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The Congenital Violence of Nazism

The extreme manifestations of Nazi violence, particularly the extermination of European Jews, has today received sustained attention among researchers as with the general public. Their monstrosity justifies this attention, but it should not have us separate them from the global criminality of the Nazi regime.[1]

Violence is at the heart of Nazism. This marks a difference from Bolshevism, where doctrine and reality found themselves in an antinomical relationship. Instead of the disintegration of the state and the advent of the Leviathan—and in the perversion of fraternity in the Gulag—in Nazism, doctrine and reality were fused from the start. The cult of heroic virility, the affirmation of the rights of the strongest, and the discourse on salutary toughness indicate that violence was not only a means but also constituted a value in itself. It was worth a "law of nature" and was even the only one apt to guarantee both survival and victory in the struggle of the races, which has been the thread of the history of the living world in the Nazi vision.

Established as a doctrine and exalted in speech, Nazi violence passed all the more forcefully into action since it was required by the fundamental project of the regime: the transformation of German society into a warring tribe, the domination of the European continent, and the racial reshaping of the "living space" that the Nazis claimed in Eastern and Central Europe. Leaning toward war, the Third Reich carried violence in its womb. And war, once it came, only increased a violence that turned against the conquered peoples and especially against any nonnative peoples who had the misfortune to reside within the "living space."

From 1933 to 1945 the curve of Nazi violence showed a constant process of spreading and of radicalization, an increase in the circle of victims and in the very forms that violence took. This should not be viewed as the effect of some determinism. There was an apprenticeship of violence, but this would have taken place with a less disconcerting ease had the political ideology, culture, and mentality of the Nazis not predisposed them to it. In order to understand the specificity of this violence, one must first look at the different political and ideological motivations that encouraged it, the actors who implemented it, and the form that it assumed.

One can distinguish three motivations to Nazi violence, all of which have become confused in historical memory but that are useful to separate for

analytical purposes: political repression, exclusion and social repression, and racial politics. As for political repression, it was a question of neutralizing the enemies of the regime in the Reich as well as in the occupied territories. This form of repression corresponded to the desire for control and change that motivated Nazi leaders. It took the form not only of a struggle against active opponents but also of criminalizing numerous forms of behavior and attitudes that belong, in a liberal regime, to the private sphere and form part of an individual's rights. In the occupied countries it also took on the form of terrorist practices that targeted civilian populations in order to have Nazi order reign there.

In the period before the war, this politically motivated violence had a relatively limited importance, except for the first month of 1933, when a wave of terror struck the enemies of the Nazi Party. About fifty thousand people were imprisoned in makeshift camps where the SA, in particular, brutally settled scores against those interned. Political repression decreased after the consolidation of the regime and the increased isolation of those that opposed it. The population of the concentration camps, henceforth unified under the control of the SS, even reached a low level in the middle of the 1930s (seventy-five hundred prisoners in 1936–37).[2] But the camps had become an institution ready to serve as soon as the need was felt. During the entire duration of the regime, repression struck above all the members of parties on the Left, though foremost against those of the Communist Party. From about the first half of the 1930s, it no longer spared the members of the clergy. It then took on the conservative opposition, particularly after the attempt to assassinate Hitler in July 1944.

Along with politically motivated repression there was the criminalization of deviant opinions. Thus the Jehovah's Witnesses brought upon themselves the fury of the regime by their refusal of the military draft. Seditious remarks of any kind were pursued with the same vigor, particularly criticism of Hitler or his racial politics. If in this area repression remained relatively foreseeable, a sword of Damocles was held over the population, especially over those who did not conform, at least externally, to the expectations of those in power. Rumors about the concentration camps produced some effect, as did the action of the traditional repressive organisms of the state, which, under constant pressure from Hitler, punished with increasing severity. Civil courts handed out 16,560 death sentences between 1933 and 1945, nearly all carried out.[3] As for the military courts, they condemned about 50,000 people to death[4] and had executed 13,000–15,000 soldiers of the Wehrmacht (for the sake of comparison, during the First World War, 48 German soldiers were

condemned to death and executed).[5] Yet the Nazi Party suffered nothing that was comparable to Stalin's purges. The episode that comes closest to these, the Night of the Long Knives in June 1934, when the leaders of the SA were executed, produced about 80 victims.

The outbreak of World War II spurred on these forms of violence, especially in the occupied territories. There was very much an unleashing of repression, which could be called terroristic in the USSR, Poland, and the Balkans before the murderous wave spread into the West from 1943 on. In the case of war against partisans, the number of civilians, victims of political and military reprisals throughout Nazi Europe, are difficult to estimate; it certainly goes beyond the figure of one million. The number that is usually quoted, 15 million civilians (including 12 million from the USSR), includes an unusually high mortality rate and deaths connected to conditions of life under the Occupation. Economic exploitation, in particular, was pitiless since Hitler wanted to preserve the level of alimentation for the German population, the price of which was borne by those living in the occupied countries. Add to this the deportation of workers carried out by force in Eastern Europe. As a total, some 8 million foreigners were forced into labor to make the German economy work, many among them in conditions close to slavery.[6]

Concentration camps reflected this evolution as well. They became virtual Towers of Babel in which men and women of every nationality coexisted, whereas German prisoners now formed only a small minority, a privileged one at that. At the beginning of the war, the population of the concentration camps approached 25,000 people. This figure had been multiplied by four in 1942, and in January 1945, there were 714,211 prisoners, of whom 202,674 were women.[7] In all at least 1.5 million people had experienced the hell of the camps. Two-thirds lost their lives as a result of physical cruelty, exhaustion, or sickness.

The second form of oppression derived from social reform and aimed at the homogenization of the *Volksgemeinschaft* ("popular community"), that is to say, of the population defined as German.[8] The regime did not limit itself, in effect, to the indoctrination or surveillance of a population whom it wanted to be in conformity with its expectations. It had recourse to repression and to exclusion, taking as its target all those who did not seem capable or desirous of belonging to the "popular community." It mainly targeted two kinds of groups. On the one hand, there were the "asocial," among whom were counted Gypsies, tramps, beggars, prostitutes, alcoholics, the jobless who refused any employment, and those who left their work frequently or for no reason.[9] On the other hand, there were homosexuals, whose behavior

conspired against the imperative to reproduce and who were the target of a ferocious repression. The courts condemned about 50,000 individuals for homosexuality, half of whom were sentenced between 1937 and 1939. Many among them were sent to camps, where most of them died, after they had served their regular sentence.[10]

As to the motivation of the violence that targeted these categories of people—and which was intensified in the second half of the 1930s—one can certainly note the concern to put unproductive individuals to work at the very time when preparations for war would bring about a smaller workforce. Basically it was a question of getting rid of any kind of behavior that did not meet the social norms of the regime. These standards were moreover the object of a large consensus of the population, be it the virtues of work and discipline or of sexual conformity. This policing of morality was susceptible to an indefinite extension against every form of social deviance, as is shown by the small war waged by urban authorities against bands of youngsters (*Edelweissipiraten*) who dressed provocatively or met to listen to jazz and who at times came to blows with members of the Hitler Youth.[11]

A third motivation to violence, and by far the most important, derived from Nazi racism. This manifested itself in two initiatives: the decontamination of the German people and the cleansing of territories that belonged in the "living space." Regarding the first initiative, one often misunderstands that racism, before it is ever directed against nonnative populations, first turns itself, logically so, against its own society in order to get rid of any germs of decadence. Such was the objective of one of the first laws of the Nazi regime, which imposed sterilization on persons suffering from physical handicaps or from neurological and psychiatric troubles that doctors of the period thought to be hereditary. About 400,000 people underwent this treatment; there were deaths and countless traumatisms. In 1937 Hitler extended the law to several hundred young Germans born of black fathers who had belonged to French occupying forces stationed in the Rhineland between 1919 and 1930.[12]

According to the same logic, there was the operation called "euthanasia," which was in reality the ongoing serial extermination of the mentally ill who were classified as both incurable and unproductive.[13] Begun in the autumn of 1939, this program created more than 17,000 victims in two years among the patients of psychiatric establishments. It was at this time that the procedure for killing with camouflaged showers was invented as well as the incineration of bodies and the recuperation of gold teeth, methods that were all used again later in the extermination of the Jews. At the same time about 5,000 children born with deformities were killed by lethal injection.

The operation was interrupted in the summer of 1941 by Hitler after members of the clergy protested. Nevertheless it would be pursued sporadically, although the target populations changed. About 20,000 sick prisoners were gassed in concentration camps as were about 30,000 Polish workers and captured Soviets sick from tuberculosis or struck with mental illness.[14]

Performed secretly and administered by doctors, the so-called euthanasia affected people whose physical state reduced them to total impotency, even sexually. They of course represented no danger to Nazi power, and there was therefore no question of repression or of terror, which supposes some form of publicity. Their elimination was founded upon premises that were strictly racist. To kill these people declared "unworthy to live," utilitarian motives sufficed. Himmler's men thus killed, through gassing in trucks or by firing squads, thousands of patients from psychiatric establishments situated in annexed Poland and in the occupied USSR, with the aim of freeing up lodgings for the troops.[15]

The second part of racial purification concerned nonnative elements in the heart of the Reich as well as in the conquered territories of the "living space": annexed regions, by right or by fact (such as Alsace-Lorraine), occupied Poland, and occupied areas of the Soviet Union. In the Reich a politics of apartheid was established to separate Jews from the "Aryan" population, even on the sexual level (the Nuremberg laws of 1935). This policy was then extended to foreign workers, whom the war economy required importing by the millions, all the while stiffening sanctions, particularly for the Poles. Sexual relations with a German woman would bring about the death penalty. The violation of any one of numerous prohibitions imposed upon workers from the East (for example, frequenting cafes or attending German religious services) was punishable by being sent to a concentration camp.[16]

In the territories belonging to the "living space," purification began with the liquidation of different elite groups. In the annexed part of Poland as in occupied Poland, the policy claimed several tens of thousands of victims before being interrupted after protests from leaders of the Wehrmacht. In the occupied Soviet Union, the liquidation of elites was relentless, anti-Communism and anti-Semitism making military protests fade away. Soviet prisoners of war were submitted to a triage in order to isolate, in addition to the Jews, all those who held positions of responsibility in the Communist Party and the Soviet state or who belonged to the intelligentsia. Several hundreds of thousands of prisoners thus selected were shot (the most current estimate for those executed places the number at 600,000).[17]

By massacring Polish and Soviet elites, the Nazis wanted to do away with

not only the administrative pillars of states condemned to disappear but also the bearers of any political or national identity that no longer had a right to existence. A series of measures was supposed to weaken the conscience of populations—for example, the closing of cultural and educational institutions, with the exception of primary schools and certain technical establishments—and to reduce them to the status of an unqualified labor force, subject to the tallage of the conquerors, until the time when they could completely Germanize their "living space."

The final objective was expulsion. No time was lost to begin deportations in the annexed Polish territories. Out of 12 million Polish Jews and non-Jews who resided there, about 1 million were deported, without property or food, to the General Government (the unannexed part of Poland under German military command),[18] where they were left on their own. The needs of the army for transportation obliged Himmler to suspend these deportations as early as 1940. This also happened in Alsace-Lorraine after tens of thousands of people had been sent to Vichy France. But the objective remained, as demonstrated by the famous East Plan, which was elaborated the day after the attack against the USSR in June 1941 and provided for the deportation of 31 million Slavs toward Siberia and their replacement with 4 million German settlers.[19]

In undertaking ethnic cleansing, the Nazis came up against a major problem: the demographic preponderance of Slavic populations. Hence the desire, expressed by Himmler, to reduce their birth rate by every means, even mass sterilization; it remained only a wish. This demographic anxiety probably had its role in the manner in which the Wehrmacht treated the majority of Soviet prisoners of war. Along with the hundreds of thousands who were shot, nearly 2 million more died from hunger, cold, and sickness in the space of a few months after their captivity during the summer and autumn of 1941. The German army was not prepared to care for such a mass of people, but this lack of preparation cannot be understood without recalling factors such as political suspicions, racial and cultural disdain, and Hitler's prohibition to bring such men into the Reich to work (the military crisis at the turn of 1941–42 made him reverse this decision and offered a chance at survival to Soviet soldiers already taken prisoner).

Another method for reducing the demographic imbalance consisted in recuperating "German blood" present in the Slavic populations. The East Plan foresaw that 10–15 percent of Poles would be Germanized (and would thus not be deported to Siberia)—likewise 50 percent of Czechs, 35 percent of Ukranians, and 25 percent of Ruthenians.[20] Germanization touched people

who, for the most part, had no language or cultural link to Germany but who possessed some physical trait that could connect them to the "German race." It remained necessary to acculturate and to make Nazis out of them, thus requiring forceful means for those who resisted. The evolution of the war placed narrow limits on this undertaking, but thousands of Slovenians, whom Himmler had decided would be Germanized, for example, were nevertheless deported into the Reich. Likewise thousands of Polish orphans were placed by adoption into German families.

For some populations terminal expulsion did not seem to be the acceptable solution, whereas their Germanization, immediate or delayed, was in principle excluded. So for Gypsies and Jews, the purification of the "living space" ultimately meant extermination after the abandonment of other solutions like emigration, deportation, and confinement on reservations.[21] Different from other victims of Nazi violence, entire families of Jews and Gypsies were here targeted—genocide brooks no exemption of any individual. This is an essential distinction that nevertheless leaves intact the specificities of extermination aimed at Jews.[22] On the one hand, they represented a key adversary in Nazi ideology, which animalized them (calling them vermin, microbes, and such) and demonized them (the "Jews" in charge in Moscow, in London, and in Washington). On the other hand, their extermination was planned as an operation that was both global, including all the Jews of Europe under Nazi influence; systematic, given that it was subject to a centralized management; and urgent, to the extent that it was important to accomplish it before the end of the war.

These three motivations to violence (political, social, and racial) were, we should repeat, conflated in historical reality. But it is evident that the racist logic penetrated and overdetermined the first two. It conditioned political repression since the treatment of all opposition was much crueler in the East, where, not coincidentally, the populations were judged to be racially inferior. Racial thinking flowed over into "social reform" as well since the Nazis were inclined to racialize social deviances more and more by attributing them to genetic factors. As a result those targeted included not only the concerned individuals but their families as well. All now fell into the category of those who were forced to undergo sterilization.

Who were the main actors of this violence overdetermined by the racist ideology? It is useless to expatiate on the institutions mainly responsible—the police and the SS, the Wehrmacht, occasional proxies such as the Chancellery of the Führer, to which Hitler confided the murder of the mentally ill—or even those who carried out the executions—the guards at the concentra-

tion and extermination camps and the police responsible for the massive shootings of Jews in the USSR and in Poland. This represents as a total some 100,000–200,000 Germans, who were helped by thousands more from other nationalities. These people went through an apprenticeship of mass murder, and it is not easy to weigh the part played by ideological motivation, particularly anti-Semitic hate, or that of situational factors.[23]

Beyond these organizations and teams, there is the contribution made by the militants of the Nazi Party. With them a culture of violence, nurtured by the experience of the First World War, had combined with the experience of confrontations during the Weimar Republic era—putsch attempts at the beginning of the 1920s through the smoldering civil war of 1930–33, which claimed several hundred lives. These militants were on the first line in pogromlike activities, as on "Crystal Night"; or during the days that followed the Anschluss, when unmentionable humiliations were inflicted upon the Jews of Vienna; or in punitive actions during the war, actions that were aimed at their compatriots or foreign workers who violated the rules of apartheid.

It is true that the perpetrators benefited from the support of a substantial part of the population. At times the support was active: without the help of denunciations, for example, the efficiency of the Gestapo would have been reduced.[24] Often there was only simple approval: noisy in the case of the execution of the directors of the SA in 1934 and during the campaign against the "asocial"; ambiguous for the "euthanasia" of the mentally ill. In addition, to the extent that Nazism exploited traditional militarism and nationalism, it had to implicate in its initiative a large part of society, beginning with the male population called into military service. The violence of the Nazi regime found a part of its propulsive force by spreading the spirit of national violence, with a fearful efficiency, to areas where its ideology could find support on rooted prejudices, such as those against Poles, Russians, or Jews.

All in all, the contributions of another group, the scientists, were important in a different way.[25] We should not lose sight of the crucial role that categorization played in Nazi violence, as in Stalinist violence. The definition of target populations used by jurists or experts of all kinds was the necessary condition for discrimination and persecution. One only has to think of the role played by criminal biology in the racialization of social deviances, by medicine in the experiments on prisoners and in the procedures of extermination of the mentally ill and of Jews, or by specialists of the social sciences (geographers, town planners, economists, and such) in planning for the social and racial remolding of the territories in the East, with its implicit threat of death, actual or potential, for the indigenous populations.[26] This was a vast

array of scientific expertise without which Nazi violence would not have had the face we know it by.

In conclusion, we should briefly evoke the differentiated character of this violence along a public/secret cleavage. There is first of all a form of public violence that can be qualified as popular, even if it was usually implemented or orchestrated by the Nazi Party. This violence aimed at stigmatizing in public, with popular support, deviant behavior that did not merit prison or the concentration camp. It borrowed its methods from the traditional repository of community violence: being placed in the pillory or being led about through the city as an alcoholic with a sign around one's neck, the shaving in public of the hair of women who had sexual relations with foreigners, and other such punishments. Toward the end of the war, this kind of violence was waged against foreign workers who had become restive and were made to pay for the Allied bombings. Another form of public violence was metered out by the military and the police to set an example. This was essentially used in the occupied countries, especially in the East and in the Balkans. This included, for example, the burning of villages and public hangings, with the bodies being exposed for several days.[27]

But secrecy enveloped the violence of the camps.[28] This violence was physical, that of corporal punishment, the usual method for whipping someone into shape, or that of clinical experimentation, which made thousands of adults and children die. This was violence also to the psyche, for the mark of the Nazi camps was, more than the higher mortality rate than existed on the average in the Gulag, the perversity that impregnated the relations of guards and prisoners and was marked by an effort to break the latter, to degrade them, and to have them lose their dignity as human beings. The most emblematic illustration of the consequence of this perversity was the figure of the "Muslim," a term that designated, in the language of the camps, the prisoner who had come to the last stage of psychological and somatic degeneration. Hannah Arendt rightly judged that, between Stalin's camps and those of the Nazis, there existed something of the difference between purgatory and hell.[29]

The mass murders were also secret. These were carried out either by firing squad (Soviet prisoners, Polish elites, and especially Jews and Gypsies) or in the gas chamber (mental patients, sick prisoners, Gypsies, and Jews).[30] Both methods attested to the rationalization of an industrial type of massacre accompanied by a dehumanized representation of the victims. But the gas chamber represented a most advanced stage of rationalization, especially of

dehumanization, doing so in the way it suppressed its victims during their last moments.

Whereas death by a firing squad gives martyrs the possibility to give one another some comfort and to experience some kind of solidarity in their suffering, there is no such connection in the gas chamber camouflaged as a shower. The sudden darkness provoked madness, suffocation increased, and panic reigned; families pressed together broke apart in a savage rush toward the door. Then each one tried to breathe the oxygen near the ceiling. The strong crushed the weak; there were neither parents, nor relatives, nor friends. The human being found himself reduced to the most elementary drive, the will to survive, which dissolves, along with the social bond, every feeling of solidarity and dignity.

Translated by Peter S. Rogers

Notes

1. Few works account for the different forms of Nazi violence. On mass murder see François Bédarida, ed., *La Politique nazie d'extermination* (The Nazi policy of extermination). Paris: Albin Michel, 1989; and Michael Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis*. New York University Press, ca. 1990.

2. See Marin Broszat, "Nationalsozialistische Konzentrationslager, 1933–1945" (National Socialist concentration camps, 1933–1945), in *Anatomie des SS-Staates* (Anatomy of the SS state). Munich, DTV, 1984, vol. 2, pp. 11–133.

3. Eberhard Kolb, "Die Maschinerie des Terrors" (The Machinery of terror), in *Nationalsozialistische Diktatur, 1933–1945: Eine Bilanz* (National Socialist dictatorship, 1935–1945: An Evaluation), ed. Karl Dietrich Bracher, Manfred Funke, and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen. Dusseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1983, p. 281.

4. Manfred Messerschmidt and Fritz Wüllner, *Die Werhmachtjustiz im Dienste des Nationalsozialismus* (Military justice in service of National Socialism). Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987, p. 87.

5. Omer Bartov, *L'Armée d'Hitler: La Wehrmacht, les nazis, et la guerre* Paris: Hachette, 1999, pp. 143–144. (1st ed., *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 95–96).

6. See Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" im der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches* (Foreign workers: Politics and practice of "Foreign units" in the war economy of the Third Reich). Bonn, Verlag Dietz, 1985.

7. Broszat, op. cit.

8. See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

9. See W. Ayas, *"Asoziale" im Nationalsozialismus* ("Antisocials" in National Socialism). Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1995.

10. Burleigh and Wippermann, op. cit., p. 197.

11. See Arno Klönne, "Jugendprotest und Jugendopposition: Von der JH-Erziehung zum Cliquenwesen der Kriegszeit" (Youth protest and youth opposition: From the Hitler youth training to the small group formations of the war period), in *Bayern in der NS-Zeit* (Bavaria in the National Socialist period), ed. Martin Broszat. Munich, Oldenbourg, 1981, vol. 4, pp. 527–620.

12. See Gisela Bock, *Zwangssterilisation im Dritten Reich* (Forced sterilization in the Third Reich). Opladen, 1986.

13. See Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: "Euthanasia" in Germany, ca. 1900–1945*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

14. Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Rassenhygiene, Nationalsozialismus: Euthanasie* (Racial cleansing, National Socialism: Euthanasia). Göttingen, 1987, pp. 361–364.

15. See Götz Aly, ed., *Aktion T-4: 1939–1945* (Action T-4: 1939–1945). Berlin, Hentrich, 1987.

16. See Diemut Majer, "*Fremdvölkische" im Dritten Reich* ("Folk outsiders" in the Third Reich). Boppard am Rhein, Boldt, 1981.

17. Bartov, op. cit., p. 126. See Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen, 1941–1945* (Not comrades: The German army and Soviet prisoners of war, 1941–1945). Stuttgart, DVA, 1978.

18. See Jan Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgovernment, 1939–1944*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979.

19. See Mechtild Rössler and Sabine Schleiermacher, eds., *Der "Generalplan Ost"* (The "General Plan for the east front"). Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1993.

20. Helmut Heiber, "Der Generalplan Ost" (The General Plan for the east front), *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1958, pp. 281–325.

21. See Raul Hilberg, *La Destruction des Juifs d'Europe* (The destruction of the Jews of Europe). Paris, Fayard, 1988; Michael Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet: Die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik gegen Sinti und Roma* (The National Socialist extermination Politics against Sinti and Rome). Essen, 1989.

22. See Ulrich Herbert, ed., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik, 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen* (National Socialist extermination policies, 1939–1945: New researches and controversies). Frankfort, Fischer, 1998.

23. One can consider the divergent interpretations of Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Les Bourreaux volontaires de Hitler: Les Allemands ordinaires et l'Holocauste* (Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust). Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1997; and Christopher Browning, *Des hommes ordinaires: Le 101e bataillon de réserve de la police et la Solution finale en Pologne* (Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the

Final Solution in Poland). Paris, Les Belles lettres, 1994. Browning seems to me more convincing on this point.

24. See Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945*. Oxford, Clarendon, 1990.

25. See Benno Müller-Hill, *Science nazie, science de mort: L'extermination des Juifs, des Tziganes et des malades mentaux* (Murderous Science: Elimination by Scientific Selection of Jews, Gypsies, and others, Germany, 1933–1945). Paris, Odile Jacob, 1989; and Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1988.

26. See Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und dei deutschen Pläne für eine eurpäische Neuordnung* (Precursors of extermination: Auschwitz and the German plans for a new European order). Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1991.

27. See the exhibit catalogue *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944* (Extermination war: Crimes of the German army, 1941–1944). Hamburger Edition, 1996.

28. Wolfgang Sofsky, *Die ordnung des Terrors: Das Konzentrationslager* (Order of terror: The Concentration Camp). Frankfort, Fischer, 1997; Klaus Drobisch and Günther Wieland, *System der NS-Konzentrationslager, 1933–1939* (System of the National Socialist concentration camps, 1933–1939). Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1993.

29. Hannah Arendt, *Le Système totalitaire* (The Origins of totalitarianism). Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972, p. 183. For some elements of comparison, see Gerhard Armani, "Das Lager (KZ und GULag) als Stigma der Moderne" (The Camps (concentration camps and gulags) as the stigma of modern times"), in *Terroristische Diktaturen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Terrorist dictatorships in the twentieth century), ed. Matthias Vetter. Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996, pp. 157–171.

30. Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, and Alalbert Rückerl, *Les Chambres à gaz: Secret d'État*. Points-Histoire. Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1987.