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David Cesarini, ed. *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation.* London and New York: Routledge, 1994. x + 318 pp. $69.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-09954-7.

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No era in German history has received the scrutiny that the twelve years of National Socialism have engendered. In recent years, an overwhelming number of studies have been published on subjects ranging from the origins of the Third Reich to daily life in Nazi Germany. No aspect of the Nazi period, however, has been as extensively researched as the decision to murder all of European Jewry and the implementation of that decision - a subject which generally falls under the rubric of the Holocaust. David Ceserani's edited volume, *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, contributes to this rapidly evolving and expanding field of historical scholarship.

The seventeen essays contained in the volume were first presented in January 1992 at an international conference held in London to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Wannsee Conference. In attendance were some of the world's leading Holocaust scholars and their expertise is readily apparent upon reading their papers. The overarching theme of the London conference, and now the book, was to "elucidate the major interpretive tendencies among historians" and to contribute to the central historical debates. Ceserani has conveniently divided the book into four sections: 1) Antecedents, Preconditions and Legitimation, 2) Operation Barbarossa, the *Wehrmacht* and the Question of Timing, 3) The Implementation of the Final Solution and Responses, and 4) Historiography.

The first three essays, written by Avraham Barkai, Henry Friedlander, and Benno Mueller-Hill are concerned with "the preconditions which made the [Final Solution] possible and the ideology which legitimated mass murder"(2). The relationship between racism, antisemitism, ideology, and eugenics figure prominently within this section. While both Barkai and Friedlander stress the importance of *voelkisch* ideology and the doctrine and practice of racial exclusion as "essential preconditions" for the Nazi genocide of the Jews, Mueller-Hill examines the role of university-trained legal officials in the Nazis' sterilization programme and the killing campaigns of the *Einsatzgruppen.* Although each author addresses the intriguing question of how people were prepared to participate in mass murder, their efforts demonstrate the elusiveness of a comprehensive and completely satisfying answer.

The second group of essays examines the crucial nexus between Operation Barbarossa and the timing of the Final Solution. The contributors to this section, Richard Breitman, Juergen Foerster, Christian Streit, Omer Bartov, and Christopher Browning all grapple with the question of when the decision was made to murder Europe's Jews. In the absence of a written order from Hitler himself, scholars have debated the timing of the "decision" for decades. Although most scholars now recognize the intimate link between the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the decision to murder the Jews, the authors of this section employ different foci to establish the onset of the Final Solution. Breitman's analysis of Heinrich Himmler's activities from 1939 to 1941 compel him to postulate that the fateful decision was reached as early as January 1941. Foerster, Streit, and Bartov examine Nazi racial policy and the role of the *Einsatzgruppen* to suggest that the fateful decision came in the summer months of 1941. Browning, on the other hand, dates the Final Solution decision precisely from mid- September to mid-October 1941, a period of time when the SS allocated sufficient manpower to carry out systematic genocide. The importance of the authors' arguments lies not so much in the dates that they suggest but rather in the highly sophisticated analyses of the Nazi administrative apparatus that support their claims.

The third section of the book is the most diffuse and, in my opinion, the most uneven. The essays presented under the heading of "The Implementation of the Final Solution and Responses," cover a vast geographical terrain (Poland, Lithuania, Croatia, France, Germany, America, Britain, and Palestine) without the benefit of a tight thematic structure. As a result, readers are presented "snapshots" of events as they developed in differ-

ent parts of the world rather that the detailed analyses of specific themes found in previous sections. Though the quality of these essays is apparent, the organizational structure of this section might have been improved. Still, Ceserani himself would have had few other choices if the present volume mirrors the conference itself.

The final two essays in this collection are offered by Shmuel Krakowski and Yehuda Bauer, two individuals who have invested their professional careers in advancing our knowledge of the Holocaust. Krakowski's paper on "Documents on the Holocaust of the Former Soviet Union," demonstrates a range of questions left unanswered and suggests avenues of future research created by the additional source material now available. As head of the archives at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, his knowledge of archival material is unsurpassed, and all Holocaust scholars would do well to consult this essay. Bauer's concluding comments on "The Significance of the Final Solution" result from years of reflection on both the Holocaust and the ways in which historians have represented it for the past four and half decades. His beliefs, first that the significance of the Holocaust is universal and, second, that the Holocaust must serve as an eternal reminder of humanity's unparalleled ability to inflict pain and suffering provide an appropriate conclusion not only for the book, but for every effort to educate people about this historical phenomenon.

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