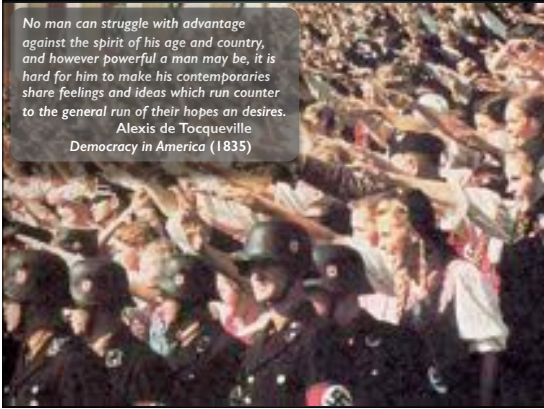


Neighbors and Villains: the Unsystematic Holocaust



No man can struggle with advantage against the spirit of his age and country, and however powerful a man may be, it is hard for him to make his contemporaries share feelings and ideas which run counter to the general run of their hopes and desires.
Alexis de Tocqueville
Democracy in America (1835)





Ordinary Men?

- March 1948 – Holocaust victims killed
- Feb 1945 – Vernichtungskrieg
 - System/Method of the Final Solution
 - Mobile killing units
 - Normal Germans – NOT forced
 - Recruit “volunteer formations” to help w/ their “special work” (programs)
 - Police Battalion 101 (800 men, SS SS)
- At least 1.8 million killed



Historikerstreit

1. Where can we draw the line between passive observers and active perpetrators of the Holocaust?
2. How does euphemism allow perpetrators of the Holocaust to be freed from culpability for their actions?
3. When perpetrators insinuate that they are merely following orders, does this constitute a transference of guilt (meaning they are no longer guilty of their actions, or at least less guilty)?
4. What makes Goldhagen's thesis unique? What historical/sociological factors were present in the German perpetration of the Holocaust that support his thesis?
5. How is Goldhagen's thesis flawed, or how could it be argued to be “bad history”?
6. What is the “Working toward the Führer” thesis?
7. How did Nazism potentially act as an enabler to the perpetration of the Holocaust by average Germans?
8. How does the issue of psychological dissonance relate to the perpetration of the Holocaust?
9. What is Christopher R. Browning's thesis? Although both Goldhagen and Browning analyzed the same evidence from the same group of perpetrators of the Holocaust (Police Battalion 101), in what ways are their theses dramatically different?
10. What does Jan T. Gross' work in Neighbors add to the historiography of the Holocaust?
11. What factors were present in Jedwabne by 1941 that enabled the massacre?
12. Describe the massacre and the nature of the murders taking place. How does this compare to the other histories of the Holocaust that you have encountered?
13. How does Gross add to the “Willing Executioner” theory, but avoid the mistakes made by Goldhagen?
14. Which argument in the Historikerstreit do you find most convincing and why?
