
Walter Benjamin, the German-Jewish philosopher, wrote that the secret redemptive power of history was to recover from its ruins debris that had piled onto wreckage. Kushner’s task in *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* is almost Bejaminian in scope as he attempts to recover and situate marginalised voices in the great field of literature that emblematises Holocaust historiography. The task of the recovery of multiplicity in history appears postmodern for it attempts to narrate a history from below rather than above. The difference becomes explicit when he says that ‘Allied responses to the Holocaust have been studied as political or diplomatic issues but not as social history’ (p. 16). *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* thus presents its narrative as an explanation of how existing historiography on the Allied involvement during the Holocaust has concentrated on elites in government circles and the Jewish diplomatic world and has alienated the responses of ordinary people in liberal democracies. Kushner’s text is thus focused on resurrecting this history from ‘below’; that is, to examine the range of the population’s liberal imagination in Great Britain and the United States to the illiberal phenomenon that was occurring in Germany and its occupied territories. Such a recovery considers the actions of the nation-states in light of popular responses, using the disciplines of social, cultural, gender and labour history. Kushner states that his agenda is to explain and not to condemn the responses and the reaction of the democratic world and to regard the Holocaust as not simply Jewish property but as an ‘integral part of the experience of many countries away from the killing fields ... it is consequently as much a contribution to Anglo-American social and cultural history as it is an account of the Holocaust’ (preface).

Familiarity with the vocabulary and language of the Holocaust is best introduced through encountering Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews*, a seminal text in historiography that laid the foundation for historians to use his categorisation of the groups in the planning, implementation and execution of the Holocaust; the perpetrators, bystanders, and victims. *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* employs these terms as a basis for commenting on the role of two countries, namely Great Britain and the USA who both represented the role of ‘bystander’ to the destruction process. Although *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* is revisionist, it does not resemble the relativising tendency of recent German historiography of the Nazi period, but rather asks the reader to reconsider and contemplate the position of the individual in a liberal democracy, and the collective response of the nation-states when confronted with the mass genocide of others.

Kushner fashions this contemplation through an examination of related issues. Firstly there is a consideration of how liberal democracies became directly connected to anti-Semitic policies of the Third Reich through the reception or
The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination is a provocative and highly accessible contribution to an area that is under-represented in historiography, although one whose argument is its insistence on the complexity of the Allied response to the Holocaust. Although Kushner states that the book is an attempt to explain rather than condemn these responses, a critical assessment could have endeavored to explain them in a framework that entailed an historical investigation of the causes of the Allied response.

Kushner also considers how the response of labor movements to the persecution of Jews was determined by the problems of economic recession in the USA and Great Britain during the 1930s, whereby governments justified refusing entry on the basis that the transitory status of Jewish refugees would have made their assimilation into the economy difficult. Other topics covered include the influence of gender on domestic servant policy; the construction of both the state's and society's perceptions of the Holocaust through liberal and nationalist frameworks; and the range of responses of the state and non-governmental organisations such as churches, Jewish community groups, the labor movement, and secular bodies in relation to public opinion. Following this, Kushner argues that the policies of the British government were not reflective of popular sympathy for the Jews within society and therefore attempts to move away from the stereotypical description of the collective British response to the Holocaust as embodying 'indifference' to a more fitting collective response of 'sympathy, antipathy and ambivalence'.

The post-war confrontation with the realities of World War II and the Holocaust are examined in the historiography of the post-war period, with particular scrutiny applied to the relative silence of those countries who chose to dispossess and marginalise the importance of the Holocaust in both domestic and world history, and through an examination of the emerging patterns of remembrance in countries such as Israel, Germany, the USA, Poland and France. Kushner contextualises these issues within the wider debate of how the complexity of the nation-state and the liberal imagination influenced the Allied response. One such complexity was the belief that despite the release in late 1944 of the Western world to the reality of the Holocaust, the extent of the persecution of Nazis was not reflective of popular sympathy for the Jews within society and therefore attempts to move away from the stereotypical description of the collective British response to the Holocaust as embodying 'indifference' to a more fitting collective response of 'sympathy, antipathy and ambivalence'.

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treatment and policies of the nation-state in relation to Jews since emancipation. In Great Britain, for example, Kushner argues that the construction of national identity of 'Englishness' used the modern concept of homogeneity to support the idea of a non-immigrant Christian nation. This modern concept of homogeneity, identified by Zygmunt Bauman in Modernity and the Holocaust, was the very basis for the Nazi racial policy of a purified, cleansed nation, where the 'other' was excluded and eventually removed from public life.

Were not the basic premises of the Enlightenment ideology manifested in emancipation promises to Jews in eighteenth century Europe constructed by tolerance, equality and brotherhood, where the idea of an homogenous society achievable through the assimilation of the 'other' would be its final product? This Enlightenment ideology nourished the liberal imagination, which ultimately stressed cultivating and sustaining an homogeneous national identity, and when combined with self-interest, formed the basis of the Allied response to the Holocaust. This combination proved decisive for the Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe, who were stateless, relatively unsupported, and ultimately abandoned. The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination represents an attempt to recover those voices in history (such as Storm Jameson and Eleanor Rathbone in Great Britain) that did not constitute the ambivalence of the collective response of the Allies, and to motivate us to understand what lies behind our own attitudes to the face of present-day genocide.

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This paperback edition is a revised edition of the 1992 original. For a region of such recent turmoil and where the results of elections occurring nearly each month seem to require a constant reassessment of one’s opinions on what exactly are the likely outcomes of the collapse of Soviet Communism, Longworth’s reluctance to substantially alter the text of this work at first glance appears strange indeed. His new preface, a mere page and a half, states that the prognostications of the 1992 edition have 'so far been borne out' (p. xiii). Initially, this confident statement may appear to be a lazy assertion justifying no further work on the behalf of the author. Recent events, however, in this reviewer's opinion have shown this not to be the case. Longworth argues that the Communist regimes erected throughout Eastern Europe after the second world war were a natural consequence of geography: the Eastern European states could be drawn either east or west. As the US government used the Marshall plan as a political tool associated with all sorts of conditions,