Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives

Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann

Palgrave Macmillan

9780230552029
412 0230552021
£45.00

Reviews:

‘Ordinary People as Mass Murderers is an extraordinarily felicitous book which ought to be regarded as an important enrichment to the academic and even to the political discussion. It offers complex, detailed and sophisticated analyses in every single one of its difficult subjects, and at the same time it is inspiring and well readable. The editors doubtlessly succeeded in offering a supremely objective and factual contribution on this urgent, extremely challenging and delicate theme.’
- Wolfgang Benz, Center for Research on Anti-Semitism, Technical University of Berlin, Germany

Contents:

Ordinary People as Mass Murderers offers a series of essays that explore one of the most fundamental and widely-discussed questions confronted by humanity: how do ‘ordinary’ people come to participate in mass murder? Recent scholarship has presented a complex and heterogeneous picture of ordinary perpetrators and shows that no age group, gender, or social, ethnic, religious or educational cohort is exempt from feeding the ranks of mass murderers. This book brings together a mix of established and younger experts to provide a unique and up-to-date overview of the current state of research, much of it previously unpublished in English. Nine contributions and an introduction combine to present complex findings in an accessible format, approaching the topic from a variety of perspectives (history, gender, sociology, psychology, law, comparative genocide) and addressing a number of hitherto unresolved questions. Together they show that our knowledge has moved on considerably since Christopher Browning’s path-breaking Ordinary Men (1992) and they add significant new impetus to contemporary efforts at understanding different forms of genocide.

With contributions from Andrej Angrick, Donald Bloxham, Thomas Kuehne, Harald Welzer, James Waller, Christina Herkommer, Irmtraud Heike, Gerd Hankel and Chris Szejnmann.

Authors:

OLAF JENSEN was born in Hamburg and studied in Hanover. He is Lecturer in Holocaust Studies and Director of the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies at the University of Leicester. His research has focused on National Socialism and the Holocaust, particularly on the impact of memory on contemporary German society. He has published widely on these topics, most importantly, Geschichte machen. Strukturmerkmale des intergenerationellen Sprechens über die NS-Vergangenheit in deutschen Familien (2004).

CHRIS SZEJNMANN was born in Munich, studied in London, and is Professor of Modern History at Loughborough University. His major publications are Nazism in Central Germany: The Brownshirts in ‘Red’ Saxony (1999), Vom Traum zum Alptraum. Sachsen während der Weimarer Republik (2000), and (co-editor), How the Holocaust Looks Now. International Perspectives (2007). He is currently writing Contesting the Rise of the Nazis (2009); and Nazism in Germany: A Comparative Regional History (2011).