

Rethinking the connection: Nazi-Euthanasia and the Holocaust

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Since Henry Friedlander's *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, we know a lot about the chain of events that made the Holocaust possible. Yet a close look will reveal that the lines are often drawn too quickly, thus turning the statement that "Euthanasia" crimes made the Holocaust possible into one that is made too easily. My paper provides a new interpretation of the build-up of the Holocaust based on a close study of biographies of perpetrators who were involved in both historical events. I will advance the theory that developments in the Warthegau were key to both the killing of patients and Jews not only in the first death camp Kulmhof, but also in the Aktion Reinhard camps Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. The first use of gas chambers happened in Posen, the same city where the gas van was invented by Herbert Lange and his team. My paper will emphasize the importance of the study of technology and knowledge transfer between different areas and groups of perpetrators. This will be shown by shedding some light on the killing methods used by Einsatzgruppen when murdering psychiatric patients as well as Jews. I will also address the role of the ethnic population in the Warthegau, especially of Polish doctors and nurses. All too easily they are exculpated because they were treated by the occupants as racially inferior and at the same time they are at times buried by the infamous term "collaborators." I will propose a new approach based on an entangled history of Polish-German relations in the field of psychiatry.