Bloxham

Genocide on Trial

War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory

When the Allies decided to try German war criminals at the end of World War II they were attempting not only to punish the guilty but also to create a record of what had happened in Europe. This ground-breaking new study shows how Britain and the United States went about inscribing the history of Nazi Germany and the effect their trial and occupation policies had on both long and short term 'memory' in Germany and Britain. Donald Bloxham here examines the actions and trials of German soldiers and policemen, the use of legal evidence, the refractory functions of the courtroom, and Allied political and cultural preconceptions of both 'Germanism' and of German criminality. His evidence shows conclusively that the trials were a failure: the greatest of all 'crimes against humanity' - the 'final solution of the Jewish question' - was largely written out of history in the post-war era and the trials failed to transmit the breadth of German criminality. Finally, with reference to the historiography of the Holocaust, Genocide on Trial illuminates the function of the trials in perpetuating misleading generalizations about the course of the Holocaust and the nature of Nazism.

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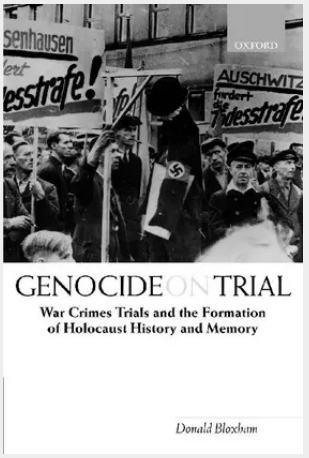

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