Historical Atlases and the Holocaust

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For most scholars born in the American Midwest the task of locating the exact boundaries of a place like the Pripet Marshes and determining whether they are in Podolia, Volhynia, present-day Belarus, or the Ukraine may seem daunting. For such a person—like any person interested in understanding events that happened in a specific location or geographic area—maps are obviously an important tool. In the research of events such as the Holocaust, which took place over a period of several years and encompassed a large geographic range, maps that reflect the geography of those events are often indispensable.

Since not all students, teachers, and researchers of the Holocaust have access to wide-ranging, in-depth map collections, gazetteers, or other geographic tools, published atlases are often the first and sometimes the only sources of readily available geographic information consulted. However, atlases that were in use at the time of the actual events are not always on hand; therefore, historical atlases are commonly used to fill the need for geographical information concerning past events—the Holocaust included.

It is clear that students, teachers, and scholars may have different needs regarding geographic material. Students who are not engaged in primary source research generally have less need for complex physical and political detail in maps. Such students are more likely to require maps that provide more information about concepts, processes, social groups, and the like, or that show overall changes in territories and borders. Teachers may require maps with more physical and political detail than their students may, but, on the whole, their needs are similar.

Scholars, however, may have very different needs. Sometimes they require very explicit topographic maps. For example, knowing the exact distance from the main street of the Tuczyn ghetto to the forest nearby would certainly help a researcher understand why the leadership of that ghetto chose the strategy of flight to the forest in order to evade deportation. Scholars and researchers sometimes need highly articulated political details, maps that include every settlement in the area being discussed, with clear
delineation of regions and districts. They sometimes need maps that show the particulars of infrastructure, such as entire railway systems, bridges etc.

In recent years several historical atlases have been published that are relevant to students, teachers, and scholars of the history of the Holocaust. The Historical Atlas of the Holocaust, published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, focuses directly on the subject. The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich, by Richard Overy, also intersects with the events of the Holocaust, as does the atlas edited by Eli Barnavi, A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People. Somewhat farther afield, but still potentially relevant, are The (London) Times Atlas of European History, A Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe, by Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, Assistant Professor and Professor respectively at Wilkes University, Pennsylvania, and an Atlas of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century, by Richard and Ben Crampton.¹

In addition to their stated perspective in presentation, historical atlases may be roughly divided into two categories, each with its own implications for the types of maps used and presented. One genre of historical atlas seeks to present political or physical maps true to the situation at different junctures in history. For example, such an atlas might provide a set of maps that shows Poland at different periods in history: the nation before and after the partitions at the end of the eighteenth century; Poland on the eve of World War I; the situation following the resurrection of the Polish state after that war; Poland in the wake of the Nazi and Soviet conquests; and Poland as it has existed since the end of World War II. In this type of atlas, the maps tend to be standard

political and physical maps, some with more detail and some with less. The
second kind of historical atlas strives to teach history through maps, that is,
such atlases present historical concepts, processes, and situations in map
format. This type of atlas might show in a series of maps the results of
regional elections in Germany between 1924 and 1933, to point out where the
Nazi party increased its voter-base on its road to power.\textsuperscript{2} The maps used in
this kind of atlas tend to have less political and physical detail, unless such
details are crucial to the presentation of the historical concept or process
being illustrated. Both kinds of atlases obviously have their uses for scholars,
teachers, and students of the Holocaust; both, also, have their limitations.

Among the atlases under discussion here, \textit{The Times Atlas of European
History} and \textit{A Concise Historical Atlas of European History} may be classified
as atlases that present maps at different junctures in history, whereas the
other atlases under discussion seek to teach history through maps. All of the
atlases discussed here may satisfy some of the needs of students and
teachers, but none of them comfortably fulfills the occasionally extraordinary
needs of scholars.

All of the historical atlases under scrutiny in this review contain
accompanying text. Some also include visual material other than maps,
including photographs, charts, tables and reproductions of works of art. The
textual problems that may be found in these historical atlases are similar to
those evident in other types of published reference material, such as lexicons
and encyclopedias. Since they offer concise explanations of often-complex
events (without footnotes), almost every word is of consequence. In such
writing it is easy to convey the wrong information or message because of a
nuance that might be less noticeable in more expansive or more scholarly
writing. Also, as with most reference works, factual errors are nearly
impossible to root out totally.

As these historical atlases are being assessed for their use by people who study,
teach, and research the Holocaust, a salient question that must be addressed is how
does each one present the subject of the Holocaust and the Jewish presence in
Europe before and after the deluge? To this reviewer it seems to be axiomatic that
comprehensive reference works dealing with the history of the twentieth century

must address the Jewish presence in Europe and the Nazi attempt to erase that presence. Such reference works must strive to present the Holocaust in proportion to other subjects depicted in their pages and in proportion to the importance of the subject to human history. It almost goes without saying that they must aim at presenting the Holocaust, as all subjects they discuss, in a clear and unbiased way as possible.

On the face of it, the *Times Atlas* is probably the least useful for scholars, teachers, and students of the Holocaust. With over 180 pages dedicated to maps illustrating 3000 years of European political history, only the last twenty-three pages concern the twentieth century. Even though the maps are political maps, and some of them—at least according to the introduction—intend to show more details, most, in fact, show very few. For example, the map illustrating the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, which focuses on the countries of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, contains only five rivers—without naming them—and eleven cities. Maps of this type are more useful for gaining overall impressions rather than solving geographic problems; for example, which communities in this region actually fell into Nazi hands and which into Soviet hands in the autumn of 1939. However, even on the level of overall impression, the maps that deal with the war years are problematic in this particular atlas. There are two double-paged maps that show Europe during World War II: one showing Nazi conquests in 1940; and another showing Hitler’s Europe in 1942. According to the color scheme, it appears in the first map as if Spain fell “under Axis occupation”; according to the second map, it appears that Spain was “under Axis administration,” because both Spain and the “German Empire” are the same shade of light brown. Since Spain was a member of the Anti-Comintern pact, this color scheme may have been adopted deliberately. But in that case other members of the pact should have also been shaded the same tone of brown—among them Italy, Hungary, and Slovakia—but were not. Stemming from the internal logic of the two maps, it appears that the coloring of Spain is simply a mistake.

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3 *The Times Atlas of European History*, pp. 7, 179-178

The *Times Atlas* does not contain any map that presents aspects of the Nazi atrocities against the Jews. The only references to the atrocities are in the accompanying text, and they are indirect and by no means compensate for the lack of maps. In the context of “nominal self government” of territories under Nazi influence, the text notes that such areas “were expected to impose Nazi measures, especially against the Jews...”\(^5\) In the discussion of the Croatian regime, for example, it is noted that savage atrocities against “Serbs, Jews and other minorities, made the Croatian regime notorious.”\(^6\) Lastly, as part of the discussion of the effect of the German occupation on the Soviet Union, which is said to have “left no traces on the ground,” it was also asserted that: “Only the ‘negative’ policy of mass extermination of Jews and other groups targeted as enemies by the Nazis was carried out on an enormous scale.”\(^7\)

Despite its cursory and fragmented treatment of the Holocaust, the *Times Atlas* may be of use in unexpected ways to those who deal with the geography of the Holocaust years, because it does contain a wealth of geographic information about Europe through the centuries. Looking through its pages, this reader finally realized why part of the area taken over from Yugoslavia by Hungary during World War II is referred to as “the Banat.” In one of the maps showing Hungary in the early eighteenth century, there is an area called “the Banat of Temes,” or the area governed by the Ban (Viceroy) of Temes, whose main settlement was Temesvar (the fortress or castle of Temes). Thus it is clear that this area has retained its historical association with the Viceroy of Temes by the continued use of the term Banat.\(^8\)

The preface to *A Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe* is quite useful for clarifying why the authors compiled the atlas as they did. According to Hupchick and Cox:

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 180.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 183.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 138.
"The primary purpose of this atlas is to provide students and interested general readers with a basic and affordable visual aid for grasping the geopolitical situation at selected important moments in the history of Eastern Europe...Only those elements deemed necessary for the general understanding of the topics presented are included. Most rivers and mountain ranges, therefore, either do not appear or do so only relative to their information purpose within any given map."

They also explain that the text does not describe the maps, but gives “a broad perspective on particular periods or issues represented in the maps.” Finally, they address issues that students of history encounter whenever they deal with geography over the continuum of time: the choice and spelling of place names. In this case, the authors have chosen to spell place names in their contemporary form, according to contemporary borders. To this rule, they have made one major exception: names that have a different common usage in English are noted by their English name. The authors also explain their method of transliteration from Cyrillic to Roman characters, another issue that poses problems for the spelling of place names. As a result, Cracow (the prevalent English-language spelling) is never referred to as Krakow, and Lviv (the current Ukrainian spelling) is never referred to as Lwow (the Polish spelling) or Lvov (the common Russian transliteration). Yet inexplicably, the name of Constantinople changes to Istanbul as the maps progress from the fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century, even though, according to the Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer, Istanbul was adopted as the official name of the city only in 1930, and Istanbul is both the current and widely accepted English-language name for the city.

Despite problems of internal consistency, this atlas may be quite useful (more for students and teachers than for scholars) as a reference tool for the geography of Eastern Europe, but not for maps concerning the events of the Holocaust itself. The second map presented is a physical map of Eastern Europe, which gives a sparse, yet clear, general picture of the rivers,
marshes, and mountains of the region, as defined by the authors. Unfortunately, the authors have chosen a rather narrow definition of Eastern Europe, defining its eastern border “as the line formed by the combined western borders of Belarus, Ukraine, and the Russian Federated Republic.” Thus they have excluded these former Soviet republics from the confines of Eastern Europe. Although they say that setting such a border may be justified, they do not really explain themselves.

The last ten maps of the book (41-50), are potentially of most interest to those who investigate the history of the Holocaust. These maps range from the outbreak of World War I to the situation in Europe in 1950. The series of maps showing Europe between the wars is particularly instructive for understanding which territories were lost by Hungary and gained by Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, and which areas of Transylvania retained a Hungarian majority following the agreements at the end of World War I. Essentially, three separate maps illustrate aspects of this exchange of territory.

It is clear that the atlas suffers from the problem of proportions, i.e., the number of maps reflecting (or really not reflecting) the importance of the issues being illustrated. Whereas the above-mentioned three maps depict the territory taken from Hungary as a result of the Trianon treaty, only one map illustrates the situation of all of Eastern Europe during World War II. Moreover, on that single map there is no reference to the fate of the region’s Jews, the most populous Jewish region in the world on the eve of the Holocaust. Like the Times Atlas, the only reference to Jews is textual, and, in this case, the text is extremely problematic. The murder of the Jews is discussed solely in the context of the fate of Poland during the war. After citing the Nazi conquest of Poland, the authors write:

12 Hupchick and Cox, Concise Historical Atlas, map 2.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., maps 42-47.
“The Nazis then set about following a propaganda campaign inside Germany portraying Slavic Poles as somewhat subhuman, which lent perverted credence to the genocidal policies they followed inside conquered Poland during the four years of occupation. At least 3 million Poles were exterminated during World War II [emphasis added-R.R.], and those who escaped that fate were subjected to the most degrading conditions. The Nazis transformed Poland into the chief killing ground in their efforts to rid future Europe of those they considered undesirable, human “vermin”—Jews, Eastern Slavs, Gypsies, political opponents, among others—through medical experimentation.”

If it were not clear from the place of employment of the authors—a university in the United States—one would be hard pressed to believe that this paragraph was not written in a former Communist-bloc country in another era. Perhaps the tone of this paragraph—which severely skews the context of the destruction of European Jewry—helps drive home the astonishing fact that in the entire atlas the authors chose not to present even one map which indicates any aspect of Jewish presence in Eastern Europe, or the destruction of that extraordinary presence on the soil of Eastern Europe. One may only wonder how a respected firm like St. Martin’s Press published a reference book with such overt bias, omissions, and untenable proportions.

Unlike Hupchick’s and Cox’s atlas, Richard and Ben Crampton’s Atlas of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century presents greater detail over a shorter period, and, on the whole, it is much more useful for geographic information about Holocaust-related events. The series of inter-war maps and many accompanying charts and tables are very informative. By using black-and-white maps, but with different textures, various sub-areas are clearly presented. The maps that show border changes after World War I for each of the individual countries, indicate few towns and cities, but they tend to include more physical and geographic details than the other atlases discussed here. The map showing the territorial changes throughout Eastern Europe between 15

15 Ibid., map 49.
1938 and 1941, still suffers somewhat from a lack of cities and geographic features, but gives a good overall impression of the changes in those years.16

In further contrast to Hupchick and Cox, the Cramptons squarely place Jews in the geographical, ethnic, cultural, and political history of Eastern Europe. One of the first maps they present shows the Pale of Settlement, to which the Czars confined the Jews. The map clearly shows the many districts that comprised the Pale and indicates which districts contained Jewish populations of over 10 percent.17 Jewish population, as well as those of other minorities, is also depicted on the map of ethnic composition in inter-war Poland.18 Only two maps deal directly with the destruction of the Jews during the Holocaust: one shows the murder by the Einsatzgruppen and in the extermination camps; and the other shows the percentage of Jewish losses per country. The accompanying text is succinct, touches the main points, and appears unbiased.19

A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People compiled under the direction of Eli Barnavi and employing a team of respected scholars, seeks to teach Jewish history through its many aesthetic illustrations and maps. Even though it is called “a historical atlas,” this book contains more text and as many illustrations as it does maps. Indeed Barnavi refers to it as a “fresco.”20 It is clearly of more use to teachers and students of the Holocaust than to scholars and would not disgrace the surface of any coffee table. Many of its maps shed light on aspects of Jewish history which may be linked to events that evolved toward the Holocaust and the Jewish situation at the time of the Holocaust. But the main part of the book that is relevant for those interested in the Holocaust comprises only eighteen pages (pages 226 to 243: the section beginning with the “Prelude to the Holocaust” and ending with “The Struggle for a Jewish State”).

17 Ibid., p. 13.
18 Ibid., p. 104.
19 Ibid., pp. 138-141.
20 Barnavi, Historical Atlas, p. iv.
Despite its polished appearance and distinguished team of scholarly contributors, this atlas does not escape some of the commonplace problems plaguing reference works in general and historical atlases in particular. The text contains its share of dubious statements, in a field, as we described above, where nuances are very important. In the opening sentence of the section entitled “The Holocaust: First Act,” the author, Dr. Idith Zertal, writes:

There is no explicit mention of the systematic physical annihilation of human beings in general, and of the Jews in particular, in official Nazi documents, with the exception of the agreement between Himmler and Thierack (Reich minister of Justice) dated September 18, 1942 stating that men and women were to be “worked to death.”

Most scholars would agree that many such documents exist, such as the Einsatzgruppen reports, which have been published in English and are thus readily available. Indeed, these are “official German documents” and certainly record the systematic physical annihilation of Jews and others.

Another small textual slip-up may be seen in one of the generally informative chronological entries in the atlas: according to the entry from July to October 1944, Raoul Wallenberg saved thousands of Jews by providing them with Swedish documents, food and shelter. Wallenberg certainly rescued thousands through such activities, but most of the actual rescue work was carried out after October 1944, and ended with his arrest by arriving Russian forces in January 1945.

Every scholar and student of the Holocaust is aware of the problems posed by statistics concerning the murder of the Jews. As a result of many factors—including frequent border changes in the first half of the twentieth century, large movements of populations, missing relevant statistical

21 Ibid., p. 228.
information (such as the Jewish population of a certain place on the eve of the war), and incomplete records regarding the fate of individuals and even entire communities—many of the statistics we commonly use are really estimations.

Regarding the losses of Rumanian Jewry in the Holocaust, this atlas clearly illustrates, if only by accident, the complexity of some of the issues. On the map showing Jewish losses in the Holocaust from 1941 to 1945, the losses for the 800,000 Jews of Rumania is set at 350,000. In the text about Rumania in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is stated that of 608,000 Jews living under Rumanian rule in 1939, 265,000 were killed during the Holocaust. The first problem here is: which Rumania is being discussed? Rumania with its borders in 1939, or Rumania of 1940, after the Second Vienna award, which transferred Northern Transylvania to Hungarian hands? The first set of figures given (800,000 Jews and 350,000 losses) does not reflect the situation from 1941 to 1945, but reflects the population of Rumanian Jewry before the transfer of Northern Transylvania to Hungary. The second set of figures (608,000 Jews and 265,000 losses) states outright in the text that it reflects Rumanian Jewry in 1939, but this is incorrect; the figure of 608,000 and the subsequent losses, reflect the borders of Rumania after the transfer of Northern Transylvania in 1940.24

The Atlas of Modern Jewish History, by Evyatar Friesel,25 in many respects is the standard against which Barnavi’s atlas must be measured. Like Barnavi, Friesel illustrates history through the use of maps, and the book contains a great deal of information in the form of text, tables, and graphs. It, too, is a book intended more for students than for scholars. Friesel’s atlas is not nearly as glossy as that of Barnavi, but, on the whole, the maps contain much more physical and political detail and are clearly articulated. None of the maps show infrastructure such as roads and railway lines, but nearly all of them show major rivers, and some suggest mountainous areas. The map of Jewish communities in Poland in 1921 even indicates districts, including

Volhynia and Polesia, and contains Jewish communities with populations over 2,000.26

Many of the maps are directly relevant to the study of the Holocaust, including those scattered throughout the book that show various countries and cities during the inter-war period, and the eight maps that relate to the Holocaust itself. Perhaps because its focus is on Jewish history from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, the information presented in this atlas is often more detailed than that of Barnavi. Some of it, however, is simply outdated. The text on the section about the Holocaust reflects the way the subject was often taught twenty years ago. In particular, the evolution of the Nazi policies against the Jews is presented in a rather deterministic fashion, and the discussion of the murder by the Einsatzgruppen does not mention that other German forces, such as regular soldiers and police units, also took part in the murder. Some of the statistics used are also outdated; for example, the figure for Jews murdered in Auschwitz is given as 1.8 million, whereas today most historians use a lower figure of roughly one million.27

In his introduction to the *Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich*, the editor and highly regarded scholar Richard Overy writes:

“This atlas is not intended as a geographical guide...The maps and charts have been chosen because they tell the story of this dozen years effectively in atlas form. Issues of race, area and resources were, as we have seen, central to the Nazi view of Germany’s future.28”

Using as much text, illustrations, and charts as maps, Overy relates a history of the Third Reich. The text is on a reading level for college freshman or above, and the maps, charts, and other illustrations are colorful, if not always clear. For the most part, the atlas is set out like a textbook, and in its

26 Ibid, p. 93.
143 pages touches subjects such as the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, German foreign policy from 1933-1939, the course of the war, the German “new order,” “German society and total war,” and the aftermath. Some of the maps are very informative, like the map that illustrates the countries of origin of foreign laborers brought to Germany, and the map that presents Nazi plans for the postwar order in Europe. But the atlas consistently underplays the Holocaust, giving it little attention and, at times, simply ignoring it. Only six of the ninety-seven maps Overy presents address the persecution of the Jews and their reactions.

Overy presents three maps relating to German Jewry before the outbreak of the war: Jewish emigration from 1933-1938; Zionist training centers in Germany; and the destruction in the wake of Kristallnacht. The map relating to resistance against the Reich regime illustrates some ghetto uprisings, albeit not very clearly. The accompanying text mentions only the Warsaw ghetto uprising; the map does not include the uprising in Bialystok, nor does it hint at the establishment of other major Jewish underground units, flight to the forests, partisan activities, or other forms of resistance. The map of the Nazi camp system includes extermination camps, but classifies Chelmno, the first extermination camp, as a concentration camp. The map showing Jewish losses also is problematic; in particular, here, too, the figures for Hungary and Rumania are very unclear. Rumanian losses are set at slightly over 269,000 (which does not include Northern Transylvania), but Hungary at only 200,000, when it should be well over half a million (especially if it takes into account the losses for Transylvania not included in the figure for Rumania). Perhaps this mistake is what leads Overy to set the overall number of Jewish losses at only 5.3 million, a figure much lower than that agreed upon by most scholars.

29 Ibid., pp. 84-85, 88.
30 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
31 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
32 Ibid., p. 93.
Although it is not within the confines of this particular essay, the curt discussion about the Holocaust in Overy’s and the Times atlases and Hupchick and Cox’s skewed presentation raise the question of whether these are isolated cases or symptomatic of how the Holocaust is often still given short shrift in many reference works. The Times Atlas’ treatment of the topic suggests that the Holocaust was not a very central event in the 3,000 years of European history. By his handling of the destruction of the Jews, Overy implies that it was neither a central nor a consequential feature of the Nazis and their regime. Hupchick and Cox barely consider the Jews a subject of East European history. Each of these positions seems to this reader to be severely biased and historically inaccurate, and the messages they transmit are, to say the least, unfortunate.

As its name clearly states, The Historical Atlas of the Holocaust by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, focuses on the destruction of European Jewry during the Nazi period. This atlas exemplifies an array of problems found in reference works aimed at the general reading public. Lacking a clear conceptual explanation in either the preface or introduction, the authors state only that the grouping of the maps follows the chronology of the Holocaust. This, however, is only partly true. For example, the map of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in the spring of 1943 is placed ten pages before the set of maps that show the murder operations of the Nazis in the occupied portions of the Soviet Union. Of course, the uprising occurred nearly two years after those operations had begun. This placement of maps underscores the difficulty in presenting complex and at times overlapping historical processes in chronological order.

The maps in the Historical Atlas of the Holocaust are very attractive visually, but have few geographical details and contain some incongruities. For example, on two facing pages, maps of the Baltic countries contain different, albeit legitimate, names for the same Latvian town: one map uses the Russian name Dvinsk and the other the German Dünaburg. Neither

mentions the Latvian name, Daugavpils, nor are the criteria for choosing the names apparent.34

Like the other atlases under discussion, the Historical Atlas of the Holocaust presents a great deal of history in a very telegraphic way, and, unfortunately, some of the text is written in an absolute fashion when a bit of circumspection would have been the better choice. A salient example is the discussion of the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies (Sinti and Roma). According to the editorial team, "Roma (Gypsies) were among the groups singled out on racial ground for persecution by the Nazi regime..."35 It may be argued—and has been argued by scholars such as Yehuda Bauer—that the persecution of the Gypsies occurred primarily because the Nazis considered them to be a-socials and not because of their racial origins.36

One cannot refrain from comparing this atlas to its forerunner by many years, Martin Gilbert’s Atlas of the Holocaust.37 Gilbert’s atlas, like that of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, seeks less to impart geographic information than to teach the history of the Holocaust through maps. The maps as illustrations of geographical and physical issues are rather amateurish, seemingly sketched by hand. At times they can be unnerving, like when they cite a region, but give it no borders: for example, map number 48 cites Polesia and Volhyna, without delineating between the two.38

Gilbert’s atlas also suffers from statistical issues compounded by the lack of clear source citations. He presents hundreds of statistics, and it would be an immense task to try to verify them all. As an example of the statistical problems, it is not clear why the author sets the Jewish pre-Holocaust

34 Ibid., pp. 64-65.
35 Ibid., p. 42.
38 Ibid., p. 47.
population of Hungary at 742,800, and not the much more widely used figure of 825,000 (which includes about 100,000 Jews who had converted to Christianity).\(^3^9\) Yet Gilbert’s atlas is so full of information, employing so many angles and such detail that it simply dwarfs the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s publication.

None of the atlases discussed here combine accurate, extensive information about the Holocaust years with clear and well-detailed maps. Some are better at one aspect than another, but none manages to put it all together. It seems to this reader there is both a conceptual and media problem. It is safe to say that the atlases discussed here are not really meant for scholars, but seem to be geared more to students, teachers and the informed reading public. One traditional way of attempting to deal with the complexities of indicating political, physical, and infrastructure features, which scholars sometimes need, is to use overlays. But binding overlays into a book is not very practical; among other reasons, in order to be able to use the overlays in any combination, according to the user’s need, they would have to remain unbound inserts. Thus, a much better way to provide such complex and detailed maps is to use computer technology. Computerized geographic systems exist for tourists or motorists, where one may zoom in on a specific area and obtain great detail.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s atlas exists in CD format, but it does not pretend to be this kind of computerized resource. According to the user’s guide that accompanies the CD, “...the Atlas can be regarded as a condensed history of the Holocaust, presenting the geographical aspects of historical events.”\(^4^0\) One may read between the lines and conclude that this resource is best used in the classroom or the household and is not really meant to provide detailed geographic information to scholars. So, like its print counterpart, the maps on the CD generally lack


physical details. Unlike the print counterpart, however, the CD allows the user to link from more general maps to more specific maps and toggle between maps, text, and photographs. For example, one may begin with a map of Poland, then link to a more detailed map of Warsaw and its environs, and from there to a still more detailed set of maps of the Warsaw ghetto in various stages of its existence; all the while text and photographs may be consulted. The drawback is that the linked sets of maps are of an uneven quality. Some of the maps of ghettos and various uprisings contain street names, whereas others do not. The map that shows the different zones of occupation in Berlin looks like a work of modern art: it has several sections painted in different colors to represent the American, British, Russian, and French zones, but gives no clue as to the streets that were contained in those zones. Although the CD provides linked maps, it does not allow for true zooming. That is, one cannot begin with a map of Poland, zoom in on Warsaw, zoom in on a section of Warsaw, and then zoom in on a street. Neither is it possible to see the same map of Poland with different overlays, such as roads, rail lines, rivers, or any combination thereof.

In order to view maps in this way, across the broad expanse of territory on which the events of the Holocaust happened and through the continuum of time, the maps would have to be generated by the proper software resting on a very detailed database. Such a database would need to include all the relevant place names and their variants, accompanying physical features in great detail, border changes, and, of course, historical and statistical information relevant to the subject of the Holocaust. This is the tool that scholars need; a tool that they can tailor for themselves; a tool that allows them to see the details that they need at a given moment and could be easily adapted for students and teachers alike. The creation of such a database and making it accessible would go a long way toward solving most problems that arise in the context of the study of the geography of the Holocaust.
