The Coming of the Holocaust

From Antisemitism to Genocide

*The Coming of the Holocaust* aims to help readers understand the circumstances that made the Holocaust possible. Peter Kenez demonstrates that the occurrence of the Holocaust was not predetermined as a result of modern history, but instead was the result of contingencies. He shows that three preconditions had to exist for the genocide to take place: modern antisemitism, meaning Jews had to become economically and culturally successful in the post–French Revolution world to arouse fear rather than contempt; an extremist group possessing a deeply held, irrational, and profoundly inhumane worldview had to take control of the machinery of a powerful modern state; and the context of a major war with mass killings. The book also discusses the correlations between social and historical differences in individual countries regarding the “success” of the Germans in their effort to exterminate Jews.

Peter Kenez is Emeritus Professor of History, University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the author of many books, including *Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: The Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944–1948* (Cambridge 2006); *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (2nd edition, Cambridge 2006); and *Red Attack, White Resistance* (2005). He is a board member for the journal *Revolutionary Russia.*
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PETER KENEZ

University of California, Santa Cruz
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