EDITORIAL FOREWORD

André Mineau's *The Making of the Holocaust: Ideology and Ethics in the Systems Perspective*, is the third volume in the special series on Holocaust and Genocide studies (HGS) of the Value Inquiry Book Series (VIBS). Mineau's focus in *The Making of the Holocaust* is on both an explanation for the Nazi genocide, and the meaning of the event of extermination: what made the Holocaust possible, what historical conditions brought it about; and what are its implications, what meaning does the Judeocide have "beyond its historical factuality?"

Mineau provides us with an analysis of the historical conditions which brought about the Holocaust which emphasizes both the role of an extreme form of antisemitism, and the totalitarian state which the Nazis created, as the preconditions for the act of genocide. What Mineau provides in his explanation for the Holocaust are new understandings of how traditional antisemitism was transmogrified into a racial antisemitism in Germany, as well as a new interpretation of totalitarianism.

In his exploration of the meaning of the Holocaust, Mineau's point of departure is his conviction that the Nazi genocide was "the quintessential figure of modern evil." Mineau's effort to grapple with the meaning of the Judeocide includes an exploration of the significance of Nazi ethics, itself based on an insistence that the *Weltanschauung* of Nazism did, indeed, contain an ethics, however grotesque we judge it. Confronted by a Nazi ethics, one which is rooted in developments within modernity as a civilizational complex, Mineau responds with a probe of the ethical resources available for resistance to genocidal tendencies, resources which he finds both in the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas, and in Christianity. Grappling with the meaning of the the Nazi genocide also provides Mineau with the opportunity to rethink the often contentious issue of the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of *The Making of the Holocaust* is Mineau's utilization of systems theory to comprehend all of the dimensions of the event of extermination. Basing himself on the work of thinkers such as Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Mario Bunge, Mineau wields the concept of an "information system" to elucidate the unfolding of the Holocaust. Among the the results of an analysis based on systems theory is a fresh approach to the intentionalist/functionalist debate which has had such an impact on Holocaust studies.

In publishing *The Making of the Holocaust* in our special series on Holocaust and Genocide Studies, we are proud to add the voice of Mineau to the growing effort to grapple with the implications of genocide in the modern world.

Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg