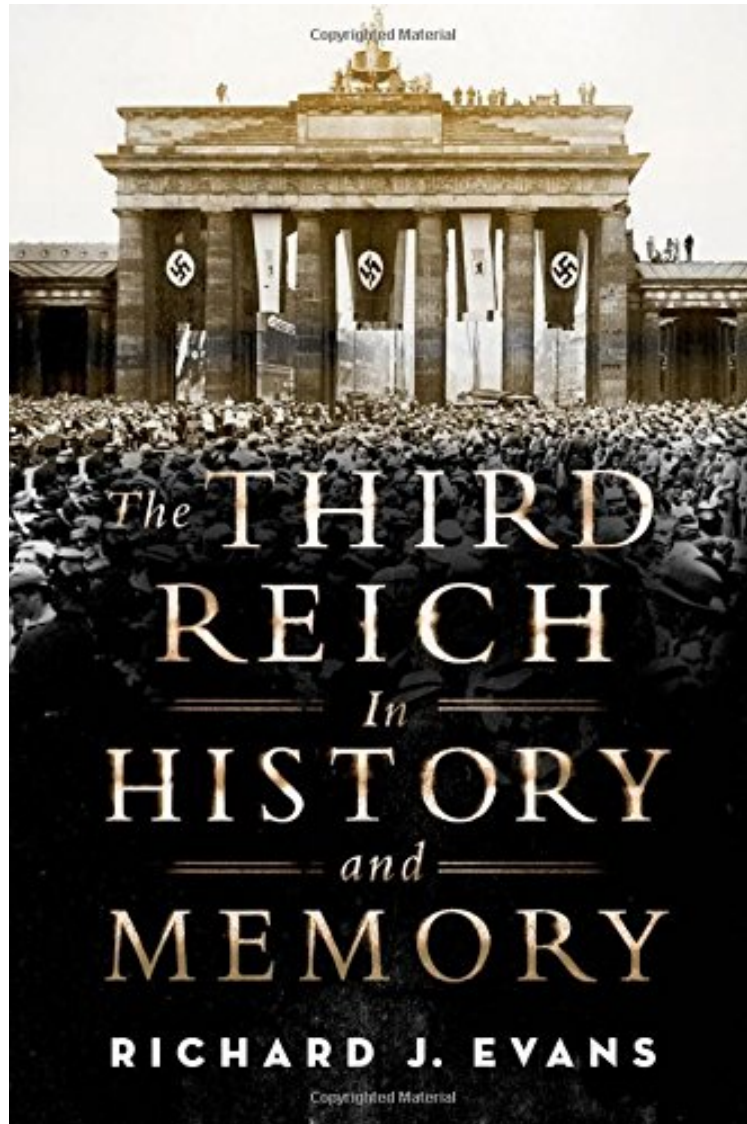


The Third Reich in History and Memory

Richard J. Evans

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Richard J. Evans : The Third Reich in History and Memory before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Third Reich in History and Memory:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Casting Light Upon DarknessBy John D. Cofield"The Third Reich was not a normal state. It was not even a normal dictatorship, if there is such a thing." This quote from Richard J. Evans' fascinating and informative collection of essays on Germany in the 1930s and 1940s really sums up his overall thesis: that what happened there was horrifying and beyond the norm for human societies. Nevertheless Evans

also makes it clear that Adolf Hitler and his Reich were not complete aberrations and were rooted in past history. The 28 chapters in this volume are all book reviews or essays written by Evans over a period of two decades or so. Arranged in rough chronological order, they form a cohesive history of the German descent into madness and then its slow recovery. Evans begins with examinations of Imperial and Weimar German policies which eventually led to the Holocaust and other Nazi policies. He includes material on the shock to the Germans of their defeat in 1918 and the impact of the social and governmental changes which followed in the 1920s and early 1930s. The second and third sections deal with life inside Nazi Germany and with the Nazi economy. These explode some longheld myths about the extent of Germany's economic revival under Hitler and cast doubt on others, such as the idea that the Germans were all enthusiastic partisans of the Nazis. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sections deal with the buildup to World War II, its conduct by Hitler and the German command, and with the Holocaust; while the final section covers the aftermath of the war, including the post-war mass migrations and expulsions, the reconstruction of destroyed urban centers, and the recovery of looted art and other treasures. Every essay in this work is well written and intriguing. Evans is scholarly but writes with non-specialists in mind as well. He has a keen eye for a good anecdote. While it may be impossible to fully comprehend the full horror that was the Third Reich, these essays do go a long way towards helping us to begin to comprehend it.

30 of 34 people found the following review helpful. Why Germany's Inconvenient Past Won't Go Away

By Matt Obenritter

Is another work on Nazi Germany actually necessary. The surprising answer is a resounding yes ! Proof that this legacy is far from exhausted is the fact that present day Greece is using the leverage of WW2 atrocities as a means to excuse themselves of their astronomical financial debt to the Germans by countering that the Germans still owe them for what the Nazis did. This makes this subject all the more contemporary and relevant even now. In fact, it almost makes Evans' timely publication seem prescient. A large percentage of what appears in this book has appeared in other scholarly journals as stand-alone pieces. What the publisher has graciously done here was to bring them together in a coherent manner so Evans' cutting insights can form a more congruent narrative for the reader. Throughout this book, Evans sheds both light and depth on recent scholarship and contributes analytical depth that only a scholar of his might can muster. Since this book traverses so many subject themes, it is hard to categorize it. It is historiographical while concomitantly full of vignettes. Evans takes the reader quickly through the environment leading up to and through the rise of the Third Reich in the first few chapters, sharing ruminations about the Nazi desire for a colonial if not continental empire. Later he leads the reader into the personal medicine cabinet of Hitler, whose addictions are becoming more widely known. Careful examination over the subject of consent and coercion as well as the 'people's community' is provided in what appears to be the longest and perhaps most important two chapters in the book. Given the long and ongoing question of how a highly civilized society like that of 20th century Germany could resort to such racially exclusionary and brutal measures against "others" demands scholarly attention. While the reasons are not easy to explain, they are not beyond our grasp and Sir Richard Evans elucidates them for all. A mix of terror, social acceptance for those suitable to the Nazis, and cultural themes of obedience coalesced under a regime which exploited its people in the most sinister of manners. Judicious treatment of this subject and its historical importance across our globalized society is tangible within Evans' text and while not excusing the Germans for their crimes, he is reminding western society that we are not beyond reproach even now. A quick look into the expulsion of ethnic Germans (and their brutal mistreatment) from the territories over which they once lorded is a crime too long ignored as well. Not one to pass on the fields where moral landmines reside, Evans demonstrates how this has been glossed over for the sake of historical, if not political convenience and sends his pen (like a minesweeper) rushing through to right a wrong. Covering everything from Nazi economics, industrial magnates who benefited unrighteously from Nazi slave labor, Nazi propaganda promises kept and those which remained unfulfilled throughout the war (the VW for instance), the Holocaust, the eventual collapse of the regime, and the aftermath of Nazi horror and Allied punishment, this book is a necessary journey from an eminent historian and deserves your full attention.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Everyone will learn something

By Thomas M. Magee

This book is a bit unusual. It is a collection of essays about Germany by the author over several years. The essays are not like chapters in a book. They are connected by broad themes. I think anyone who reads this will be enriched no matter what your background. He doesn't really touch the macro issues. He takes some very obscure topics and dives deep or takes a general topic and comes at it from the side. Everyone will learn something from this book. I was very struck by the essay on the great migrations after the war when ethnic Germans were on the march back to Germany. I also learned a lot about how the Beetle got its start. His take on the "Final Solution" against history and what else was occurring like with the Russians is interesting. He then takes the theme of the essay and drags it to current times so you can see how the issue is still alive or shaped politics today.

In the seventy years since the demise of the Third Reich, there has been a significant transformation in the ways in which the modern world understands Nazism. In this brilliant and eye-opening collection, Richard J. Evans, the acclaimed author of the Third Reich trilogy, offers a critical commentary on that transformation, exploring how major changes in perspective have informed research and writing on the Third Reich in recent years. Drawing on his most notable writings from the last two decades, Evans reveals the shifting perspectives on Nazism's rise to political power,

its economic intricacies, and its subterranean extension into postwar Germany. Evans considers how the Third Reich is increasingly viewed in a broader international context, as part of the age of imperialism; discusses the growing emphasis on the larger economic and cultural circumstances of the era; and emphasizes the development of research into Nazi society, particularly in the understanding of Nazi Germany as a political system based on popular approval and consent. Exploring the complex relationship between memory and history, Evans also points out the places where the growing need to confront the misdeeds of Nazism and expose the complicity of those who participated has led to crude and sweeping condemnation, when instead historians should be making careful distinctions. Written with Evans' sharp-eyed insight and characteristically compelling style, these essays offer a summation of the collective cultural memory of Nazism in the present, and suggest the degree to which memory must be subjected to the close scrutiny of history.

"[Evans is] one of the English-speaking world's foremost historians of modern Germany...in these essays, as in so much of his scholarship, he is right on the mark." --The Financial Times "Evans' careful discussion serves as a reminder of the naiveté of thinking that dictators have no popular support in the countries they control, or that removing them is easy. But he also shows how unfair it is to assume that everyone (or even the majority of people) in a dictatorship is responsible for the regimes' actions. Collective guilt and collective innocence are appealing myths, but the realities of power are much messier." --The Pacific Standard "Mr. Evans may now be a rather grand pillar of the historical establishment - a former Regius Professor of History at Cambridge University, 'Sir Richard' since he was knighted for services to scholarship in 2012 - but he shows no signs of settling into comfortable eminence. He thinks hard about what history is and how it is done... Mr. Evans has something of interest or importance to say on almost any aspect of [the Third Reich] that might come up." --The Wall Street Journal "[A] lucid and informative essay collection." --The Jewish Daily Forward

About the Author Richard J. Evans is Regius Professor of History at Cambridge University. Knighted in 2012 for his services to scholarship, he is the author of many prizewinning and bestselling books, including his acclaimed study of the Third Reich, whose three volumes have been translated into twelve languages.