



The Gestapo: A History of Horror

Jacques Delarue , Mervyn Savill (Translator)

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From 1933 to 1945, the Gestapo was Nazi Germany's chief instrument of counter-espionage, political suppression, and terror. Jacques Delarue, a saboteur arrested by the Nazis in occupied France, chronicles how the land of Beethoven elevated sadism to a fine art. *The Gestapo: A History of Horror* draws upon Delarue's interviews with ex-Gestapo agents to deliver a multi-layered history of the force whose work included killing student resisters, establishing Aryan eugenic unions, and implementing the Final Solution. This is a probing look at the Gestapo and the fanatics and megalomaniacs who made it such a successful and heinous organization—Barbie, Eichmann, Himmler, Heydrich, Müller. The Gestapo's notorious reign led to the murder of millions. *The Gestapo* is an important documentation of what they did and how they did it.

The Gestapo: A History of Horror Details

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From Reader Review *The Gestapo: A History of Horror* for online ebook

A.L. Sowards says

This was an informative book about an unpleasant subject. Some parts were more interesting than others, but I definitely learned a few new things. It's a good place to go if you're interested in some of the main villains of WWII but don't want to read separate biographies on each of them. It also covered organizational issues, Nazi rivalries, and of course their crimes.

I was struck with how quickly the Nazis were able to take over. I've read other histories of Nazi Germany (*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, for example), but this book really hit home how fast and how completely Hitler, Himmler, Goering, and their associates turned Germany into a police state. It's frightening.

The book was written by a Frenchman, and so it discusses the Gestapo and the SS in France more than it covers Holland or Belgium or Czechoslovakia. It had decent coverage of Poland and the Soviet Union.

Probably 3.5 stars. The writing (a translation from French) was competent if not elegant. There were a few typos in the electronic version, but they weren't too distracting. The kindle version is only \$1.99.

Holly says

Insightful and interesting. Discussed the primary minds behind the Gestapo and the S.S. like; Himmler, Heydrich, and Goering to name a few. Discusses the birth of National Socialism and explains the drama of that scandalous Roehm.

Some of the things that will continue to run through my head was an interesting tidbit concerning the Nazi "breeding farms" between select prized Aryan individuals who could produce fine Nordic specimens for the Reich. The interesting part concerned a study made sometime in the 1950's that tested the intelligence of these babies raised by the Reich and found that they scored, on a whole, infinitely lower than other children.

Another fact that I was aware of about the Nazi use of Jewish "human parts" like, fat for soap and hair for socks and slippers. But the thing that haunts me was that in 1945, 7 tons of human hair was found. I was trying to think of how horrible that must have been. Seven tons of human HAIR!! Decompression chamber experiments were equally revolting. In fact, the author simply wrote at times that the tortures were "too indescribable" or "too revolting to convey."

In all, a great book to add to any WWII history buffs collection.

Julie says

Disturbing, but that's the truth of the matter. I was hoping to learn more about the intricacies of the Gestapo, and less details of the Holocaust, though I know they go hand in hand. I'm just trying to understand how and why it was allowed to exist in the world theater.

Raquel says

Very dense and detailed in the material. World War II is one of my favorite historical topics, but I think this would be a difficult book for someone unfamiliar with general knowledge about the Nazi party and various parts. The author spent little time with backstory and the reader needed to be somewhat familiar with names, conflicts, etc. But, this allowed for a more in depth exploration about the "in's and out's" of the Gestapo, which I appreciated.

Martijn Hartman-maatman says

A big book but such a great read. Every detail of one of the most evil organizations of the second world war is described. Who were these people and how did they get so much power and how could they do all those horrible things every day and still go home every night.

Because the author is French, a lot of the book is about France, which is a little annoying sometimes. But overall I really liked the book and recommend it to everyone...

Jerry Peace says

An extremely unpleasant, even horrific read. And a requisite one, both for those who are glad that hellishness is over and those ever alert for a present day redux. You can, and should, read for yourselves the grisly horror of the Nazis, and perhaps worse, the at best cowardice and at worst, the silent and self-serving confirmation and support of the atrocities by the German populace. But hear what Delarue says in summation: "The crimes of Nazism are not the crimes of one nation. Cruelty, a taste for violence, the religion of force, ferocious racialism, are not prerogatives of a period or of a people. They are of all ages and of all countries....but let a regime come which not only liberates these terrible impulses but makes a virtue of them... in which gentleness, kindness, pity, respect for law, and a taste of freedom were no longer virtues, but inexpiable crimes. It was a world in which one could only obey by crawling, killing on orders, and dying oneself in silence...It was a world where people exterminated for pleasure and where murderers were treated as heroes....If a people is subjected to a regime composed of obsessional propaganda, terror, total militarization, denunciation, and surveillance...if criminals are glorified; if a nation is deprived of all morality and persuaded that is an elect people...the final result will always be the same....What people could resist a similar regime tomorrow? ...And who will be tomorrow's victims?"

John Grimes says

How to accurately reflect on a writing of such sheer horror...

Took me awhile to read this one, as it is not good bedtime reading, nor something that you can read just a few pages at a time. As a historical reference, however, it is definitely top notch.

At times a bit organizational heavy. (Such as descriptions of each of the subdivisions within a particular branch of the Gestapo...) However, at the same time, it's necessary to show the breadth and scope of the organization itself.

I'd recommend it to history buffs, or those needing a reference material, but otherwise? Probably something to avoid.

Paige says

The narrator said some names weird, consequently I was hearing about people like Doctor "Hole In Bum" and Lt "Hoe Fucker". And frankly some of the phrasing was hilarious. "Penetrating the rear" happened a lot, but my personal favorite was when someone was "assigned to stiffen Hitler" but ended up being "reprimanded for a lack of firmness". I mean really. This was originally written in French, so I like to think the translator was just screwing with people.

But really, this was very informative. I wouldn't recommend it for someone with only a passing interest in WWII history, its a bit intimidating. It's an exhaustive account, and even going into this knowing who everyone was and with some familiarity with events, I lost the thread of the book several times. And a little dry, even for a history book.

Ana-Maria Bujor says

A very informative and detailed book about Gestapo, the way it got to have so much control, the power struggle between Nazi leader and of course, the end of it all. It is definitely worth a try if you know at least a bit about World War 2, if you can remember numerous German names and if you want to learn more.

Garry says

An informative and interesting read. At times a little too detailed. Still fascinating. The width and reach of the organization is matched only by its leader's blind ambition and devotion to his own bizarre beliefs; it is incredible to watch this man rearrange the deck chairs and fight savagely for the best view while the Titanic (Nazi Germany) sinks increasingly rapidly into defeat.

Gmaharriet says

The evil described in this book would be incredible if not for the documentation and sworn statements of the people who survived. So many innocent civilians died at the hands of these monsters.

Although the book sometimes bogs down in details about inpronoucible names and the dates jump around a bit, any previous reading about WWII and Nazi Germany helps to tie it all together. Let us hope, never again.

Ivan says

Just because the details exposed in this book are facts registered by the history and actually lived and suffered by so many people, we may believe the horrors described on this book were true.

As Mr. Delarue himself says it, back in 1960 he took the text of this book directly from real registers raised during the malevolent years of Nazism.

Since the information was taken directly from existent records -the text is organized and presented as a summary of those documents- this book deserves to be read, in order to learn how an evil man –Himmler- incredibly, in just 12 years, built a so intricate and obeying organization, aimed exclusively to restrict liberty, submit millions of people in various European countries and built death factories around Europe for efficiently kill millions of human beings.

Really, the devil exists. We must be conscious that provided the convenient circumstances; such an organization may appear again.

Although interesting, the book is a little bit difficult to read because too many uncommonly words are used. The original was written in French Language and perhaps the translator used frequently the dictionary, hence, many words relate with that language and even though correct, some have a sort of forced meaning into the phrase where they are located, therefore, the reason for me to give 4 stars to this book.

I fully recommend this book, which is a reflection of what is at present happening and preparing to come in some Latin-American countries.

Cerisaye says

Listened to the audiobook, with some distracting mispronunciations and odd emphases. Takes forever to get to the Gestapo, so you get not only how the Gestapo was formed but a whole background history of how Hitler and the National Socialists came to power, and what they did once they seized it, the Reichstag fire, Night of the Long Knives, etc. Comic book caricature descriptions of big-name Nazis, all grotesque monsters with odd physical attributes, no banality of evil. Written by a French survivor of Gestapo treatment in the early 1960s so based on old research (from transcripts of the Nuremberg trials, for e.g.) and memoirs therefore out-of-date compared with modern histories of this well-researched period.

It's chilling, insightful and comprehensive, almost too much detail to be honest, which bogs down the narrative. At times it was like dipping into one of J Robert Janes' St-Cyr and Kohler crime novels set in Occupied France- Delarue's book must be one of his sources- only this account of terror, intimidation and executions is all too horribly real, ruthless repression of resistance, torture, deportations to concentration camps (the last convoy left Paris the week before liberation in August 1944).

A rather dry read but an informative one, interesting to anyone wanting to know more about the Gestapo and how it operated throughout the Nazi period. Dated but still valuable as a source and a history.

Kevin says

Given that this book was written in fifties and the topic is very close to the author (who was a victim of the Gestapo), its a very interesting description of how the Gestapo worked, the infighting, the total control, and just how quickly ordinary people can be corrupted in the right situation. The book is a bit dated and does not have some of the more recent information regarding that era. But it presents just how terrifying and brutal they were and how good they were at control.

Its interesting because there are many similarities between the Gestapo and the KGB. It would be interesting to get the author's comparison.

Taisynn says

An intimate look into the rise and fall of the Gestapo

This book explains and demonstrates the rise and fall of the Gestapo, the army, and even the rise of Hitler. It fully explains how a whole country could be forced to be silent as the tortures of the war, the concentration camps, and the persecution of Germans willing to stand up to such heinous acts. This is a must-read in order to better understand the Nazi's reasoning for what they did. I can only pray that our youth continue to study what led to such heinous atrocities in the name of "loyalty."
