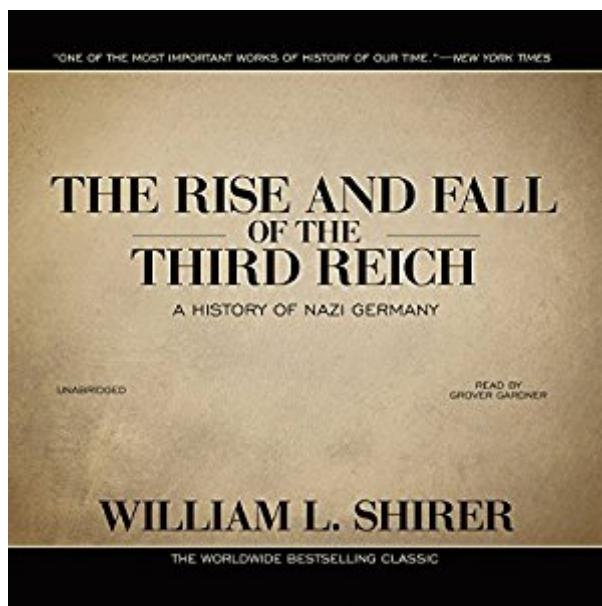


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The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich: A History Of Nazi Germany



Synopsis

Since its publication in 1960, William L. Shirer's monumental study of Hitler's German empire has been widely acclaimed as the definitive record of the 20th century's blackest hours. The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich offers an unparalleled and thrillingly told examination of how Adolf Hitler nearly succeeded in conquering the world. With millions of copies in print around the globe, it has attained the status of a vital and enduring classic. Now, many years after the end of World War II, it may seem incredible that our most valued institutions and way of life were threatened by the menace that Hitler and the Third Reich represented. Shirer's description of events and the cast of characters who played such pivotal roles in defining the course Europe was to take is unforgettable. Benefiting from his many years as a reporter, and thus a personal observer of the rise of Nazi Germany, and availing himself of some of the 485 tons of documents from the German Foreign Office, as well as countless other diaries, phone transcriptions, and other written records, meticulously kept at every level by the Germans, Shirer has put together a brutally objective account of how Hitler wrested political control of Germany, and planned and executed his six-year quest to dominate the world, only to see Germany go down in flames. This is a richly rewarding experience for anyone who wants to come to grips with the mysterious question of how this menace to civilization ever came into being, much less was sustained for as long as it was. The answer, unfortunately, is that most of Germany, for a whole host of reasons, embraced Nazism and the fanaticism that Hitler engendered.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first read The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich in high school about 3-4 years after it was published.

My best friend had read it, and he pushed his copy on me, urging me to read it too, which I did. My second reading was recently. With more than fifty years between readings, the book came across very differently this time. Since the book was published in 1960, there have been hundreds of documentary and docudrama films made about the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party, the war in Europe, and the downfall of Germany. There have also been hundreds of books on the subject, many of which I've read. So on my second reading, there wasn't much of the material that I wasn't already fairly familiar with. But in 1960 when the book was published, there wasn't a lot of in-depth material on Germany and the Third Reich. Shirer did a bang-up job of documenting the rise of Hitler and the Nazis from his firsthand view, the road to war, early victories, and the eventual downfall due to the Soviets turning the tide of war in the east, and American and British troops closing the noose from the west. The book was an instant bestseller in 1960, and now, 56 years later, it's still a big seller. Don't be put off by the book's length, it's well worth reading.

This is for me a re-reading of Shirer's famous tome, and I found it a genuine pleasure. I have read most of the more traditional historians on this notorious period of modern history, but none are as well-written or as memorable as Shirer's who was after all a journalist by trade. One can always quibble about facts here and there--Lucaks is especially good at that--but this summary remains to me masterful and well worth the time it takes to go through. It does shortchange various parts of the complexities of the war itself, but certain elements, like his summary of the horrors of the camps and Einsatzgruppen in the east, make gripping reading. And his suggestions about what a Hitler victory would have meant for the world are ghastly in their formulations. I heartily recommend the book, especially for those ready to take a long, first look at this story, a stark reminder that even the most educated and sophisticated cultures can all too easily fall under the sway of a madness hard to fathom. In our own day, when forces of hatred and bigotry stride the world, the saga of the Third Reich is a cautionary tale that needs retelling and rehearing.

When nationalistic politicians around the world are finding a frightening increase in their audiences it is worth remembering that Adolf Hitler was actually elected to his first position of real power. The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich is a fascinating and highly readable account of those times. In addition, rare among detailed histories of such a complex eras, it is written in something of a personal tone because the author was present for much of the story, at least of the rise and seen most and met many of the players of the story. At 1100 plus pages it is a bit of an investment but worth it if for no other reason than it provides an unignorable caution for our own times.

This is a fascinating book that should be read by everyone who can read! The events depicted are not that far from what we are currently experiencing in our society and provide an ominous warning of what can happen when leaders and society abrogate their responsibilities as citizens.

The book is unquestionable, relying on the massive surviving documents of the fallen Reich. I've read the book multiple times, with the greatest interest being how so many can be persuaded by the beliefs of a person like Hitler, and how so many others took up his ideals and turned his evil thoughts to action and the atrocities against humanity. It's disturbing it happened, has happened albeit in smaller and different ways, and gives the finished reader the understanding that prejudice will always exist and in some form or manner events in the future will occur such as this, with different and newer technologies. Humanity should always be on guard.

This is a classic history of the German Greater Reich. How it began, how they thought it up, how they arranged it, and what became of it. Mr. Shirer was a journalist so he can tell a good story. The print is very small in the paperback, but the thoughts expressed are worth a little eye strain. There is analysis in the narrative not just a listing of facts. The author lived in Germany as these events were happening so it is written from a different perspective. I can see now why they consider this a classic.

This is a monumental work of scholarship and journalism. In its 1,250 pages it relates the story of the greatest social catastrophe we have known. Not only does Shirer, given access to the latest documents after the war, tell us in shivering detail about the facets of this obscenity -- the Third Reich -- but it is painful to remember that it happened in the lifetime of many contemporary readers and it happened in one of the most "civilized" of countries: Germany. And what is additionally maddening is that the rise of the Third Reich could have easily been thwarted a number of times during its growth decade, but that it wasn't because other countries were too timid and too exhausted by the prospect of another world war. So, Hitler was able to put into motion a madman's wet dream. If you think you know all about the cruelty of the Nazis -- you probably don't. Hitler's cruelty went way beyond what I had ever imagined. And once you become familiar with these horrors, you will never again lightly bandy about the term "Nazi" because to do so would only trivialize this monumental obscenity. So, here we are some 70 years after the fall of the Third Reich and you will be stunned when you recognize many similarities between now and the fateful decade

of the 1930s. Could it all happen again? I, for one, think so but whether or not you agree, this book should be required reading for today's young people. No story -- fact or fiction -- can be more sobering than the Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. Shirer has written a masterpiece.

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