

THE THIRD REICH

A NEW HISTORY

"Not merely the most comprehensive one-volume account of the Third Reich in any language but an original work of interpretation in which straightforward narrative history, rigorous analytic explanation and unflinching intellectual-moral judgment are united with compelling originality."

—MICHAEL ANDRÉ BERNSTEIN, *LOS ANGELES TIMES BOOK REVIEW*

MICHAEL BURLEIGH

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The Third Reich: A New History Michael Burleigh A Major Study of One of the Twentieth Century's Darkest Periods

Until now there has been no up-to-date, one-volume, international history of Nazi Germany, despite its being among the most studied phenomena of our time. The Third Reich restores a broad perspective and intellectual unity to issues that have become academic subspecialties and offers a brilliant new interpretation of Hitler's evil rule.

Filled with human and moral considerations that are missing from theoretical accounts, Michael Burleigh's book gives full weight to the experience of ordinary people who were swept up in, or repelled by, Hitler's movement and emphasizes international themes-for Nazi Germany appealed to many European nations, and its wartime conduct included efforts to dominate the Continental economy and involved gigantic population transfers and exterminations, recruitment of foreign labor, and multinational armies.

The Third Reich: A New History Details

Date : Published November 1st 2001 by Hill and Wang (first published November 2nd 2000)

ISBN : 9780809093267

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Format : Paperback 992 pages

Genre : History, Nonfiction, War, World War II, Cultural, Germany

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From Reader Review The Third Reich: A New History for online ebook

Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly says

An extremely dissatisfied people. The economy has tanked and there are grumblings everywhere. The government is perceived to be corrupt and incompetent. Many have lost their jobs and those who have not worked before cannot find any. The country had lost a war, with massive loss of lives and resources. There seems to be no clear path to recovery.

From this morass rose a leader who succeeds in capturing the imagination of the people. His speeches are mesmerising, his eyes sincere and hypnotic, and his personal charisma has an almost universal appeal. People laugh and cry when they see him in person. Young women write to him proposing marriage. He shuns wealth, he says the right things, he promises to end corruption and restore the country to its former glory.

He explains the errors of the past. He suggests that the country's present sad state, and its main problem, is due to a certain class of people. His countrymen agree with this, as it has been widely believed before. He then promises to get rid of this cancer in the society. The people applaud.

He got an overwhelming mandate during the elections. Seeming validation of the correctness of the people's will came thereafter with his outstanding accomplishments. He reduced the country's unemployment to zero. Suddenly, every able-bodied citizen has work and has food on their table. He even managed to stage a world olympics. He indeed put his country on the world map again, respected and feared. He conquered vast territories without firing a shot. Then even more, with minimal casualties, after he had decided to use his fearsome weapons of war.

At the height of his power the people's adoration of him achieved a cult-like status although a few, perceptive ones had always considered him a fool. A fictionalized caricature of him as a religious leader responsible for a reign of terror in the 16th century was written by a diarist entitled "History of a Mass Lunacy."

As regards the "enemy" within his country and among the citizenry his government initially resorted to remove them in more benign ways: voluntary immigration and forced deportations. But there were simply too many of them and there was need to speed things up. So why not just slaughter them. Systematically, using the resources of government, but not openly to avoid international outrage.

A holocaust done indiscriminately without any regard to individual guilt or innocence. Years after the fall of his regime, with some remnants of his government apparatus still alive for interviews, they were asked why even women and children were not spared. The explanation: it was their BLOOD which had caused harm, and still threatens, the country. So it was not necessary to know what a person did or did not do. They needed to kill them all.

This is perhaps the most comprehensive history of Hitler's Nazi Germany which I've read. It is more than a thousand pages but there was no boring moment in it.

Anne Cupero says

I have read a great deal about the Third Reich and I find that this book should not be your first but it is by far one of the best. Erudite language and very recent research (Fallada for example) makes it a terrific addition to Shirer, Friedlander, et al.

Samantha says

Not for the faint of heart, a complex history of the Third Reich with an incredible amount of detail. Not for bed time reading or to just dip into. An incredibly depressing but fascinating account of man's inhumanity to man and not just from the Nazis themselves many countries inflicted suffering on others for revenge and cultural/racial differences. It wasn't just a case of a battle of good and evil, there were many factions fighting within countries with their own agenda. This book draws all those elements together laying it all bare for you to see.

Ryan says

As brilliantly successful as it is staggeringly ambitious, Burleigh's "New History" of the Third Reich is rightly regarded as a classic work of history. Not for the faint of heart, both because of the material he covers and the sheer scope and resultant page count. This is no mere survey or work of "popular" history, but a serious scholarly investigation into the phenomenon of Nazism from its birth as a sordid revenge-fantasy in the post-apocalyptic chaos of post-WWI Bavaria to its grisly self-immolation in the bunkers of Berlin. The work is also a great overview of the subject for those who already have some familiarity with WWII-era history. If you are looking for an introduction to the history of the war, a linear recitation of the timeline of events, or a military-focused history full of tactical detail, this is not it. However, if you want to try to understand why and how millions of Germans lined up under the Nazi banner, what drove the party's ideology and politics, and get a fuller appreciation of the consequences for tens of millions of people throughout Europe, including the German people, this book is for you. Now almost fifteen years old, it remains a standard text. and with resurgent rightist parties in both Europe and North America, and the stirrings of political religion once more dominating global headlines, this analysis is more topical than ever.

Petr says

Do?etl jsem to už dávno, ale necht?lo se mi psát ani pseudorecenzi, tak m? ta tlustá kniha zmohla. Ponechávám jeden z prvních dojm?: na autorov? p?ístupu je trochu roz?ilující, že to vzal jako kurs pro pokro?ilé se vším všudy: vynechává hodn? hlavních událostí (nebo je p?ipomene jednou v?tou) a rozebírá detaily. Tak dobrou pam?? ani znalosti bohužel nemám, takže to musím ?íst s Wikipedií a handbuchy kolem sebe.

Stojí to za tu námahu? Píjde na to. Nic zásadně nového se nedozvíte, ani pokud jde o fakta (to se ani nedá říkat), ani co do originality autora přístupu (přestože právě tohle v úvodu slibuje). Po roce 1939 se z dějin říše do známé míry stávají dějiny války, děj se posouvá na frontu a do Německa se vrací až spolu s ní. Právě období 39 - 45 uvnitř Německa by mě zajímalo ze všeho nejvíc - jak se měnila nálada, jak režim utahoval nebo povoloval šrouby...

Některé postavy jsou nicméně skvělé. Velice se mi líbil třeba jasný rozbor Hitlerova vztahu ke kolaborujícím představitelům evropských zemí. Přicházeli za ním s vlastními iniciativními návrhy, co by se dalo tuhle a támhle vylepšit a co by si rádi ponechali ve své podřízené pravomoci - Degrelle v Belgii, Quisling v Norsku, vichisté... „Chtěli si ponechat svůj kousek z koláče, který Hitler neměl v plánu krájet.“ (str. 356) Vedli hodně řeči o sjednocené Evropě a kulturním dialogu, mimochodem. (Odbočka: thriller Roberta Harrise *Fatherland* se odehrává v alternativním světě, kde Německo vyhrálo válku. Nad Reichstagem, samozřejmě přebudovaným dle Speerova návrhu, tam samozřejmě vlaje černorudobílý prapor s hákovým křížem a vedle něj symbol podřízené Evropy: dvanáct zlatých hvězd v modrém poli. Ehm.) Z prvních stránek knihy jsem měl pocit nepovedeného překlada a hlavně redigování, ale našťást se to dost rychle zlepšilo - nebo otupěla má pozornost.

Verdikt: rozhodně nikomu neradím jako první obsáhlou knihu o tématu. Je to pro pokročilé a trpělivé.

Jamie Rose says

Finally done. This book is an immaculately researched and hugely informative study of the insanity underpinning the Nazi era. The story is even more squalid and grimy than I knew and in the parade of horrors that ensued is so staggering in scale that the overall effect is predictably quite numbing. By the time of the post-war 'reconstruction' era and the first hints of what I recognise as a modern era of globalisation the whole thing suddenly returns to seeming like an impossible nightmare. Burleigh does an incredible job of providing insight into the mixture of luck, circumstance, brutality and madness that seemed at the start of the war to have an unstoppable momentum. He does this from the smallest scale to the broadest, through exploring gradual and ineluctable changes to everyday life and routine through the escalation of evil and disaster that followed. Burleigh records this in minute and exhausting detail, while repeatedly resisting any historian's urge to dwell on what he refers to as 'the salacious'. I admire the skill that has gone into the creation of a book like this and the manner in which Burleigh's clarity of hindsight sifts through the chaos of the era and places cause and effect in something resembling order. As the reader, you can only shrink at the gradual unveiling of something close to Hell unleashed on Europe.

I have read that the book is noted for displaying Burleigh's own sense of anger and frustration at the horrific events of the Holocaust era and the men who shaped it - as he mentions there is certainly nothing even remotely resembling a happy ending to the tale. The confusion and political game-playing of the post-war years meant that despite Germany's defeat, the 'denazification' process (both physical and psychological, personal and national) could never counter the monster that had just been unleashed on the continent, or ever allow a sense that any real justice was - or could ever be - done. It goes without saying that the horrors that Europe's Jews and invaded minorities were subjected to (unleashed by the Nazis but perpetrated across the continent) can never be folded away or reconciled from any civilised point of view. In that sense, we are forever helpless against the grief and fear of what happened, it still threatens to swallow us up. This realisation is put quite well in one of Burleigh's closing paragraphs, wherein he is searching in vain for a sense of closure in the aftermath of the Allied victory:

'While it is possible to draw positive conclusions, it is important to emphasise that these are intellectually akin to discovering that one's house is built over a mineshaft...'

There is little to be done in the face of the 20th Century's defining horror story except feel yourself sink into the earth a little and shudder at the realisation that it was not long ago and remains in every sense not far away from us today. Again, as ever, that reminder is all you can carry forward.

I also found Burleigh's depiction of Hitler and his court as thugs and lunatics with delusions of grandeur very revealing, particularly in their remorseless 'staged exit' from the ashes of a city and country they had pulled down around them.

Tonally Burleigh's anger can read as grumpiness occasionally, particularly when he is venting at the work of other historians and - perhaps inevitably in a book/project of this size - he can be overly digressive at times. Certainly his core thesis - that Nazism borrowed the trappings of heroic religion and reformulated it as paganised pseudo-science - is fascinating, but not returned to as often as I had expected, nor does it permeate the book in quite the way I had expected. In fact at times it functions as little more than a broad framework that can tend to drift off into the distance.

These are small points however in what is a comprehensive and morally-charged encounter with ugliness, fear, societal collapse and true, utter disaster.

Michael says

To begin with: this book is not what expected or hoped for. In my life as a reviewer and student of the Third Reich, I am often asked for a book that will serve as an introduction for interested individuals with no training in history, who want something better than the History Channel or William Shirer. This book is not that. Burleigh is not a popular history writer, and this book is no introduction. At several points, he says "much has already been written about" an aspect or that "there is no point in going over the basic details of so well-worn a topic." In other words, you need to have some background before you approach this text. Sorry, everyone, I guess you have to stick with Shirer for now.

That said, the book is definitely worthwhile for those who have that background. This is not least because he does engage with academic historical debates, and does so from a unique and often fascinating perspective. I don't necessarily agree with a lot of it, but that's precisely what makes it challenging and useful for me. Burleigh is sometimes described as a "right wing" historian, a term that has been tarnished by the likes of Niall Ferguson and Glenn Beck, but he is a genuinely responsible academic, and he makes his arguments for the most part without resorting to rancor or misinformation. These two paragraphs represent the bulk of my review for those who interested in assessing whether or not to read the book. What follows is a detailed analysis of his arguments, based on the notes I made while reading.

His theoretical approach is discussed in the Introduction. Perhaps most significantly, he identifies as a proponent of the concept of "totalitarianism" as a category more important than divisions like "Fascism" or "Left-Right" divides. . Someday, I'd like to see a use of the concept of "totalitarianism" that explains why Hitler and Stalin are more similar to each other than either one is to Oswald Mosley or Fidel Castro, but generally, what it is used for is to paint all Communists, Fascists, and other ideological authoritarians with a single, broad brush, that simplifies rather than complicates our understanding. On page 21, even Burleigh places Cuba and Stalinism together without a hint of irony. Still, in terms of understanding this category as it is used in scholarship, I have seen no better example than Burleigh, and slips such as the above are relatively rare. The other recurring theme that deserves mention is his argument that National Socialism was a "political religion," and therefore more hostile towards Christianity than is generally recognized. In the

Introduction, he posits Nazism as “a creative synthesis of both...science run riot [and] bastardized Christianity” (p.14). He ties this idea to a number of previous scholars, including Mosse, but does not develop it adequately in the rest of the text to be persuasive to me. Again, however, the presentation is interesting and the idea challenging.

The first chapter discusses the Weimar Republic and its decline and fall. His point is not to examine the complexities of the period but rather to consider the reasons it ended as it did. Burleigh does not give in to single, oversimplified “magic bullet” theories here. He gives a broad overview of political, economic, social and cultural factors that undermined Germany’s experiment in democracy, and is fair about distributing blame among rich and poor, right and left, foreign and domestic sources of tension. His use of anecdotes and examples is actually quite original, and he avoids the clichés most people have seen dozens of times. Even his illustrations from *Mein Kampf* impressed me as being sections not frequently used, some of which I had forgotten having read years ago.

Chapter Two covers “the demise of the rule of law” and it returns to a large degree to arguments of totalitarianism. Among the issues covered are the Nazification of the judiciary and the police, the extension of secret policing and the power of the SD, and the management of the pre-war system of Concentration Camps. This is decidedly useful material, even though I found myself questioning his interpretations frequently in this section. Although the chapters can be seen as roughly chronological, the approach within chapters is more thematic. The demise of the rule of law generally is necessary to understand what came later (the Holocaust), but he discusses events from 1937 alongside those in 1933 in a manner that would be confusing for newcomers. The Reichstag Fire and Röhm purge are two subjects he discusses in terms of their effects on this process, but he does not provide enough background to be coherent to a neophyte.

Chapter Three is “New Times, New Man,” and discusses several of the more “positive” aspects of the Nazi program in action. This includes charitable work, efforts to create a classless society, educational efforts, the use of pageantry and ritual, and international relations and foreign policy. I began to notice here his dependence on the “*Berichte der SOPADE*” as a source for many of his anecdotes. These are reports produced for the exiled leaders of the Social Democratic Party by agents within Germany, and represent a curious source for a “right wing” author. In his bibliographic essay at the end of the book, Burleigh discusses his use of these documents: “Despite its obvious biases, which in this context are no demerit, the most detailed contemporary observations on life under the Nazi regime during the 1930s were collected as” the *SOPADE*. I found that they added much fresh detail to the narrative, although of course they are merely anecdotes.

With Chapter Four, “Living in a Land with No Future,” Burleigh makes it clear that for him the study of the Third Reich is intimately bound in the study of the Holocaust, unlike many earlier writers, who treated the Holocaust as a side-issue or final chapter. This chapter focuses specifically on the rising mis-treatment of Jews as racial outsiders through the pre-War period (1933-1938). He includes quite a bit of information on Austria, which was only added to the Reich at the end of this period, but seems to have made strenuous efforts to “catch up” with and even exceed the rest of Germany in anti-Semitism. A large section discusses Kristallnacht, which Burleigh explicitly classes as a “pogrom,” and which he is at pains to demonstrate was neither “spontaneous” nor “popular,” although here his evidence is somewhat stretched, in my opinion. His discussion of Eichmann is interesting and complicated: he is a man who, yes, acted more from ambition and personal gain than from ideology, but who clearly took to sadism as an outlook and a lifestyle. He does not appear as a truly faceless bureaucrat, although it is possible to believe that there are many like him tucked away within bureaucracies, waiting their chances.

The progression toward the Holocaust is made more explicit in Chapter Five, on “Eugenics and Euthanasia.”

The sections are broken down into discussions of “breeding” and “murder,” with eugenics coming in for moral as well as scientific re-evaluation. Burleigh points out that enthusiasm for eugenics was not solely a Nazi concern, many countries enacted laws or policies, or at least had doctors advocating them, which attempted to control the genetic future. However, the Nazis did take it to an extreme degree, probably helping to discredit it after the War. Euthanasia continues to be a contentious point in many countries, with “mercy killing” still an open question for many. This may be because the Nazis did not apply “mercy,” but rather made an active effort to sterilize and kill the “less useful” members of their society. Burleigh examines the response of the churches to this situation, especially relevant because of the many ecumenical hospitals involved in the programs. This subject area doesn’t lend itself well to discussion of “totalitarianism,” because what the Nazis did for eugenics, and in their approach to “euthanasia,” were unique, although in theory the discussion of the churches should open an opportunity develop the “political religion” thesis, which he mostly ignores in favor of giving more anecdotes and details.

Chapter Six, “Occupation and Collaboration in Europe,” is actually a bit of a breather after such a grim topic. Not that Burleigh argues that occupation and collaboration were pleasant for the subject countries, but it varied in intensity and generally was better than T-4. Burleigh hops around the map of Europe somewhat madly, demonstrating by contrast the difference in treatment received by east and west, on the basis of the Nazis’ racial hierarchy. The extreme cases are Poland and Denmark. The Poles’ fate was never intended to be much better than the Jews: their “best stock” was claimed for Germany, while intellectuals and leading nationalists were murdered outright and the Polish nation-state was wiped out of existence, politically and geographically. Denmark was permitted to choose its leadership (the local Nazi party achieving 2% of the vote at its height) and largely left to its own devices. In fact, the occupied Channel Islands seem to come off even better, since German soldiers were ordered not to pick flowers on private property, but we don’t get as much about that occupation. Collaboration is treated with refreshing complexity, neither exculpating those who legitimately committed crimes of treason against their own nation, nor expecting saintly heroism from people who were presented with very few choices.

Chapter Seven, on “German Invasion and Occupation of the Soviet Union,” looks at the most particular of these many diverse occupations. This chapter serves as a bridge from the previous consideration of occupation policies/responses to and the later explicit coverage of the Holocaust. Here, we learn of the “Commissar Order” and the capture of vast numbers of prisoners of war that strained the infrastructure of German occupation forces. We also get a clear sense of the pointlessness of the orders for “hardness” and “brutality.” In the end, Germany got little economic benefit from the areas it took from the USSR, and actually had to import supplies to some of them. Burleigh’s emphasis is not a chronological examination of the military maneuvers, but in this chapter we get more discussion of generals and battles than in most others. The siege of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk are given especial attention. Of course, much of Burleigh’s point is to compare the two totalitarian powers – to neither’s benefit. Stalin’s sluggish reaction to the invasion, his expectation to be removed from power, and his own brutal and violent orders are all given coverage.

Chapter Eight is on “Racial War Against the Jews,” and represents the culmination of his making understanding of the Holocaust intrinsic to the study of the Third Reich. It is here that he most explicitly addresses historical debates, and most clearly places himself within those debates. In previous chapters, there were hints in the form of notes which named Daniel Goldhagen, cited after disparaging comments about “Exterminationist” viewpoints, but in this chapter he explicitly uses the work of Christopher Browning to support a largely “Functionalist” argument. This is not to say that Burleigh (or Browning) attempts to argue that the Nazi leadership, particularly Hitler, did not begin their careers with the conscious intention of murdering as many Jews as possible, but rather that for most of the killers and their immediate superiors this was not inherent or given. For most readers, this will probably seem unimportant or simple bewildering, but

for historians engaged in these debates, Burleigh's use of Browning and other sources will be informative. Chapter Nine, on German Resistance to Nazism is telling of Burleigh's biases, if still worthwhile as a point of departure for future writers. Because Communism is Totalitarianism in his pantheon, Communist resistance to Nazism is disingenuous or ignorable, certainly not worthy of any respect. The Left more broadly is downplayed as well, in spite of a nod to the value of the SOPADE reports. The churches are mostly a disappointment, although he makes special note of the moral consistency of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The conservatives who ultimately did conspire against Hitler are rehabilitated from modern criticism, however, in an attempt to present a "fairer view" than "criticizing [them] ahistorically in terms of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic" (695-696). His bias is all the more clear when he says, of German aristocrats, "[f]or them, aristocracy entailed obligations, a virtually incomprehensible notion in cultures which only recognize rights" (706). None of this is as problematic as his decision to excise Sophie Scholl and the White Rose entirely from the record. While their resistance may have been ultimately symbolic, they certainly represent a more optimistic antithesis to Hitler than a bunch of anti-democratic, generally anti-Semitic army officers and intellectuals who hesitated to take a direct stance until the war was nearly over.

The final chapter, "War and Peace," covers the final weeks of the Third Reich, its government and military, and the Allied occupation and reconciliation/retribution arrangements. Here he treats the allied bombing campaign and its ethical questions with sensitivity and consistency. He gives considered attention to the issue without letting it become "equal to" or otherwise excusing the Holocaust. This chapter also gives some information on Soviet policies, particularly the mass deportations of Germans from former-Prussian (now Polish) regions, but is mostly a fairly quick overview of the fall of the regime and the Nuremburg Trials. It wraps up the narrative well, but doesn't try to add much to the debate.

Windsor says

A great book that doesn't focus on the military for a change. Coming from a military obsessed scholar, it's a refreshing change. Most of the details in the book aren't shocking to me, being an avid fan of third Reich history. This book does shed light on how horrible not just Hitler is, but also the regime that he came into. A very drudging book to read, but worth every single page. I will def recommend this to anyone who is bored of the military Third Reich.

Nial says

A very in depth read that goes into the details that other books do not. Be warned though, this assumes that the reader has prior knowledge of the main facts and then delves deeper into how things actually worked in the Third Reich. It brings up a load of forgotten heroes that history deserves to remember such as people who spoke out against the Nazis when it was not safe to do so. It shows how barbaric the Nazis were and how they went about killing people and making people go along with it. Some of it can be tough to read such as the wholesale slaughter of people and children, all to go along with their warped ideology.

It is a long book and not a book that you can dip into as there is so much detail that I found myself doing frequent re-reads of passages to take in all the information.

Well worth reading until the very end.

Chris says

This took more time than anticipated, both because of the enormity of the subject matter and material, and because of Burleigh's challenging, almost literary writing style--which can test readers already exhausted by the emotionally and statistically weighty subject. This is not your average McCullough or Chernow (nor should it be, I think, given the subject), but I couldn't help but make comparisons to Robert Caro's masterfully accessible presentation of incredibly dense material. Nonetheless, this history is an admirable 1-volume history of a era and regime to which whole fields of study are dedicated.

Monique says

Growing up as a lover of modern history, I always had a permanent etching of what a Nazi soldier looked like. Popular culture dictated to me an image of an imposing machine who was the embodiment of the Angel of Death. He was the tall, aquiline gazing, blond-haired and blue eyed man clad in Waffen-SS grey who obeyed every murderous order to the letter. Sort of like this:

In Michael Burleigh's tome "The Third Reich: A New History", the image of that soldier and what he represented was written so well that I had to take a break from reading some parts of the book for they were incredibly soul crushing and gut wrenching.

Burleigh's research and ambition is evident in his writing; I obviously cannot summarize almost 800+ pages of text in one review but what I enjoyed about his approach to this incredibly sensitive subject is that he tells small stories of individual people that witnessed these atrocities first-hand. (I particularly liked the anecdote of the middle class man who had a mass collection of books and attended costume parties dressed as Napoleon; although his life becomes incredibly tragic as you read on about him.)

To his approach about Hitler himself, Burleigh doesn't pull out the stops when it comes to mocking him or his compatriots. His comparisons of Hitler as a backwoods revivalist preacher was particularly enjoyable to read.

If you wish to tackle this beast of a book, it is worth every single minute. I wish that more people in this day and age read about the atrocities that were committed by these monsters so that we may never have to witness such brutality ever again.

Michael Pugh says

The claims made on the rear cover of this book, an example being, "However familiar with the story you may think you are, this book will surprise you" were true, I found. This book is one of, if not the best book on history that I have read - its accessibility, its clarity, its interpretation and its deliberate engagement in-text with common and fashionable beliefs surrounding the Nazis make this book a must-read. If you want to

better understand the Nazis and if you want to understand the Holocaust of the Jewish people particularly, Michael Burleigh's book helps to fix in your head not only the details of what happened, but how and why it all happened.

Jussarian says

An excellent and thorough review of the Third Reich. I especially liked the moral outlook of the history: the leading figures of Nazism are not made out to be super villains, but seen as weak and frightened and unsuccessful men, full of issues, with a new big stick to beat the world with. And the account of the early assault on civility and its importance to the whole project is wonderful - as historians until the mid 19th century knew, the manners of a people are very important. Burleigh brings this often unseen aspect into plain sight.

Lewis Weinstein says

I have read the first 130+ pages, until 1930. This is an excellent history, written after most of the other standards. The author is not reluctant to express his opinion. Here are a few quotes ...

... German elites and masses of ordinary people chose to abdicate their individual critical faculties in favor of a politics based on faith, hope, hatred and sentimental collective self-regard for their own race and nation ... leading to an almost total moral collapse of an advanced industrial civilization ... many citizens abandoned the burden of thinking for themselves.

... National Socialism went beyond brawling, despair and hatred ... to a heroic quasi-religious dimension ... with sacrificial victims, martyrs ... took the emotions of religion and synthesized them into a political religion ... the German state religion ... with a messianic Hitler central to it all

... a Hamburg schoolteacher (female) wrote after a 1932 meeting ... How many look up to him with touching faith ... as their helper, their saviour, their deliverer from unbearable stress ... he rescues (us all)

... Nazis differed from other political parties by keeping their election machinery permanently mobilized ... they held meetings before, during and after elections ... their printers were ready to rebut opponents instantly ... they were always ready to file writs of libel ... pamphlets were issued in braille

MORE TO FOLLOW

Juan-Pablo says

This is not a book of detailed accounts of events, characters, and military success and failure of the Third Reich. It is neither a Hitler-centered overview of his dictatorship. This is a book of insightful interpretation on how the carefully crafted Nazi propaganda replaced religion in Germany to become the one-party regime of those convoluted 1920-30.

Michael Burleigh's main thesis is that the upcoming of Nazisms can be understood as a spurious religious

movement. Nazism carefully design Hitler's image through propaganda, with a whole mythology surrounding him in his messianic role. How this mythology redirected religious fervor is an astonishing account but Burleigh bring it to life with his great insights.

The book is not an easy read, so is not for people that want a fast introduction to Nazi Germany. It is, however, a very well documented and written analysis. The main facts are only mentioned and the reader is expected to know them, this is not why this book is called a "New History". His interpretation is what makes the book a worthy (New History) read for anyone that wants more in-depth analysis of those year.

I gave the book 4 stars only because Burleigh abuses the negative adjectives (evil, insane, atrocious, etc...) which I think is totally unnecessary giving the context and expecting smart and informed readers (what's the point of ending a sentence or a paragraph of massive murder in the Eastern Front with those words, isn't it obvious enough?).
