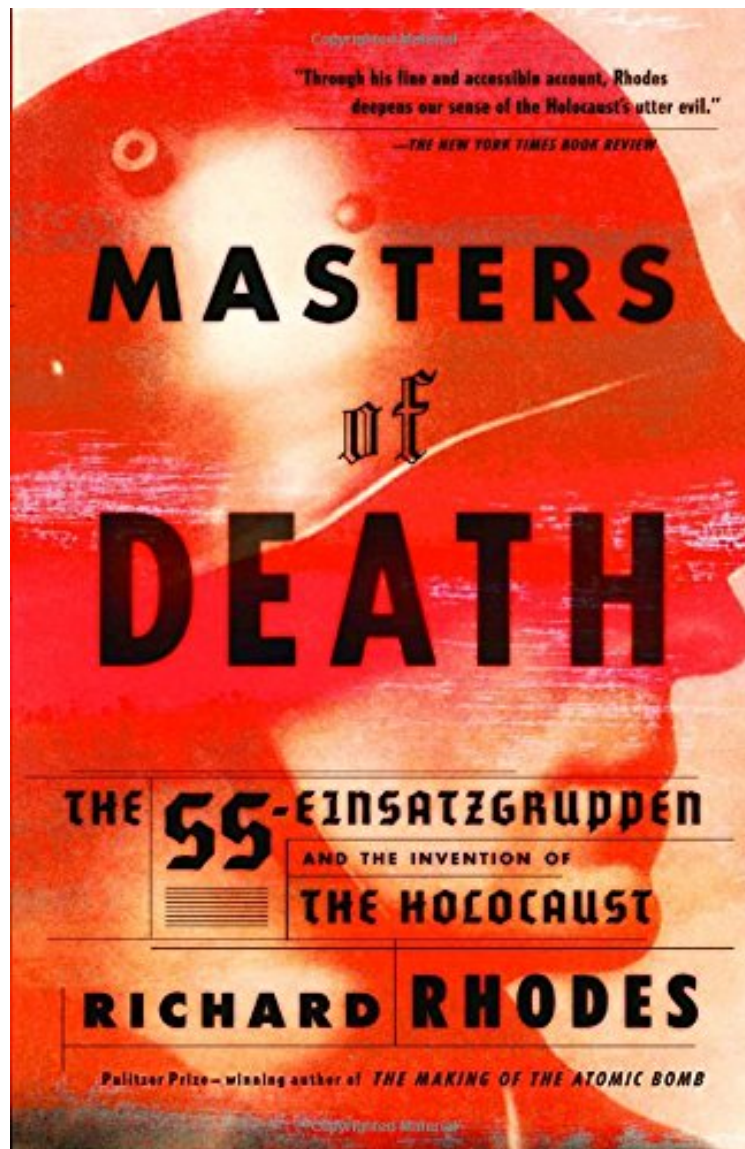


(Download free pdf) Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust

Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust

Richard Rhodes

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#135301 in Books Richard Rhodes 2003-08-12 2003-08-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .70 x 5.201, .80 #File Name: 0375708227368 pages Masters of Death The SS Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust | File size: 44.Mb

Richard Rhodes : Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A rare history
By Thomas M. Magee
This book is a rare find. It covers a piece of World War Two that most books gloss over at best. This book offers up a very detailed history of the infamous SS Einsatzgruppen troops. These were the special units the SS put together to go into occupied Eastern Europe to kill Jews. The book offers a great deal of information about these units. The book is full of horrific story after horrific story about the work of these units. The way the stories are told is very enlightening. They are told almost like a news story, as they unfold. That makes the story come more alive, and thus more scary. The abundance of these stories is almost overwhelming. It is told through various first person accounts with graphic detail. This book doesn't stop there. The book describes how they came together. It dives into the details of the emotional aspect of the killing on the troops. What they did as a unit did impact them as individuals. I found that very interesting. The killing toll drove the men crazy. It created a blood lust of sorts. The guilt weighted heavy on them. They either became 24/7 drunks or individual homicidal manics. The lack of speed of killing in the eyes of their Berlin HQ led them to create "the final solution". That is the death camp system. The down side of the book is the lack of the big picture. The story gets lost of the blood filled stories. The ending epilogue chapter is very interesting too. The author gives a break down of what happened to the various key personnel of the groups. I think this book has to be the only one like it or definitely one of a few.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I especially liked the way Rhodes couches the development of the killers ...
By Daniel Herkes
Tremendously well researched and reasoned analysis of the Einsatzgruppen during WW2. Warning this is an unpleasant subject that I could only read for about an hour at a time. Himmler and Heydrich were monsters of a sort that we might never see again. I especially liked the way Rhodes couches the development of the killers malefic behavior in a bona fide framework - Lonnie Athens stages of violent development. Great book.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "Masters of Death" written by a Master of History
By Joshua Leviton
Richard Rhodes has further solidified himself as one of my favorite authors with his work "Masters of Death." After reading is world-reknowned "The Making of the Atomic Bomb," I was eager to read more of his work. As a student of the Holocaust and World War II, I knew the book would be incredibly powerful and informative. The book looks not only at the historical aspects of the Nazi-created genocide and killing machine of the 1940's but looks at the "human element" involved in undertaking such a brutal, cruel and inhumane operation. He delves into how the Nazi's looked to lessen the impact of the mass killings on those who committed them and protect the sanity of German soldiers. A thorough, well-researched, often horrific book because it explains how the Holocaust, supposedly initiated by monsters, was entirely too human. Thank you, Richard Rhodes, for giving readers another masterpiece of history.

In *Masters of Death*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rhodes gives full weight, for the first time, to the Einsatzgruppen's role in the Holocaust. These special task forces, organized by Heinrich Himmler to follow the German army as it advanced into eastern Poland and Russia, were the agents of the first phase of the Final Solution. They murdered more than 1.5 million men, women, and children between 1941 and 1943, often by shooting them into killing pits, as at Babi Yar. These massive crimes have been generally overlooked or underestimated by Holocaust historians, who have focused on the gas chambers. In this painstaking account, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Rhodes profiles the eastern campaigns architects as well as its ordinary soldiers and policemen, and helps us understand how such men were conditioned to carry out mass murder. Marshaling a vast array of documents and the testimony of perpetrators and survivors, this book is an essential contribution to our understanding of the Holocaust and World War II.

.com *Masters of Death* is Richard Rhodes's chronological account of the Third Reich's Einsatzgruppen (a hand-picked task force) and its death work--the executions of 1.5 million people, Jews and non-Jews--in Russia and Eastern Europe from 1941 through 1943. Rhodes sees these operations (the victims were, almost exclusively, shot) as a ghastly prelude to the subsequent (and much more written-about) horrors of the death camps. In chilling--and occasionally excessive--detail, Rhodes describes the killings and the reasons behind the Reich's cautious, rather than precipitous, escalation of the same: the military's "concern for German and world opinion"; the need to improve methodology; and finally, the need to "condition" the troops, thereby avoiding "disabling trauma." Rhodes makes good use of firsthand accounts and outlines the effects the larger war (Pearl Harbor; the failure to defeat Britain) had on Hitler's attempted obliteration of European Jewry. His chapters on the nature of evil seem hurried and not particularly fresh. --H. O'Billovich
From Publishers Weekly
This is not for the squeamish. Rhodes, a Pulitzer winner for *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, has pulled together a mountain of research on the mass murders of Jews perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen special task forces organized by the SS commanders Himmler and Heydrich before the gruesome death camps industrialized the Final Solution. The catalogue of horrors, drawn not only from postwar memoirs and interrogations but also from the Nazi fanaticism for statistical detail, is profoundly appalling, even revolting: some of the malefic perpetrators were so sickened by the slaughter that Himmler set up mental hospitals and rest camps for the insufficiently sadistic. By January 1942, when the Wannsee Conference implicitly authorized the death camps, more than a million Jews crowded the killing pits, some of them later torched to conceal the massacres. Relatively few in the Nazi command structure would pay for their crimes. John J. McCloy, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, Rhodes

reminds us, reduced 10 of 14 death sentences in U.S. war-crimes trials, and by 1958 all surviving Einsatzgruppen defendants had been freed. German courts were also lenient. But he also suggests that genocide is new only as a word in the dictionary: "The Final Solution...was intended to be only the first phase of a vast, megalomaniacal project of privation, enslavement, mass murder and colonization modeled on the historic colonization of North and South America and on nineteenth-century imperialism but modernized with pseudoscientific theories of eugenic restoration." Thus Rhodes holds the mirror up. 16 pages of photos and six maps not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rhodes (*The Making of the Atomic Bomb*) provides a detailed examination of the organization, motivations, and activities of the SS-Einsatzgruppen, which killed thousands of Jews in the wake of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. He argues that Hitler made two separate decisions to annihilate European Jewry; the first, in summer 1941, was directed at the Jews of Eastern Europe, while the second, in December 1941, involved the rest of Europe. This is a controversial assertion, as is Rhodes's foray into psychological theory. He is certainly not the first to ask why some individuals willingly engaged in mass slaughter, but he still cannot provide an entirely satisfactory causal explanation. Rhodes claims to be offering a new thesis regarding the Holocaust, but unfortunately he eschews most of the major historiographical controversies in Holocaust studies and thus fails to place his thesis in context. The advantage is that he does not clutter his text with intentionalist vs. functionalist arguments that could daunt general readers. Instead, he produces a penetrating study of the Einsatzgruppen one of the best available and one of the few recent works to examine this corps in detail. Although Rhodes's thesis may be rejected by specialists, his careful expos will be welcomed by general readers. Recommended for all libraries. Frederic Krome, Jacob Rader Marcus Ctr. of the American Jewish Archives Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.