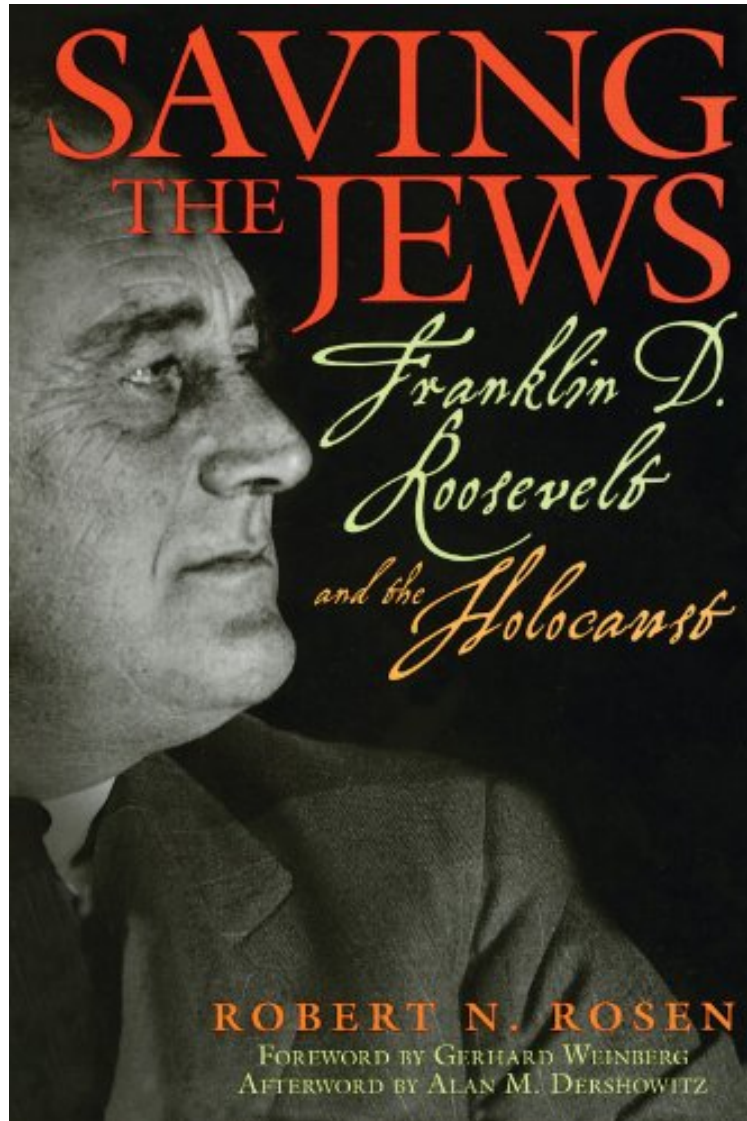


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## Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust

*Robert N. Rosen*

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**Robert N. Rosen : Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust:

17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Uneven, But a Very Good Place to StartBy Conrad von MetzkeThere has long been a myth that Franklin D. Roosevelt in effect ignored the Jews of Europe in 1933-45 when in fact he might well have saved most of them. Older books that treat with the topic have developed this myth to the point that it has become a "popular fact," along with the one about knowing in advance about Pearl Harbor, or giving

Eastern Europe away to Stalin without a fight. FDR was hardly perfect and had some serious failures mixed with his monumental successes; but the "popular facts" mentioned above are blatant rubbish, and in the case of the salvation of the Jews, Robert N. Rosen has made a major contribution to the debunking process. (Fortunately, newer general biographies of FDR - e.g. those by Jean Arthur Smith and Conrad Black (both very much worth reading) - are no longer repeating these shabby legends, but they persist nonetheless.) Rosen's is primarily a scholarly approach: Citations abound and the references used comprise a formidable list indeed. And on that basis alone this is a magnificent first encounter with its topic, especially for one who has the interest and resources to pursue the matter further via the bibliographic material. Though not particularly even-handed in its treatment, Rosen's book nevertheless is very clear when it comes to what Roosevelt tried to do, what he in fact achieved and what he didn't, and in each case why things went as they did. And Rosen is not above faulting FDR in matters where Rosen feels there is fault, though he hardly belabors these elements (as he does in a few cases of the opposite assessment). But the book is not overly well written for general reading; the style is abrupt, sometimes fairly mechanical, occasionally repetitious, and too often a bit awkward when viewed primarily from a literary vantage. In short, Rosen is a brilliant scholar and a magnificent researcher; he is not however a terribly good writer. (Lord Black has somewhat the same problem in his monumental biography, but not even remotely on the same level.) In addition there are a few proof-reading lapses that it would be well to fix, lest readers who know better confuse errors of minutiae with errors of real substance. As examples, Governor Herbert Lehman was not "Herman" (p.21); Vice-President John Nance Garner was not "James" (p.135); and Robert H. Jackson was not one of the judges at the Nuremberg Tribunal, he was the chief prosecutor (p.206). In summary, Rosen's book is a superb treatment of its topic in terms of depth of fact and support for the material, and in solidly-researched debunking of persistent myths that really ought never to have been allowed to grow in the first place. Rosen's work could, however, do with a bit of touch-up in places, and perhaps a bit of help with the mechanics of narrative would have made it a smoother read for the non-scholar.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Wyman Comparison  
By Cabin Dweller  
Directly after reading David Wyman's "The Abandonment of the Jews," I read this work by Rosen. While Wyman dedicated all of his book to a thorough examination of policies only concerning Jewish rescue, Zionism, State Department conferences, bombing, the voyage of the St. Louis, etc. between 1941 and 1945, Rosen feels compelled to write the following less scholastic, more subjective "Roosevelt could not understand Adolf Hitler and thought him insane" on page 2. On page 495, for example, he wastes more words with "Neither FDR nor the leaders of American Jewry were perfect" and "Roosevelt had sworn to utterly destroy the Axis war machine". I was encouraged to see Rosen start in 1933, but quotations like this set a trend for an agenda. Ironically, it is Rosen who writes to refute Wyman's "agenda" of revisionism. The mind-reading that Rosen frequently relies on subordinates his history to Wyman's, not their feelings about Roosevelt. Page 446 is the low point: Rosen writes a mock letter to "St. Louis" refugees to show Roosevelt's conflict of interests. I found here that Rosen considered winning an argument more important than tact and taste. Does he even win the argument about the St. Louis? He certainly supplies all readers with enough information about bombing Auschwitz to convince us just how big of a mistake that would have been. And he does a great job of showing us why Roosevelt, rightly, resisted these bombings out of hand. Perhaps the most enlightening aspect of this history is the Jewish effort to attack Great Britain, lest Winston Churchill appease Near Eastern Arabs and Indian Muslims by so strictly limiting Jewish access to Palestine. The Irgun discussion, although obviously very important, was somehow not a priority for Wyman. Other issues would seem to put the conflicted sides to this argument on the same page. The US State Department, the Bermuda Conference, and especially Breckenridge Long, to the extent that even the president has limited power, are the real villains here. Although "Abandonment" and "Saving" are ideologically opposed and marketed as such, the facts within both texts make those errors and indifferences a consensus.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. saving the jews  
By STING1  
this is an outstanding book on debunking incorrect rumors about fdr's care of the jews and about his having to contend with americas fifth column during wwii

A rigorously researched narrative of the record of the Roosevelt Administration.

From Publishers Weekly  
Was FDR an indifferent or possibly anti-Semitic president who abandoned European Jews, or was he a pragmatic leader who understood that the key to saving the Jews was winning WWII as swiftly as possible? This bloated, repetitious volume reads like one long apology as it takes on the so-called "revisionist" historians who question FDR's good will; it concludes that he should be "honored for [his] actions during World War II, not defamed." According to Rosen (*The Jewish Confederates*), FDR may have told ethnic jokes about Jews, but he also surrounded himself with Jewish friends and advisers like Henry Morgenthau Jr. FDR didn't have the political clout to change American immigration laws, and two-thirds of the refugees on the SS *St. Louis*, who were refused entry to the U.S. in 1939, are believed to have survived the war. Roosevelt probably didn't know about requests by various Jewish leaders to bomb Auschwitz, an action that, Rosen says would have killed Anne Frank and other innocents. Although Rosen is able to debunk some of the more overheated claims put forth four decades ago by Arthur Morse in *While Six Million Died*, his often simplistic arguments don't undo landmark works like David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the*

Jews. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist What was once a controversial, revisionist view of the U.S. role in the Holocaust has recently achieved disturbingly wide acceptance. That view asserts that the Roosevelt administration, including FDR himself, was indifferent to the fate of European Jewry, motivated by crass political concerns or even outright anti-Semitism. Rosen has written a passionate, well-researched, and convincing response. The most troubling accusation, that of anti-Semitism, is refuted by the unprecedented participation of Jews in the upper echelons of the Roosevelt administration, as well as Roosevelt's personally warm relations with many Jews. Roosevelt had spoken out forcefully about Nazi persecution of the Jews since the late 1930s, and with the death camps in full operation, he made it clear that Nazi leaders would be held accountable. Rosen also deals effectively with other controversial actions, including the refusal to bomb railroad lines leading to the death camps. This strong, counterrevisionist work will not end the debate, but it will help balance the scales. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Passionate, well researched, and convincing. . . . This strong, counterrevisionist work will not end the debate, but it will help balance the scales." "The latest book from . . . Robert Rosen sets the record straight. . . . A fully documented exoneration of the president who helped save the world, and the Jews, from Nazi domination." "An authoritative analysis of FDR's response to the horrifying plight of the Jews, skillfully set in the wider frame of the whole war. Indispensable to the better understanding of a highly controversial issue." -- James MacGregor Burns