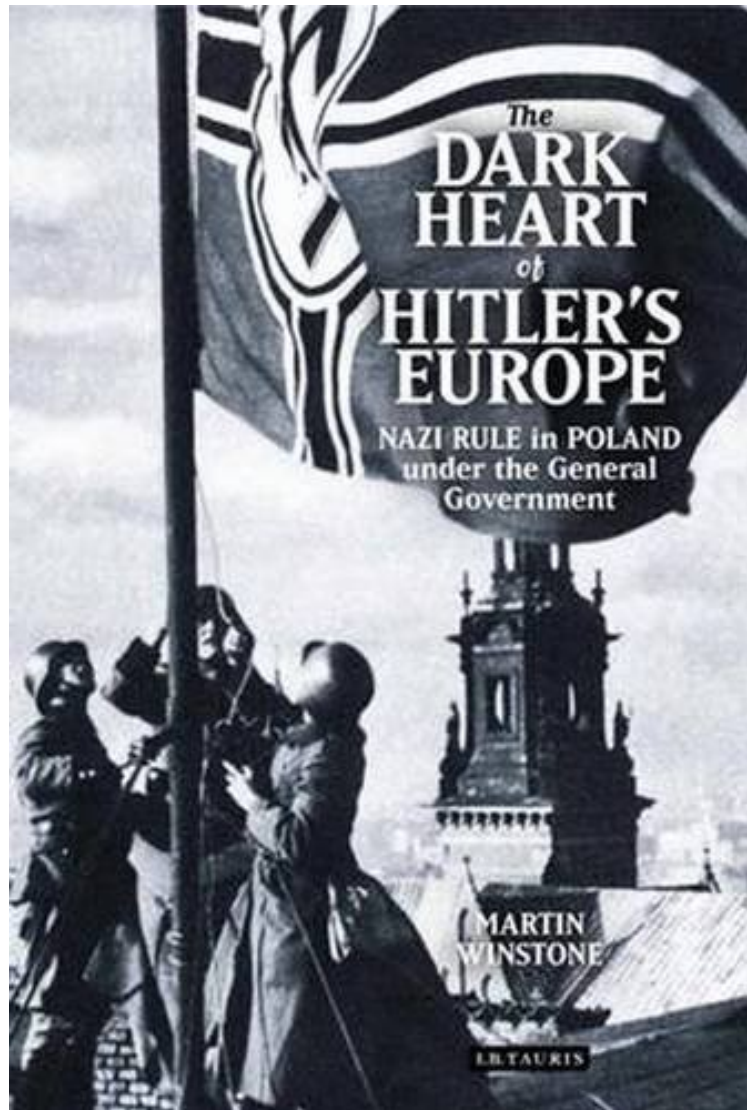


[Download pdf] The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe: Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government

The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe: Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government

Martin Winstone

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Martin Winstone : The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe: Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe: Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government:

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Tom Mccarthy best book on Hitler's destruction of Poland. Has taken a long time to come out. worth the wait. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. THE

DARK HEART OF HITLER'S EUROPE: NAZI RULE IN ... By Robert A. Lynn
THE DARK HEART OF HITLER'S EUROPE: NAZI RULE IN POLAND UNDER THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT MARTIN WINSTONE I.B. TAURIS, 2014
HARDCOVER, \$29.00, 336 PAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS, ABBREVIATIONS
Having partitioned Poland, both the former Soviet Union and Germany set about imposing their administration on the territory under their control. In the German occupation zone, the western provinces (Silesia, Pomorze, Poznan, most of Lodz and part of Warsaw, Cracow, and Kieck Provinces) were annexed to the Reich by a decree of 8 October 1939 and were known as the Wartheland. They accounted for an estimated 35,000 square miles with an estimated 9.5 million of Poland's pre-war population. In the remaining area which fell under German control, the Nazis established a "General Government" which was intended as a labor colony of the Reich. It incorporated an estimated 37,000 square miles of territory-including the cities of Warsaw, Cracow, Radom, and Lublin-and 12 million inhabitants. The seat of power was established at Cracow with Hans Frank, a Nazi lawyer being appointed governor. The Nazi occupation marked the beginning of almost six years of unspeakable horror for the Polish people. Within days of the German invasion of the former Soviet Union in June, 1941, all Poland as constituted in September, 1939, came under German control for the first time. In a new administrative division, the southeastern regions were transformed into Distrikt Galizien with its administrative headquarters at Lwow, which was incorporated into the General Government. To the east, the remaining territories became Reichskommissariats of the Ukraine and Ostland-the latter incorporating also the Baltic nations. Poland was now divided between the Reich (30.8%), the General Government (38.8%), and the Eastern Reichskommissariats. The only mistake that is found in this book is on Page 94 Chapter 5-Something Big Is Coming. The claim that is made that people knew the Germans were going to invade the former Soviet Union goes counter to reputable military historians and German security procedures at that time. The Germans observed strict OP or Operational Security to prepare for the invasion. **THE DARK HEART OF HITLER'S EUROPE: NAZI RULE IN POLAND UNDER THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT** is the first book that details the Nazis' attempt to destroy Poland as a nation. The author's emphasis is on the turf wars between Reich, Party, and SS officials. Events such as the defeat of France in 1940 and the expansion of the General Government to Galicia in 1941 allowed horizons of opportunity to grow, while careerism and venality characterized the exploitation of occupied Poland. This is a very absorbing and disturbing account of the bureaucracy and the personalities who were entrusted in making sure the goal of destruction was achieved by any means possible. The author's book is both balanced and well argued. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida Guard Orlando, Florida 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. **The Nazi German Mass Murders of Jews AND Poles. Has an Odd Disclaimer. Nuanced Polish-Jewish Relations.** By Jan Peczkis The author repeats standard information on the Shoah, taking a functionalist approach to its origin. (p. 150). As for the Gypsies (Sinti and Roma), Winstone concludes that the Nazis never developed a clear policy on them. (p. 171). Finally, the author devotes considerable detail to the Nazi destruction of Poles and of Polish institutions. Although the information is not new, it is eye-opening because of the nearly-complete monopoly of the Holocaust in the thinking of Western academia and media, and the almost total disregard of Polish suffering and its implications. Winstone uses hundreds of scholarly sources to support his conclusions. This includes the work of the historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, and his *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947*. **WHY THE GLARING DISCLAIMER?** The author is identified as the Education Officer for the Holocaust Educational Trust. Winstone begins this work with the following statement, (quote) The views or opinions expressed in this book, and the context in which the images are used, do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (unquote). (p. vii). This is unusual. I have read and reviewed many Holocaust-related books, and they never carry any disclaimer. Why is it necessary here? Is it because Martin Winstone is juxtaposing the sufferings of Poles and Jews, under the Nazis, which is not to the liking of the Holocaust establishment? Or is it because Winstone softens the standard black-and-white narrative on the occasional Polish negativism towards Jews a softening that the Holocaust establishment also does not like? **THE GERMANS VAINLY SEEK A POLISH QUISLING** Author Martin Winstone parts ways, though not completely, with those who discount Polish heroism by saying that there was no Polish quisling only because the Nazis never wanted one. He cites German attempts to get Wincenty Witos to head a collaborationist government. (p. 27). However, the author is too quick to dismiss long-term Polish Germanophile Wladyslaw Studnicki as a prospective quisling. (p. 27). Joseph Goebbels himself mentions Studnicki in this potential role. Please click on, and read my detailed review, of *The Goebbels Diaries 1939-1941*. (My review was posted September 28, 2006). **SOME EXAMPLES OF THE GERMAN-MADE TERROR FACING POLES** The author estimates that, by the end of 1939, some 50,000 Polish civilians, of whom about 7,000 were Jews, had perished at the hands of the Nazis as part of murderous non-military actions. (p. 59). Martin Winstone discusses the mass expulsions of Poles and Jews from the Warthegau, and into the GG (General Government). He realizes that this process came to a halt in 1941, not out of some newly-discovered German compassion for Poles, but owing to the Wehrmacht's needs for the upcoming Nazi German invasion of the USSR. (p. 87). The author examines the Germans Operation Zamosc in considerable detail. Hundreds of Polish villages were depopulated, and replaced with German settlers. Some 100,000 Poles fled their homes, or were deported to concentration camps. Thousands died or were murdered. Of some 30,000 Polish children who were uprooted, about

10,000 of them perished. The Poles successfully resisted with massive guerrilla warfare. For more on all this, see my review of Odilo Globocnik, *Hitler's Man in the East*. THE NAZI GERMAN GENOCIDE OF THE POLES Winstone seems to consistently attempt to minimize the overall number of Poles murdered by the Germans. He seems to only give credence to the facts and figures that minimize Polish deaths at the hands of the Nazis, and does so without presenting any evidence to justify his preferences. In addition, the author is internally inconsistent on the subject of the Nazi German genocide of Poles. On one hand, he maintains that the Nazis, after the war, merely planned to resettle (not exterminate) tens of millions of Poles, and other Slavs, to Siberia, as part of GENERALPLAN OST. However, while discussing the earlier Nazi-proposed resettling of European Jews to the same location, he only THEN states that this alone would have resulted in a vast number of deaths. (p. 150). So, following his thinking, how could the same policy that would cause massive Jewish deaths also not cause even more massive Slavic deaths? In addition, if a mass-resettlement plan for the Jews could (and did) evolve into a mass-extermination plan for the Jews, then why would a mass-resettlement plan for the Slavs not evolve into a mass-extermination plan for the Slavs? That is, since Nazi policies against Jews became radicalized, why would this radicalization not eventually extend to the Slavic UNTERMENSCHEN? The author details the million (or more) Poles deported to Germany for forced labor. (e. g, pp. 111-112). However, he does not even touch on the genocidal aspects of this policy. It removed a large fraction of Poles of childbearing age from the population, thus depressing the natural growth rate of the Polish population. Martin Winstone details the near-starvation of Poles under the German occupation. (e. g, p. 115). However, he does not follow up on the implications of this. This passive genocide of Poles undoubtedly caused a depressed birth rate and high natural death rate. In addition, the near-starvation conditions make it easy for the reader to see why Poles commonly refused to help fugitive Jews, and why Poles commonly reacted with denunciation, or even murderous violence, against Jews known or suspected to be stealing from them. THE AUTHORS RELATIVE FAIRNESS TO POLES Now consider Polish conduct during the Holocaust. The author makes many of the standard canned assertions too many for me to address. However, and to his credit, Winstone engages in a somewhat deeper understanding of the issues involved. Let us consider some examples. The author appreciates the harsh conditions facing the Poles, and, for this reason does not jump to instant moralizing about Poles denouncing Jews for German rewards. (p. 178). Nor does he summarily judge Poles greedy and anti-Semitic for wanting to acquire post-Jewish properties. (p. 179). Instead, Winstone appreciates the degradation, demoralization, and brutalization caused by the German occupation. (p. 178). Rather than uncritically repeating accusations of the Polish Underground killing fugitive Jews, Martin Winstone realizes that mistaken identity is a factor, in that bandits often pretended to be Polish guerrilla forces. (p. 182). The author exonerates Poles for taking payment from Jews they were hiding. He realizes that no payment could ever suffice for risking one's own life. (pp. 179-180). To explore this overall subject objectively, and in more detail, please click on, and read my detailed review, of *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold? Studies on the Wartime Fate of Poles and Jews*. Although the author does not elaborate on Jedwabne, he does realize that, in his words, the flawed Communist-era trial documents raise their own problems (p. 177). Unfortunately, Winstone then lapses into a where there is so much smoke, there must be fire line of thinking. He suggests that reports of Polish misconduct are so numerous that they must be true. This is a non sequitur. There are also many reports, from different places and different times, accusing Jews of conducting ritual murder, but this does not, by itself, necessarily mean that these accusations are true.

After the German and Soviet attack on Poland in 1939, vast swathes of Polish territory, including Warsaw and Krakow, fell under Nazi occupation in an administration which became known as the 'General Government'. The region was not directly incorporated into the Reich but was ruled by a German regime, headed by the brutal and corrupt Governor General Hans Frank. This was indeed the dark heart of Hitler's empire. As the principal 'racial laboratory' of the Third Reich, it was the site of Aktion Reinhard, the largest killing operation of the Holocaust, and of a campaign of terror and ethnic cleansing against Poles which was intended to be a template for the rest of eastern Europe. This book provides a thorough history of the General Government and the experiences of the Poles, Jews and others trapped in its clutches. Employing previously underused sources, Martin Winstone provides a unique insight into the occupation regime which dominated much of Poland during World War II.

""This remarkable book fills an enormous gap in our knowledge of the Second World War, by focusing on an area utterly unlike any other in occupied Europe in which the Nazis tested their demented economic, social and racial theories. Martin Winstone illustrates this gruesome tale with harrowing detail but maintains a crisp pace, a detachment and a nice sense of irony which help to make it a real page-turner."" Adam Zamoyski ""An excellent book, impossible to put down, brilliantly written and very well documented."" Professor Jan T. Gross, Princeton University ""From its indeterminate origins the General Government was a chaotic, lawless place characterized by corruption and ultimately pockmarked by mass graves filled with victims of the greatest mass murder in history. In this first English-language study of the region Martin Winstone brings clarity to a neglected chapter of Polish history and the fate of the Jews. Lucid, balanced, but suffused with humanity it draws on a multitude of sources, in Polish and German, to give mass

suffering a human face. Winstone also locates the destiny of this tragic place in the domestic politics of the Third Reich and the rivalries of the wartime allies. It is a major achievement and deserves a readership well beyond the students and scholars to whom it will be invaluable." - David Cesarani, Research Professor in History, Royal Holloway, University of London