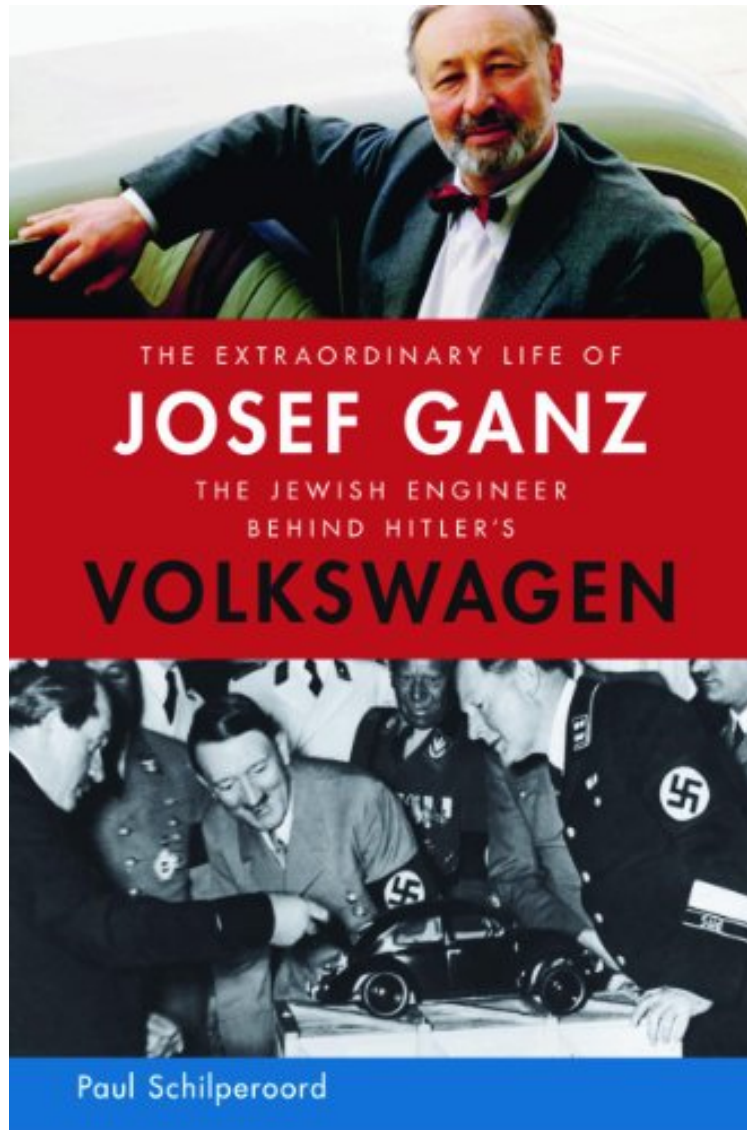


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The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: The Jewish Engineer Behind Hitler's Volkswagen

Paul Schilperoord

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Paul Schilperoord : The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: The Jewish Engineer Behind Hitler's Volkswagen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: The Jewish Engineer Behind Hitler's Volkswagen:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: Purchased at .comBy depNow I can say that I know the real history of the Volkswagen. A well written and well researched book that for the first time

tells the story of the Volkswagen and its originator, Josef Ganz. Josef was a Hungarian Jew and a whiz at all things technical, especially when it came to one of his pet projects which was a dream to build a car. Not just a car though, but a certain type of car. Unfortunately for Josef, while he was in the midst of creating his dream vehicle, the country of Germany was where he lived. When the Nazi's came along in the 1930's Josef was one of their prime targets. This was a great book, I gave it four stars only because some of the technical information becomes a bit long winded. I'm glad I know the real history of this beloved car and of Josef Ganz who saw his dream come true and then watched it slip away. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. History of the invention of the VW beetle design. By Piet Hein I am a car nut. I enjoy cars. I have owned many and have 7 at the present time, because there is not room for more. I purchased this English translation after reading the original issue in Dutch. Nothing is lost in translation. Ludwinka the designer of the rear engine Tatra has often been credited with developing the original VW concept, and then having it stolen by Porsche. VW actually paid Tatra damages for this alleged theft. However none of that story is as well documented, as conclusively proven, via copies of articles, blueprints, drawings and innumerable other concrete and indisputable facts such as photographs, as the contents of this book. Joseph Ganz was a genius and obviously a fanatic about his swing axle rear-engined motorcar design. Although he published a magazine that carried every thought he ever had about anything automotive, and most of those thoughts were derogatory ones about the lackluster and status quo designs of the then major European motor car manufacturers of that time, none would so much as even look at his novel and brilliant rear engine vehicle design with fully independent suspension. So as any fanatic would when his ideas are held up for public ridicule and the ravings of an idiot, he set out to build his own prototype in the shop of a benevolent and willing carmaker. He built his car from full sized drawings and within a few months had built a fully functioning vehicle exactly like the concept he had written and spoken about for at least a decade. He called the little car May Bug, because it was small and the shape resembled a small bug. His idea and his creation were presented to Hitler; unfortunately Ganz was a Jew. He managed to escape, but the design took form via the People's car. The story is amazing and almost unbelievable, and then there are the photos the reprints of the articles he wrote and it is believable again. This man, by himself, with only a drafting table and his brains and some incredible engineering skills fully developed a functional vehicle design. No laboratories, no test mules, no design budget, NOTHING but brains and fanatical belief in his concept. It is a book about history of the period just before Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and WWII, it is a book about a young man with a dream and it is absolutely one of the most fascinating automotive stories ever told. And (as I said) documented to a fair degree. Piet Hein 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The story behind the story! By Lewis Sofman The mainstream story is always the accepted story, however the real origins reveal the truth. The author researched the life of Josef Ganz quite well, establishing that his idea was the impetus to bring forth a Volkswagen, a people's car. He was in the right place at the wrong time, due to the turmoil of anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. At least Ganz survived and was able to continue his life's passion as best as he could. I am a VW enthusiast, having owned many air cooled examples in my collection through the years, with The Thing as my overall favorite. I have always gone with the Porsche origin story. The book is an excellent read, recommended for any person with interest in VW and automotive history. I'm glad to read the true story behind the story!

The astonishing biography of Josef Ganz, a Jewish designer from Frankfurt, who in May 1931 created a revolutionary small car: the Maikfer (German for "May bug"). Seven years later, Hitler introduced the Volkswagen. The Nazis not only "took the concept of Ganz's family car—their production model even ended up bearing the same nickname. The Beetle incorporated many of the features of Ganz's original Maikfer, yet until recently Ganz received no recognition for his pioneering work. The Nazis did all they could to keep the Jewish godfather of the German compact car out of the history books. Now Paul Schilperoord sets the record straight. Josef Ganz was hunted by the Nazis, even beyond Germany's borders, and narrowly escaped assassination. He was imprisoned by the Gestapo until an influential friend with connections to Gring helped secure his release. Soon afterward, he was forced to flee Germany, while Porsche, using many of his groundbreaking ideas, created the Volkswagen for Hitler. After the war, Ganz moved to Australia, where he died in 1967.

"...intriguing." -- The New York Times "...controversial and enlightening...with the feel of a thriller." -- The Wall Street Journal "...the book has created a stir in the motoring world." -- The Times (London) About the Author Paul Schilperoord is an European journalist, science and technology writer, and car expert. He was born in The Hague, the Netherlands, and currently lives in Florence.