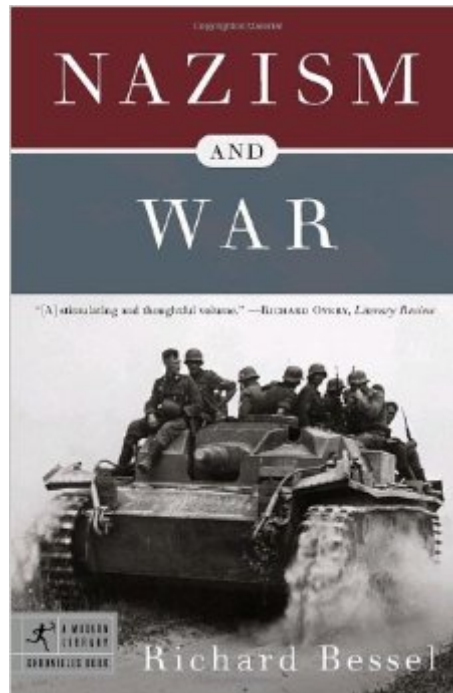


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Nazism And War (Modern Library Chronicles)



Synopsis

The Second World War was the defining event of the twentieth century, leaving millions dead and redrawing the political map in ways that continue to affect nearly the entire human race. What was unprecedented, however, was not simply the war's scale, but its causes. Unlike previous territorial or political clashes, the war launched by Nazi Germany was an ideological one, waged to wipe entire peoples and cultures from the face of the earth. In *Nazism and War*, Richard Bessel, one of the preeminent authorities on the social and political history of modern Germany, demonstrates how racial hatred was the driving force behind—and not a by-product of—Nazism. War was the anvil on which Hitler's worldview was forged; to him, war was the most memorable period of my life, and all the past fell away into oblivion. German National Socialism was born in war, emerging triumphant over a country deeply scarred by defeat and eager to reclaim its greatness and to punish those who had usurped it. As a political philosophy, Nazism glorified struggle and conflict, viewing them as the purpose of a nation and a measure of its overall condition. As a political movement and state system, Nazism made its ideology real, plunging the European continent into a war of annihilation and a sea of blood. Nazism—inseparable from war—destroyed the old Europe, and thus helped to create the world in which we live. Incisive, authoritative, and immensely readable, this is an incendiary and forcefully argued work of scholarship that will rank with the most influential historical analyses of our time. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The purpose of this little book is plain and simple: to establish that Nazism and war were inseparable and inevitable. Of course, some reconstruction of history has to take place before this argument becomes compelling and while the author makes an interesting presentation of his point of view, it is not without its defects. For example, too much emphasis is placed in the beginning of the book on the musings in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to predict (and thus support as inevitable) future acts of Hitler and the Nazis, while the post-*Mein Kampf* events that actually influenced Hitler are conveniently ignored. Part of the problem with this reasoning (an undue reliance on *Mein Kampf*) is that it is based on Hitler being inflexible in his views and how to achieve his goals. Yet that reasoning ironically misses the point entirely of the basic construct of *Mein Kampf*, which is that Hitler realized (after the failed putsch that put him in jail and allowed him to write *Mein Kampf*) that he must not be inflexible but had to be amenable to changing his strategy of obtaining power and seek to obtain it through legitimate means rather than force. In other words, the use of *Mein Kampf* to attempt to show the inevitability of wishes, desires, and delusions discussed therein is undercut by the book itself and the events that led to its being written. In this instance, as the author's thesis is predicated on this faulty logic, the entire work necessarily suffers accordingly. Some historically inconvenient facts ignored by the author are: (1) the terms of the Versailles Treaty were indeed harsh on the Germans not just bothersome as the author argues; (2) war for Hitler was not an either/or proposition (total victory or total defeat), e.g.

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