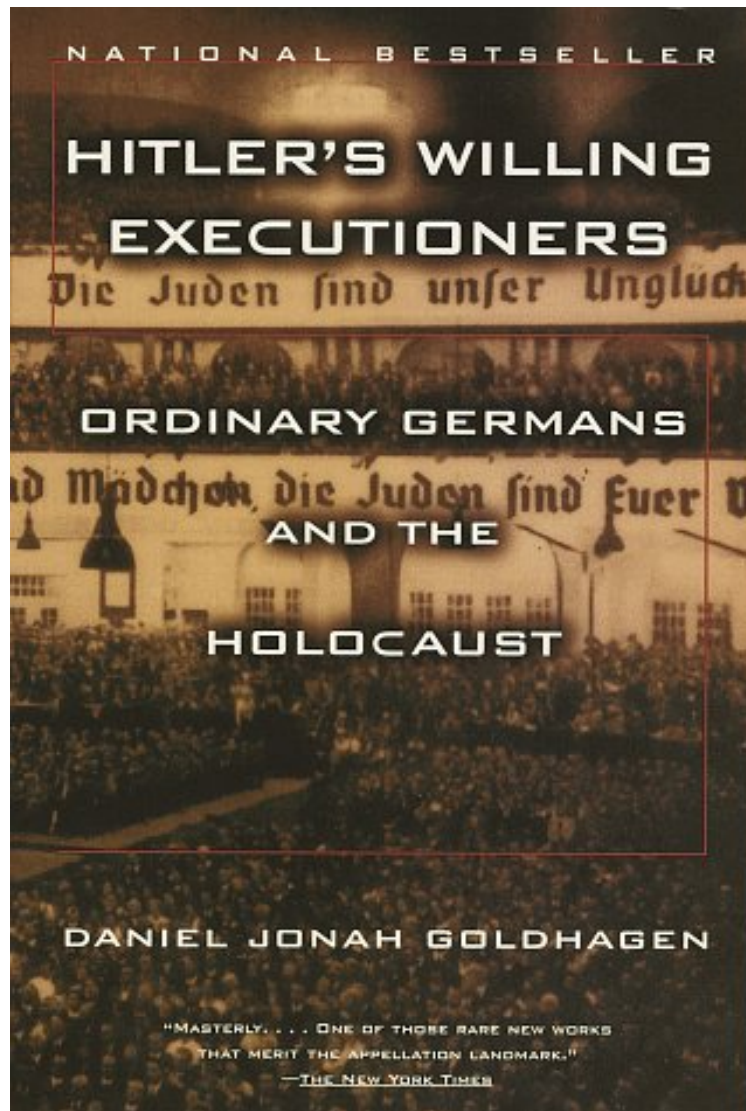


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Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust

Von Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

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Von Daniel Jonah Goldhagen : Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen4 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Collective Guilt AbsurdVon Ein KundeGoldhagen espouses the absurd viewpoint of collective guilt (much like Levi Primo). The work is overstated and should be taken with a dose of Browning or another author grounded in historical fact. Book sure to stimulate conversation, which is good, but is also just as surely going to mislead novices in

holocaust studies who read this book only because of its notoriety

2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Some Good Info, Poorly Written Von Tom Robinson This book has some good info on the police battalions, the work camps, and the death marches, but I have several problems with this book. First Goldhagen is a horrible writer. His style is boring and he seems to toss in big words just to prove he knows them. Second, although this book is supposed to be a new view on the Holocaust and ordinary Germans it really isn't. Most of the information in the book that is supposedly new can be found in many other books. Third, the main point of the book is spelled out in the first couple of pages, but Goldhagen keeps repeating it over and over and over again throughout the book. It really becomes annoying. Finally, all of these things combined makes this a pretty forgettable book. All in all the book has some decent moments, but is poorly written, parts are boring, and the information that is supposed to be new really isn't. There are much better books about ordinary Germans and the Holocaust out there than this one.

6 von 10 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Challenging and Well Done Von Customer Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book is the most challenging and necessary book to be written about the Holocaust and the pre-1945 German people I have ever read. Goldhagen attempts to prove that, in his words, "a vast majority" of Germans actively supported and participated in the destruction of German and European Jews. His arguments are cogent, pertinent, and reasonable. His conclusions are controversial but not encumbered by prejudice, or preconceived ideas, or bias against Germans. His facts and arguments speak for themselves. Make no mistake though, Goldhagen is discussing antisemitism in pre-1945 Germany, the persecution and elimination of Jews by the Germans, and the causes and participants in this monumental human tragedy. This is not a pleasant topic; it assaults our humanity so savagely that we seek for some sign of hope or heroism or redemption in the accumulative horrific events. To Goldhagen's credit he does not succumb to providing anything but a cold, rational scrutiny of this horror and leaves it to his readers to cope in the pages of his book with what six million people (or more) had to face in harsh reality. Some false questions or criticisms have been written regarding Goldhagen's work. I'll mention the most frequent I've noticed and explain why the questions or criticisms are not valid, in my opinion (and I presume in Goldhagen's).

First: Why focus on the Jews when the Nazis killed many other groups as well? The answer is self-evident - any book on such a huge, monstrous travesty as perpetrated by Germans before and during WW II does not have to be all-encompassing to be valid. Goldhagen's subject is Germany's treatment of German and European Jews (the Holocaust) - he makes no statement that other groups did not suffer and die, or don't merit study on their own; it is simply beyond the scope of his inquiry.

Second: His work is biased or unbalanced because he does not include any study of so-called "good Germans." The very issue Goldhagen tackles in this book is, if you look at it inversely, just how many Germans were NOT Hitler's Willing Executioners. Goldhagen is always imprecise on actually how many Germans participated in one or more facets of the Holocaust - but his research and book is a search into quantifying who participated, when, and how. What Goldhagen has found and has proved about participants and non-participants is fundamental to his thesis.

Third: He is illogical or contradictory. Only reading the book will definitively put these questions to rest. But Goldhagen states his working assumptions, argues well for their coherence and pertinence to his thesis, and continually references his previous arguments as he makes point after point. I read plenty that disturbed me, but very little of it had to do with Goldhagen's methods and reasoning. Human nature, I think, demands that Goldhagen's thesis not be true. We don't want to believe something so monstrous about a people, a nation, a milieu. Goldhagen's arguments are forcible enough to withstand our own unwillingness to believe. One summation of this book would be that it explores a time, a place, and a people where "norms" of human nature -- of civilization broke down completely.

I have two major concerns about Goldhagen's work. He admits that it would be a monumental task to determine the actual numbers of people who were involved in even the major aspects of the Holocaust - such as how many pulled a trigger or turned on the gas or herded a child into a cattle car or supervised an incineration (see footnote 13 for Chapter 5). Quantifying and qualifying ordinary German's participation in the Holocaust is his central thesis. To form a lasting judgement on Goldhagen's questions and concerns, we must have this analysis of actual numbers. For Goldhagen's thesis to be universally accepted he or someone must undertake that task. In the interim, Goldhagen provides acceptable, reasonable, and fair arguments (in my opinion) upon which he bases his conclusions. But I can understand why this may not be acceptable or totally convincing to others.

The second concern is Goldhagen's sometime sparcity of sources for some aspect of an argument. A single author may suffice to "reasonably" prove a given point but I would feel much more comfortable if the author had found multiple corroborating sources. (In one instance he even cites a Gestapo report as a source for a town's participation and willing involvement in an event! There are few sources more questionable and untrustworthy than propaganda-prone Nazi institutions. In Goldhagen's defense he does not often cite Nazi institutions to corroborate an important interpretation for his thesis.) This is a good book. It will challenge you. It is a first or early step in an endeavor I hope Goldhagen and others will continue to pursue.

Kurzbeschreibung This groundbreaking international bestseller lays to rest many myths about the Holocaust: that Germans were ignorant of the mass destruction of Jews, that the killers were all SS men, and that those who

slaughtered Jews did so reluctantly. Hitler's Willing Executioners provides conclusive evidence that the extermination of European Jewry engaged the energies and enthusiasm of tens of thousands of ordinary Germans. Goldhagen reconstructs the climate of "eliminationist anti-Semitism" that made Hitler's pursuit of his genocidal goals possible and the radical persecution of the Jews during the 1930s popular. Drawing on a wealth of unused archival materials, principally the testimony of the killers themselves, Goldhagen takes us into the killing fields where Germans voluntarily hunted Jews like animals, tortured them wantonly, and then posed cheerfully for snapshots with their victims. From mobile killing units, to the camps, to the death marches, Goldhagen shows how ordinary Germans, nurtured in a society where Jews were seen as unalterable evil and dangerous, willingly followed their beliefs to their logical conclusion. "Hitler's Willing Executioner's is an original, indeed brilliant contribution to the...literature on the Holocaust."--New York of Books "The most important book ever published about the Holocaust...Eloquently written, meticulously documented, impassioned...A model of moral and scholarly integrity."--Philadelphia Inquirer From the Trade Paperback edition. de In a work that is as authoritative as it is explosive, Goldhagen forces us to revisit and reconsider our understanding of the Holocaust and its perpetrators, demanding a fundamental revision in our thinking of the years between 1933-1945. Drawing principally on materials either unexplored or neglected by previous scholars, Goldhagen marshals new, disquieting primary evidence that explains why, when Hitler conceived of the "final solution" he was able to enlist vast numbers of willing Germans to carry it out. A book sure to provoke new discussion and intense debate..com In a work that is as authoritative as it is explosive, Goldhagen forces us to revisit and reconsider our understanding of the Holocaust and its perpetrators, demanding a fundamental revision in our thinking of the years between 1933-1945. Drawing principally on materials either unexplored or neglected by previous scholars, Goldhagen marshals new, disquieting primary evidence that explains why, when Hitler conceived of the "final solution" he was able to enlist vast numbers of willing Germans to carry it out. A book sure to provoke new discussion and intense debate.