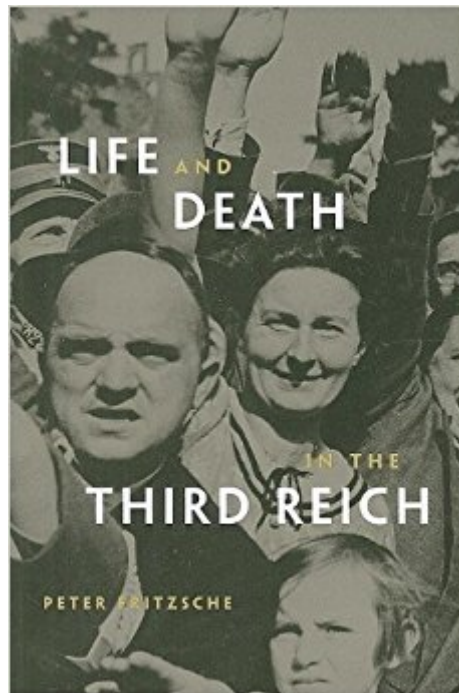




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# Life And Death In The Third Reich



## Synopsis

On January 30, 1933, hearing about the celebrations for Hitler's assumption of power, Erich Ebermayer remarked bitterly in his diary, "We are the losers, definitely the losers." • Learning of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which made Jews non-citizens, he raged, "hate is sown a million-fold." • Yet in March 1938, he wept for joy at the Anschluss with Austria: "Not to want it just because it has been achieved by Hitler would be folly." • In a masterful work, Peter Fritzsche deciphers the puzzle of Nazism's ideological grip. Its basic appeal lay in the Volksgemeinschaft • a "people's community" • that appealed to Germans to be part of a great project to redress the wrongs of the Versailles treaty, make the country strong and vital, and rid the body politic of unhealthy elements. The goal was to create a new national and racial self-consciousness among Germans. For Germany to live, others • especially Jews • had to die. Diaries and letters reveal Germans' fears, desires, and reservations, while showing how Nazi concepts saturated everyday life. Fritzsche examines the efforts of Germans to adjust to new racial identities, to believe in the necessity of war, to accept the dynamic of unconditional destruction • in short, to become Nazis. Powerful and provocative, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* is a chilling portrait of how ideology takes hold.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

University of Illinois historian Fritz (Germans into Nazis) effectively takes up one of the key controversies surrounding the Third Reich: to what extent were the German people accomplices of the regime? Over the years, the answers have ranged widely. Daniel Goldhagen's argument that

the annihilation of the Jews was what the German people had always wanted has never persuaded specialists. Others have argued that the German people were either manipulated and deceived by, or converted to, Nazism. Fritzsche provides a more nuanced argument that the Nazis were quite successful in winning the people's support, but it took time and effort. He cites diaries showing that individuals had to examine how they could become reconciled, or converted, to National Socialism. The fabled Volksgemeinschaft "people's community" was not mere propaganda but had a powerful allure that drew Germans into the Nazi orbit. Fritzsche mines diaries and letters written by the famous and well-placed as well as the unknown, to show that the prospects of German grandeur and unity resonated deeply with many people, even when it meant a hugely destructive war and the genocide of the Jews. Fritzsche offers a significant interpretation of Nazism and the German people, and writes with a vibrancy that is not often found in studies of the Third Reich. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A provocative revisionist view of the Third Reich and the complex relationship of Germans to it. This book, more than any other I know, conveys the complex nature of day-to-day life in Nazi Germany from the perspective of its political leaders, German citizens, and Jewish victims. In many ways, Fritzsche's interpretation of National Socialism and its supporters is far more unnerving than a view of a terrorized, hypnotized populace. The book offers not only an admirable analytic clarity but also passages of such human pathos that they leave the reader quaking. (Thomas Childers, author of *In the Shadows of War*) What makes this thoroughly engrossing account of everyday life in Nazi Germany so important is Fritzsche's ability to show how the ideology of racism enveloped not only the public but also the private sphere and eventually informed all thought and action in this empire of death. This is a major achievement. (Modris Eksteins, University of Toronto) Fritzsche has written an extraordinary book--a short, compelling, and yet comprehensive history of the Third Reich. It unfolds a masterful narrative of a regime that set out to restore a nation and in the process turned Europe into a killing field. This history familiarizes the reader with the key events as they unfolded and with contemporary reflections on them in diaries and letters. We come to the quite shocking recognition that these ruminations capture a conversation, for good and evil, that continues to the present day. (Michael Geyer, University of Chicago) With remarkable vision and poise, Fritzsche guides us through the interior of the Third Reich's racial imaginary to explore the terrible effectiveness of the efforts required of Germans in thinking themselves into the morally coercive world of the Volksgemeinschaft. Commanding the vast literatures on Nazism with enviable facility,

he seamlessly combines major themes with a keen eye for the telling detail. This is one of the most illuminating reflections on the popular history of the Third Reich in many years. (Geoff Eley, University of Michigan)Fritzsche effectively takes up one of the key controversies surrounding the Third Reich: to what extent were the German people accomplices of the regime?...Others have argued that the German people were either manipulated and deceived by, or converted to, Nazism. Fritzsche provides a more nuanced argument that the Nazis were quite successful in winning the people's support, but it took time and effort...Fritzsche mines diaries and letters written by the famous and well-placed as well as the unknown, to show that the prospects of German grandeur and unity resonated deeply with many people, even when it meant a hugely destructive war and the genocide of the Jews. Fritzsche offers a significant interpretation of Nazism and the German people, and writes with a vibrancy that is not often found in studies of the Third Reich. (Publishers Weekly 2008-01-07)[A] fascinating book...Fritzsche's book demolishes the myth of contemporary ignorance about the Shoah and the artificial divide between the apolitical Wehrmacht and the evil SS. As the aerial bombing campaign destroyed German cities, the citizenry transformed their status as perpetrators and beneficiaries of Nazi policy into that of victims, thereby quelling postwar confrontation with reality for more than a generation. Fritzsche's book demonstrates that there are still numerous areas of the Nazi era in which historians may delve. (Frederic Krome Library Journal (starred review) 2008-03-01)Peter Fritzsche's book is one that will undoubtedly court controversy. His aim is to show that "more Germans were Nazis" and that Germans were "more National Socialist" than had been previously accepted...This book combines a compelling historical narrative with a thought-provoking analysis. (Lisa Pine Times Higher Education Supplement 2008-04-03)Fritzsche writes with his customary flair and verve, and packs an enormous amount into a relatively short volume...His immensely readable and intelligent book makes superb use of letters and diaries to communicate the experience of ordinary people under Nazism in a way that few other historians have been able to do. (Richard J. Evans New York Review of Books 2008-06-26)What Peter Fritzsche does so well in his new book, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, is show the systematic breakdown and reshaping of a society...Fritzsche paints such a nuanced and exhaustively researched portrait of German National Socialism that in the end it just doesn't suffice simply to call the Nazis architects of death. They were, of course, but the political wave they rode in on was something of a phenomenon. So adroit were the Nazis at all-consuming manipulation that they were able to essentially recast the entire destiny of a country in such a way as to make the Holocaust actually seem to make sense, at least in the context of their own barbaric political framework. (Jeffrey White PopMatters.com 2008-09-02)Fritzsche combines the most recent

research with his own investigation of primary sources to create an important synthesis of National Socialist goals and ideology among the ordinary citizenry of the Third Reich. (J. Kleiman Choice 2009-02-01)

...but hard to read sometimes. As much as I've read about the Third Reich, it was only after reading this book that I was able to glimpse the horror of it. The pervasive racism, the complicity of the German people, the active involvement of the Wehrmacht, the destruction of the bodies and history of the Jews in Europe, and the way in which it is all remembered (if at all) is laid out in detail. The book is hard to read sometimes - not because it is badly written - but because I didn't want to believe that it was possible for people to behave this way. This book should be mandatory reading for anyone interested in or studying the Second World War.

A fantastically written book about real life during the war years through the lens of the German citizens. Backed by facts, diary entries and unembellished war stories of the victors, this is a must read.

How can you love a book about WWII? Well, if it's well written, well documented, very thorough and very thoughtful - it can be done.

I have read many books about Germans and their relationship to the Nazis, but none as good as this one. Not only is his narrative style superb, but his deep understanding of the psyche of the ordinary German is fresh and unnerving, at the same time. I am on to his next book and look forward to reading it.

Simply put, this is one of the best books on the Third Reich I've ever read. Fritzsche has produced a book that ranks among the better one-volume histories of the Nazi regime. While the title may make you think this book is all about eugenics or the Holocaust (and those topics are covered in detail), in actuality I found this to be a book about why the Nazis came to the policy conclusions they did, how they enacted them, and what their world view was about. Using numerous diaries, letters from the front, newspaper accounts, and other primary sources, Fritzsche lets the people of Germany tell much of the tale. The book reads well and I think Fritzsche convinces the reader of this thesis: namely, that in order for the Germans to live (those the Nazis deemed worthy, of course), others had to die. Thus, the title of the book. I disagree with another reviewer who seemed to think

Fritzsche has an agenda at work here. Instead, I thought the book was very reasonably argued and did not seem to be a stretch of the evidence just to prove the author's point or reach his goal. I'd highly recommend this to anyone interested in Nazi Germany and what day to day life was like in Germany under Nazi rule.

Feel like I am reading about the current era in U.S. Horrifying. It can happen again so easily!

Fritzsche adds more information to the ongoing question regarding the complicity of the German People in their support of the more sordid facets of National Socialism. He maintains a very objective approach throughout, which is a refreshing change from those historians who are out to support their own agendas, and often leave this reader in distaste for their exaggerations and warping. I would recommend this work for both the casual and serious student of the 3rd Reich. A full section of footnotes also lends credence to his work

Parts of this book were fascinating and horrifying. It really did tell a different part of the holocaust. But some sections I didn't follow. The download from print to kindle was the worst I have ever seen.

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