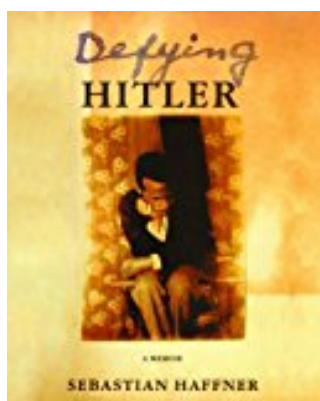


[PDF] Defying Hitler

Robert Whitfield, Sebastian Haffner, Oliver Pretzel - pdf download free book



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Description:

What was it about Germany that made the rise of Adolf Hitler and his murderous regime possible? That troubling question has occupied many fine minds over the last six decades, few more lucid and thoughtful than the late historian and journalist Sebastian Haffner. In this book, drawn from a manuscript he did not live to complete, Haffner examines the social and cultural conditions that made Germany ill-equipped for democracy and ripe for totalitarianism. Among these, Haffner writes, were a generational war between an apathetic adult population and a youth "familiar with nothing but political clamor, sensation, anarchy, and the dangerous lure of irresponsible numbers games"; a

fatal fondness for the winner-and-loser dichotomy of sports and a rage for spectacle and entertainment; a resignation through which ordinary people came to "adapt to living with clenched teeth, in a manner of speaking," rather than stand up in protest. In that climate, Haffner--who left Germany just before World War II broke out--suggests, Nazism was almost an inevitability, against which he, too, tried to withdraw into "a small, secure, private domain," like so many others of his time and place. An important eyewitness account, Haffner's book deepens our understanding of how small missteps can lead to tragic ends, and how nations can be led into chaos. --Gregory McNamee -- This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly A sample historical headline: "1890: Wilhelm II dismisses Bismarck." No one's life was disrupted, writes Haffner. "No family was torn apart, no friendship broken up, no one fled their country." Compare that with "1933: Hindenburg sends for Hitler." In this case, "[a]n earthquake shatters 66 million lives." Thus begins a vivid examination of just how Hitler's ascension affected an ordinary German, a young lawyer with no strong political views, whose career and life were disrupted by the Nazis. Written in 1939, this memoir was not published until 2000, when Pretzel, Haffner's son, brought it out in Germany, where it was a bestseller. Haffner alternates political analysis with accounts of how the rise of the Nazis in the 1920s and early '30s affected his attempts to build a career, keep friendships alive and kindle romantic liaisons. His analysis of the failure of post-WWI German society to create stability is familiar, but Haffner writes with a close familiarity that makes the old new again. And his description of the way the Nazis invaded people's daily lives shines. It becomes clear how many "good Germans" struggled against impossible odds to keep their personal lives politics-free. Unfortunately, Haffner's manuscript ends with 1933 (Pretzel covers the rest of Haffner's life, beginning with immigration to England, in a brief afterword). This intimate self-portrait stands with Victor Klemperer's two-part memoir, *I Will Bear Witness*, as evidence that the personal can offer insight into the political tragedy of Nazism. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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