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During the Nuremberg trials, Dr. Leon Goldensohn—a psychiatrist for the U.S. Army—monitored the mental health of two dozen German leaders charged with carrying out genocide. These recorded conversations have gone largely unexamined for more than fifty years, until Robert Gellately—one of the premier historians of Nazi Germany—made them available to the public in this remarkable collection. Here are interviews with the likes of Hans Frank, Hermann Goering, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and Joachim von Ribbentrop—the highest ranking Nazi officials in the Nuremberg jails. Here too are interviews with lesser-known officials essential to the inner workings of the Third Reich. Candid and often shockingly truthful, *The Nuremberg Interviews* is a profound addition to our understanding of the Nazi mind and mission.

The Nuremberg Interviews Details

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Luis Cardenas says

Ya a la septima entrevista es muy monótono y no da espacio a ninguna novedad, son como las entrevistas que mas me gustaron, pero en lineas generales no aporto nada nuevo a todo lo que yo ya se sobre el tema. Un grupo de derrotados no queriendo tener responsabilidad en nada.

Mac says

Possibly my favourite WWII book. I have read this a number of times and the more you know about WWII and the Nazi figures involved the better.

I would recommend this only to advanced readers who already have a large understanding of the figures involved and thereby know when the prisoners are lying and the context of their viewpoint.

Regina Lindsey says

On November 19, 1945 The International Military Tribunal opened at the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg, Germany to hear the cases of twenty-two Nazis within seven organizations indicted on four charges – conspiracy to commit crimes, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Of the twenty-two individuals standing trial three were acquitted, twelve were sentenced to death, three were given life sentences, and four were given sentences ranging from 10-20 years. During the trial Dr. Eli Golensohn, a psychiatrist for the U.S. Army, interviewed both defendants and witnesses. The Nuremberg Interviews is a compilation of Dr. Golensohn's copious notes from interviews with nineteen defendants and fourteen witnesses.

While the prospect of a peek into the mind of high profile Nazi war criminals like Hermann Goering and Albert Speer is tantalizing, the most interesting aspect of the book in my opinion is the debate between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin on how to go about seeking justice. All three at one time favored summary execution. The concept of a trial was actually first suggested by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov as far back as October 14, 1942 and was vociferously advocated by U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, who insisted on the need to avoid the impression that the Allies were seeking vengeance. Ironically, it was Stalin who was the first of the leaders to embrace the trial concept and had FDR not died paving the way for Harry Truman to ascend to the presidency execution very well may have ruled the day. It was during this read that it dawned on me just how difficult it was for these three countries to forge a path forward deciding on the procedures that would ultimately govern the trial. After all, the three countries have vastly different judicial systems and compromise ruled the day. For instance, defendants were not granted anything resembling 5th Amendment protection and were required to answer all questions posed, a concept which is anathema to the US justice system. The other item I learned was that it was the organizations (the Reich cabinet, SS, SA, SD, and Gestapo) that were charged under the indictments rather than specific individuals.

Unfortunately, the interviews themselves were not that enlightening. The reading became redundant, as each defendant used similar defense strategies – the government was disorganized and I didn't know anything; I

don't hate Jews, I have friends that are Jews; and it was someone else's fault. The most delusional was Herman Goering who had the audacity to state, "But always my intention was to contribute these art treasures, paintings, pieces of sculpture, altarpieces, jewels, et cetera, to a state museum after I had died, for the greater glory of German culture. Looking at it from that standpoint I can't see that is was ethically wrong. IT was not as if I accumulated art treasures in order to sell them or to become a rich man. I love art for art's sake and as I said, my personality demanded that I be surrounded with the best specimens of the world's art." (pg. 163) I suppose the most interesting part of the interviews was how clearly evident the ramifications of the Versailles Treaty were on the psyche of individual Germans. Historians have correctly pointed to this has a precursor to the rise of Nazism and Hitler but hearing it these defendants words makes the case even stronger.

I would only recommend this book to those who have a prior understanding of the individual subjects of the book. The author doesn't provide enough background to give good context for the conversation or the verdict and it could be confusing for those without a good basis of knowledge of the characters.

Taylor Roe says

Fascinating, and a bit frightening to get a look into the minds of the leaders of this fascist party. While it is a historical non-fiction book, it doesn't read like many do in their textbook type manner. It's very readable, and incredibly real.

Sandra says

Leon Goldensohn fue el psiquiatra que entrevistó a los acusados y a los testigos del bando nazi antes, durante y después de los juicios de Nuremberg. El libro es largo, de hojas bíblicas. Cada entrevista es diferente, con una edición distinta y un enfoque adaptado al humor del entrevistado (y del entrevistador). Todos niegan saber lo que ocurría. Y si aceptan saberlo, estaban siguiendo órdenes. Y si se les reprocha su falta de valentía por no detener algo que les causaba "repulsión", la guerra es la guerra y no se puede hacer nada. Pero hay algo más inquietante. No se trata de las justificaciones ni de la paranoia del gigante ruso que quiere invadir el mundo, sino del comportamiento infantil de acusados y testigos. Todos son como niños que ignoran a su conciencia simplemente porque se saben impunes. Por eso sus excusas son tan pobres. El mal es el mal.

Maria says

A intenção do livro é boa e permite tirar algumas ilações, mas a ligação dos factos deixa muito a desejar, o livro não está bem estruturado e confunde até em certas partes. Não tem perguntas muito directas por vezes , ou seja, o psiquiatra poderia ter puxado pelas testemunhas mais , acaba por os deixar apenas falar. Mas vale a pena para percebermos o que vai na mente dos assassinos nazis (na maioria dos casos nada de especial), na desresponsabilização que assumem.

Bom para tentar perceber a loucura da mente humana mas podia estar mais bem construído como livro. Se não fosse o tema seria apenas um 3 estrelas.

Jo says

What were they like? Manipulative to the extreme - playing their peers, their interviewer(s), themselves - not, generally, a nice bunch of people. Some were intellectually far ahead of others, and drew conclusions about the course of history which panned out that lets them appear terribly convincing, yet cynical and coldly calculating beyond belief. Others were merely cruel and narrow minded and yes, why not, a bit dim. Not a pleasant read but an eye opener about the human condition. Don't be fooled, people like that are out there.

Dionísio says

De um modo geral, os Nazis defenderam-se em Nuremberga pondo as culpas nos mortos (Hitler, Himmler, Bormann, Goebbels). Já os Aliados mostraram-se tendenciosos e incapazes de perceber o seu quinhão de responsabilidades na guerra.

O psiquiatra que faz as entrevistas, Leon Goldensohn, é um autêntico advogado de acusação, incapaz do distanciamento necessário à sua função e sem nenhum interesse no bem-estar dos acusados. Já estes, sem liberdade para serem sinceros (porque não sabem sê-lo ou porque têm receio de que tudo venha a ser usado em tribunal) aproveitam os encontros com o psiquiatra para preparar a sua defesa.

Óptima tradução, apenas aqui e ali com alguns erros de português. Salta à vista o malfadado "Há x anos atrás", que aparece recorrentemente.

KOMET says

The chief value in "The Nuremberg Interviews" comes from the views, perspectives, and at times, candid reflections offered by the 33 defendants and witnesses whom Dr. Goldensohn (then a U.S. Army psychiatrist) interviewed during 1946. In reading this book, I felt as if I were in company with Dr. Goldensohn and his interpreter as he carried out his enquiries of each person. Hermann Goering, nominally the Number 2 man in the Third Reich, didn't strike me as a person given to much introspection or regret. Rather, he came across as a man who enjoyed wielding power and showed no contrition about the Holocaust and several of the other crimes committed by Hitler, whom he regarded largely as a genius.

On the other hand, Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz, showed no evasiveness when speaking about his responsibility for the extermination of 5 million people. He fully accepted his guilt and the likelihood he would be hanged for his crimes (which took place in Poland in 1947).

For any reader interested in understanding the mindsets and philosophies of individuals who served a totalitarian state, I strongly recommend this book.

Dori says

"I love my wife, but I cheat on her. Hitler was bad. 6 million were killed? I had no idea." Repeat 41 times. Now you've read the book.

Murray says

This book could easily have been titled "I had nothing to do with THAT."

"The Nuremberg Interviews" is an intense read with complex dynamics. On the one hand, there are psychiatrist Leon Goldensohn's efforts to understand his Nazi subjects who are either standing trial or serving as witnesses. Goldensohn asks probing questions to both establish psychological profiles and to also try to understand how they rationalized an aggressive war coupled with genocide. He doesn't seem like a passive 'pipe in the mouth' type of psychologist - instead, he confrontationally pushes his subjects like a surrogate prosecuting attorney. On the other hand, there are the incarcerated 'patients' who are eager to speak to Goldensohn, but often less eager to take responsibility for their crimes. Given an opportunity to expound their cases, the Nazis frequently sound rational and, to some degree, innocent. But Goldensohn doesn't let them off the hook quite so easily when he can see right through their lies and BS.

At about 450 pages, "The Nuremberg Interviews" is often tedious and repetitive. Most of the Nazis who were on the militaristic side claim to have little or no knowledge nor responsibility concerning of the events of the Holocaust. Without a counter argument, it's hard to dispute their claims. Most of the defendants charged with crimes against humanity state that they were just following orders or had no choice. Or, if they were more closely associated with atrocities, they would cite all of their other job responsibilities that prevented them from taking part in murder, torture and other reprehensible acts. In the end, their meandering logical leaps, callousness, and denial of culpability is enough to turn your stomach.

They conveniently blame the dead or missing Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich and Bormann for the mass murders and put a cherry on top by saying how reprehensible these activities were. Goldensohn challenges these statements while readers can draw their own conclusions. This is a scholarly study at times, and in its tedium it's often difficult to recall the Q&A of each subject. That said, Rudolph Hoess (commandant at Auschwitz) and Julius Streicher (publisher of Der Sturmer) provided the most disturbing and harrowing personal reflections of their ideologies and actions. Fortunately for us, they were both executed shortly after the interviews.

Note that Goldensohn had no hand in the publication of this book. He died in 1961, many years before the publication of the book. His widow and scholars assembled the book based on his notes from the interviews. So, other than being a Jewish American in Nuremberg, Goldensohn had no ulterior motives for fame or riches. Which is something that gives the book a level of purity.

Daz says

Nadzwyczaj interesujacy zapis rozmow wiezennego psychiatry z ludzmi odpowiedzialnymi za jedne z

najwiekszych zbrodni w historii swiata. Odarci ze swych napuszonych, dygnitarskich szat oraz insygnii wladzy, lotrzy ci odpowiadaja i reaguja.. po ludzku. "Rozmowy" to nie tylko znakomity kontekst dla badaczy drugiej wojny swiatowej, ale rowniez cenny material dla pasjonatow psychiatrii

John says

I thought i had read everything about this era. not so. this was interesting in that the doctor who did the interviews asked questions which i had not thought would be of interest but they were. A very easy read and well edited. I guess i learned that even the most evil doers in the world are also human beings.

Agata czyta ksi??ki says

Niezwyk?a relacja z wywiadów psychiatry z oskar?onymi i ?wiadkami, którzy brali udzia? w pierwszym procesie w Norymberdze. Rozmowy dotyczy?y genezy narodowego socjalizmu i udzia?u rozmówców Goldensohna w pope?nionych zbrodniach. Niezwykle poruszaj?ce jest to, ?e wed?ug oskar?onych, jedynymi winnymi piek?a, które zgotowa?a ludziom III Rzesza byli: Hitler, Himmler, Bormann i Heydrich. Lektura tej ksi??ki pozwala zobaczyć, w jaki sposób zbrodniarze bronili si? przed nieuchronn? sprawiedliwo?ci? i w jaki sposób usprawiedliwiali swoje nieludzkie czyny. Lektura wywo?uje du?o emocji i stanowi niezwykle cenny dokument dotyczc?cy procesu.

Szplug says

What Goldensohn was able to pry from the collection of Nazi defendants at Nuremberg—after considerable coaxing and between-the-lines analysis in some cases, simply directing and recording the logorrheic flow in others—is oftentimes banal, occasionally insightful, frequently delusional, haltingly confessional, and invariably self-serving: that is, it's very real and immediate and readable. Through their own words, each interviewed internee reveals a culpability ranged across a spectrum whose upper bands radiate monstrousness: and not a single one—however they protest, plead, or prevaricate—comes off clean.

One of the more interesting things about this book was the discovery, in the introduction, that the US and British were in unity upon a policy of summary executions for the Nazi leadership—the idea of pursuing convictions through trials having first been raised by Molotov in the Soviet camp. After Stalin [allegedly in jest] announced that wiping out 50,000 Nazi officials and military officers should do the trick—and to which Roosevelt [surely in jest] suggested 49,000 as a more copacetic tally in the face of an appalled Churchill's protestations—all sides were moved, with US Secretary of War Stimson's voice the foremost, to effect a tribunal that would try the main leadership, and, in so-doing, establish an important precedent in the realm of international criminal law.
