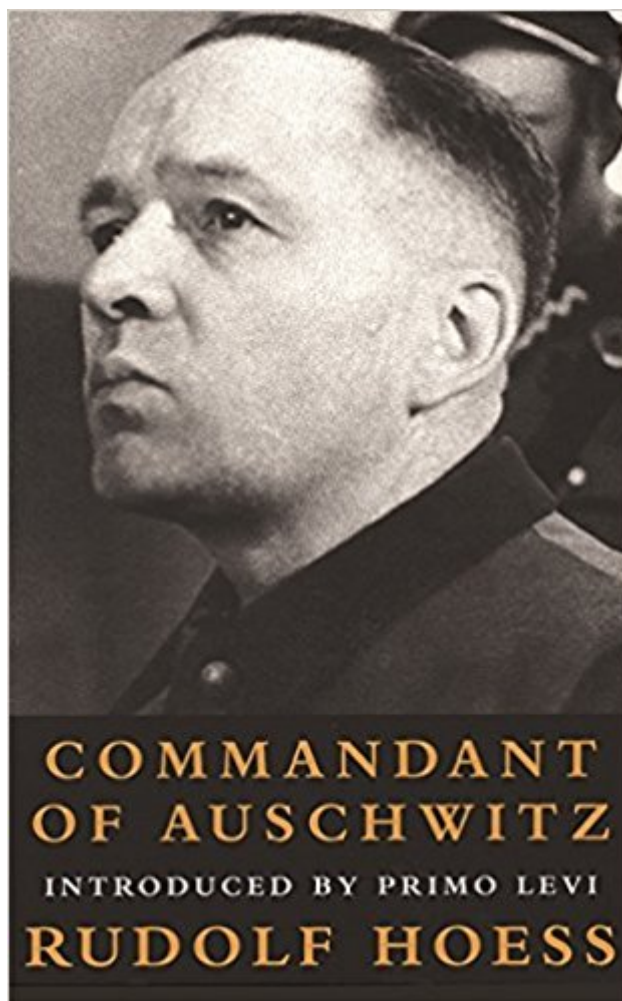


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Commandant Of Auschwitz : The Autobiography Of Rudolf Hoess



Synopsis

A self-portrait, composed by one of the greatest monsters of all time: Rudolf Hoess, the Commandant at Auschwitz, and the man who knew more than almost anyone about how Nazi Germany implemented the Final Solution. Captured by the British after the war, tried, and sentenced to death, he was ordered to write his autobiography in the weeks between his trial and his execution (which fittingly took place in Auschwitz itself). Hoess apparently enjoyed the task, and the most careful checking by researchers showed he took great pains to tell the truth. The result: a vivid and unforgettable picture of the 20th century's defining and most horrific event. Royalties from this book go to the fund to help the few survivors of Auschwitz.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German

Rudolf Hoess was the Commandant of Auschwitz during the war. He was executed in Poland upon concluding these memoirs.

I read this book and less than halfway through, I was feeling the people who edited and reviewed the autobiography were agenda driven. Just like the protagonist, Rudolf Hoess. I felt they were a little too eager to point out inconsistencies he penned, and that too, Hoess wanted to paint a picture, that "He" wanted to pain and explain himself. To re-write history as an apologist for his actions. But

as you think about the era in which it was written, the entire German culture of militarism, and sometimes unquestioning obedience to laws, you start to sense a problem. That the perfectionism and opportunism and manipulations of Hoess as he meandered from post to post in his life, that somehow, it was almost accidental that he was chosen to this position. Also you must ask yourself, if he didn't do his job, they would have surely found someone more capable in short order, They were totally committed irrespective of Hoess to the annihilation of the Jews. I came away with mixed feelings, perhaps this whole thing, only God can know the true answer to. I don't wish to make an ambivalent view, but that is what it comes to in the end. The American psychologist Langer viewed Hoess as a schizoid type without the frank lack of empathy of a psychopath, but doing a psychopathic work nevertheless. I feel that Hoess was very flat in emotion, he had little at all. He was probably a full blown psychotic. But that would not do in a criminal trial where they needed to hang a person, to hang the blame in total. It seems a forgone conclusion someone was going to hang, and with that in mind, there was no chance of an insanity plea by a defense attorney. I myself think he was accountable. He had to know on some level that it was criminal, immoral, ghastly.

It's 'interesting' to read his autobiography, but even the most evil things he did are glossed over -- generally by his (and others) simply following orders. Himmler, the evil genius of the Holocaust remains revered and almost deified in Hoess' mind. The extermination of the Jews -- among others -- remains a worthwhile goal. The real meat is at the end of the book where one can get an idea of the evil of the extermination camps.

An interesting read, but not an accurate tell all. Hoess wrote this autobiography while awaiting trial after the war, so you have to understand that he's not telling all the truth and is still covering up many details. However, it is interesting to hear his point of view. The text also contains notes from researchers that fill in details and correct his selective memory. This is a definite must have item for any researcher or collector or WW2 information.

This is a hard read when you know its told by the madman who killed millions. It a history of Auschwitz from the eyes of Rudolf Hoess who ran the camp for many years. If there was ever a person who death was required for the crimes committed it this guy.

Being very interested in WWII, this book will be another great read. Just saw a special on the CHILDREN of these 'monsters'. So am anxious to read it.

I couldn't believe how he tried to justify the horrors he was responsible for. It was interesting to read about the point of view of the criminal.

Diary of a mad man...

This book was written by the commandant of Auschwitz while he was awaiting trial and execution. Very interesting insight into the mind of one of the men responsible for murdering (by his own estimation) over 2 million people in just a few short years. He openly confesses to being responsible for over 2 million murders, but denies responsibility for some of the "lesser" crimes like the day to day brutality of the camps, claiming that this was beyond his control or influence. Based on all of the other crimes that he readily plead guilty to, without trying to hide his involvement, it would seem weird that he would lie about whether he felt that the prisoners being held in Auschwitz et al should be treated better or receive more food, but the editor readily accuses him of being a liar on every count where Hoess either denies responsibility or claims only partial responsibility. I tend to think that he may be telling the truth that he was not (completely) responsible for every little crime that happened as that would be well beyond his role of commandant, but ultimately he is still the one that has to take responsibility for every little crime that happened, and he was executed for that. There were people in the Nuremberg trials that were convicted of crimes that they did not commit, and Hoess may have been as well, but he definitely was not in any way an innocent man. Note that profits from this autobiography go to funds for survivors of the Holocaust and not to families of the perpetrators.

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