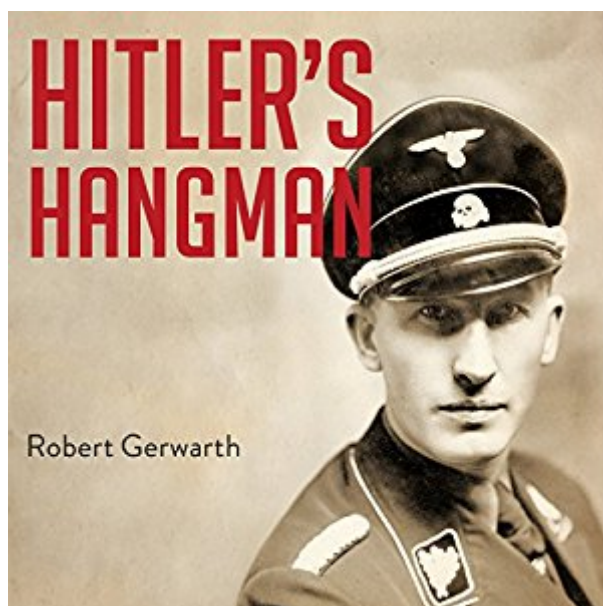


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# Hitler's Hangman: The Life Of Heydrich



## Synopsis

Reinhard Heydrich is widely recognized as one of the great iconic villains of the 20th century, an appalling figure even within the context of the Nazi leadership. Chief of the Nazi Criminal Police, the SS Security Service, and the Gestapo, ruthless overlord of Nazi-occupied Bohemia and Moravia, and leading planner of the "Final Solution," Heydrich played a central role in Hitler's Germany. He shouldered a major share of responsibility for some of the worst Nazi atrocities, and up to his assassination in Prague in 1942, he was widely seen as one of the most dangerous men in Nazi Germany. Yet Heydrich has received remarkably modest attention in the extensive literature of the Third Reich. Robert Gerwarth weaves together little-known stories of Heydrich's private life with his deeds as head of the Nazi Reich Security Main Office. Fully exploring Heydrich's progression from a privileged middle-class youth to a rapacious mass murderer, Gerwarth sheds new light on the complexity of Heydrich's adult character, his motivations, the incremental steps that led to unimaginable atrocities, and the consequences of his murderous efforts toward recreating the entire ethnic makeup of Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In June 1942, only some weeks after Heydrich's assassination, Thomas Mann, whose home had previously been raided on Heydrich's orders in 1933, commented on a BBC radio broadcast, and said that "wherever this killer went, blood flowed in rivers. Everywhere, even in Germany, he was simply called: the Hangman". Heydrich was one of the most sinister monsters of the Third Reich.

Although many other mass murderers got a lot of biographers, Heydrich's place in the pantheon of the library of evil was somehow ignored or minimized. Enter Robert Gerwarth's excellent and profound biography whose purpose is to rectify things about this nebulous figure. As Mr. Gerwarth explains, "Heydrich was both a typical and an atypical representative of his generation. He shared in many of the deep ruptures and traumatic experiences of the so-called war youth generation: namely, the Great War and the turbulent post-war years of revolutionary turmoil, hyperinflation and social decline, which he experienced as a teenager." Heydrich, who was born in 1904 in Halle in Prussia, and whose parents were both musicians, was dismissed from the navy in 1931 as a result of a broken engagement promise and his subsequent arrogant behaviour towards the military court of honour. It was at this point when he met his future wife, Lina von Osten. The couple had four children and Lina had a tremendous influence over her husband to join the SS. At the age of thirty-eight, and as the second most powerful man in the SS behind Heinrich Himmler, he had built a reputation as one of the most uncompromising executors of Hitler's dystopian fantasies for the future of the Reich and Nazi-occupied Europe.

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