

The Mark of the Crooked Cross

“The Nuremberg Trial: A History of Nazi Germany as Revealed Through the Testimony at Nuremberg,” by **Joe J. Heydecker and Johannes Leeb**, translated from the German by R. A. Downie (World, 398 pp. \$6), bares a regime whose cruelty has never been surpassed. John H. Herz, professor of political science at City College in New York, wrote *“International Politics in the Atomic Age”* and the section on Germany in his and G. M. Carter’s *“Major Foreign Powers.”*

By JOHN H. HERZ

LIBRARIES have been filled with writings about the war crimes trials, their legal problems, their moral and political implications. The authors of this book had a more modest aim: to trace, with the aid of the Nuremberg documents, the history of the Nazis’ rise to and use of power. Although they rarely go beyond what was said and read at the first and chief Nuremberg trial, they succeed surprisingly well. It is astonishing how the findings of the trial have stood the test of time. What was revealed at that early point shows, in all its stark and gruesome particulars, that this was not, as revisionists have it, “victor’s justice” or “victor’s vengeance” but a verdict based on a fundamentally sound interpretation of what had happened. Subsequent trials, including Eichmann’s, have added little except fuller details, and historiography since 1946 has given little cause for revision (again, except for detail).

This volume can therefore serve as a kind of textbook introducing the reader to the history of a regime whose cruelty has never been surpassed. One would wish the book a large audience, especially in the country where the guilty or affected generation has for the most part elected to overcome its “undigested” past by repression of memory, but where a new generation is eager to learn about and from the sins and errors of its elders.

Yet an emphasis on Nazi terrorism often makes us forget that the German people as a whole identified themselves with much of Hitler’s program, especially his foreign and war policies; indeed, putting the onus on a few leaders today frequently serves as exculpation for all

the others. In his recent and important book “German Catholics and Hitler’s Wars,” Gordon Zahn has shown that even outstanding leaders of groups with non-Nazi standards, men who courageously resisted certain policies of the regime, identified themselves fervently with aggressive war and expansionist war aims.

This raises the question whether and how such nationalistic identification can be avoided in an age where the individual is ever more integrated into society and made to accept its controlling standards. We refer not only to the danger that totalitarian nihilism may again get hold of a nation or a region—as most recently exemplified by the OAS in Algeria—but also to the more and more coordinated and uniform reactions of the masses of the people in the non-totalitarian societies, especially during foreign policy crises with all their hysteria. The history of Nazi totalitarianism re-

minds us that the fate of a country—and today quite possibly the survival of mankind—may depend on whether there remain chances to oppose and resist policies and decisions which in the case of nuclear war would (in their effects at least) surpass even Nazi atrocities.

Albert Speer, most “rational” among the Nuremberg defendants, perceived these implications with remarkable foresight.

This war [he said in his concluding statement] has ended with remote-controlled rockets and atom bombs. . . . In five or ten years’ time the technique of war will have made it possible to fire rockets from continent to continent . . . able to destroy a million people in the center of New York within seconds. . . . Every country in the world now stands in danger of being terrorized by technical means. The more technical the world becomes, the more necessary is the demand for individual freedom and independent thought as a counterweight. . . . This trial must be a contribution toward preventing wars in the future and in laying down the fundamental laws of human co-existence.

We may well heed this advice if we want to survive.

Who Killed the Four Thousand?

“Death in the Forest: The Story of the Katyn Forest Massacre,” by **J. K. Zawodny** (University of Notre Dame Press, 235 pp. \$6.50), probes a tragic mystery of World War II. Henry C. Wolfe, author of *“The Imperial Soviets,”* is a long-time student of Polish and Soviet affairs.

By HENRY C. WOLFE

BEFORE World War II, the gloomy forest of Katyn, near Smolensk, was reported to be a “special zone for the Soviet secret police.” The region first made world headlines in April 1943, when the Nazis announced that their troops had found the bodies of several thousand murdered Polish prisoners buried in the forest. The Nazis accused the Russians of the crime. The Kremlin countered that the massacre was the work of “the German-Fascist hangmen.”

J. K. Zawodny has exhaustively investigated the monstrous, mystery-shrouded affair, and publishes his conclusion in “Death in the Forest.” A

former Polish anti-Nazi underground fighter and now associate professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Zawodny has been aided in his research by an impressive number of university authorities and former government officials involved in the Katyn investigations. His sources included the Library of Congress, the Hoover Library at Stanford, and the Princeton University Faculty Research Committee. The result is an objective, painstakingly documented report that, unless additional information is revealed some day from Moscow’s secret files, will remain the definitive work on the subject.

WHEN the Nazis accused the Soviets of the Katyn slaughters, few gave them credence. The Nazis’ record of atrocities, even against their own people, barred them from a respectful hearing. But the Polish Government-in-Exile, which had been vainly trying for nearly three years to trace 15,000 missing Poles taken prisoner by the Russians, asked the International Red Cross to investigate the Katyn crime. Denouncing “Hitler’s Polish collaborators,” the

Kremlin broke relations with the Government-in-Exile.

From his own underground experience the author knew "what it means to be hunted on the streets [by the Nazis] like an animal, for being a Pole or a Jew." More important, he knew that the Soviets and Nazis had collaborated in the destruction of Poland. He started his Katyn research on the premise that "the executioners could have worn either swastikas or red stars on their uniforms."

Scrupulously sifting every shred of available evidence from far-flung sources, interviewing numerous survivors of Polish prison camps in Russia, and weaving a tortuous way through tangled wartime politics and propaganda, Dr. Zawodny pieced together a mosaic of facts that shaped themselves into a finger of accusation.

Of top significance was the time of the massacre. The Russians insisted that the Poles had been executed in the fall of 1941. The Nazis argued that they had been killed earlier, while still prisoners of the Soviet. Polish anti-Nazi underground agents learned that all the letters, clippings, and diaries found on the more than 4,000 Katyn bodies were dated not later than April-May 1940. Not one letter dated later than the spring of 1940 was ever received by relatives of the missing 15,000 Poles. The remaining 11,000 men have never been accounted for. Not since Genghis Khan, reportedly, has there been such a mass murder of military prisoners.

AFTER more than two decades, the brutal fate of the Polish prisoners still affects relations between Poles and the Soviet Union. The murder victims were doctors, lawyers, scientists, journalists, teachers—the very men who would have provided leadership for postwar Poland. Their loss was tragic both for their families and the new Poland. Dr. Zawodny's findings indict the Kremlin.

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Architect of Death

"Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman," by Charles Wighton (Chilton. 288 pp. \$5.50), illuminates the shadowy figure who planned and carried out the destruction of most of Europe's Jews. Foreign correspondent Quentin Reynolds's reports from the European front in World War II are well known.

By QUENTIN REYNOLDS

IN MAY 1942 Josef Gabcik and Jan Kubis, two Czech army officers who had been given intensive training by the British in the art of assassination, were dropped into occupied Czechoslovakia. Their orders, which came from the British Secret Service, were simple: "Kill Reinhard Heydrich."

The two heroic men accomplished their suicidal mission, thus eliminating a man who was undoubtedly the most effective mass murderer of all time. Heydrich was the supreme architect who planned and carried out the extermination of six million Jews and, at the time of his death, was working on the blueprint that would (had Germany won the war) eventually be used in the liquidation of thirty million Slavs.

Since 1945 the name Heydrich has been a symbol of all that was evil in Nazi Germany, but he has always been one of the great mysteries of the Hitler period. Despite repeated references to him in postwar memoirs of former Nazis and other books about Hitler's Germany, he has remained a shadowy figure, and little was known of his background, his mind, his character, and his motives.

Charles Wighton, a British newspaper correspondent, brings valid credentials to the task of explaining Heydrich. For nearly twenty years Germany has been his specialty. In "Heydrich" he has written the definitive work on the head of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Secret Police) and real master of the Gestapo. In collecting hitherto unpublished material on the role Heydrich played, the author not only received the full cooperation of American, British, and Soviet officials who opened their files to him, but also that of Heydrich's widow. The result is a well-documented and eminently readable book that brings not only Heydrich but other Nazi lead-



Reinhard Heydrich—"most effective mass murderer of all time."

ers to life as perhaps no other book has done.

Reinhard Heydrich was no Adolf Eichmann or Heinrich Himmler who believed blindly in the German tradition established by Frederick the Great, "*Befehl ist Befehl*" (an order is an order), and that authority is unchallengeable. He was an innovator, an imaginative executive, and the only orders he ever carried out literally were those he received directly from Hitler; and Wighton makes it clear that he had a great deal more influence on Hitler than did his nominal superior, the sketchily educated Himmler, an unsuccessful fertilizer salesman in pre-Nazi days, whom Hitler once called a "crank and a lightweight." Heydrich had an uncanny ability to manipulate men for his own aims. Not even Goebbels or Goering could outwit him. The blundering Himmler soon became his docile puppet, and, had he lived, his secret dream of eventually succeeding Hitler might well have materialized.

Heydrich was a complex man with the kind of family and background not usually associated with an enthusiastic mass murderer or, for that matter, with anyone belonging to the Nazi hierarchy. The files left by Himmler, Martin Bormann, and Walter Schellenberg (his closest SS associate) all agree that Heydrich's maternal grandmother was part Jewish. Himmler told intimates that he had discussed this with Hitler but that the Fuehrer had such regard for Heydrich's peculiar talents that he conveniently overlooked the blot on the ancestral escutcheon.

Heydrich had been raised as a dev-