

The Meaning Of Sebastian Haffner

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The Meaning Of Sebastian Haffner
According to the curator of a controversial exhibit at the Jewish Museum of New York in 2002, the Israeli media had claimed that one of the artworks displayed “‘turn[ed] the Holocaust into pornography ...

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The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust
Sometime in the near future, you are possibly going to do something that might have been unthinkable a few months ago: You are going to go see a movie. Maybe it’ll be a long-awaited reunion with ...

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97 Movies You’ll Want to See This Summer
² In what follows, I discuss how we use the term “pornography,” often imperceptibly, to make cultural meaning out of increasing anxieties ... (pp. 106-134) Sebastian Haffner, a prominent German ...

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A noted German journalist explains why Hitler’s campaign to transform the crippled republic of the 1930s into a military and industrial power convinced Germans at all levels of society that he was the nation’s savior

Defying Hitler was written in 1939 and focuses on the year 1933, when, as Hitler assumed power, its author was a 25-year-old German law student, in training to join the German courts as a junior administrator. His book tries to answer two questions people have been asking since the end of World War II: “How were the Nazis possible?” and “Why did no one stop them?” Sebastian Haffner’s vivid first-person account, written in real time and only much later discovered by his son, makes the rise of the Nazis psychologically comprehensible. “An astonishing memoir... [a] masterpiece.” — Gabriel Schoenfeld, The New York Times Book Review “A short, stabbing, brilliant book... It is important, first, as evidence of what one intelligent German knew in the 1930s about the unspeakable nature of Nazism, at a time when the overwhelming majority of his countrymen claim to have know nothing at all. And, second, for its rare capacity to reawaken anger about those who made the Nazis possible.” — Max Hastings, The Sunday Telegraph “Defying Hitler communicates one of the most profound and absolute feelings of exile that any writer has gotten between covers.” — Charles Taylor, Salon “Sebastian Haffner was Germany’s political conscience, but it is only now that we can read how he experienced the Nazi terror himself — that is a memoir of frightening relevance today.” — Heinrich Jaenicke, Stern “The prophetic insights of a fairly young man... help us understand the plight, as Haffner refers to it, of the non-Nazi German.” — The Denver Post “Sebastian Haffner’s Defying Hitler is a most brilliant and imaginative book — one of the most important books we have ever published.” — Lord Weidenfeld

Using his skills as a journalist, historian, and memoirist, Sebastian Haffner (author ofThe Meaning of Hitler) traces the development of the German Empire (1871-1945) and the central role of warfare that characterized the Reich. Haffner contends that Germany’s unfavorable geographic position had much to do with the state’s belligerence and that, from its inception, created the conflicts that culminated in two world wars. “The fruit of decades of study, the moving and sometimes very personal testament of an author whose works more than any others have influenced public opinion and challenged academic historians.” — Die Zeit “A brilliant work from the top hat of a powerful historical magician.” — Rudolf Augstein, Der Spiegel “A thoroughly successful work.” — Wiener Tagblatt “A book with more historical insights than a whole pile of learned volumes.” — Münchner Abendzeitung “The history of the Third Reich in just 43 pages? Impossible to do more than discuss a few features superficially. But not with Sebastian Haffner. This brilliant thinker — a journalist turned historian — reveals the fundamental lines of development in a way that anyone can follow. The pages bristle with questions and unexpected answers. The 300 pages of ‘The Ailing Empire’ contain more clever and original insights into German history between 1871 and 1945 than many a weighty tome.” — Dieter Wunderlich “This illuminating survey by a German journalist focuses on the continuities and discontinuities of the modern German Reich ... Haffner argues that the founding of the state was never regarded as a climactic achievement but rather as a springboard for expansion, and that Germany’s unfavorable geographic position had much to do with the state’s armed belligerence. The author also contends that the Reich was self-destructive almost from the beginning, creating a host of enemies who brought it to its knees in two world wars and eventually divided it. He describes how Hitler accelerated the catastrophic finish of the Reich by inopportunely taking on both the Russians and Americans, then tried to turn military defeat into the annihilation of the German people with his Nero Directive of March 18-19, 1945.” — Publishers Weekly “[The Ailing Empire] tells the story of yesterday’s Germans who made today. It is a story Americans must understand.” — San-Diego Union “Sebastian Haffner has written a book that traces the path of Germany’s political self-destruction, and offers a realistic account of the war’s real causes ... It is a highly readable analysis of the road from Bismarck to Hitler ... This book, based on many previously unpublished accounts, is a devastating portrait of human society.” —Chattanooga Times “This is a highly readable analysis of German history over the last century. A long-time journalist, Haffner asserts that the foundations of the German Reich were an inadequate basis for a modern nation state and contained the seeds of its own destruction. Though lacking documentation, Haffner’s first-hand recollections of the Nazi era are most interesting. Particularly noteworthy are his observations on daily life during the regime and his judgment regarding those literary and artistic ‘antis’ who chose ‘internal emigration’ within the Hitler state.” — Library Journal

Read by *Sebastian Haffner* 18-08-2019

Sebastian Haffner regarded himself as “a Prussian with a British passport.” In this overview of Prussia’s 170-year history as an independent state, he depicts Prussia’s evolution from a sensational 18th century success story – “a state based on law, one of the first in Europe” – to its absorption into the Third Reich where “the rule of law was the first thing that Hitler abolished.” In this succinct and readable book, Haffner argues that Hitler’s racial and nationality policy was the opposite of Prussia’s and Hitler’s political style, the very opposite of Prussian. “In his short book The Rise and Fall of Prussia Haffner combines a critical examination with a declaration of love for a state which always lived beyond its means ... but which managed to combine material poverty with intellectual grandeur.” — Michael Stürmer,Welt am Sonntag “Haffner sees Prussia’s history as the ‘tragedy of a purely rational state’. An agglomeration of arbitrary territories, it made a virtue of its artificiality, adapting to the enlightenment and then to romanticism, but finally also to nationalism, betraying the basis of its statehood and leading to its ultimate destruction.” — Chrisian Roth,Akademische Blätter “Haffner long regarded himself as a ‘Prussian with a British passport’. He identified with Prussia and its achievements: general compulsory schooling (1717), the abolition of torture (1740), the establishment of religious toleration (1740), Bismarck’s welfare state (1883), the medical giants Virchow, Koch, von Behring, the intellectual giants Kant, von Humboldt and von Schlegel, and much more. At the end of his book he recounted the (often-ignored) expulsion of millions of Prussians from their homeland in 1945. ‘It was an atrocity, the final atrocity of a war which had more than its share in atrocities, admittedly begun by Germany under Hitler.’ His message is very relevant today, when he praises those expelled for rejecting revenge and having the courage to say, ‘This is enough.’” — David Childs, The Independent

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A noted German journalist explains why Hitler’s campaign to transform the crippled republic of the 1930s into a military and industrial power convinced Germans at all levels of society that he was the nation’s savior

In this book written in early 1940 in England, Sebastian Haffner, a recent refugee from Nazi Germany, analyzed Hitler, the Nazis, the German population, and German émigrés. His purpose was to help the Allies wage “psychological warfare” against Nazi Germany, to correct misconceptions about the Nazi regime, and to outline “the foundation of future peace” in Europe. “Sebastian Haffner’s book is unmatched as a contemporary analysis of the Third Reich. It is quite remarkable that, writing in 1940, he could produce such acute insights into Hitler’s character and political hold over Germany” — Ian Kershaw “ ... excellent analysis of Germany’s ills ... Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles, according to [Haffner], is no mere musical fantasy but a national mania, a fixation, which is driving the nation, not as some imagine, to a great and noble destiny, but to damnation ... This is a particularly penetrating study of a phenomenon whose like history has, perhaps, not ever been seen before.” — The New York Times (August 1941) “Haffner’s clear-sighted analysis, applied mainly to the dissection of his fellow Germans, also annihilates any claim by his contemporaries not to have known about Nazi crimes. The nature of Hitler’s regime, he says, was well understood; all that is open to debate is the eagerness with which it was supported ... Apocryphally, Churchill told his cabinet to read this book so that they would understand the Nazi threat. We should do likewise to understand how close we came to ignoring it.” — The Observer “clear-sighted and perspicacious ... This brilliant journalist shows that it was possible to see and to hear and to draw one’s conclusions if one only had the will.” —Süddeutsche Zeitung “An alarm call trying to awaken the British to the unique nature of Hitler and the Nazi regime ... Remarkably prescient” — J. G. Ballard “A powerful and sustained text ... it explodes with rhetorical fireworks. Haffner produces a convincing picture of the Nazis, their numbers, their power and the destructive nihilism that united them” — Giles MacDonogh, BBC History

Written in the tradition of Stefan Zweig’s biographical studies, Haffner’s Churchill is a concise, effective, warts-and-all analysis of one of the giants of the twentieth century. Beginning with a brief history of the Churchill family, Haffner examines the future Prime Minister’s childhood; his early failures in school and in politics; his indomitable energy and drive; how he managed to become an inspirational figure to anti-Nazis all over the world; and how he managed to seize success from the jaws of defeat over and over again. Compact, elegant and incisive, this is the one book about Churchill that is a must-read. “One of the most brilliant things of any length written about Churchill.” — The Times Literary Supplement “Fast-moving and perceptive.” — The (London) Times “A wonderful portrait of Churchill.” — Die Zeit “A ravishing biography.” — Der Spiegel “[A] fascinating psychological study of Britain’s greatest war leader... a pleasure to put on your bookshelf” — Tribune “His Meaning of Hitler published in 1978 remains a masterpiece of historiography. His Churchill biography gives the first indication of his great talent for brief, wonderfully graphic insights.” — Süddeutsche Zeitung “Of all [Haffner’s] books, this is the one that stays in my memory.” — Marcel Reich-Ranicki “[Haffner] was an ‘admirer of great men’ and among all the biographies of Winston Churchill his brief sketch of the man who ‘risked Britain in order to defeat Hitler’ is a model of historically empathetic veneration.” — Joachim Fest “Astute, short, analytical, like all Haffner’s work. Cuts away anything that is not bare essential, what remains stays with you for a lifetime.” — J. AB Sennef, Quora “What distinguishes this brilliant biography is its partisanship. It does not list facts in order and evaluate them. Every sentence is witness to the fact that the biographer loves this man with all his failings.” — Wolfgang Frasnens, Belletristik Couch “A jewel. Haffner lived through the decisive years in Britain and gives a convincing description the fragile atmosphere in which Churchill fought his battles.” — Tarzan von Aquin “[Haffner was] one of the great historians and journalists of the last century.” —Andrew Roberts

Many scholars have tried to assess Adolf Hitler’s influence on the German people, usually focusing on university towns and industrial communities, most of them predominately Protestant or religiously mixed. This work by Walter Rinderle and Bernard Norling, however, deals with the impact of the Nazis on Oberschopfheim, a small, rural, overwhelmingly Catholic village in Baden-Wuerttemberg in southwestern Germany. This incisively written book raises fundamental questions about the nature of the Third Reich. The authors portray the Nazi regime as considerably less “totalitarian” than is commonly assumed, hardly an exemplar of the efficiency for which Germany is known, and neither revered nor condemned by most of its inhabitants. The authors suggest that Oberschopfheim merely accepted Nazi rule with the same resignation with which so many ordinary people have regarded their governments throughout history. Based on village and county records and on the direct testimony of Oberschopfheimers, this book will interest anyone concerned with contemporary Germany as a growing economic power and will appeal to the descendants of German immigrants to the United States because of its depiction of several generations of life in a German village.

The masterfully told story of what happened in Germany following its defeat in the first world war: the Kaiser’s exit from the stage, the sailors’ mutiny, the spreading of the revolution and its betrayal by its own chosen socialist leaders. Haffner recounts the murder of Karl Liebknecht and of Rosa Luxemburg — and the deliberate creation of those relentless counter-revolutionary forces that became the nightmare of the Third Reich. More than a brilliant historical study: it has vital lessons for our own day. “Haffner’s history of the revolution is unrivalled — tight, precise, passionately rational, brilliantly formulated.” — Profil/Wien “No-one else has described and analysed the events of 1918/19 that were decisive for the century as well and as convincingly as Sebastian Haffner.” — Tagespiegel “For Haffner, the revolution was a social-democratic revolution. That it was nevertheless ultimately suppressed bloodily by social-democratic politicians confirms Haffner’s suspicion that this was a case of betrayal.” — Norddeutscher Rundfunk(North German Radio) “Haffner’s book is one of the few that breaks open previously locked doors and shines a light on dark corners of our past.” — Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger “Sebastian Haffner’s brilliant intellect clarifies contrasts and similarities in situations, motivations and deeds and describes lucidly and dramatically the main lines of the complex developments from September 1918 to January 1919.” — Dieter Wunderlich “Those who know Haffner’s method of making the writing of history an inspection of the past motivated by the present, will appreciate this book.” — zitty/Berlin

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