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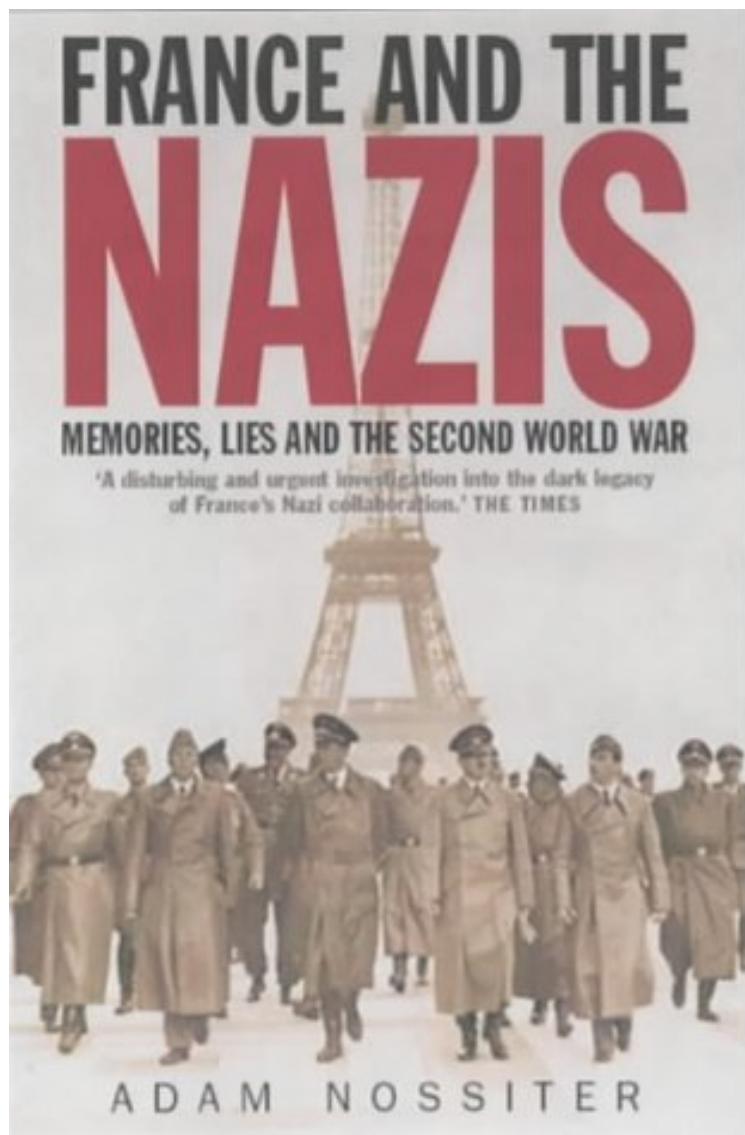


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Adam Nossiter

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(Free read ebook) France and the Nazis: Memories, Lies and the Second World War

France and the Nazis: Memories, Lies and the Second World War

Adam Nossiter : France and the Nazis: Memories, Lies and the Second World War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised France and the Nazis: Memories, Lies and the Second World War:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Love it!By Lindan QuetelardI love this book! It gives a frank view into the mentality of at least some of the French during the German occupation of France. I think Adam Nossiter was in a unique position to write this book; being an American who spent a lot of time in France as a child he could understand the culture, and, of course the language. But being an "outsider" perhaps was an advantage, as many

French will not, even today, discuss the what happened during the war among themselves. I was struck by how negatively the people of Tulle viewed the resistant fighters and blamed the reprisals on them rather than the Germans. And also how the citizens of Bordeaux couldn't understand why the world kept "harping on" the deportation of the Jews. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in the occupation of France during WWII.

26 of 27 people found the following review helpful. fascinating and illuminating, uncovers the myths of the past

By Larry Mark - Editor of MyJewishBooksDotCom

Should sleeping dogs be left to lie (or tell lies)? There are those who wish not to remember, and those who find it difficult to forget. In 1966, Adam Nossiter was six years of age and living in Paris' 14e with his family. His father was a reporter for The Washington Post, covering France and President de Gaulle. His father was enamored with the big-nosed President. It was a time that you heard "[I / That person] was in the resistance" as much as you heard "Bonjour." De Gaulle promoted the myth that all of France was in the Resistance against Hitler and that the Vichy government was benign. Not even the Jews of France and the Marais discussed the deportations of 25% of their co-religionists. The film, "The Sorrow and the Pity," was banned from French television. Why mess up a pleasant life and a myth-based collective conscious with reality, let's just forget. As a child, Nossiter remembers that he stayed away from their home's sewing room. It was the place where it was said that the prior tenant, Thierry de Martel, a famed brain surgeon (but a right wing, anti Semitic French nationalist) killed himself when German troops entered Paris in June 1940. The sewing room cast a shadow on the author's childhood, just a WWII, its war crimes, and its myths cast a shadow on French society to this day.

In light of the recent trend of some French citizens to face the truth about not only Vichy collaboration, but Vichy's striving to do rid the country of democracy and the republic and replace it with authoritarian rule, Nossiter travels to three towns in France to illuminate France's population and their legacy of WWII. He lives there over 3 years. His quotes the papers from the time, its ads, the trials, its calls for a Juif-free culture. In Bordeaux, he follows the unsettling six month trial of 87 year old Maurice Papon, who stood accused of deporting 8 of 10 trains of 1,560 French Jews to their deaths (as the post-war head of the police in Paris under de Gaulle, he also helmed the murders of dozens of Algerian protestors). The trial provokes the population and stirs up memories; it is seen as an irritation by many of the old guard. In a dilapidated Vichy, the seat of the collaborationist government, the author researches what really happened during the war, and what myths were created about collaboration and resistance. Why were only 28,000 of the 1.5 million Vichy functionaries ever reprimanded? Is living in Vichy like residing in a town named Dachau? Why should Vichy take the blame when Petain was just as popular in Paris? In Tulle, a town relatively shielded from the war, he listens for the echoes of a Nazi massacre that occurred in June 1944.

Nossiter, a former reporter for The NYT and the Atlanta Journal Constitution brings to French History the same keen observations that he brought to his previous work on Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers. Can a time of illogic be judged from the current time of logic? How do you live with the past? How do the victims continue to live with the persecutors? How do myths make life easier? Nossiter's writing style pulls you in with the force of a whirlpool. By the way, for those wondering about the title, the Algeria Hotel in Vichy housed the offices of the Commissariat Generale aux Questions Juives (but if you ask some of people who worked for the commission, they will tell you to this day that they didn't know what went on there)

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Literature, Not History

By John P. Rooney

"Algeria Hotel" by Adam Nossiter. Subtitled: "France, Memory, And The Second World War". Houghton Mifflin Company, New York 2001.

Adam Nossiter is an excellent writer. In this book, he has attempted to catch the conscience of the French Nation by examining their memory of collaboration with the Nazis during the Second World War. Armed with an excellent command of the French language, he spent some three years in the towns of Bordeaux, Tulle and Vichy, itself. He was at Bordeaux for the trial of Maurice Papon, who had collaborated with the Germans in the removal of French Jews from France. The author, Adam Nossiter, interviewed various people, high and low levels, about their war time experiences. He records a general reluctance of the French to discuss their roles in the war and at the Vichy government center in that tiny spa town. When the interview came to the question of the French Jews and the Vichy collaboration which permitted the Nazis to transport the Jews out of France, the people being interviewed really shut down.

The author has expended a great effort on making the book great literature. His writing delves into the basic human condition in that he examines why we are willing to forget the bad times, the evil that has been done , and we bury the those memories under "good" memories. Having said that, I would like to record that the statement of Maurice Papon, on page 84, really defines the difficulties of the Historian in reconstructing the past, event the recent past. The author has written excellent literature, but Mr. Nossiter has missed the mark in writing History. After I had finished the book, I was able to quote "Mark the music" (Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice", 5.1), as to the quality of the writing, but as to the history, I struggled to recall if Maurice Papon had been convicted of collaborating, and if so, what was his sentence?

The book has period photos of the certain buildings in each town. One of the most poignant was the photo of Fr. Jean Espinasse, the R.C. priest who attended the victims of the hanging in Tulle.

On June 9th, 1944, citizens of Tulle, France silently watched as soldiers lazily consumed cherries from the abundant trees, whilst hanging nooses from its leafy branches in preparation for the murder of 99 randomly selected Frenchmen, condemned for being Jews. This gruesomely vivid image is emblematic of the Vichy regime's enthusiastic application

of its Nazi masters' policy towards the Jews and is one of many memories rejected by the people of France today. In "France and the Nazis", journalist Adam Nossiter explores the conscience of a nation. Following the trial of Maurice Papon, the government official connected with the deportation of 1500 Jews to Nazi death camps, Nossiter seeks "those who might have reason for not remembering". Instead he encounters many who are self-serving, dismissive and forgetful. Vichy, the capital of occupied France, housed the Gestapo headquarters; here, Nossiter finds many who confess ignorance to the government's actions and memories that have been distorted to provide a comfortable view of the past. In Tulle, site of the aforementioned atrocity, the victims' families are still angry, whilst to others the incident seems to assume the texture of a long-forgotten dream. This is a searching study of the ghosts of modern France - from collaboration to collusion to compromise - and a resonant story about how we remember and why we forget.

From Publishers Weekly Nossiter takes on some weighty issues in this disappointing study. A former New York Times journalist and author of *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers*, he spent part of his childhood in De Gaulle's France, which prided itself on resisting the Nazis, until in later decades, a much uglier truth France's cooperation with the Nazi regime and its deportation of Jews began to come to light. Nossiter attempts to explore the effects of this double consciousness through three communities. First, he focuses on the trial, in Bordeaux, of Maurice Papon, who was instrumental in deporting French Jews to the camps of Eastern Europe. Nossiter then moves on to Vichy, a resort town-turned-headquarters of Ptain's Collaborationist government. The book's last section deals with the southern working-class town of Tulle, where, in retaliation for a Resistance raid, the SS rounded up the town's men and publicly hanged 99 of them in a single afternoon. Nossiter has done his homework: the book is replete with names, facts, anecdotes and observations. But he set himself a near-impossible task to take the pulse of an entire country and compounds it with a first-person narrative that keeps readers from engaging with the people and events described. Add to this the fact that Nossiter is delving back 50 years, and the result is a series of disconnected and uneven vignettes connected by Nossiter's constant reminders to readers of what he's trying to do. His voice is not compelling enough to carry such a lengthy, weighty narrative. Nossiter's exploration will likely be sought out only by Francophiles (and Francophobes) and those interested in scholarly research on the topic. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal It should surprise no one that the four years of fascist rule in France, anathematized with the humble disyllable "Vichy," spark memories so painful and humiliating for those who lived through them that many have felt that the entire episode was better relegated to oblivion. Employing journalistic persistence and scholarly fastidiousness, reporter and author Nossiter (*Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers*) explores the peculiar relationship between truth and memory via interviews with some who witnessed that time, many of whom wished never to recall what they had seen and some who simply denied it altogether. This book ponders the function of memory and the willingness of the French to come to terms with their history. Not a scholarly study but a journalist's investigation, this is an excellent complement to the work of Robert O. Paxton (*Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*) and is recommended for both public and academic libraries. Michael F. Russo, Louisiana State Univ. Libs., Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist The behavior of the French populace under Nazi occupation remains an open sore on the French psyche. Despite de Gaulle's efforts to foster the myth of a heroic, broad-based resistance, it has long been clear that the responses of ordinary French citizens ran the gamut from resistance to enthusiastic cooperation with the occupiers. Nossiter is a journalist who spent part of his childhood in France in the 1960s. His observations here are the results of three years of recent traveling, interviewing, and listening to the views of ordinary French citizens who directly experienced the occupation. What emerges is a portrait of people still struggling to come to terms with their past, on both an individual and a communal basis. Some of the individuals viewed here are truly admirable and heroic; others are evasive and perhaps contemptible. Of course, most seem human and ambivalent--they apparently saw the occupation as something to be endured and survived as best as possible. This is a powerfully revealing and important contribution to a continuing controversy. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved