

Germany - Jekyll and Hyde - an eyewitness analysis of Nazi Germany
by Sebastian Haffner. Libris 2005.

I have been reading history books about Germany, and volumes on the Shoah for 35 years, and it is easy to think that another tome on the subject of one or the other will have little that is fresh to report. It is a joy then to discover *Germany - Jekyll and Hyde*, and to be able to say that it is one of the most magnificent, stirring, powerful and convincing books of its kind that I have ever read.

Sebastian Haffner, nom de plume of an 'Aryan' lawyer named Raimund Pretzel, left Germany in 1938 because of his engagement to a Jewish woman and came to London as a refugee. The German conquest of Poland in September 1939 inspired him to write the book as informative propaganda for the Western enemies of Nazi Germany. Coining the term 'psychological warfare' Haffner set out to deconstruct Germany, Nazism and the Nazis and thus provide the Allies with the information they needed to end and eradicate what he saw as a vile scourge.

The book is divided into eight sections: Hitler, The Nazi Leaders, The Nazis, The Loyal Population, The Disloyal Population, The Opposition, The Emigrés and Possibilities.

Haffner's argument and invective are glorious - he writes with a literary anger that is white hot about the Nazi regime and Hitler in particular - and although the subject matter is very serious it is hard to avoid the occasional smile at his prose.

Haffner presents, inter alia, the best analysis ever of why the Nazis gained power in Germany and of the psyche of the country broken down into its constituent parts, some of which he felt held the key to Germany's future liberation and salvation. He is also prescient in his forecasting of a European Union/Common Market as the only structure in which a new Germany could be constrained and encouraged to play a constructive role.

Germany - Jekyll and Hyde should be essential reading for all students of Nazi Germany and the Shoah. Even though Haffner in 1939/40 could not foresee the effect of the victories of 41-43 on the German mindset, and even though some of what he says in 1939/40 was thus undermined, the book overall is superb, and as brilliant a piece of taut journalism as you could wish to read.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh