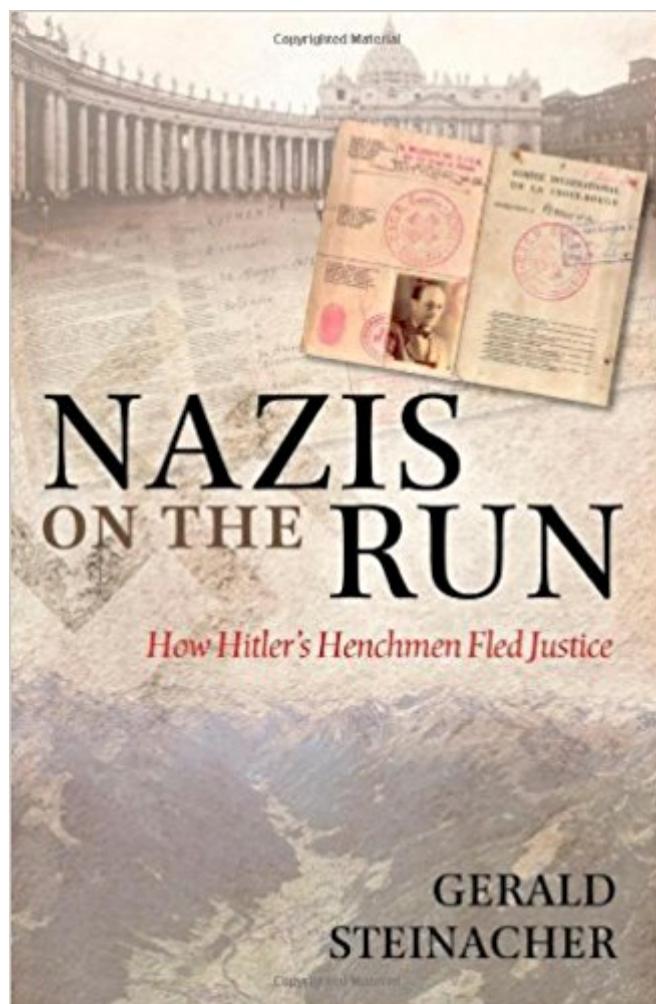


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Nazis On The Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice



Synopsis

After World War II, rumors circulated that a secret organization named "Odessa" had smuggled Nazi war criminals out of Europe, a rumor further fueled by the wildly popular novel *The Odessa File*. But "Odessa" was nothing more than a myth. Now, in *Nazis on the Run*, historian Gerald Steinacher provides the true story of how the Nazis escaped their fate. Steinacher not only reveals how Nazi war criminals escaped from justice at the end of the Second World War, fleeing through the Tyrolean Alps to Italian seaports, but he also highlights the key roles played by the Red Cross, the Vatican, and the Secret Services of the major powers. The book takes a hard look at the International Committee of the Red Cross, proving that identification papers issued by the Red Cross made it possible for thousands of Nazis, war criminals, and collaborators--including Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengale--to slip through the hands of justice and to find refuge in North and South America, Spain, and the Near East. Steinacher underscores the importance of the South Tyrol as a "ratline" from Germany to Italy and also reveals that many figures in the Catholic Church--sometimes knowingly, other times unwittingly--were involved in large-scale Nazi smuggling, often driven by the fear of an imminent communist takeover of Italy. Finally, the book documents how the Counter Intelligence Corps and later the CIA recruited former SS men to advise U.S. intelligence agencies and smuggled them out of Soviet-occupied areas of Austria and Eastern Europe into Italy and on to South America. Based on extensive research in newly opened archives, *Nazis on the Run* is the first book to provide a complete picture of this little-known story of justice denied.

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Customer Reviews

Gerald Steinacher's 'Nazis auf der Flucht' offers a well-researched, deeply engaging, and exhaustive analysis of escape routes of high-ranking Nazis and war criminals via Italy to Argentina and other overseas destinations. It makes an important contribution to our understanding of Nazi escape routes, for it not only demystifies the Odessa myth, but also sheds light on the complicity of influential organizations such as the Catholic Church, the International Red Cross, and the U.S. and Argentinean governments. Natalie Eppelsheimer, German Studies Review Coming now and in the next few weeks are at least two important new works of nonfiction about the Nazis besides Larson's, from Austrian historian Gerald Steinacher and British historian Frederick Taylor. Philipp Kerr, Washington Post Steinacher uses an array of records including recently declassified US intelligence files, various official Italian and German archives, the archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva, Catholic Church records from the National Catholic Welfare Conference and from the Instituto Santa Maria dell'Anima (the German/Austrian Church in Rome), and a host of local records from South Tyrolean towns. The result is a fine study and a great read. Norman W. Goda, The International History Review Gerald Steinacher describes exactly how they managed this in "Nazis on the Run"-only the second authoritative book on the subject, after Uki Goni's "The Real Odessa" (2002). Philip Kerr, Wall Street Journal Steinacher offers much new information Robert Knight, Times Literary Supplement a well-written book that is packed with startling information and grubby stories about the moral cost of political exigency. David Cesarnani New Statesman In this murky world of hidden identities, deception and secrets, it is good to have a book as level-headed as this one, based on thorough research. Richard J. Evans, The Guardian This book will be the standard for generations of historians who wish to study the fate of Hitler's followers who evaded justice for decades or escaped it altogether. Recommended. Library Journal

Gerald Steinacher is currently a Joseph A. Schumpeter Research Fellow at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University and Lecturer on Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

The Authors research was undeniably as solid and thorough as one could ever desire. "In a court case, that is. And yet eventually one night, I was audibly saying to my Kindle - "Please, just get on with it!" The Author told us again and

again (and again) about the Italians, the Red Cross, the Vatican, the Americans and a call list of nasty Nazis in an only-too-familiar plot. Before the Author could go through every first Adolph, to every last Zimmerman in page-scorched 1945 German telephone book, I had to delete „Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice“ off my Kindle, with a degree of annoyance over this wasted purchase. I wish I had noticed the excellent reviews of fellow readers here on . And I wish the Author might have listened to some honest comment, even if it was a hurtful criticism of a First Draft from his Publishers next door neighbour's uncle. Anything might have helped change this tome from a tomb...It's as boring as hell.

The fact that thousands of Nazi criminals and their accomplices fled justice and were never caught has been known for many years. To give just one example, one of them, Eugen Dollmann, who belonged to the infamous SS, remained hidden under the protection of Cardinal Schuster in Italy, whence he wrote in his memoirs that "after successfully escaping from an Allied prisoner-of-war camp 'I had battled adventurously all the way to Milan. Shortly afterwards, scruffy and wrapped in an old English office's coat, I stood facing Cardinal Schuster. The cardinal smiled gently: 'You don't need to say anything ,Dr Dollmann. Over the past few years you have done a great deal for the Church. Now the Church will do something for you'....The Church did something for me. It sheltered me..."Dollmann was not alone benefiting from the hospitality of the Catholic church. He was just one of the many Nazi criminals who were hidden by the Vatican and in Italy, and many of these made their way to a safe haven, mainly to South America, some to the Middle East, where they were welcome in Lebanon or Syria. Most of this fascinating book is devoted to Italy, since that country was to become an all-important highway for war criminals on their way to overseas destinations. Escape routes through Italy started functioning in 1946 and the majority of Nazis fleeing from Europe passed through Italian harbours on their journey abroad. The German-speaking population of South Tyrol was the one which was to play an essential role in aiding the fugitives. This is precisely one of the main themes on which the author zeroes in. He describes the bonds of the ethno-nationalism of the Tyroleans with the other Germans, and the book highlights how the set of conditions facilitated the emergence of an escape hatch in South Tyrol. Former Nazis and SS officers fleeing from Germany or Eastern Europe to Italy crossed the Austrian territory that lay in between. They were taken over the Brenner pass on smuggling routes. These smuggling ways and the smugglers themselves star copiously in the pages which follow. Some of the smugglers made no distinction between German criminals whose destination was South America and those Jews who were fleeing

illegally to Palestine. Networks of assistance in South Tyrol were well organized and able to provide war criminals and SS officers on the run with essential items, among them new identity papers under false names. Another original part looks at the role played by the Red Cross (then known as the International Committee of the Red Cross) in aiding willingly or unwillingly those arch-criminals. The Red Cross failed to speak out against the Holocaust despite having clear information on what was happening to the Jews of Europe. Among those who made use of the Red Cross papers were Adolf Eichmann, Josef Mengele and Franz Stangl, who used transit papers from the Red Cross to flee abroad. Evidence shows that by 1951 at least 120000 travel documents were issued, and thousands of them were given to war criminals and collaborators from all over Europe. The book also shows in great detail to what extent the Vatican and the Red Cross were working together in their efforts to assist those henchmen. Many leaders of the Catholic Church were also involved in large-scale smuggling. The main motive was the need to fight against Communism, which was godless, and many letters which were exchanged between bishops in the USA and Italy show the fear of a communistic takeover in Italy, which had the strongest communist party in post-war Western Europe. The main character to populate the pages which describe this is Bishop Alois Hudal, who enjoyed a close relationship and ties to Pope Pius 12th. Severely anti-Semitic and a Hitler ardent supporter, Hudal saw the Catholic Church as an instrument which would re-Christianize Europe after years of pagan Nazi rule, thus being a tool to fight communism. Another part of the book shows to what extent the Allies made use of famous Nazis in recruiting them to work for the Western intelligence services. This was one of the many signs which started the Cold War, because it was believed that the Third World War was only a matter of time. So why not recruit former criminals to advise US intelligence agencies by helping those SS men to escape through the famous ratlines? These were smuggled out of Soviet-occupied areas of Austria and Eastern Europe into Italy and on to South America. In the words of the author, these people were "recycled and deployed against the communist enemy starting from 1947, when the Americans supported the escape of any SS men from Europe, especially those who had intelligence and/or anticommunist experience". The 'ratlines' was a spy jargon word used to refer to prepared routes along which refugees or agents could be smuggled in or out of enemy territories. Both sides would benefit, since the SS men in Italy wanted to escape from the war with as little punishment as possible, therefore they negotiated their surrender to the Allies, offering additional services to the victors. The last part of the book describes the fate of those who managed to escape to Argentina, a country which became the most popular refuge for Nazi criminals. This country was interested in German scientists and other specialists after the collapse of the Third Reich. President Peron wanted to

modernize the army and his officials concentrated on recruiting mostly the middle level of scientists and military officers, leaving the top to the Soviets, the British, and the Americans. Argentina was an attractive destination for immigrants from Europe, especially those who came from South European countries. But tens of thousands of Germans were to immigrate into Argentina after the end of WW2, and, according to statistical data, some 800 Nazis and military experts from Germany and Austria immigrated there. A 1953 CIA report described the wide range of German experts and groups coming to Argentina, adding that the intention of them was to carry on Nazi activities. "A substantial stream of German immigration, including Wermacht and SS veterans, Nazi economists, propagandists, intelligence agents, scientists, and military specialists, has flowed into Argentina since 1945". Not all the efforts of the Argentinian authorities in exploiting the expertise of the Nazis were successful. Its attempt to join the circle of nuclear powers with the help of German scientist Ronald Richter was a total fiasco. Another criminal, Franz Rubatscher, who played a significant role in the attempted Nazi putsch in the Tyrol area in 1934 and was an SS man came with his family to Argentina, where he would meet other ex-Nazi henchmen, among them Erich Priebke and Fritz Lantschner, the Gauamtsleiter of South Tyrol. This book shows to what extent hypocrisy played a central role in the way the Allies employed it when dealing with the Nazi criminals. It shows the extent of governments' silence and the way nongovernmental agencies or private institutions and people contributed to the flight of Nazis. The book is extremely well researched and documented, making use of never-before-seen documents and testimonies, among them that of Hudal's close confidant. Archives from at least six countries were used and researched, in addition to regional, church and corporate archives, as well as the internal correspondence of the Red Cross archive in Geneva. The book also points out the shifting perspectives of history and the historiography regarding this painful topic and shows the discrepancy between realpolitik and moral standards. I can only highly recommend this brilliant and superb book to anyone who has an interest in this interesting and controversial subject.

A good resource for researchers, being full of specific examples, but for the casual reader, this gets a little repetitive. Covers the situation in South Tyrol well, explaining the historical background which made the border province sympathetic to escaping Nazis. Also covers the background to the situation which made Argentina a prime destination. However, anyone looking for a 'light read' will be disappointed.

This is a very scholarly book yet also very readable. It presents only useful info and does not pull

punches about the Red Cross, the Vatican and U S Intel.

we just returned from a two week vacation in Germany. We stayed in Garmisch which is in the heart of Bavaria. Garmisch-Partenkirchen is where the 1936 Winter Olympics were held. On one of our tours into a town in Northern Italy in the Brenner Pass area, our tour guide told us about the Goldenes Kreuz. This is where Adolph Eichmann and Joseph Mengele stayed on forged papers out of the Vatican. I was able to get pictures of the hotel while there. This well written book explains further many other interesting details. Wish I would have read it prior to trip.

This is an amazing account of how so many Nazis--infamous or not--'disappeared' after WWII. It traces the routes used, and names the people and organizations who opened the routes. The effort was a product of the Cold War. A good read.

This book is way too long.

This is a sound, penetrating study, and very interesting, of course. The author's findings are well-grounded. Nevertheless the book is too detailed and the number of source examples should have been reduced.

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