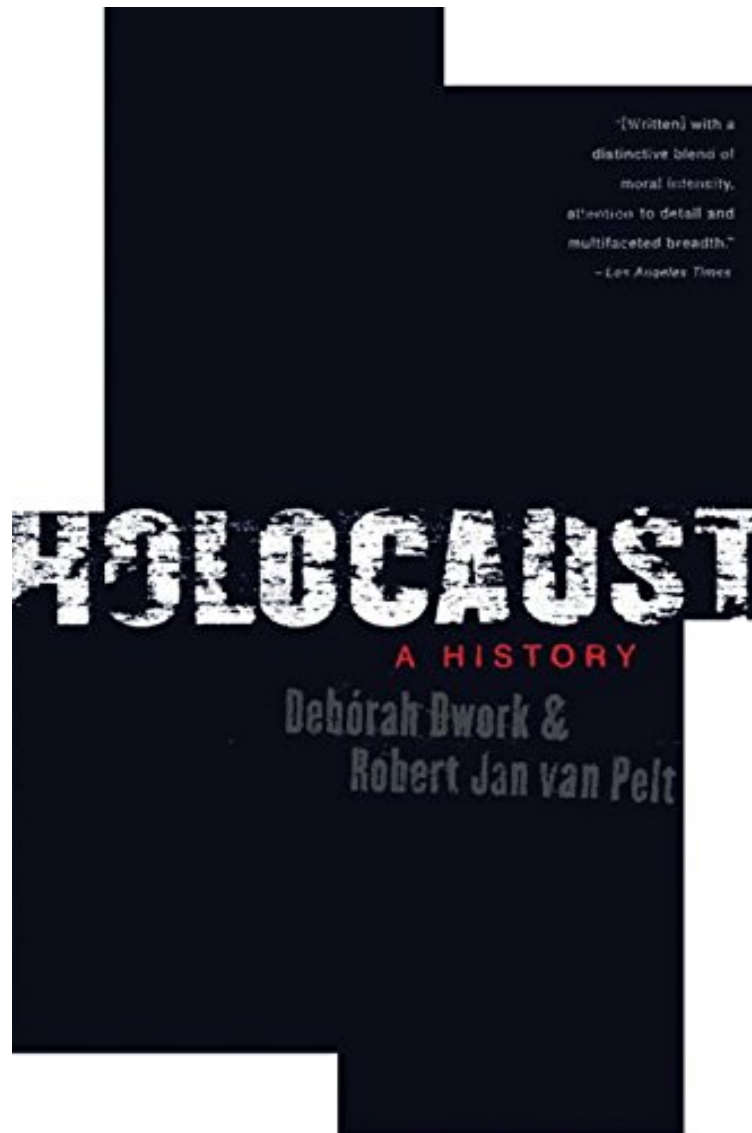


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Holocaust: A History

Debrah Dwork, Robert Jan van Pelt

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Debrah Dwork, Robert Jan van Pelt : Holocaust: A History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Holocaust: A History:

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A magisterial, dramatic account that reshapes the way we think and talk about the greatest crime in history. Unrivaled in reach and scope, Holocaust illuminates the long march of events, from the Middle Ages to the modern era, which led to this great atrocity. It is a story of all Europe, of Nazis and their allies, the experience of wartime occupation, the suffering and strategies of marked victims, the failure of international rescue, and the success of individual rescuers. It alone in Holocaust literature negotiates the chasm between the two histories, that of the perpetrators and of the victims and their families, shining new light on German actions and Jewish reactions. No other book in any language has so embraced this multifaceted story. Holocaust uniquely makes use of oral histories recorded by the authors over fifteen years across Europe and the United States, as well as never-before-analyzed archival documents, letters, and diaries; it contains in addition seventy-five illustrations and sixteen original maps, each accompanied by an extended caption. This book is an original analysis of a defining event. 14 maps, 75 illustrations

From Publishers Weekly During the past half-century Holocaust studies have perhaps become the most vital area of historical research. Yet books with the significance of this new history of the Holocaust are rare it is exhaustive as well as consistently insightful. From the opening chapters in which the authors, contradicting popular wisdom, argue that the direct eliminationist roots of the Holocaust are found not so much in the centuries-old European anti-Semitic legal regulations, but in the Inquisition's intention of social purification, the Terror of the French Revolution and the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turks in 1915 Dwork and van Pelt challenge and provoke. Rather than viewing the Holocaust as a distinct historical phenomenon, the authors do their best to integrate it into a wide range of historical, cultural and social conditions. In discussing the German subjugation of Poland, for example, they focus on how gentile Poles saw the extermination of Jews as a precursor to their own fate; in their discussion of how Jews coped with ghetto life, the authors examine in detail the underground schooling systems that benefited both students and teachers. They also place the history of rescue efforts (usually based on personalities such as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg) in a broader and more complicated geographic and social perspective. The book is also filled with fascinating details that challenge our preconceptions for instance, it is a myth, they note, that King Christian of Denmark wore a yellow star in sympathy with his country's Jews, since no Nazi order was ever given for Danish Jews to be so identified. Like their important earlier work Auschwitz (winner of a National Jewish Book Award), this is beautifully and lucidly written, presenting complex and important information in a highly accessible manner. 75 illus., 16 maps. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This thoroughgoing work does not treat the Holocaust as an addendum to World War II but as a separate event deserving its own account. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Dwork and Van Pelt are the authors of Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present (1996), a history of the site that has come to epitomize evil. In their new book, their aim is to "untangle the paradoxical developments that led to the murder of six million Jews who--in the heart of a civilization that thought itself the zenith of human history--were identified, disenfranchised, marked, imprisoned, and killed because their existence was seen as a blot on the very civilization to which they had contributed so much." To achieve this goal, the authors examine such issues as the historic relationship between Jews, gentiles, and Germans; World War I and its consequences; National Socialism in the Weimar Republic; the Third Reich and its anti-Semitic measures; worldwide refugee policies that became a disaster for the Jews; and Jewish and gentile life under German occupation. They also examine the efforts by Allied nations to help the Jews and conclude that rescue operations were "small and far between." This is a monumental work of impeccable scholarship. George Cohen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved