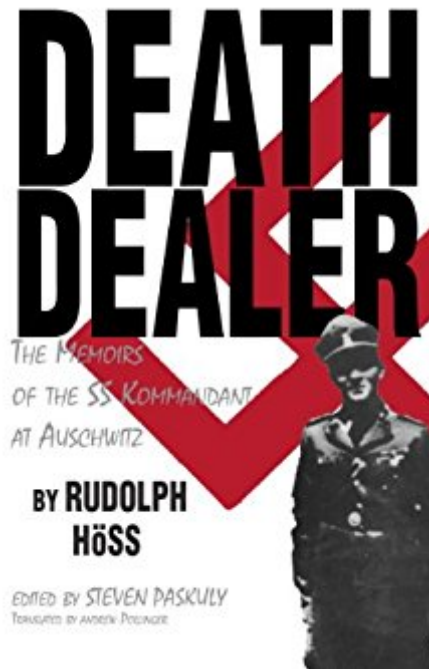


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Death Dealer: The Memoirs Of The SS Kommandant At Auschwitz



Synopsis

By his own admission, SS Kommandant Rudolf Höß was history's greatest mass murderer, having personally supervised the extermination of approximately two million people, mostly Jews, at the death camp in Auschwitz, Poland. *Death Dealer* is the first complete translation of Höß's memoirs into English. These bone-chilling memoirs were written between October 1946 and April 1947. At the suggestion of Professor Stanislaw Batavia, a psychologist, and Professor Jan Shen, the prosecuting attorney for the Polish War Crimes Commission in Warsaw, Höß wrote a lengthy and detailed description of how the camp developed, his impressions of the various personalities with whom he dealt, and even the extermination of millions in the gas chambers. This written testimony is perhaps the most important document attesting to the Holocaust, because it is the only candid, detailed, and (for the most part) honest description of the Final Solution from a high-ranking SS officer intimately involved in carrying out the plans of Hitler and Himmler. With the cold objectivity of a common hit-man, Höß chronicles the discovery of the most effective poison gas, and the technical obstacles that often thwarted his aim to kill as efficiently as possible. Staring at the horror without reacting, Höß allowed conditions at Auschwitz to reduce human beings to walking skeletons - then he labelled them as subhumans fit only to die. Readers will witness Höß's shallow rationalizations as he tries to balance his deeds with his increasingly disturbed, yet always ineffectual, conscience.

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Customer Reviews

Rudolf Hoess was captured shortly after the war and wrote this amazing collection of thoughts observations and descriptions while on trial and while waiting to be executed. Hoess explains very clearly the history, structure and mission of the camps (not just Auschwitz) to include just about every aspect, from blockleader, Kapo, guard to Kommandant, even discussing the pros and cons of using dogs as guards. His descriptions of the gassing process are spellbinding and shocking all at once, you feel almost obscene while reading them as if you were the one looking through the peep-hole in the door as these poor people die...it is that vivid. He describes the architectural concerns that were taken into account while designing and building (book contains diagrams and photos as well) the crematoriums. He does not deny his role, but he does fall back on the old "just following orders" excuse, and saying that he was betrayed by the higher up in the Nazi party. He describes some unusual things in this book, for example, he tells of how well his children got along with the inmates, asking for cigarettes to pass out to them, he speaks of the most daring and ingenious escapes that he witnessed while in the camps, he speaks of the difficulties that could be avoided by fooling inmates into thinking up to the last moment that they were really only going to the shower, not an execution/murder, he recalls some of the most haunting words and deeds of prisoners just before the doors to the gas chamber were closed. There is one recollection that really disturbed me, it concerned a young girl who somehow survives the Cyclone-B gassing under a pile of fellow prisoners, is revived, given food and clothes only to be discovered by a guard and executed.

On April 16, 1947, Rudolph Hoess, the infamous Kommandant of Auschwitz was hanged in his former concentration camp for, "crimes against the Polish people." While awaiting trial, Hoess, who knew he would pay for his crimes with his life, sought to renew the spiritual connection he had eschewed as a youth. Accordingly, he recounted his time in the SS for his captors. His story is also that of the darkest side of the Third Reich. The book begins with a discussion of the, "final solution," of the Jewish Question. He tells how he was ordered to establish a camp at Auschwitz for the purpose of eliminating, "enemies of the state." Details of camp construction and experiments to find the appropriate gas he describes without emotion. Yet he relates questions asked by young SS

soldiers and inmates as to how small children could be an "enemy." His "party line" response fooled some, but never himself. Hoess also describes the victims he tried to destroy. Jews had "strong family ties;" gypsies were, "childlike;" the Jehovah's Witnesses were worthy of emulation. The SS was challenged to have the same devotion to the Fuhrer as they had to Jehovah. In chapter 22 he describes the gassing process as only he could do. His primary concern was to dispatch his victims quickly and efficiently without displaying emotion that would affect young guards. Here, he admits, he hid behind an iron mask. Particularly interesting is the story of a young, extremely attractive, Jewish girl who fought back even as she was undressing for the gas chamber. Resistance was rare but in this case, effective; deadly effective! The book describes his early life and the events that caused him and many others to blindly follow the SS motto: "Fuhrer, you order. We obey!"

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