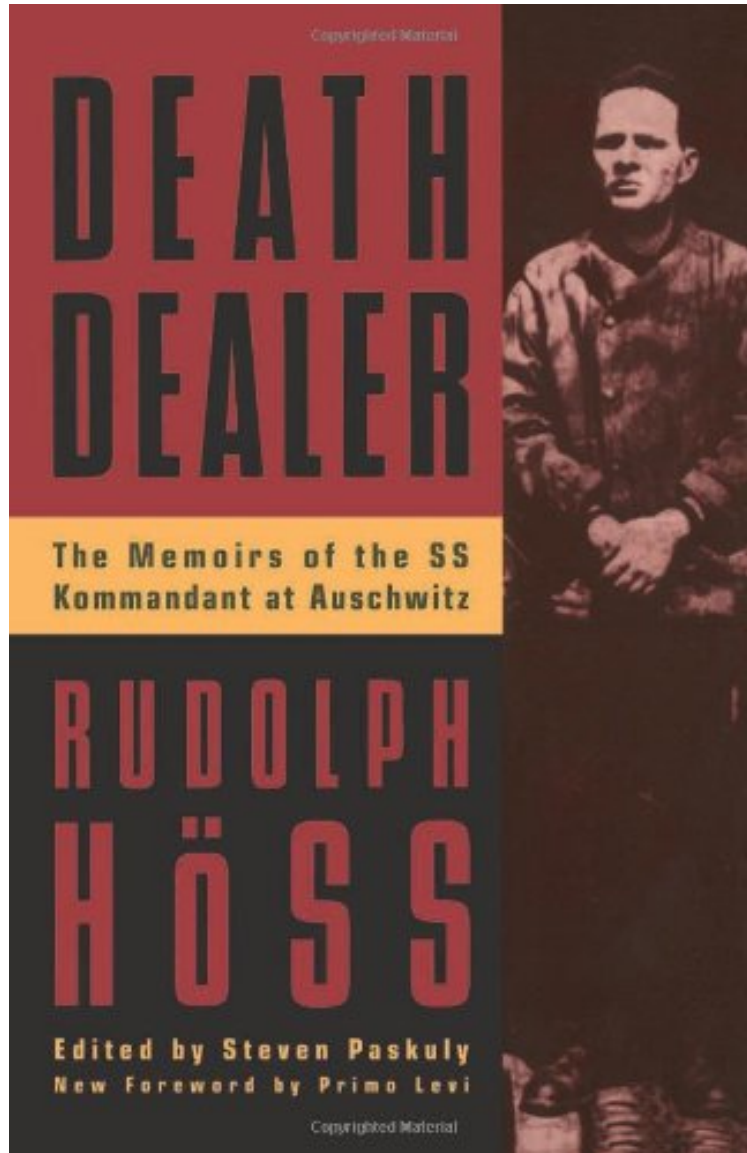


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## Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz

*Rudolf Höss*

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**Rudolf Höss : Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. credible account of incredible inhumanityBy ALMy main concern reading Rudolf Hoess' memoirs was how credible I would find them. I knew he wrote them while in Polish custody, and I was afraid some Marxist official had written them and just put Hoess' name on them.Having finished the book, I

can report that I find it believable that Hoess wrote them. There are enough descriptions of things that don't incriminate Hoess or the Third Reich and would serve no propaganda value from a Marxist or Polish perspective, that I do find the book credible. For example, Hoess compares the Allied treatment of German POWs with German treatment of Soviet POWs: "The army was not prepared for the masses of prisoners captured in 1941. The entire bureaucracy handling POWs was much too rigid and immovable and could not improvise quickly to meet the situation. By the way, the German POWs did not fare any better during the collapse in May 1945. The Allies also were not prepared for this mass influx. The prisoners were simply herded together on suitable terrain, surrounded by barbed wire, and then left to themselves. The German POWs suffered the same way as the Russians did." p. 132. With that observation, Hoess foreshadows James Bacques' assertions in his book, *Other Losses*, first published in the 1980s. *Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners at the Hands of the French and Americans after World War II* For the most part, Hoess' assertions are believable. The most difficult to take seriously regard the *Sonderkommando*, the prisoners who were made to dispose of the bodies of gassed victims; he has them eating food, while handling corpses of people who've just been murdered with poison gas, on page 45. This edition of this book includes much additional material, including a foreword by Primo Levi, in which he addresses whether the book might not be genuine; he points out that the "confessions extorted by... the Moscow Trials of the 1930's had an entirely different tone." p.9. This edition also includes "final letters" Hoess wrote his family, profiles of the camps and profiles of the SS, written by Hoess. The latter includes a lengthy and scathing description of Heinrich Himmler, in which Hoess claims "[I]n the summer of 1941 Himmler summoned me to Berlin to give me the disastrous and harsh order for the mass annihilation of the Jews from all over Europe." p.286. Appendices include a quote from the "Reminiscences of Pery Broad," from KL Auschwitz as Seen by the SS, about a massacre at an Auschwitz sub-camp called Buda, a Chronology of Important Events at Auschwitz-Birkenau, by Danuta Czech, and the complete Wannsee Conference Minutes. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Sobering Look At the Bureacracy of Murder By Kindle Customer Other reviews have adequately described the uniqueness of this diary. I want to comment briefly on its contents. What I found fascinating was Hoss' description of the petty rivalries various bureaucracies within the Nazi regime had for each other, and their competing aims. These rivalries are very matter-of-factly explained, even though they involved the intentional murder of millions. For example, Speer and his war production needs placed significant demands for slave labor. This collided with Himmler's orders to kill all the Jews. So there was constant tension between finding sufficient slaves from the "prison" populations, keeping them healthy enough to be useful slave laborers, and yet also satisfy demands for more numbers of Jews killed. The Nazi doctors, meanwhile, had their own concerns -- they did not want to certify borderline Jews as "healthy" for slave labor, and then find their limited medical sources "wasted" on treating sick Jews that were going to die and were not particularly useful to the war machine anyways. The banal nature of this testimony -- by supposedly "educated" European bureaucrats as they efficiently calculate planning and other material needs of a large sophisticated war economy -- is simply stunning. I also found his first-hand accounts of the final phase of the war to be interesting -- the trail of tears of millions of displaced German civilians, slave laborers, soldiers and of course Auschwitz 'death marchers' all converged in a mad rush through the snow to escape the marauding Russians, all while Allied bombs fell overhead. The personal details, as Primo Levi notes brilliantly in his introduction, are scary for their apparent lack of self-awareness and intense need for projection and/or denial. Hoss was a skilled cog, indoctrinated into a propaganda machine that emphasized country, loyalty and moral and racial superiority. His defense of anti-semitism (the Nazis got it wrong in its execution, but not in its ideology) remains one of the more chilling aspects of his "confession." Recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. His message is quite clear that it is very easy for evil to transform otherwise good people into efficient ... By wbummer This book is a collection of writings by R. Hoss that explores his transformation from a boy destined to the priesthood into the Commandant of Auschwitz. It is a series of notes that he wrote during his captivity and trial for crimes against humanity. As such, it is filled with repetitions and is not well edited. His message is quite clear that it is very easy for evil to transform otherwise good people into efficient killing machines.

SS Kommandant Rudolph Höss (1900–1947) was history's greatest mass murderer, personally supervising the extermination of approximately two million people, mostly Jews, at the death camp in Auschwitz, Poland. *Death Dealer* is a new, unexpurgated translation of Höss's autobiography, written before, during, and after his trial. This edition includes rare photos, the minutes of the Wannsee Conference (where the Final Solution was decided and coordinated), original diagrams of the camps, a detailed chronology of important events at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Höss's final letters to his family, and a new foreword by Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi. *Death Dealer* stands as one of the most important—and chilling—documents of the Holocaust.

From Publishers Weekly This first complete English translation of a senior Nazi officer's account of the Final Solution describes in cold, stomach-churning detail the program of genocide as an administrative procedure. Written during the six months before his 1947 execution in Warsaw for "crimes committed against the Polish people," Hoss's memoirs are filled with specific recollections, from his fervently religious boyhood in Mannheim, through a prison term in

Liepzig (for having killed a fellow soldier), to marriage and induction into the SS in 1934. Particulars of his roles in the concentration camp system include his ordering of "the first execution of the war" at Sachsenhausen in 1938 and his 1941 assignment to establish and manage Auschwitz as "the largest human killing center in all of history." Personal squabbles with other SS leaders are interspersed with chilling descriptions of prison conditions and gassing procedures. This compelling historical document, from which Hoss emerges as a classic model of the bureaucratic middle manager, is expertly edited by Paskuly, a history teacher in New York; Pollinger's translation is seamless. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The man who presided over the expansion and lethal functioning of Auschwitz concentration camp, which surely earned him the distinction of being "the greatest destroyer of human beings in history," left behind this memoir before he was executed by the Poles at the end of World War II. A dedicated bureaucrat, Hoss smothered his feelings and devoted his talents to the killing of millions, even though he "personally never hated the Jews." The work was hard, and he "was no longer happy at Auschwitz once the mass annihilation began." An editorial glossary of terms and personalities enhances the usefulness of this valuable addition to Holocaust studies, a chilling self-portrait of an all-too-typical servant of totalitarianism.- R.H. Johnston, McMaster Univ., Hamilton, Ontario Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. Language Notes Text: English (translation) Original Language: German