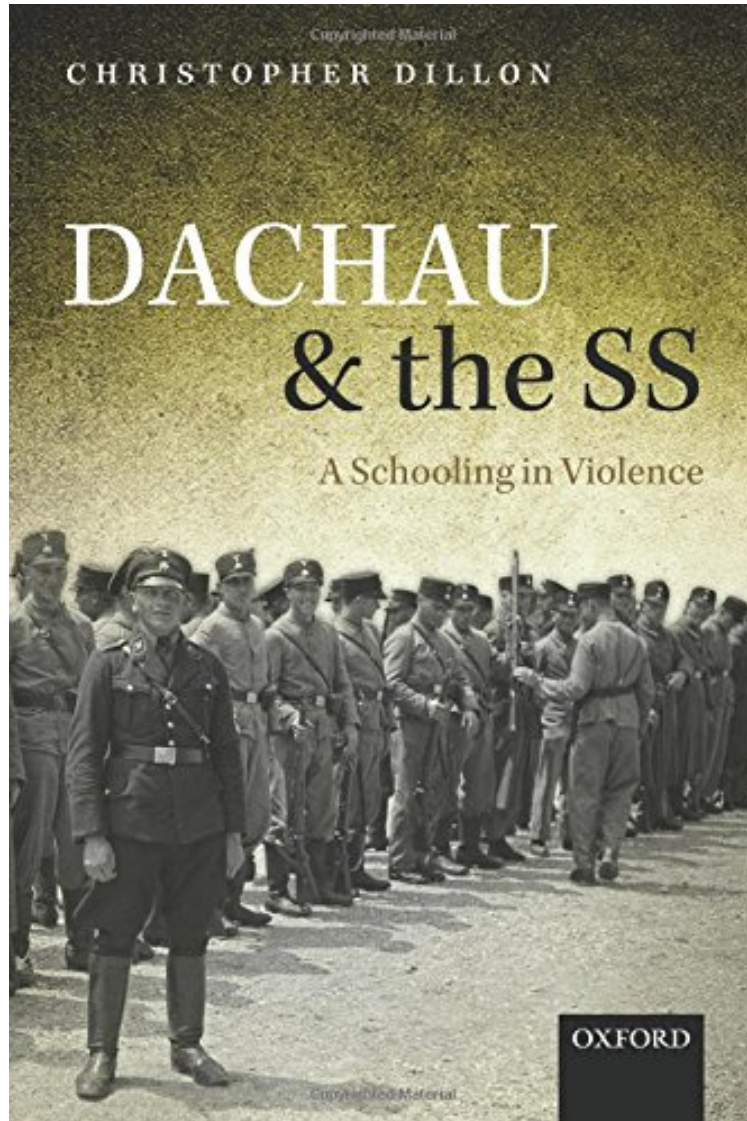


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## Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence

*Christopher Dillon*

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**Christopher Dillon : Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence:

Dachau and the SS studies the concentration camp guards at Dachau, the first concentration camp and a national 'school' of violence for its concentration camp personnel. Set up in the first months of Adolf Hitler's rule, Dachau was a bastion of the Nazi 'revolution' and a key springboard for the ascent of Heinrich Himmler and the SS to control of the

Third Reich's terror and policing apparatus. Throughout the pre-war era of Nazi Germany, Dachau functioned as an academy of violence where concentration camp personnel were schooled in steely resolution and the techniques of terror. An international symbol of Nazi depredation, Dachau was the cradle of a new and terrible spirit of destruction. Combining extensive new research into the pre-war history of Dachau with theoretical insights from studies of perpetrator violence, this volume offers the first systematic study of the 'Dachau School'. It explores the backgrounds and socialization of thousands of often very young SS men in the camp and critiques the assumption that violence was an outcome of personal or ideological pathologies. Christopher Dillon analyses recruitment to the Dachau SS and evaluates the contribution of ideology, training, social psychology, and masculine ideals to the conduct and subsequent careers of concentration camp guards. Graduates of the Dachau School would go on to play a central role in the wartime criminality of the Third Reich, particularly at Auschwitz. *Dachau and the SS* makes an original contribution to scholarship on the prehistory of the Holocaust and the institutional organization of violence.

"[C]hillingly informative..."--Sheldon Kirshner, *Sheldon Kirshner Journal*"In a penetrating analysis, he shows that their violence was not only the result of broader Nazi ideology but emerged also from a localized Bavarian context of racism and vendetta, deeply influenced by the memory of civil war and revolutionary violence dating back to 1919 ... Dillon adds detail to the story of the harsh, sometimes humiliating, training of SS recruits, the meaning of their pseudo-military deportment, and the generational dimension."--Alan Kramer, *Journal of Modern History*"Dillon's reading of the performative violence of the commandant staff down to the level of the Blockführer as theater with multiple audiences--the prisoners, the commandant and the inspectorate of the camps, and their own subordinates and peers--makes perfect sense. The chapter on the SS and masculinity is especially illuminating on topics such as comradeship, homosexuality (the extent of which is often overstated in the literature), and marriage. From the work of Orth and other scholars the criteria for physique and Aryan pedigree are well known; Dillon adds detail to the story of the harsh, sometimes humiliating, training of SS recruits, the meaning of their pseudo-military deportment, and the generational dimension."--Alan Kramer, *Journal of Modern History*"... provides revealing insights not only into the camp's personnel, but also into the dynamic nature of Nazi violence more generally" - *The Times Literary Supplement* "An assiduously researched and intelligently argued book that takes our understanding of the camp personnel to a different level. Even in a crowded field such as this, it genuinely stands out above all, perhaps, in its account of the dynamics of masculine identity creation and performance in Dachau, opening up new terrain on gender and murder in this context." - *Times Higher Education* "Dillon has produced a highly readable history of the Dachau SS units during the prewar years that offers a great deal of new information and is recommended reading for everyone who is interested in the connection between violence and masculinity under National Socialism." - *American Historical Association*

Prior to joining the department as a Lecturer in Modern European History in 2012, Christopher Dillon taught at the University of London's Birkbeck, Queen Mary, and Goldsmiths colleges. He studied for his PhD at Birkbeck (awarded in 2011) as part of an AHRC-funded project on the pre-war National Socialist concentration camps, having received his MA from Sussex and his BA from Exeter.