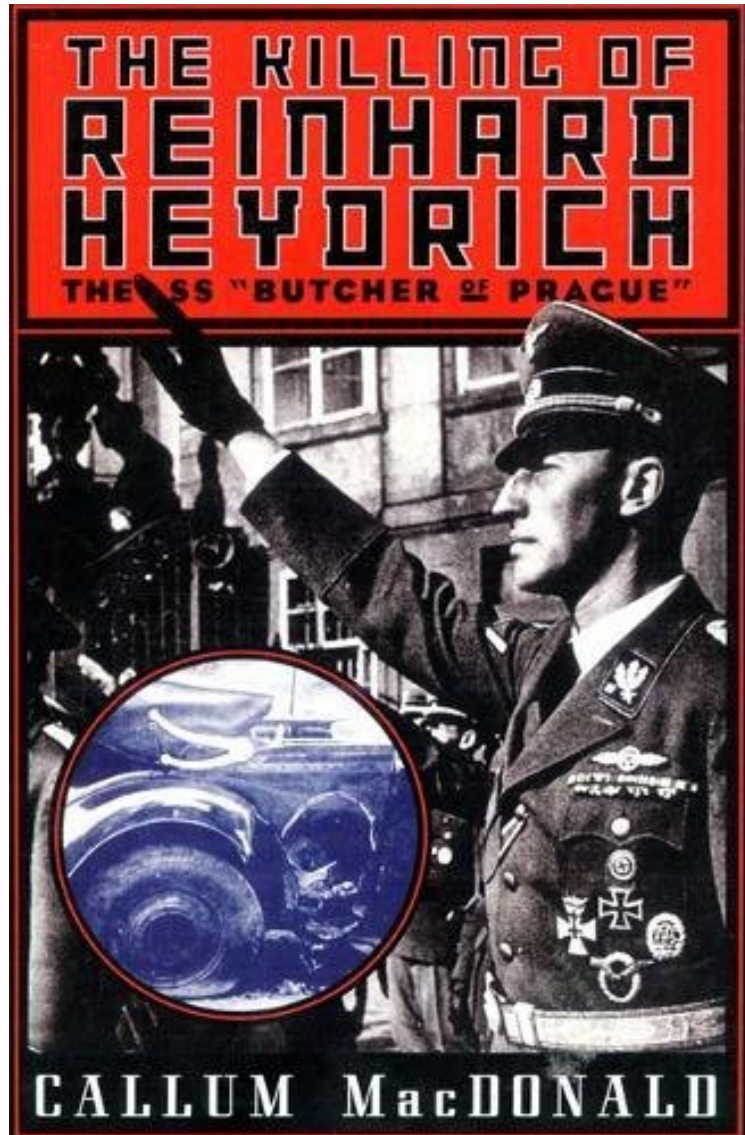


[Ebook free] The Killing of Reinhard Heydrich: The SS 'Butcher of Prague'

## The Killing of Reinhard Heydrich: The SS 'Butcher of Prague'

Callum Macdonald

*\*Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#148136 in Books 1998-08-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .50 x 6.001, .84 #File Name: 0306808609264 pages | File size: 62.Mb

**Callum Macdonald : The Killing of Reinhard Heydrich: The SS 'Butcher of Prague'** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Killing of Reinhard Heydrich: The SS 'Butcher of Prague':

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An absorbing tale of intrigue, heroism and tragedy By David PAs Reinhard Heydrich lay in state in Prague, the Czech people had good cause to receive his death with anxiety. Even in death, Heydrich's chilling faade and steely eyed opacity hung over the Reichsprotectorate of Bohemia-Moravia like a

haunted spectre. For unlike so many of his sycophantic, unremarkable and thuggish colleagues, Heydrich was unique in the annals of Nazi tyranny. Astonishingly sharp witted, callous, ambitious, and cruel in equal measure, Heydrich was the manifestation of Nazi culture. A mixture of self-loathing, inner competition and unvarnished hatred for perceived weakness drove him. He had gone from Himmler's aide de camp to violent organisational genius in a scarce five year period; ending with his richly deserved assassination in 1942. Callum MacDonald dispenses with the lofty (and longwinded) biographical indulgences, and opts to document a fascinating period in history that reads like a spy novel. This is not to suggest that MacDonald polishes over the grotesquery that came to define Heydrich, his security police and role as civil administrator over Nazi-occupied Prague, as he judiciously balances breathless moments of excitement and political intrigue with moral clarity. Heydrich's tentacular grip over Bohemia-Moravia serves to ignite additional plot threads, which provide a multi-faceted account of the day-to-day operations in Prague, Berlin and in Great Britain, where Churchill received exiled Czech president Edvard Benes and his delegation with solidarity. Prior to Heydrich's arrival in Prague, Konstantin von Neurath was appointed to fill the post. A starved Weimar conservative and worldly diplomat, von Neurath's appointment served to dull the incredulity of Hitler's critics, but it was pure deception. Von Neurath was a relic of antiquity, an elder statesman type absent of the requisite ideological fervour that Hitler prized; he had recently lost his bid to retain his office as Foreign Minister to the vacuous and thoroughly pathetic, Joachim von Ribbentrop. A reprieve in the end, for Ribbentrop's tenure as Foreign Minister earned him the noose at Nuremberg, while von Neurath was given only a stiff prison sentence. It was Karl Hermann Frank, an unscrupulous, mercurial and brutal Sudeten-German, nominally serving the region as state secretary, who ran the show. Frank, a high ranking SS man, integrated his cultural insecurities with state policy; owing its character to a mixture of carrot and stick trickery and violent purges. Like so many ethnic Germans who lost their regions to the Allied partitioning after the First World War, Frank felt compelled to prove his worth to the regime. He pursued this aesthetic vision in earnest. By the time the exiled Czech government arrived in London, Prague had fallen prey to the Nazi occupied archipelago. Any vestige of Czech independence or nationalism, real and imagined, was crushed with alacrity. Benes, feeling the vicarious prongs of guilt and victimhood, treaded the Churchillian waters with meek submission and well apportioned gratitude; not servile enough to arouse pity, nor independent enough to provoke scorn. By the time Benes had settled in, Churchill broached the question of assassination. Heydrich and Frank now had dominion over the Protectorate. The only relevant question that remained was: who to kill? Frank was deeply entrenched at this point and Heydrich, the newly minted overlord of Prague, was well known in context of the SS bureaucracy, but not in terms of politicking in the way Frank was. Heydrich had restructured Skoda Works, mobilised Czech industry to its benefit, and provided an enticing welfare programme with his work-to-foodstuffs ratio. He had also consigned Jews to their fate by transporting them to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp, and, more broadly, to the Eastern killing centres in Poland, not to mention his murderous purges against the intelligentsia and Czech nationalists. He not only continued Frank's repressive policies, but perfected them. Frank lacked Heydrich's adroit politicking, and it was so agreed that the latter would be the target. At this point, MacDonald shifts the narrative from the convoluted milieu of politics to the on-the-ground operations of the SOE (Special Operations Executive). The names Jan Kubis and Josef Gabcik certainly won't spark august reminiscences in the popular consciousness as other figures in the patriotic lexicon have, but their courage, integrity and sacrifice redounds to their honour. Gabcik and Kubis were trained (gruellingly) in exile and parachuted into Prague at night for this quixotic and lethal adventure. After they had established contact with the local resistance and determined the variables of Heydrich's security and day-to-day activities, Gabcik and Kubis acted swiftly. Heydrich's death, rather ironically, satisfied the notion of one going out with a bang and a whimper. Here, MacDonald interweaves a little known factoid into the manifold: Nazi Germany had no access to antibiotics. Heydrich survived the bombast and hysteria of an impressive explosion, but had fallen prey to the hindrances of medical mediocrity. For the ambitious singularity of its culture; its demagogic preaching of human sophistication, the medical branches of Nazi Germany had not acquired penicillin (an American export), and as a result, Heydrich, a much feared figure of indestructible Nazi mythology, had pathetically wilted away to an ashen, poisoned husk of a man. On its own terms, Heydrich's assassination was justified and, more importantly, timely. His quasi royal appointment to Prague was small potatoes in the grand scheme of things; Heydrich was being vetted for greater opportunities, notably his expected promotion to General Plenipotentiary of Nazi-Occupied France, where he would, unlike any of Hitler's other satraps, control the civil administration as well as the police apparatus. More broadly, however, Heydrich's assassination did little to thwart the mechanics of violence, and in reprisal all the men in the Czech provinces Lidice and Lezaky were murdered en masse. Heydrich was replaced at the RSHA by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, a raw boned, alcoholic sadist, while his former Protectorate was dually taken over by Karl Hermann Frank and Order Police Chief Kurt Daluege. Proving themselves to be as cursed as Heydrich, these men were executed in post-war trials. What, if anything, MacDonald asks, did the killing of SS chief Heydrich accomplish? As mentioned earlier, on its terms, precisely what its makers set out to achieve: the displacement of a cruel, but also very capable administrator, by lethal means. Beyond this, I have to concede cynically, very little. There was an acute increase in violence following his death, and his former positions were continued in similar zeal, if not imagination. The progress its architects expected only came at war's end. The reader should not go in expecting

vindication, you won't find it here. What you will find is a well documented, tightly edited, thrilling narrative, with all the intrigue, excitement and despair that history has to offer. Highly recommended. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The necessary action of the Czechs in their resistance to the Germans. By Phelps R. Gose Good review of the Munich Pact and the result of the pact. The Czechs were sold out and the world paid a heavy price for the sellout. The Czechs paid a heavy price but they had no choice but they were extremely brave. It was essential for the Czechs to act. They were being killed anyway. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting history of the terrible times of Nazism. By Book Angler Interesting history of the terrible times of Nazism. Some of the book is hard to read but sadly to say, history tends to repeat itself. Excellent writer.

The extraordinary account of one of the most daring World War II missions, as told in the movie *Anthropoid* If anyone warranted assassination during World War II, the man to know was Reinhard Heydrich (1904-1942) chief of the security police, rabid anti-Semite, architect of the Final Solution, ruthless overlord of Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, and Hitler's most likely successor. In 1941, at the height of the Nazis' seeming invincibility, the Czech government-in-exile launched a desperate operation to kill Heydrich. From the assassins' training in England to their Thermopylae-like last stand in the flooded crypt of a Prague church, and the Nazis' savage reprisals (including the obliteration of two villages), *The Killing of Reinhard Heydrich* brilliantly recounts one of World War II's most daring and tragic missions.

Reinhard Heydrich was one of Hitler's most ruthless Nazis. In addition to heading the occupation of Czechoslovakia, he was a leading architect of the Holocaust. There was even talk of his one day succeeding Hitler. For these reasons and others, he became a target--and ultimately the victim--of Allied special operations. This compelling book by English author Callum MacDonald is a skillful, journalistic retelling of a story that would make a solid espionage novel. It begins with a brief sketch of Heydrich--a handsome, violin-playing villain. His fierce anti-Semitism apparently was an emblem of self-hatred; all his life he was bewitched by the knowledge that some of his ancestors may have been Jewish. The bulk of the book turns to the assassination itself, from its planning stages in Britain, to the nighttime airdrop of the conspirators, to their arrangements in Prague, to the nearly botched event itself. Following Heydrich's death, which Hitler compared to losing a battle, the assassins eluded a massive manhunt. Sympathetic priests had hidden them in a Greek Orthodox Church. Despite the success of their mission, their story does not have a happy ending--the Nazis eventually learned of their whereabouts, and the book climaxes with their bloody last stand in the church crypt. This is an outstanding tale of evil, intrigue, and heroism. --John J. Miller From *Library Journal* Here's one who didn't get away. Quite the contrary, Heydrich, the perfect Nazi. If there could be such a thing. He was assassinated in 1942 by Czech patriots who planted a bomb in his car. MacDonald's 1989 volume, which reads like a good thriller, follows this plot to kill the head of the Nazi security police. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Callum MacDonald was a historian at the University of Warwick, England, and the author of *Korea: The War Before Vietnam*. He died in 1996.