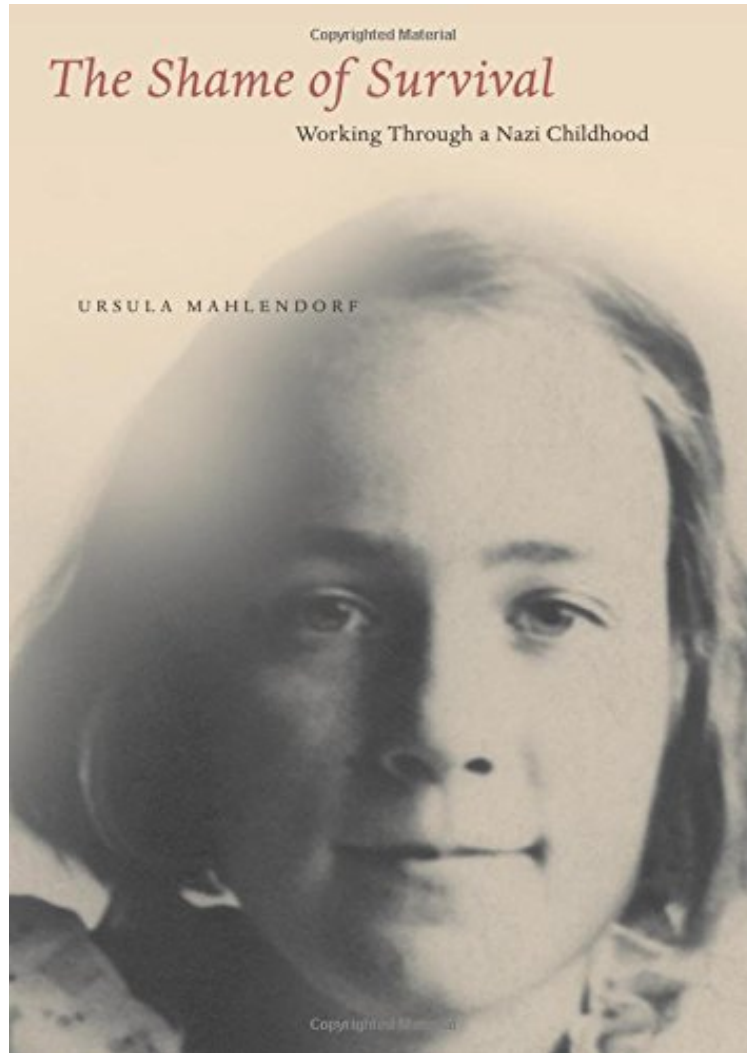


(Read free) The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood

The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood

Ursula Mahlendorf

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#553499 in Books 2010-09-20 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.63 x 1.04 x 6.13l, 1.13 #File Name: 0271034483376 pages | File size: 39.Mb

Ursula Mahlendorf : The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Perspective of German child growing up in Nazi Germany By Jean E. Terry I thought this was fascinating. You could see how everyone was drawn into the whole culture when Hitler came into power. This was before people knew and realized how evil it was. This young girl had leadership qualities for sure, which she carried into her adult life as a professor. But, at this time, what other options were there? I assume like today, kids want to be part of the group and it was made to look like this was a great group to belong to. She gradually understood that it was not the great thing she had been led to believe. Very smart girl and I imagine it would

be difficult to realize you were part of the whole thing back then and to not feel any guilt about all the evil that happened. Even though she as a youngster was certainly not guilty. She did what most kids would do in these circumstances and who were lucky enough not to be Jewish at that time. That whole period is so painful and to grow up there and realize how evil the whole system was, including many of the people, would be difficult. Still, if the adults had not been so gullible and then when they realized what was happening had stood against it, would it have still happened? None of us knows how we would stand faced with that kind of evil unless we go through it. I certainly don't hold her accountable for any of it, but I do hold the adults who watched it happen and did nothing accountable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. but I liked this memoir By Old Growth English 4.5 stars. I'm not a strong reader, and often put books down, but I liked this memoir, and it absolutely held my interest. The author grew up in Nazi Germany, participated in the Hitler Youth movement, then years later became a scholar and academician at UC Santa Barbara. There are many strands of insight in the book, but one of the most difficult and haunting topics is something we all face: if any of us had grown up in Nazi Germany, would we have joined the blind fervor of the Hitler Youth or Nazi party? If so, what level of cruelty could/would we have perpetrated? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a must read By pastor This is undoubtedly one of the best books I have ever read. It helped me understand the German people during and following the Nazi reign. The author's honesty, especially her emotional honesty, makes it a slow and painful read. I could only read 5-6 pages before putting the book down and spending some time digesting what I had just read. ALSO, there is a video on Youtube where the author talks about her experiences. That was the icing on the cake.

While we now have a great number of testimonials to the horrors of the Holocaust from survivors of that dark episode of twentieth-century history, rare are the accounts of what growing up in Nazi Germany was like for people who were reared to think of Adolf Hitler as the savior of his country, and rarer still are accounts written from a female perspective. Ursula Mahlendorf, born to a middle-class family in 1929, at the start of the Great Depression, was the daughter of a man who was a member of the SS at the time of his early death in 1935. For a long while during her childhood she was a true believer in Nazism and a leader in the Hitler Youth herself. This is her vivid and unflinchingly honest account of her indoctrination into Nazism and of her gradual awakening to all the damage that Nazism had done to her country. It reveals why Nazism initially appealed to people from her station in life and how Nazi ideology was inculcated into young people. The book recounts the increasing hardships of life under Nazism as the war progressed and the chaos and turmoil that followed Germany's defeat. In the first part of this absorbing narrative, we see the young Ursula as she becomes an enthusiastic member of the Hitler Youth and then goes on to a Nazi teacher-training school at fifteen. In the second part, which traces her growing disillusionment with and anger at the Nazi leadership, we follow her story as she flees from the Russian army's advance in the spring of 1945, works for a time in a hospital caring for the wounded, returns to Silesia when it is under Polish administration, and finally is evacuated to the West, where she begins a new life and pursues her dream of becoming a teacher. In a moving Epilogue, Mahlendorf discloses how she learned to accept and cope emotionally with the shame that haunted her from her childhood allegiance to Nazism and the self-doubts it generated.

From Publishers Weekly A former German and women's studies professor at UC Santa Barbara, Mahlendorf grew up in a small town in Silesia and was a squad leader in the Hitler Youth who embraced Hitler as a father substitute after the death of her own father, a former SS member, in 1935 and also in rebellion against her mother who disapproved of the Nazis. Her escape from a group suicide pact in the wake of Hitler's suicide was a first step in her denazification and eventual acceptance of her culpability in the Holocaust, an open-ended process that gained a feminist twist as she realized how politics were personal under Nazism. An eye-opening, honest and absorbing account of how evil takes root and flourishes among ordinary people. Illus. (Mar. 28) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Inducted into the Hitler Youth at age 10, Ursula Mahlendorf witnesses the pogrom of Krystallnacht in her small German town and becomes an ardent follower, exhilarated by news of German victories. Now a retired professor of German literature and women's studies at the University of California, she is still torn with guilt, mortified that I felt edified by such trash. As a young teen, she was a bystander; if she had been old enough, would she have been a perpetrator? It is that dual perspective that gives this memoir its power: the immediacy of her memories; the shame, remorse, and uncertainty of remembering. There is sometimes too much personal detail, especially about her academic career that led to a Fulbright scholarship to the U.S. But the personal experience is haunting about then and now: how you can develop a shell of toughness and numbness and not know what is happening at Bergen-Belsen, only 50 miles away from where you live. --Hazel Rochman *The Shame of Survival* is a compelling memoir of a girl's experiences growing up in Nazi Germany that analyzes the lifelong implications of Nazi indoctrination on a sensitive, thoughtful young woman. It shows how a reluctant, shy, frightened, and naive BDM member becomes swept up in Nazi ideology and documents the lifelong psychic ramifications of living with that legacy: feelings of guilt and shame, a need to work through these experiences and to take responsibility for and mourn the past. Focusing on both class and gender, Mahlendorf's memoir offers a unique and

valuable perspective on a growing body of emergent belated narratives on Nazi Germany by German migr academics. Anna Kuhn, University of California, Davis Ursula Mahlendorfs *The Shame of Survival* is a beautifully written autobiographical account of a former BDM (League of German Girls) leader who was a loyal supporter of the Nazi regime until its demise, when she suffered a major crisis in her entire belief system. Such eloquent, thoughtful accounts of a German girls experience during World War II have been rare, and Mahlendorfs incisive gender analysis provides a firsthand look at how women and girls were cynically co-opted by the Nazis. Mahlendorf contextualizes her experiences within the larger frame of German military aggression and the Holocaust, focusing not only on the brutal consequences of unquestioningly following the Nazis, but also on how her traumatic postwar expulsion from the East caused her to reevaluate everything she had been taught during the Third Reich. Erin McGlothlin, Washington University in St. Louis As a young teen, she was a bystander; if she had been old enough, would she have been a perpetrator? It is that dual perspective that gives this memoir its power: the immediacy of her memoirs; the shame, remorse, and uncertainty of remembering. . . . The personal experience is haunting about then and now: how you can develop a shell of toughness and numbness and not know what is happening at Bergen-Belsen, only fifty miles away from where you live. Hazel Rochman, Booklist This is a brave, honest account of a young girls experience in Nazi Germany, and especially of how women and girls were exploited. There are many layers of story and meaning in this courageous and painful memoir. Jewish Book World [Ursula Mahlendorfs] autobiography is a journey of emotional loss and recovery, a model of critical introspection, and a rich exploration of place and memory. Jacqueline Vansant, German Quarterly Mahlendorfs book is an exacting self-examination, a sharply focused account of Nazi indoctrination and a scathing criticism of the failure of adults during the Third Reich to protect their children from the poison of this indoctrination. I can only recommend it. Bill Niven, European History Quarterly [Mahlendorfs] is a straightforward, honest, intelligent, and at times painful recollection of how a young and impressionable girl of ten years could fall victim to the propaganda of the local National Socialist establishment; how a community of adults, from her own mother to neighbors, relatives, teachers, and youth leaders, not only looked on but reinforced a worldview based on deception and lies; and ultimately how the author struggled for decades to come to terms with the lies that defined her childhood. Petra Goedde, Journal of Modern History