

The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy By Martin Gilbert The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy The official biographer of Winston Churchill and a leading historian on the Twentieth Century Sir Martin Gilbert was a scholar and an historian who through his 88 books has shown there is such a thing as "true history" Born in London in 1936 Martin Gilbert was educated at Highgate School and Magdalen College Oxford graduating with First Class Honours. After working as a researcher for Randolph Churchill Gilbert was chosen to take over the writing of the Churchill biography upon Randolph's death in 1968 writing six of the eight volumes of biography and editing twelve volumes of documents. In addition The official biographer of Winston Churchill and a leading historian on the Twentieth Century Sir Martin Gilbert was a scholar and an historian who through his 88 books has shown there is such a thing as "true history" Born in London in 1936 Martin Gilbert was educated at Highgate School and Magdalen College Oxford graduating with First Class Honours. After working as a researcher for Randolph Churchill Gilbert was chosen to take over the writing of the Churchill biography upon Randolph's death in 1968 writing six of the eight volumes of biography and editing twelve volumes of documents. Gilbert drove every aspect of his books from finding archives to corresponding with eyewitnesses and participants that gave his work veracity and meaning to finding and choosing illustrations drawing maps that mention each place in the text and compiling the indexes. Martin Gilbert had an ambitious project -- cover the whole Holocaust from the pre-Hitler days to after the war all over Europe -- but he was able to accomplish his ends without either glossing over anything or making it too long. Books like *If This is a Man* by Primo Levi and *Schindler's Ark* by Thomas Kenneally bring home the reality and bestial horror of life and death in the camps but just how do you get your head around 6000000? A bit less than the whole of London. If you want to really feel what the Holocaust was like to see snapshots from lives to experience the sheer inhumanity and horror of the Nazi death-camps to see what human beings are really capable of read this book. This work should be read by everyone but like most important works on the 20th Century's darkest period it will be read by those who least need to read it and will be ignored by those that should read it. My mind cannot fully grasp the concept of six million anything much less six million people much less six million people rounded up and murdered burned to ash and scattered across a continent. A reader can pick up a book like Thomas Kenneally's *Schindler's List* or even Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* and find a glimmer of hope and redemption lining the dark and ugly clouds of the death camps gas chambers and crematoria. The German strike into Stalin's Soviet Union really kicks off the liquidation phase of the Holocaust which up until this point had been garden-variety genocide (stripping Jews of their civil rights seizing their property forcing them from their homes and herding them into ghettos). Gilbert keeps throwing ridiculous numbers out on the page (whole towns whole generations lost) and intersperses the dry figures (what does it mean that 1000 people died or 10000?) with horrific stories of Jews who somehow survived in the killing pits trapped beneath the naked blood-streaked corpses of countless victims. Later on as the *Einsatzgruppen* terrorize the Soviet Union the structure is more effective though as I pointed out above is about as subtle (and enjoyable) as a frying pan to the head. Indeed there is a good argument to be made that the Holocaust - the elimination of the Jews - was Hitler's preeminent goal one that he devoted possibly war-saving resources to accomplish). But when you step away and get a little distance you realize that all the collected stories end-to-end have created a monument as powerful and lasting as anything constructed of stone or marble. Martin Gilbert *The Holocaust A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War* by prolific historian Martin Gilbert is the most comprehensive one volume work on the Holocaust out there. The main theme of this book is hundreds of eyewitness accounts of the unbelievable horrors perpetrated against Jewish men women and children by the Nazis and their subordinates during the Second World War which resulted in the destruction of six million Jews including 1 and a half million Jewish children. During the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto several hundred small children were shot in the entrance to one of the houses and several hundred old people were killed in the street. We read accounts of Mengele's horrific experiments on adults and children and of Jews of all ages being thrown into furnaces and of course the mass executions of millions of men women and children in gas chambers

and by shooting and then throwing the bodies and half-alive survivors into pits. It is simply impossible to document how one feels reading page after page these accounts of the scope of inhumane monstrosity. Also disturbing is the section on how after Nazi Germany was defeated hundreds of Jews were slaughtered by anti-Semitic Poles and how Soviet soldiers engaged in the rape of Jewish girls who had survived the concentration camps. One of the photos in the photograph panels is a heartbreaking picture of a four year old little Jewish orphan girl shot to death with six other Jews by an anti-Semitic Pole just after the war. As well as the six million Jews murdered another ten million non-combatants were killed by the Nazis including a quarter of a million gypsies and millions of Poles Czechs Serbs Russians French Italians and Greeks. For example the boycott of all Jewish shops cafes and businesses in the 1930's in Germany is echoed by the calls for sanctions and divestment against Israel and for boycotts of Israeli products and businesses by academics far-left politicians and trade unions around the world today. Also the cultural professional and academic boycotts of Jews in Europe then are echoed by the cultural professional and academic boycotts of Israel and Israelis including the banning of Israeli scholars and research today in various universities across the world including North America and Europe. The book documents how between 1929 and 1939 with the rise of Nazism in Germany a new wave of 250000 immigrants went to the Land of Israel (Palestine) the majority of these 174000 arrived in Palestine between 1933-1936 after which increasing restrictions on immigration by the British made immigration clandestine and illegal. Nazi broadcasts beamed to Palestine Syria and Egypt helped ensure Arab hostility helped ensure that Arab hostility towards the Jewish refugees from Nazism would be kept as high as possible. History has shown that when anti-Semitism is allowed to spread beyond the cesspool of the mind that contains it slaughter of innocents and the destruction of entire nations seem inevitably to follow. Over half of all Holocaust survivors today live in Israel (as do many descendants of Holocaust survivors) and it would be a hideous twist of history for these too to perish in the flames of anti-Jew hatred as they would do if Israel was destroyed by forces of evil (God forbid that this should ever be allowed to happen!) Martin Gilbert Instead I would recommend *The Holocaust : The Fate of European Jewry 1932-1945* by Leni Yahil which i think will become the standard history. Gilbert catalogues the individual horrors in an unceasing page after page torrent of horror and misery and with this subject if you do not strive for a measure of dispassion and objectivity you will drown,

This is a very thorough account of the experience of the Jews of Europe during World War II: It is virtually a day-by-day account in men and women's own words of the horrifying events of the Holocaust - the Nazi attempt to exterminate people of the Jewish religion, He was a Research Scholar at St Anthony's College and became a Fellow of Merton College Oxford in 1962 and an Honorary Fellow in 1994: He was a Research Scholar at St Anthony's College and became a Fellow of Merton College Oxford in 1962 and an Honorary Fellow in 1994: In addition Gilbert has written pioneering and classic works on the First and Second World Wars the Twentieth Century the Holocaust and Jewish history: He travelled widely lecturing and researching advised political figures and filmmakers and gave a voice and a name "to those who fought and those who fell: " [{site_link}](#) [{site_link}](#) [{site_link}](#) This is a tour-de-force of history. The guy really knows how to write too and put his sources together into one coherent narrative. Also the book was written over 25 years ago and is a little dated as a result; a lot of research has been done since then: Has he put out a second edition? In the meantime Martin Gilbert is my new superhero. Martin Gilbert This chronicle of the atrocities of the Holocaust is a stunning achievement, The figure of 6 million jews killed by the Nazis is a number that is difficult to comprehend just because of its sheer scale, listing in shocking detail as many of the names and locations and numbers in a chronological account of the industrialised slaughter that is unrelenting in its detail: It's a very tough read but I felt duty bound to complete it and then re-read it, It seems like 1000's are dying on literally every page but that is its power: Martin Gilbert This is one of the most horrific books I have ever read because it's true. The passage of time generally removes much of the emotion from history but not with the Holocaust and not with

this book. I found myself in tears within ten pages and pretty much cried my way through its entirety: I guarantee it will haunt you for the rest of your life: Martin Gilbert I picked this book up because I was looking for more information about Bialystok Ghetto and this book has it. There's a quote from Elie Wiesel on the back of my edition. It will be painful to you but you must read it anyway. But simply to remember all those whom the world once upon a time tried to forget: Gilbert's book stops from becoming a death list because of the names that make their way into the book, In addition to the thousands of less or little known people Gilbert mentions Saul Friedlander his own family Pope John Paul II. It's this weaving of recognizable and everyday that compels the reader of the book to finish, Martin Gilbert Probably the finest most comprehensive and beautifully written work on the 20th Century's ultimate nadir. What happened in Europe between 1939 and 1945 is almost too much to handle on any but the most abstract terms. As you are given titles that represent thin slices of the Holocaust experience: Books about the Jews in Warsaw who fought back or about the few good men and women such as Oskar Schindler who tried to help, This is the Holocaust treated like a mortgage cut into palatable tranches: It offers some little faith in humanity that keeps readers from setting down their books and finding a German to punch in the face: There is a strong human compulsion to put the best face on any situation, This is probably a function of the fact that we are all dying and no one has yet told us the point: I visited Germany when I was in high school and my class took a day trip to the Dachau concentration camp just outside Munich. One of the things I best remember is a striking simple memorial: a wall with a two word phrase written in Hebrew French German English and Russian: It's nice to think that isn't it? That we learned something from the Holocaust as though it were a teachable moment rather than a crime without parallel: Of course it has happened again (in Cambodia the Balkans and Rwanda), And even if it hadn't happened again our noble sentiments can't raise the dead: I snapped a picture hopped back on the tour bus and headed into Munich to grab some beers at the Hofbräuhaus before stumbling to the Glockenspiel (which sucks by the way). Martin Gilbert's The Holocaust is unique in its near-unflinching refusal to offer false hope or faith in humanity: It is a big dense book with a stark black cover emblazoned with blood-red lettering; in many ways it is a monument filled with the stories of the dead, The Holocaust purports to be a history of European Jewry during World War II, That's a pretty large scope and 815 pages isn't nearly enough to cover that whole topic. To make things manageable Martin opts to skim on the set-up the larger context in which the Holocaust was seeded planted and brought to life, The first 80 pages cover everything from the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ to World War I to Kristallnacht to the Nuremberg Laws. Rather than being head-spinning however this portion of the book was plodding. It never found a comfortable balance between the macro meso and micro levels of the narrative: I also never got a sense as to what events Gilbert was trying to highlight and which events he found unimportant. I suppose I was also a bit unmoored since Gilbert doesn't tell this story through the eyes of the usual suspects. He leaves the top-ranking Nazis in the background and focuses on the stories of ordinary Jewish people told in their own words: While this brings an admirable intimacy and immediacy to the proceedings it also cramps your ability to see the big picture (essentially you are viewing history through a keyhole): Around 100 pages in the Germans invade Poland divide it up with the Soviet Union and then decide to attack Russia. At this point I really started to question Gilbert's ability to pull this book off or my ability (or willingness) to finish, The Nazis round everyone up make them take off their clothes march them into the forest have them dig their own graves and then shoot them in the back of their heads, I started to lose track of where we were (there are a lot of maps but they weren't helpful to me especially without a good master map). However Gilbert runs the very real risk of violating the Stalin-era dictum that "a million deaths is a statistic, " The barrage of mass killings the staggering casualty figures have an anesthetizing effect. It doesn't become boring per se but it starts to breed indifference: It's not really a style at all; rather it is a structure. He relies heavily on the writing and remembrances of survivors. In almost 815 pages of text almost every paragraph includes a direct quotation from one source or another, Much of the book is made up of block-quotes (one entire chapter is an extended excerpt detailing one Jew's escape), Gilbert is like a tailor using his words as

a needle and thread to stitch together the various personal stories. As I mentioned earlier this structure hampered the early chapters of *The Holocaust* detailing the post-Weimar pre-Invasion days in Germany which call for a more macro God's-eye view: Somewhere along the way however and I'm not sure where an unexpected thing happened: I realized I couldn't put this book down: The individual stories are powerful and often very-well told; the cumulative effect though is shattering: Even in a sea of blood there are moments details that stand out: We undressed quickly and our arms uplifted we went in the direction of the ditches we had dug ourselves. The graves which were two meters deep were full of naked bodies...[W]e lay down quickly in order to avoid looking at the dead, My little daughter was quaking with fear and asked me to cover her eyes. I embraced her head; my left hand I put on her eyes while in my right I held her hands, Shots were fired; I felt a sharp pain in my hand...The survivor's-eye-view has its drawbacks, I understand that this is a history of the Jews by the Jews. However including more stories from the perpetrators would have added a lot of corroboration to the Jewish testimony giving it even more weight, The ground-level viewpoint also causes you to lose a sense of the chronological progression of events, The year is given on top of each page so you know that you're in 1941 or 1942 but otherwise you might find yourself a bit adrift as to the timeline: This is accentuated by Gilbert's decision to minimize discussion of anything not related to the Holocaust. (There are obvious space constraints but I would've have liked to have seen Gilbert integrate the Holocaust into World War II a bit more. Obviously in any broad history the author has to choose what to stress: He spends a great deal of time detailing the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto: I would've appreciated Gilbert emphasizing the lesser-known acts of Jewish resistance such as the revolt at Treblinka, Gilbert actually quotes a Jewish fighter saying ruefully that his life and death will boil down to three sentences in a history book: Along those lines Gilbert has chosen to focus on one particular aspect of the Holocaust above all others: the ghettoizing deportation and gassing of the Jews. That means skipping out on a lot of other aspects of the Holocaust. For instance there is very little about day-to-day life and survival in the concentration camps. Gilbert could not fully cover everything without writing a book that requires a wheelbarrow to haul around. It is a voluminous refutation to people like David Irving who attempt to deny or minimize the destruction of European Jewry during World War II, At times *The Holocaust* is hard to read for a variety of reasons beyond the darkness of the subject matter, When you are nose deep in the book all the collected stories end-to-end seem repetitive. Martin Gilbert This is an excellent book and very well researched an in depth study of the Holocaust, Martin Gilbert I'm not sure how to (or even if I should) review or grade a book that is effectively a catalogue of Holocaust murders. It begins with describing Hitler's rise to power and the history of anti-Semitism in Europe during the 20th century. It goes on to describe the pogroms against Jews in Germany during the 1930's and the stripping away of their basic human rights. Gilbert describes Kristallnacht and the violent destruction of Jewish homes businesses and synagogues: Gilbert describes how during the Holocaust Hungary Italy Bulgaria and German occupied Denmark attempted to protect their Jews from Nazi genocide. No Jews were deported from Italy to death camps until after the fall of Mussolini and the German occupation of northern Italy in the autumn of 1943, One is numbed by the sheer horror and bestiality of it all as page after page is filled with graphic inhuman cruelty and bloodshed, Particularly heartrending is the way children were treated by the Nazis: It is from eyewitness accounts that we discover how the SS used to amuse themselves by swinging Jewish children by their legs and then flinging them to their deaths, Another eyewitness Maria Hochberg-Marianska described the fate of Jewish children during the mass deportations in Cracow in March 1943 :At Midday cars drove up before the institution: Little ones three years of age were flung into baskets and placed on platforms or hoisted on to carts. The older children were driven off to Plac Zgody flanked by armed soldiers. The baskets with the little ones were emptied behind the city like so much rubbish: There they were thrown into a ditch most of them alive, Some were killed with a blow by a rifle butt before burial: So we continue to read of the mass executions and torures and horrors inflicted on the Jews of Europe in these times. Poles Czechs Serbs were to become subject people of the Germans in the New Order but only the Jews were singled out to be destroyed in their entirety ,

Every single Jewish man women and child was to disappear so that there would be no Jewish life in Europe: Some of the parallels with early Nazi anti-Semitism and the new anti-Semitism of the 20th century are chilling. 70 years ago the cry of the anti-Semites in Europe was 'Jew go to Palestine!' . Today the cry of anti-Semites (Yes-anti-Semites!) around the world is 'Jew-Out of Palestine'. In 1933 in reaction to the arrival of Jewish refugees in Palestine Arab attacks on Jews were launched and continued unabated until 1939: In response to Arab terror and afraid of alienating Arab support the British blocked hundreds of thousands of Jews attempting to flee Nazi terror to enter Palestine. Today Israel is about the size of the state of New Jersey with a Jewish population of less than 1% of the world's population: Yet Iran's president says the Holocaust is a myth and Israel must be wiped off the map: -which would mean the genocide of another 5 million Jews nearly half of the world's Jewish population : Yahi's book gives the reader the big picture - the huge picture - and the necessary details. I was dizzied by the number of sources he quoted.Two caveats: Gilbert transliterates proper names strangely. For example Tuvia Bielsky is called Tobias Belsky.meaningless.Gilbert does his best. If you do the maths.the book has 960 pages.so that's 6250 people killed per page. Keep that figure in mind as you read.just mind numbingly horrific. It left me shaken and disturbed as it should. The quote reads This book must be read and reread. To know? No. To understand? No not that either. Martin Gilbert The Holocaust overwhelms. It is a crime that beggars the imagination. Perhaps that is why if you search "Holocaust" on Amazon. Personal memoirs by survivors. Stories about the children who survived. This holds true of the Holocaust. The words: Never Again. At the time I didn't care. I thought the monument was cool. There is page after page of mass executions mass graves. The Nazis pack up and move along. Then the whole thing repeats. We move from one killing site to another. The stories start to blur. It is relentless. And I suppose it is meant to be so. At this point I should mention Gilbert's writing style. That is he relies on their own exact words. In this way we lay down our faces turned downwards. For one you only get one side of the story. They weren't parallel events after all. Here Gilbert really belabors the familiar. This is a famous story told many times. And that's about all Gilbert actually gives him. These aren't criticisms as much as they are observations. In the end The Holocaust is a testament. Ultimately though it is rewarding. It's an astonishing moving and horrifying achievement. Read it so we never forget. The Gestapo men flung themselves upon the children. There they joined the grown ups. Gilbert's book drowns the reader. Martin Gilbert

