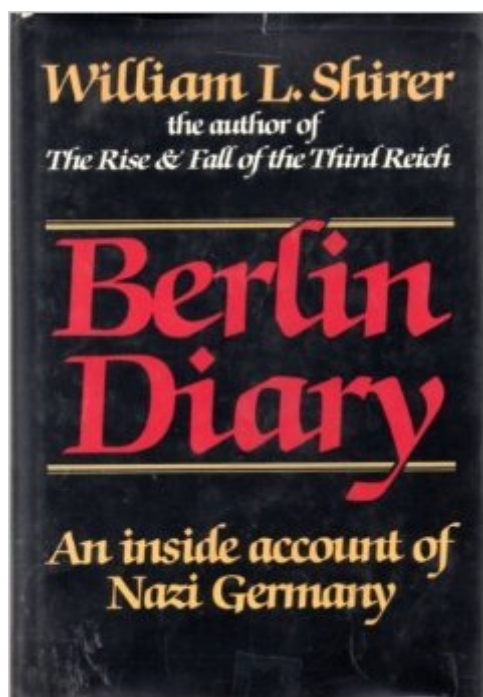


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Berlin Diary



Synopsis

A precursor to the author's best-selling *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* describes the harrowing Nazi rise to power in Germany during the second half of the 1930s and profiles Hitler's complex personality. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (482 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

If you are interested in this period in history, you should read this book. Shirer offers a day-by-day history of life in Germany during the rise of Nazism and beginning of the war. That alone would be enough for a great book, but there is much more. Shirer covers many aspects of the war; he writes eloquently and accurately about the naivety of pre-war British diplomacy, strategy on both sides, and the Nazi clique. He provides an early glimpse at horrors of Nazi genocide. And his personal story is fascinating, as he travels across Europe, worries about his family, and matches wits with his censors to get as much of the story out as he can. *Berlin Diary* is very well written and hard to put down. Gems of description abound; for example, he describes a visit to a Lisbon casino: "Tonight, Ed [Murrow] and I did the casino. The gaming rooms were full of a weird assortment of human beings, German and British spies, male and female, wealthy refugees who had mysteriously managed to get a lot of money out and were throwing it about freely, other refugees who were broke and were trying to win their passage money with a few desperate gambles with the fickle roulette wheel..." Highly recommended.

I enjoyed this book's sense of "being there," and its quiet outrage against Nazi brutalities. Shirer's

diary has lost none of its power since 1941, when as the world's best-selling non-fiction work it aided interventionist sentiment in the U.S. Its companion published in 1947, *End of A Berlin Diary*, adds illumination but isn't as moving. Although raised Presbyterian, Shirer's sympathies led some to believe him Jewish. Still, the last line of introduction sets the chilling tenor of that era; "The Gestapo will find no clues."

If you haven't yet read Herr Shirer's all time classic "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich", or if you just completed it, this is the greatest companion book. Heck - even if you don't intend to read "The Rise and Fall" - read it anyway. It gives such great insight into the mind of one of the greatest correspondents of the modern era and the great historians of the Third Reich. It also helps you to see the war from the side of the German people - after all, they did have to deal with Hitler - and his legacy the longest. As you will see, this is Shirer's personal diary, in which he speaks lovingly about his wife and newborn and worries about their safety in Switzerland. He deals with his trips to the front and contacts in the foreign ministry. Extremely well written - and a great reference during the long haul of "The Rise and Fall" (Personally, I'm still pushing through "The Rise and Fall" after a year and a half - and yet it's one of the greatest books I've read) Come on! Buy it! You'll thank me! It's an investment you won't regret.

There was a previous reader review of "Berlin Diary" on this site. It gave it a 3 on a scale of 10. I could not disagree more strongly. This is probably the most fascinating book I've ever read. I was sad when it ended. The previous reviewer criticized William Shirer as hardly being objective in the manner required of a journalist. Keep in mind you are reading a diary. A personal account of the beginning of our century's most horrific period. It was written by a man who was the right person in the right place at the right time. Berlin, Munich, Paris and Compiegne. It is the observations of someone witnessing peace slipping away because of driving tyranny (German) and bungling diplomacy (The Allies - where was the U.S.?) If I were teaching a class on WWII, "Berlin Diary" would be the text. Not only does it give us insights into a wide array of subplots to the war but it is the most readable bit of history ever written. I stand by that statement. Read the book.

Shirer is better known, of course, for having written "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," which is an excellent first book to read on Nazi history. After reading "The Rise and Fall," though, I stumbled on "Berlin Diary" and I was riveted. Shirer's life as an American correspondent in pre-war Nazi Berlin gave him a unique position from which to observe and chronicle life under the 20th century's most

bloodthirsty regime. Shirer's day-to-day observations are both precise and chilling. I was especially fascinated with how he sparred with--and often outwitted--the Nazi censors. He walked a fine line with many of the stories he filed; he was committed to giving his American readers an accurate depiction of life in Nazi Germany but knew that his characterizations were being closely monitored. I came to really admire his courage and determination, and found the book a pleasure to read.

A well-written contemporaneous account of a correspondent's life in Nazi Germany up to 1940. Shirer is almost prescient in his assessment of Hitler's actions and their consequences. It is unfortunate that he could not continue his reporting after 1940, because an account of this caliber of the years when Germany was at war with America, made from inside Germany, would have been a valuable historical record. Shirer is a true journalist; while he offers opinions, they are clearly labeled as such, and do not get in the way of dispassionate reporting of the events he witnesses.

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