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The Nazi rise to power was one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century. In this book, Peter Fritzsche sets out to explain how the Nazis—who on January 30, 1933, were only given power due to backroom deals with conservative intriguers around the ailing President Paul von Hindenburg—were able to wholly consolidate their power in a matter of weeks. This book is an “everyday history” of the first three-and-a-half months of the Third Reich rather than a “top down” approach of the early period of Nazi rule. In many respects, this is a far more difficult task, to recreate how the German nation, which did not, in an electoral sense, show majority support for the Nazi movement or Adolf Hitler, seemed to fall into line with Nazi goals and policies with little to no resistance. As the glowing praise for *Hitler’s 100 Days* on the book sleeve reminds us, this book is a timely reminder during the (then) time of President Donald Trump.

This book is divided into nine chapters. The first two chapters set the scene for Nazi success from a social point of view, identifying the deep impacts of the economic crisis facing Germany. They also identify who the Nazis were as a “movement” and how they managed to succeed to gain power from such meager beginnings and in such a short time. The third chapter begins to look at the period on and immediately after January 30, 1933, when Hitler was appointed chancellor. The speed Fritzsche moves through this part gave me pause to realize that the “100 days” would not really be the focus of this monograph. The next three chapters predominately look at how the enemies of the Third Reich—communists, socialists, and Jews—were treated. These chapters offer the strength as an “everyday” history, in terms of examining the reaction of the German people, across a range of sources and views, and the initial Nazi treatment of Jews, socialists, and communists. The next chapter focuses on how Nazi racial policies affected German men and women, as eugenics and hereditary policies had an impact on ordinary people. This is most illuminating as Fritzsche highlights instances of several early enthusiasts of the regime who soon found themselves on the other
side of the fence, when their imperfect heraldry made them instantly unsuitable as full-blood comrades of the racial state. It is here that the book moves completely away from the “100 days” project. Chapters 8 and 9 look at the nature of media and press at the time and then the development of fascism across the Rhine in France, comparing the context and reaction in the United States of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first 100 days as president. These later chapters, a far wider scope than just the Third Reich, examine more broadly fascist development in Europe. I found these later chapters interesting but also frustrating as they move quite beyond the concept of the “100 days” to power and of Germany itself. Nevertheless, some contextual knowledge of fascism as a rising phenomenon of the early 1930s does offer some illumination.

Fritzsche cites often the “48 percent” who had not voted for the Nazis in the March 1933 election (p. 132). However, he takes this figure from March 1933, when the Nazis were already in charge, arresting opponents, supressing opposition, controlling the media, and taking advantage of the climate of fear created after the Reichstag fire that occurred a week before the election. At this time, as Fritzsche rightly identifies, “civil war” seemed to be the greatest fear on every German’s lips. But for someone looking for the intricacies of how Nazism managed to take the 33.1 percent of the vote “mandate” they obtained in the November 1932 election (the last largely free election in Germany) and turned Germany into a functioning dictatorship, this book probably only explains so much (p. 98). Fritzsche uses several diarists extensively, and while these give shape to his idea of turning Germans into Nazis, such evidence can only really go so far. Personally, I think the reaction of the leadership (both Nazi and what remained of Weimar institutions) to certain events would have given greater understanding of how far the regime drove policy and how genuine the “spiritual reawakening” among the people was, as some people readily adopted antisemitism and fell into line with the authoritarian system. Fritzsche, at least initially, identifies at various stages how certain events happened on “day number X in the Third Reich” to illustrate the brief amount of time it took for certain radical actions to be deemed acceptable by the public or to show by what time the Nazis were able to get away with something (pp. 105, 109). However, he does not persist with this technique throughout the book as he moves into areas that are well beyond the scope of the first 100 days.

The role played by the Nazi leadership in terms of legislation, orders, and action, and the role played by the bureaucracy, civil administration, and especially the army could have been addressed. Delving deeper into the core issue of why so many Germans fell into step with the Third Reich is at the very heart of the point of this book. Looking in-depth into the “consent versus coercion” debate is a missed opportunity. A criticism made by some is that the sections on terror in this book are repetitive in terms of the violence they relate; however, I refute this as I see Fritzsche’s whole purpose as explaining how widespread these acts of violence were, in addition to who initiated and orchestrated these acts and what role they played in either confirming the opinions of some Germans that such action was needed or scaring them into submission.[1] At the start of his book, Fritzsche notes the consent versus coercion debate, but he seems to outline the argument made by Mary Fulbrook, which is to avoid “simple dichotomies” of consent and coercion and instead look at how long it took people to adopt new modes of thinking and behavior.[2] Fulbrook’s argument is valid, but it should be balanced by looking at the Nazi “hot” terror period that was enacted after January 30, 1933, the time frame of this book’s 100 days. The stories of the violence perpetrated toward victims, such as Siegfried Reiter or Dr. Michael Siegel, who on March 10, 1933 (forty-one days into the Third Reich), was forced to march through the streets of Munich with a placard around his neck. While it was an antisemitic-driven persecution, it is interesting to note that
Siegel's placard was believed to have said, “I will never complain to the police again” (Ich werde mich nie wieder bei der Polizei beschweren), which can be interpreted as having a warning for the broader German population than just for the Jews of Munich. Fritzsche gives us some idea of this broader warning by identifying communists and socialists as targets in the same period. However, a further examination of the “hot” terror period, where siblings, wives, and children were either arrested in the place of the target or were arrested alongside them as a warning, would have illustrated the depth of violence of the early Third Reich. As pointed out by Martin Broszat, in 1932 a total of 268 people were tried for high treason in Germany, but during 1933, this figure had jumped to 11,156.[3]

The subtitle of this book, *When Germans Embraced the Third Reich*, illustrates the position the author takes in terms of the consent versus coercion argument. He believes that many Germans easily slipped into gear with the Nazi state and did not require overt use of threats or persecution. However, not acknowledging the creation of the terror network nor the role of Heinrich Himmler or of Hermann Goering, nor the multitude of other lesser leaders, who played a pivotal role in orchestrating violence against anti-Nazi elements, provides an incomplete picture of the first 100 days. I was hoping there would have been more discussion on the public's reaction to the creation of concentration camps and the rise of Himmler. But these topics do not see much space in this book. In fact, according to the index, Himmler is only referenced once in the entire book. Discussion of the reaction of the public to the creation of the terror network, the impact of the hiring of *Sturmbteilung* (SA) as auxiliary police, and the creation of “wild” concentration camps across Germany is an opportunity missed. To not cover these aspects but instead rely on several diarists showing their shift in thinking toward embracing the Third Reich is a little too poetic an explanation for how Germans became Nazis. The role of those outside of the party also could have been explored further. A starting point for this is the fact that in the first cabinet meeting on January 31, 1933, it was the vice chancellor and Centre Party member Franz von Papen who first suggested the Enabling Act, the very device used by the Nazis to establish their whole dictatorship.[4]

The book has only a few minor issues of accuracy. Noting that Magda Goebbels's miscarriage in December 1932 after the birth of her “first child,” Helga, in September 1932 forgets Harald Quandt (1921-67), who was her first child born to her previous marriage (p. 302). The identification of a railway inspired rank of *Sturmbahnführer*, rather than *Sturmbannführer*, is amusing (p. 252). These are extremely small quibbles in a book that otherwise shows the author's overall command of the topic. I greatly appreciate Fritzsche's ability to create a superb narrative of (mainly) the early months of 1933 in Nazi Germany, but his explanation of how the Third Reich was solidified in its first 100 days is not as accurate. In a way, this book is an admission that 100 days did not matter in the wider scheme of things and that the full horrors of the Third Reich needed more than 100 days as a platform. However, to really identify a shift in thinking, to identify the way directives and functionaries began to move in their areas of operation in these 100 days, and to assess how the top affected the bottom or how the bottom did in fact influence the top would have been a fascinating exercise. Fritzsche has done a wonderful job in researching and writing this book. As it is, he has written an interesting and readable book, one that does give us some sense of how the Third Reich was born and how the German people reacted to its birth in the first three months of its terrible existence.

Notes
[1]. See, for example, Dietrich Orlow, review of *Hitler’s First Hundred Days: When Germans Embraced the Third Reich*, by Peter Fritzsche, Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies/Revue...
nadienne d'études néerlandaises 40, no. 2 (2020): 143.


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