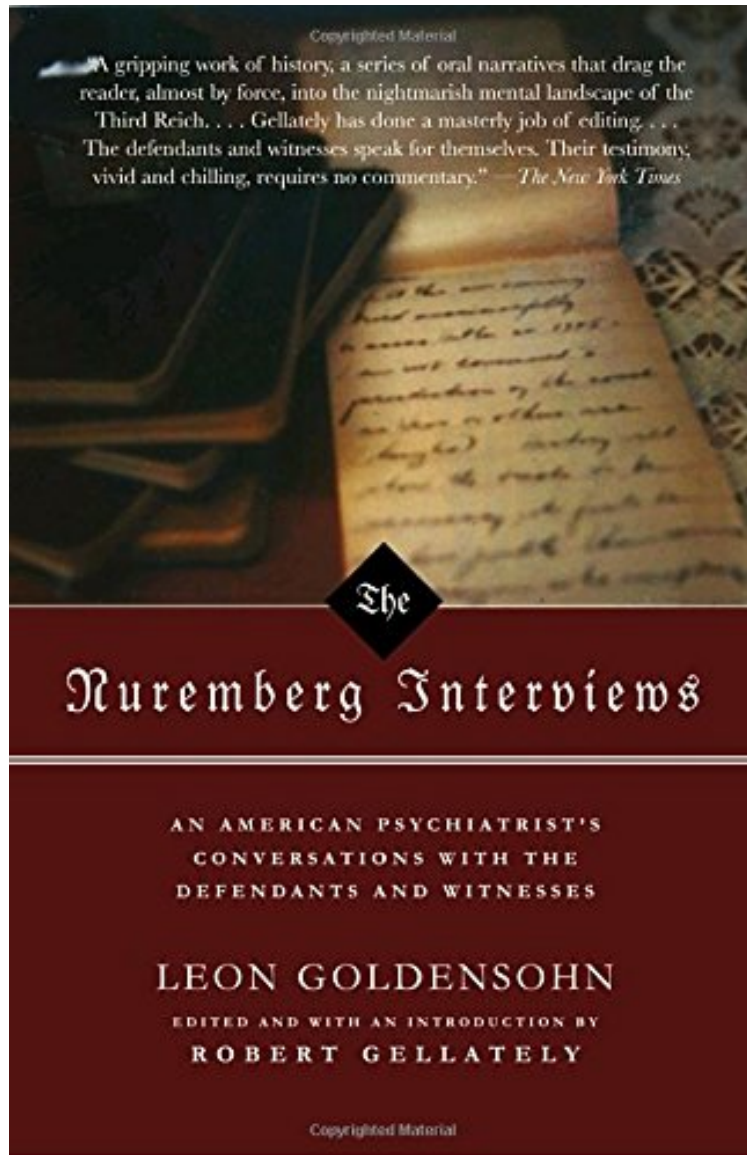


[Free pdf] The Nuremberg Interviews: An American Psychiatrist's Conversations with the Defendants and Witnesses

The Nuremberg Interviews: An American Psychiatrist's Conversations with the Defendants and Witnesses

Leon Goldensohn

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During the Nuremberg trials, Leon Goldensohn a U.S. Army psychiatrist monitored the mental health of two dozen Germans leaders charged with carrying out genocide. These recorded conversations went largely unexamined for more than fifty years, until Robert Gellately one of the premier historians of Nazi Germany made them available to the public in this remarkable collection. Here are interviews with the likes of Hans Frank, Hermann Goering, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and Joachim von Ribbentrop the highest ranking Nazi officials in the Nuremberg jails. Here too are interviews with lesser-known officials essential to the inner workings of the Third Reich. Candid and often shockingly truthful, *The Nuremberg Interviews* is a profound addition to our understanding of the Nazi mind and mission.

From Publishers Weekly "How did you figure a six-month-old Jewish infant must be killed was it an enemy?" Goldensohn asked Otto Ohlendorf at Nuremberg. "In the child," explained the SS lieutenant general, "we see the grown-up." Goldensohn, an army psychiatrist, was assigned in 1946 to the Nuremberg trials. In his evaluations of the German defendants, he quickly got over his shock at their casual acceptance of Nazi doctrine and refusal to take personal responsibility for their acts. Goldensohn died in 1961, and recently his brother Eli collected the long-stored transcripts edited by historian Gellately (*The Gestapo and German Society*). Goldensohn tried to coax childhood memories from the men, seeking early motivations for later monstrousness, and found little to go on. Most were ordinary people who took unexpected opportunities in politically festering interwar Germany. Few expressed even meager repentance, blaming betrayal of the Nazi ideal for the thwarting of the Garden of Eden promised by Hitler, who remained for them a political and military genius. Goldensohn's conversations with these men are perturbing because most of them seem like many of us except for the circumstances that lured them into opportunistic deviance. Goldensohn may not have left a headline-making legacy of belated revelations, but he has complicated further the tapestry of evil. 31 photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In 1946 Goldensohn, a U.S. Army psychiatrist, conducted a series of interviews with many of the defendants and witnesses as the Nuremberg war-crimes trials unfolded. Until Gellately edited them, these interviews have been unavailable to the public. Virtually all of the top Nazi officials tried at Nuremberg are interviewed here, and their responses make for fascinating yet chilling reading. There are few surprises. Most of the defendants insist that they were unaware of the extermination camps, and many of them say they now realize the criminal nature of Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels. What is striking about them is what Hannah Arendt called the sheer "banality of evil." These men, with the possible exception of Julius Streicher, don't come across as fire-breathing monsters or even fanatics. In fact, under other circumstances, some of them would be viewed as rather decent. Goering, who was the charismatic "star" of court proceedings, was clearly a man of considerable intelligence and charm. Yet most of these men willingly played integral parts in a machine that practiced atrocities as a matter of routine. Without necessarily intending to do so, these men reveal how easily totalitarian systems can induce acquiescence to or even enthusiastic participation in evil. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A gripping work of history, a series of oral narratives that drag the reader, almost by force, into the nightmarish mental landscape of the Third Reich. The New York Times A rare document. . . . Striking proof of the banality of evil. Kirkus Goldensohn serves as a down-to-earth Dante in these anterooms to hell, getting one damned soul after another to reveal himself in his own words." Newsweek