
BOOK NOTE/CRITIQUE BRÈVE

Jäckel, Eberhard. *David Irving's Hitler: A Faulty History Dissected*. Translation and comments by H. David Kirk. Brentwood Bay: Ben-Simon Publications, 1993. 58pp.

Probably the most well-known of contemporary Holocaust deniers is David Irving. Irving is perhaps unique among them in that he has been able to disguise his political agenda with the cloak of scholarship. It is because of this that pamphlets such as Eberhard Jäckel's need to be written. This short work is divided into five sections: a forward, a translator's introduction, two essays by Jäckel and a translator's postscript. The foreword, by Toronto journalist Robert Fulford, explains how Irving makes denial seem respectable, by manipulating "evidence, collecting whatever fits his preconceptions, misinterpreting as he chooses, and ignoring whatever fails to support his views" (p.1). H. David Kirk's translator's introduction accomplishes several tasks. It contextualizes Jäckel's pieces, which were originally written for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*—a German newspaper—in 1979 to coincide with the German television showing of the American television mini-series, *Holocaust*.

David Kirk explains the insidious nature of David Irving's work in the 1970s. Rather than denying the reality of the Holocaust, Irving attempted to show that Hitler bore no personal responsibility. Such a project could lead to a refashioning of Nazism into a basically benign movement which contained its share of hotheads. Eberhard Jäckel's essays discuss Irving's

volume, *Hitler's War*, and confront Irving's attempted exculpation of Hitler. His refutation is two pronged. Jäckel explains that nothing of consequence happened in the Third Reich without Hitler's knowledge and approval. He also marshals evidence that convincingly demonstrates Hitler's personal responsibility. This evidence includes statements made by Hitler both in private and in public. The translator's postscript mentions other historians who have refuted David Irving, including Martin Broszat and Lucy Dawidowicz.

Although there is nothing new in this volume for the professional historian, it should be an extremely important pedagogical tool for the public. As recent polls have shown, many people are willing to entertain the lies of neo-Nazis and others about the Twentieth Century's worst crime. It is therefore still necessary to counter them at every opportunity.

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