



Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and "Enemies of the State"

Stephen P. Halbrook

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Based on newly-discovered, secret documents from German archives, diaries and newspapers of the time, Gun Control in the Third Reich presents the definitive, yet hidden history of how the Nazi regime made use of gun control to disarm and repress its enemies and consolidate power. The countless books on the Third Reich and the Holocaust fail even to mention the laws restricting firearms ownership, which rendered political opponents and Jews defenseless. A skeptic could surmise that a better-armed populace might have made no difference, but the National Socialist regime certainly did not think so—it ruthlessly suppressed firearm ownership by disfavored groups.

Gun Control in the Third Reich spans the two decades from the birth of the Weimar Republic in 1918 through Kristallnacht in 1938. The book then presents a panorama of pertinent events during World War II regarding the effects of the disarming policies. And even though in the occupied countries the Nazis decreed the death penalty for possession of a firearm, there developed instances of heroic armed resistance by Jews, particularly the Warsaw ghetto uprising.

Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and "Enemies of the State" Details

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From Reader Review Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and "Enemies of the State" for online ebook

Fredrick Danysh says

A history of gun control in Germany from the end of World War I through the fall of Nazi Germany. It reinforces the fact that European governments, including Germany, feel that civilians should not possess or have access to firearms as that gives dissidents the ability to resist actions by the state. A history of gun confiscation and persecution of the Jewish people is given. This work shows that the right of defense through armed resistance is an unique American one. A must read for both sides of the gun control issue.

Marvin Watts says

All I could say is WOW!!!. Could history be repeating itself with the efforts of gun control advocates to create more laws and regulations that have a disarming effect on law-abiding citizens?

Pam Thomas says

this book explains how gun control in Germany proceeded the lesson in gun control. We should consider how the enemies of the people, Nazis relied on gun control for genocide of the German Jews and for their role in the power struggle. Nazi leaders extended gun control laws and were obsessed with disarming Jews, evil became fueled with fanaticism, you only have to look at how far we have come in the centuries to see that some form of gun control must be put in place.

Patrick says

In reading this book the reader is presented with a detailed account of how the Nazi party was able to use the existing gun laws to begin their efforts of ridding the world of the Jewish people. One cannot but help to draw some disconcerted lines between the rationale used to promote the need for gun registration in Germany and the present day here in the US. Freedoms are not to be taken lightly. Material presented in the book leave one pondering "what if",

Jeff says

After reading this book, it is apparent gun control results in the political consolidation of power, the complete disarmament of the citizenry, the violation of rights of the people, the loss of innocent life, the rise of the absolute corrupt.

I see some parallels to what is happening in the US and it is very concerning. While Germany did not have the same political makeup nor the government design as the US, it should be a lesson for all as to what

should never happen to any society and why the citizenry at large should always be armed. Another MUST read!

Marvin says

When I was offered *Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and "Enemies of the State* to review, I was filled with quite a bit of curiosity. In 2013, when there seems to be a shooting a day by some disgruntled person, there is quite a discussion going on about gun control and the 2nd amendment. A lot of it on both sides is hyperbolic and weak with facts. One of those analogies you see quite often on the anti-gun control side is about the Third Reich in Germany in the 30s and 40s. The basic argument is that Nazi Germany had gun control and it either led to or was an important factor in the rise of Hitler and it could happen here. On the other side, the pro-gun control side states that using this is a ridiculous statement in that gun control was not the reason that the Third Reich occurred. So a serious, non-hyperbolic look at what actually went on in Germany during the rise of Hitler could actually be helpful to know.

The first thing to be aware of is who wrote the book and who published it. And, for that matter, who is reviewing it. Stephen P. Halbrook has written extensively on gun rights and the second amendment. The publisher is the Independent Institute, a Libertarian think tank whose basic stance on this topic is that any restriction on gun control, no matter how small, is anti-constitutional. My own position is that I support the second amendment but understand that some restrictions, like gun registration, may be necessary to protect that right and to prevent abuses, just like there are minimal restrictions to the right to free speech and the right to assembly to protect people against irresponsible and harmful behavior. In the arena of gun control debate, I would probably be considered moderate or in the middle. In most other things, I would definitely be considered liberal. So there is the philosophical starting points for all to see.

My first reaction to this book was how well researched and devoid of preaching this book is. Halbrook did an impressive job of researching his subject and preventing his viewpoint from overpowering the facts. He starts his look into German gun control laws in 1918 when gun possession was pretty much prohibited and severely punished. He continues to the gun control laws of 1928 by the relatively liberal Weimar Republic that allowed possession of firearms but called for national registration. In the 30s the Nazis took control of the country and used these laws to further restrict gun possession and to search for and find arms possessed by those they felt were a threat to the regime. In 1938, a new law was passed that forbade "enemies of the state", and specifically Jews, to possess firearms. The Nazis massed an aggressive campaign to seize weapons and arrest anyone against their government, securing the control of the country to Hitler and the Third Reich.

My synopsis is quick and simple but suffice to say Halbrook present detailed evidence of this scenario. Much of this evidence is claimed have been made available only recently. The author does not claim that the gun control laws caused the rise of Hitler's Third Reich but he does make a good case in that it was a significant factor in its success and was also a factor in the lack of armed resistance in Germany during this time. I also think he made a good case for the idea that any law restricting human actions, not just gun control laws in my opinion, have consequences and should be monitored for the potential of abuse by the government.

I really admired Halbrook's research and presentation. The historical facts seem not in dispute. However what can be in dispute is the intent and conclusion of the author and the publisher. For the question now is how much of this can be related to our current national and world environment. While Halbrook's book for the most part appears "to the facts" there are occasional statements that made me wonder. In the introduction

of this book, the author states a movement in the United States exists that claims firearms should only be allowed for the military and police. That seems odd to me since I know of no group that takes that extreme and, if there is, it would be a very insignificant movement. I do know that pro-gun registration groups are commonly attacked as wanting to take's guns away from everyone when it is simply not true, I wondered if what I read was an example of that mentality. Another instance happens when the author relates an instance in the 30s in which a German Nazi attacks a Jewish family with a blunt weapon and a gun. The author implies that this incident in another culture would be used as propaganda against the Aryan using the weapon. I was very mystified until I realized that these sentences could have been written in 2013 during or after the incident in which George Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin with a gun and could be implying Zimmerman was used in some form of propaganda attack, even though what actually happened is still disputed in most circles. I may be totally off here but I can't think of any other interpretation. I would love to ask the author what he was meaning or implying when he wrote that paragraph.

For the most part, Halbrook wisely leaves us to make our own conclusion but he is certainly trying to lead us to certain ones. I have my own questions needing answers in order to offer a conclusion. For instance, there is no doubt that Germany's laws, even those of the alleged "Liberal" Weimar Republic, were much more restricted than anything existing or even proposed in America. Is it fair to compare one country with a tradition of second amendment gun rights to a country where such rights would be basically unheard of. Also, taking the current world situation in mind, all countries in Europe and Northern America, in other words most developing countries, have gun control or registration with America's laws being the weakest. I would be hard put to see where any of those democratic countries are in danger of heading toward tyranny at this time even if certain extreme conservative groups love to yell words like "Tyranny" when addressing the current administration.

Another interesting conclusion that the author makes is this. If there were not gun control registration laws in Germany, there could have been an effective resistance by both Jews and people against the Third Reich. That is one of those speculations that is hard to prove but I would essentially agree with it in the abstract. However, I do want to point out it is not a slam dunk. It is good to remember that at about the same time and across the Atlantic, Japanese-Americans were being rounded up into relocation camps with no apparent opposition and resistance despite the existence of the second amendment.

I do think we need to be very careful at what solutions we use even though I think national gun registration is essentially a sensible solution if done correctly. What I don't understand is why conservative groups, meaning in this case Republicans, are so concerned about the possible abuses of gun control laws while they actively pass laws that force pregnant women into invasive ultra-sound procedures just for considering their legal birth control options or pass voter ID laws that will effectively curtail the right of minorities and women to vote under the guise of preventing non-existent voter fraud.

So I think the conclusions can still be argued. But I do commend the author and the publishing country for providing a sane and well researched look at a part of history that is usually drowned in insinuations and exaggerations. I think it would be good for both sides to read this book, weight the information and the discuss the right way to address gun control issues using more sense and less accusations.

I want to thank the author, the Independent Institute and Netgalley for allowing me to read and review an advance review copy. I suspect the author and publishing company may not be happy with some of my review but hope they will take solace in the fact that I actually enjoyed the book and found it informative. I also hope they appreciate that, in this particular instance, they were not preaching to the choir.

Patrick Peterson says

Excellent book on a crucial issue. If you think the downsides of gun control are inconsequential, you need to read this book.

If you think the Nazis were lawless from the beginning, with making their own laws up to persecute the Jews, with no precedent, this book could open your eyes.

If you think gun registration is a good thing that has little to no downside, and can do great good, you need to read this book.

The facts revealed here about law abiding Jews and others turning in their guns must have some affect.

Joseph says

This book was only like 220 pages (not including like 15 pages of an introduction that does not have page numbers to it), but there were all type of footnotes on the bottom of the page, which made the book like 190 pages or something. I have to say this was painful to read, which sucks because this was a book I really wanted to read and be good. I think if you did a drinking game of how many times they said like this law was created and guns were taken away you would be hammered in less than half the 1st chapter.

All the country was doing was taking the guys away from its own people so they can control them and kill them if needed. Sort of like how one of our political parties wants to ban guns so you can't defend yourself.

But this was a really dry and boring book to read. Skip it.

Jen says

I enjoy reading books about World War 2, but I am not in any way a "buff". I learned so much from this book it was amazing. I have to say, that what the Nazis did in regards to gun control and census is paralleling what is happening in America. This book needs to be read by everyone, especially those who are pro gun "control", I'm not a gun "nut", but I do recognize the necessity of civilians of any place being able to protect themselves from criminals and tyranny.

This book was FULL of footnotes and the bibliography of the book is extensive. I wrote down a bunch of different titles that sounded interesting that I want to read in the future. The author is very responsible with his citations, using other works to back his thoughts.

I would recommend this book to EVERYone. This book is needed now, especially with guns being seen in such a negative light. Guns aren't evil, but things can be done with guns that are evil. The Nazis disarmed their victims, making it much easier for them to do the evil they did.

This was an eARC and going to be archived. I will DEFINITELY get myself a copy of this book, with multiple copies for friends as gifts.

Emerson Lima says

Contra ou a favor do desarmamento?

Colocado desta forma, poucos diriam contra. Afinal, quem quer ser contra desarmar indivíduos nocivos? Todos nós conhecemos indivíduos nocivos e a possibilidade de vê-los armados é bem assustadora mas...quem decide quem é nocivo? você? Bem, VOCÊ pode ser o "cara nocivo" na opinião de outra pessoa. Talvez a sociedade? Bem, a sociedade é apenas uma reunião de pessoas e já houve épocas que a "sociedade" decidiu que escravidão era algo aceitável. De fato, sobre a escravidão, havia teorias e mais teorias - apresentadas pela inteligência da época como verdades irrevogáveis - que hoje acreditamos serem falsas para justificar toda sorte de atrocidades (e toda sorte de boas ações também em consonância com a máxima "errar é humano...e ACERTAR também").

Nessas horas de dúvidas, a história pode ser uma boa conselheira do que fazer. Neste contexto, acabei de terminar um livro absolutamente fundamental para o debate acerca do direito (ou não) do estado em desarmar seus cidadãos com o intuito de protegê-los. O livro do professor e conselheiro da Suprema Corte Americana, o Dr. S. P. Halbrook é muito elucidativo.

Repleto de um farto material documental para endossar cada uma de suas afirmações, o livro conta a história de como desarmar a população alemã foi um passo absolutamente fundamental para o terror nazista que tomou conta daquele país em meados décadas de 1930 até quase 1950. Os argumentos da época soam absolutamente idênticos aos de hoje:

-- Nenhum cidadão de bem precisa de uma arma: a polícia vai proteger sua vida e seus bens. Armas são coisas de bandidos e desarmá-los vai melhorar a segurança de todos!

>>> O livro deixa claro como a violência só aumentou pois, como esperado, apenas o "cidadão de bem" obedece a lei a ponto de se desfazer de uma posse apenas por que um grupo de burocratas decidiu que ele deveria fazê-lo. O fora-da-lei, por definição, jamais quis obedecer. Para ele, a medida foi apenas um desarmamento de um dos lados da disputa.

Um detalhe aterrador foi que os PRÓPRIOS JUDEUS na época acreditaram em grande medida dessa afirmação e muitos foram

presos NA FILA para entregar as armas, pasmém, por porte ilegal de armas!

-- As pessoas vão atirar umas nas outras por qualquer briga de bar! O povo (alemão, neste contexto mas brasileiro, inglês, francês, etc em outros contextos) não tem educação para portar armas!

>>> A violência só aumentou na Alemanha quando as armas foram banidas. O mesmo no Brasil. Em 2015 dei uma palestra na qual falava da ATERRADORA estatística de 55 mil assassinatos por ano. Em 2017 foram 65 mil! E estamos em plena vigência do estatuto do desarmamento...

-- A caça, antes esporte nacional, deve ser proibida pois o Führer é avesso a qualquer crueldade contra animais (aliás, ele era vegetariano).

>>> Pena que a mesma compaixão não se aplicava a seres humanos.

-- Um grupo de pessoas de bem que estejam armados não podem fazer frente a um governo opressor de forma que mantê-los armados seria inócuo e perigoso para eles.

>>> Várias cidades francesas não foram tomadas, assim como diversos focos de resistência em cidades tais como Berlim, não somente obtiveram vitória contra soldados treinados usando armas de baixo poder ofensivo (pistolas e revolveres) como , em muitos lugares, reverteram o domínio nazista muito antes do final da guerra. Detalhe mórbido: 80% (isso mesmo, quatro em cada cinco pessoas) eram, e continuaram sendo, CONTRA as ações assassinas e genocidas do regime nazista. Teria o nazismo uma assenção tão rápida não fosse o, como destacado por Heinrich Himmler, o acovardamento da classe média e o início de uma psicose de delatar antes de ser delatado por simples medo de que QUALQUER UM poderia ter o respaldo de invadir sua casa e roubar seus pertences e causar toda sorte de mal apenas se achasse que você era simpatizante dos judeus? Quem invadiria uma casa se soubesse que encontraria resistência legítima? Teria, honestamente, acontecido a "noite dos cristais" se os poucos jovens nazistas (menos de mil) que prenderam mais de 30.000 judeus, queimaram mais de mil sinagogas e destruiram mais de 7 mil negócios soubessem que haveria resistência? Onde estava a polícia que protegeria a todos?

Ainda sobre a noite dos cristais, o estopim foi a grande atenção da mídia acerca do assassinato do diplomata alemão

Ernst vom Rath pelo polaco judeu residente em Paris(!)
Herschel Grynszpan. Segundo a mídia da época, se os judeus
NA ALEMANHA tivessem sido desarmados em sua totalidade,
o assassinado NA FRANÇA não teria ocorrido...Impossível
não lembrar do alarde midiático toda vez que um louco NOS
ESTADOS UNIDOS usa uma arma (illegal, na maior parte das
vezes...daquelas que nenhuma lei de desarmamento tiraria
das ruas) para matar inocentes e a medida alardeada é
retirar armas dos cidadões NO BRASIL (como se já não o tivessem
feito. EXATAMENTE como na Alemanha da época JÁ HAVIAM DESARMADO
OS JUDEUS E AQUELES QUE PODERIAM OS TER DEFENDIDO).

Não há o que dizer. Contra ou a favor do desarmamento? Bem,
não vou opinar sobre o desarmamento dos outros. Quem quiser
que não compre uma arma. Mas sou veementemente contra o
MEU desarmamento por um governo que jamais conseguiu me dar
proteção ou, nas palavras de Benjamim Franklin,

"Aqueles que abrem mão da liberdade essencial por um
pouco de segurança acabam sem nenhum dos dois"

D.E. Heil says

This book is not easy to read and takes a tremendous amount of concentration but it is definitely worth it. It is an extrememly important subject that has haunted me ever since reading this book.

The activites and decisions made by well-meaning people in government wanting to do the right thing eventually led to the Holocaust and all the other tragedies of World War II. This is history but the chilling aspect of this book that continues to haunt me is the remarkable similarities that our elections and governmental activities take in the present time.

This is a must read for anyone interest in politics, the gun control movement, and understanding how well-intentioned actions can be morphed into extrememely evil acts that must be recognized, halted, and never allowed to happen again.

Allen Roth says

Professor Halbrook has delved into newly available archives to write a compelling history of the Nazi regime in Germany. Halbrook documents how the first order of business of the Nazi thugs was to track down gun owners (through government records that included applications for gun permits) and to confiscate these weapons. The Nazis knew that many Germans were professional soldiers who fought in World War I and they posed a potential armed threat to the Nazi regime. To eliminate this threat they disarmed patriotic, law abiding Germans. When the Nazis unleashed their reign of terror they had little to fear from an armed opposition. When they attacked Jewish store owners they knew the victims of their aggression could not adequately defend themselves. Halbrook includes several portraits of victims of this gun control regime

including a German Olympic champion. I highly recommend this important book.

Beanbag Love says

This book was a "read now" on Netgalley and, since the subject interests me I thought I'd give it a go. Glad I did, but it's always hard to leave this history behind.

The author, Stephen Halbrook, is unreservedly, unapologetically, pro-Second Amendment. He makes a point of letting the reader know in the introduction that advocating for gun rights is NOT the purpose of this work. It's an angle on the rise of the Third Reich that hasn't seen as much study as it could and that's how he approaches it. He also makes it perfectly clear that he's not at all trying to say strict gun control brought about the Third Reich or the Holocaust. It seems to be just one of the many pieces of a harrowing puzzle. To understand such a baffling stretch of recent history, it's important for all aspects to be explored. So often we only see the simplest arc and come away with shallow suppositions based on half information. This is an effective installment in the efforts to understand something that, to me, is incomprehensible.

The book is actually a quick and fairly easy read considering the subject matter. Halbrook's manner is straight-forward, just-the-facts, and full of footnotes, annotations and cites. The information he imparts has been meticulously researched, so as a text relating history, it's trustworthy.

I think the best way to approach and present this subject is to avoid drama. If you've ever been to the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. the information is presented very similarly. Contemporary articles and spare exhibits. It's thought-provoking and haunting. While Hollywood has made Nazi's into caricatures, this style of presentation invokes appropriate horror far better than a dramatic depiction ever can. This is why this book is effective, in my opinion.

So, it's a factual, almost dry text, but the facts contained are so riveting and arresting that this kind of non-fiction stays with you for a long time after reading.

Charles says

Gun control is one of those few issues where there are zero good arguments on one side. Almost anyone who supports gun control is ignorant. Not a malicious ignorance, necessarily—more of an ignorance born of a love of moral preening. On the other hand, it is true that a few gun control supporters are not ignorant, but rather liars, who understand that gun control arguments make no sense on any level, factual or logical, but use them as a cover to achieve their end of keeping law-abiding citizens from having guns, in order to achieve their greater end of more government control of the citizenry. But mostly it's ignorance—essentially every supporter of gun control knows nothing about guns, nothing about the insane and criminals, and nothing about history. It's for that latter lack that this book is an excellent corrective, even though almost certainly no "gun control supporter," a tautology for "invincibly ignorant person," will read it. That's too bad.

A reasonable initial reaction to this book is that it's a *prima facie* violation of Godwin's Law: "As an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches one." But that reasonable reaction would reject the possibility of any apt comparison being made on any issue to the actions

of the Nazis. In this case, that would be a mistake. Unfortunately, Godwin's Law probably does limit the usability of this book in some actual discussions—but fortunately not in all.

Stephen Halbrook, one of the world's leading scholars on gun rights, has done a great deal of original research to buttress the conclusions and arguments of this book. Those conclusions are, in essence, that (a) gun control in Germany, beginning shortly after World War One and in part dictated by the Allies, was aggressively phrased but little enforced; (b) as disorder increased and developed a more political component, gun control became more loosely phrased but much more aggressively enforced; (c) such enforcement was in practice done only against already law-abiding citizens and involved careful tracking of any citizen owning a gun; and (d) even though the danger was recognized, such tracking was immediately used by the Nazis upon their accession to power to destroy any chance of an armed German citizenry.

Dr. Halbrook parses many German legal documents and court cases, most presumably never before available in English, to prove his points. He voluminously footnotes his work, and he cites to various scholars opposed to his (earlier) legal articles on this and related topics, encouraging the reader to obtain opposing views (probably because they're so weak, but you can't blame him for that). As Dr. Halbrook shows, most of the practical consequences of German gun control, other than greasing the Nazi rise to and consolidation of power, were exactly what you'd expect: only law-abiding citizens lost their guns (which, when criminals continued to use guns, was used as an argument for further restricting law-abiding citizens, just as in the United States, until the recent reversal in fortune for gun rights in the US).

The conclusion is not, of course, that 2015 America is 1930s Germany. Not only are gun rights here continuing their fast rise, and the gun grabber movement on the ropes, if not knocked out, but America's history, culture and Constitution all are very different. Of course, there is a powerful, vocal, tiny minority in America who have the same ends in mind with respect to guns as the Nazis, even if not the same general ends in mind (although when your mind runs in the same track, you tend to end up in the same place). And vigilance against them is and will be constantly necessary. But on this issue, past is not prologue, in all likelihood.

Various other items pop off the page. For example, Oskar Schindler, of Schindler's List fame, made sure that his Jewish workers received guns and training, a fact of course omitted in Spielberg's film. Another fascinating fact found in the book is how few guns there were in Germany in private hands, yet the extreme lengths the Nazis went to confiscate them. Most guns were, of course, low-capacity pistols or bolt- or single-shot rifles on a hunting or World War One military pattern. In 1933, Wilhelm Frick, the Reich minister of the interior, complained to Hermann Goring that in one month, 17,000 pistols were imported, "ten times the average import of the preceding three months." You can extrapolate from that that around 20,000 pistols were imported a year into Germany (although that of course excludes domestic production). Compare that with the roughly 25 million guns sold in the US in 2014 alone and you can conclude that the societies are very different. What the meaning of that difference is may not be clear (it is not homicide rates, which are quite low for the US relative to most of the world, and which are just as low as even Western Europe when adjusted for the demographics of 90% of the US homicides.) But, doubtless, one conclusion should be that the process and result of any civil unrest or government authoritarianism in the United States would be quite different than it was in Germany, which is as it should be.

Dr. Halbrook is very cautious in his conclusions as applied to the modern world. His only real conclusion in that regard is "But an armed populace with a political culture of hallowed constitutional and natural rights that they are motivated to fight for is less likely to fall under the sway of tyranny, and if they do, they are more likely to offer armed resistance. A disarmed populace that is taught that it has no rights other than what the government decrees as positive law is obviously more susceptible to totalitarian rule and is less able to

resist oppression.” No doubt.

Bliss Tew says

GUN CONTROL IN THE THIRD REICH should be read by any American, European, Asian, African, etc. if they want to understand the facts surrounding murder by government. The National Socialist government utilized gun registration laws to aid it in its program of disarming civilians targeted for elimination, millions of them. First the intended victims, law abiding citizens, were disarmed by law, then they were easily rounded up, deported to concentration camps, worked as slave and murdered by the millions. Why? Simple; because once the intended victims were disarmed they could not effectively resist the theft of their property by a corrupt government nor the murder of themselves and their family members by that same corrupt government. Stephen Halbrook lays it out for any honest investigator to see. It should be a warning to civilians everywhere since the Nazi holocaust isn't the only instance of corrupt governments murdering millions of their citizens in recent times.
