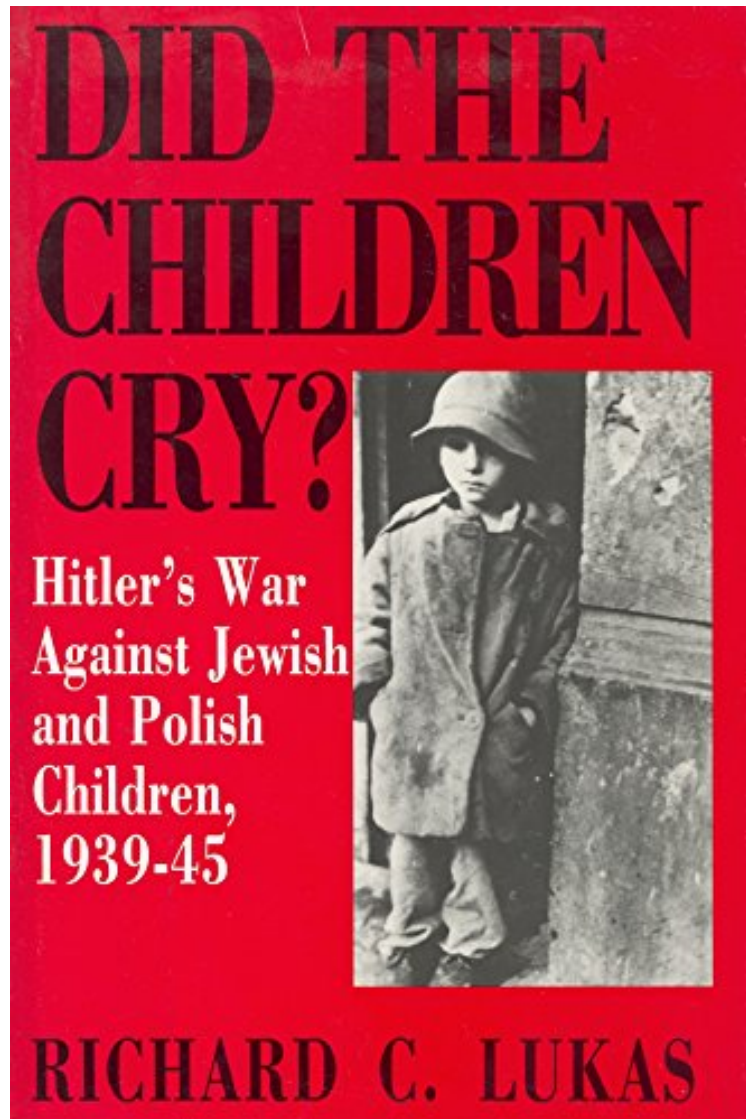


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Did the Children Cry: Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45 (Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-1945)

Richard Lukas

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Richard Lukas : Did the Children Cry: Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45 (Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-1945) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Did the Children Cry: Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-45 (Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939-1945):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Eye Opening ReadBy Honesty is the best policy!!!I hate to rate a book with this title a five because its a horrific thing that happened to them! But it was well written and truly an eye opener. To think what I was doing at age 10 and what these children had to do...its just horrific.9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Lost Children of Poland!By SylviastelMy father watched his friends and neighbors being killed in the streets of Siedlce only because they were Jewish but my father never mentioned that they were. To him, they were his neighbors and friends.My mother never saw her father again because he was in a Prisoner of War Camp in Dusseldorf, Germany for the Polish Home Army and did not see him until she was 19 years old in America. On top of that, my mother's farm animals and livestock were murdered as well as the invasion of Nazis in her home.My parents were never really the children that they were supposed to be because of the War. The war against the children of Poland whether they were Jewish or Catholic remains forgotten among the books about the Holocaust and World War II. My father died a month after he finally admitted to the slaughter. It was only after my research that I learned that his friends and neighbors were Jews. My aunt recalls her first boyfriend who was shot to death for delivering newspapers. My father also remembered his parents talking about how the Nazis were going to kill all of them and since Treblinka was a train stop away, it was a possible reality that they would all be next to the gas chambers. The children were witnesses to great horror during World War II such as the bodies of soldiers, friends, neighbors, and relatives among their midst as well as the destruction of their own community. The author does a superb job in helping us understand the children's plight. Unlike adults, the children were innocent victims and now many are in their seventies and they haven't discussed the horrors of war with the younger generations. Unlike the concentration camp survivors, many Poles don't talk about the war. After World War II, there was communism which was an improvement since instead of being killed that you were arrested. The psychological horrors from World War II can be argued forever. The truth is that a holocaust is happening somewhere. The Polish countryside that was once littered with crops turned to a killing fields of rotting corpses and death.68 of 70 people found the following review helpful. Objectionable (!) Juxtaposition of Polish and Jewish SufferingsBy Jan PeczkisThis book is known less for its content than for the controversy that has surrounded it. Nominated for the Janusz Korczak Literary Award, it was subsequently beset with a flurry of Jewish protests. After a spate of bad publicity, and the threat of legal action, the award was belatedly presented--but without any ceremony.One reason give for challenging the Janusz Korczak Literary Award is the transparently bogus charge that this book "sanitizes" Polish behavior. Even a cursory reading of it reveals just the opposite. Lukas criticizes Polish conduct many times. For example, he discusses Polish-German collaboration (e. g., pp. 141-142), even citing an Israeli study that estimates that there were 7,000 Polish collaborators in all (p. 152; which, incidentally, means that about 1 in every 4,000 Poles had been a collaborator). Another reason given for challenging the Janusz Korczak Literary Award is the claim that this book is "borderline anti-Semitic". Indeed it is--if one understands anti-Semitism to be any criticism of Jewish conduct under any circumstances. Lukas, for example, points out that Jews were commonly prejudiced against Poles just as Poles were commonly prejudiced against Jews (p. 152). He also gives examples of Jewish selfishness against fellow needy Jews at the same time that he gives examples of Polish selfishness against fellow needy Poles (p. 28). Lukas also cites a Jewish historian who faults the method that Jewish organizations used to recover Jewish children after the war (p. 220). Is all this anti-Semitism? Let the reader decide.And, far from overstating the extent of Polish assistance to Jews, Lukas quotes a wide range of estimates (both Polish and Jewish) of how many Poles were involved in such aid (pp. 155-157). Lukas also provides figures for the deaths in some of the extermination camps. The collective death toll at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka ranges from 1.65 million to 2.54 million (p. 230).The genocide against Jews is well known, but Lukas makes it clear that Poles were also victims of genocide. The genocide of Poles does not spark the imagination as much as the industrial-scale gassing and cremation of Jews by the millions, but it was no less real. Heinrich Himmler stated (p. 17) that all Poles will disappear from the world and that all Poles will be destroyed. Martin Bormann (p. 21) asserted that Slavs should be kept alive only as long as they are needed as forced laborers. 2-3 million Polish gentiles, including roughly half of the Polish intelligentsia, were already murdered. Of course, since the Polish population was much larger than the Jewish one, the genocide of Poles had to be a long-term German project, with greater emphasis placed on passive genocide, at least until Germany won the war. Hitler spoke of reducing the Slavs' fertility and, by 1942, the Polish birth rate had fallen by 80% relative to its prewar level (p. 87). SS General Odilo Globocnik noted that the mass killings of Poles and their replacement with German colonists meant that Poles would be gradually crushed "economically and biologically"(p. 107). Heinrich Himmler wanted the General Government (German-occupied central Poland) to be completely Germanized within twenty years (p. 107).Throughout this book, Lukas consistently relates the experiences of Polish and Jewish children to each other. Both, for instance, experienced the horror of the German conquest of Poland. Both experienced a breakdown of morality caused by the privations of the German occupation. Both learned how to lie and steal to survive. Both quickly learned not to trust anybody. Both were in German concentration camps. Both were used in sadistic experiments conducted by Dr. Mengele. Both experienced sexual assaults (including homosexual assaults) by German guards and officials (pp. 95-96, 202). Both were sent to secret schools in their respective communities. Both took part in clandestine cultural activities. Both enjoyed the childrens' books written by Polish Jew Janusz Korczak. Both held odd jobs to help their parents. Both were forced to

work in Germany as forced laborers under appalling conditions. Both were involved in the rescue of their compatriots. Both served in their respective guerilla movements. Both had to watch their parents die, and both experienced death at the hands of the Germans in large numbers. Both were commonly left orphaned. Both experienced difficulties in locating still-surviving relatives (with postwar Germans commonly resisting attempts to identify kidnapped Polish children: pp. 211-214). Finally, both experienced adjustment problems after the war. For example, both Polish and Jewish children commonly internalized the German hatred directed against their respective nationalities, scorning their respective heritages, and sometimes actually believing that their nationalities had deserved their sufferings. Let us return to the contrived fuss surrounding the Janusz Korczak Literary Award. The reader can clearly see that this book does not fit with the template of modern thinking--where the genocide of Jews is given disproportionate attention, is accorded a special term (Holocaust), and any attempt to compare it with any other genocidal event is called "relativizing the Holocaust." In contrast to all of this, Lukas consistently juxtaposes the experiences of Polish and Jewish children. Perhaps that is what motivated the outburst of hostility to this book. So long as Jewish sufferings are thought to be higher than those of others, or at least more worthy of public attention than those of others, specifically the Poles, any such juxtaposition will be unbearable, especially for a book that is to receive any special recognition.

Based on eye-witness accounts, interviews, and prodigious research by the author, who is an expert in the field, this is a unique contribution to the literature of World War II, and a most compelling account of German inhumanity towards children in occupied Poland.