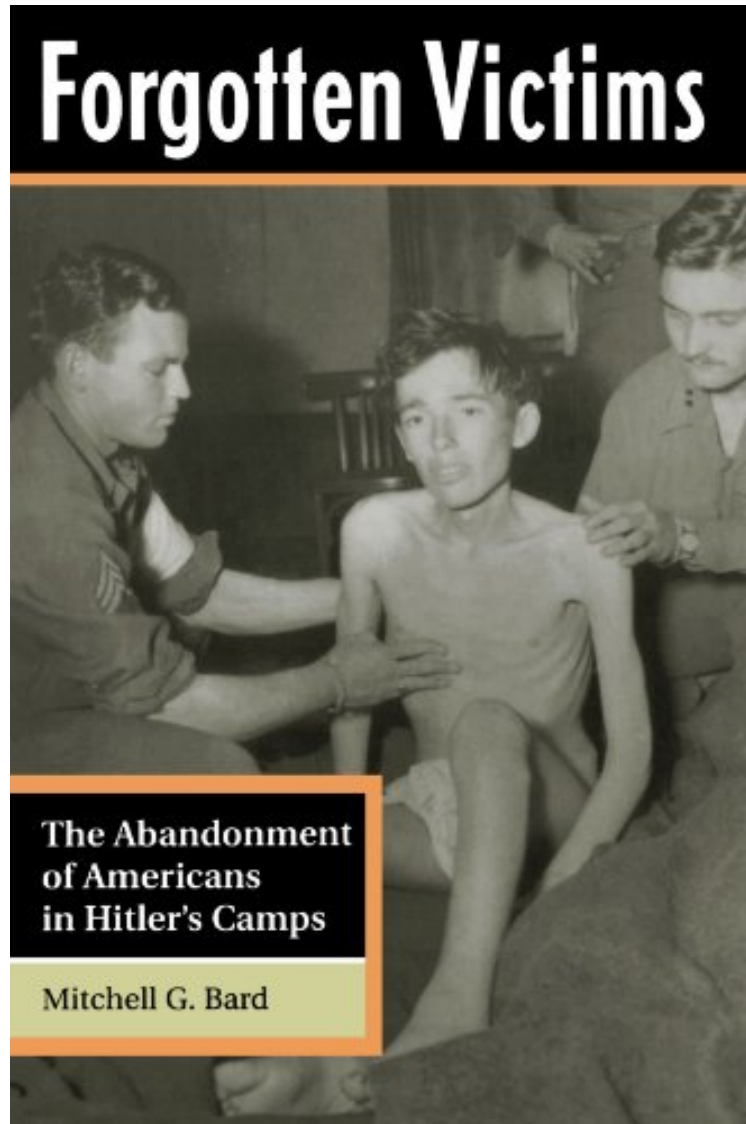


[Free] Forgotten Victims: The Abandonment Of Americans In Hitler's Camps

# Forgotten Victims: The Abandonment Of Americans In Hitler's Camps

*Mitchell G. Bard*

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One common explanation for the world's failure to prevent the Holocaust is that the information about the Nazi extermination program seemed too incredible to believe. Fifty years later, Americans may now also find it difficult to believe that their fellow citizens were among the twelve million people murdered by the Nazis, abandoned to this fate by their own government. The outbreak of war in Europe put tens of thousands of American civilians, especially Jews, in deadly peril, but the State Department failed to help them. As a consequence of this callous policy many suffered and some died. Later, when the United States joined the war against Hitler, many brave young Americans were captured and imprisoned. Jewish soldiers were at a special risk they were sent into battle with a telltale H (for Hebrew") on their dog tags, which helped the Nazis single them out for mistreatment. One group of Jewish GIs was sent to the brutal Berga labor camp, which had the highest fatality rate of any POW facility. Other POWs were sent to concentration camps, where they became victims of the machinery of the Final Solution. Why is it that none of the hundreds of books about the Holocaust has examined the fate of Americans who fell into Nazi hands? Perhaps it is because the number of American victims was relatively small compared to the total that perished. Perhaps it is due to the perception of the Holocaust as a purely European phenomenon; most people assumed that Americans could not have become victims. But, according to Mitchell Bard, the main reason this story has gone untold for a half century is that much of the evidence has been concealed by our own government. The U.S. government had good reasons to cover up this story. The revelation that Americans were mistreated and that their government knew and failed to do anything about it would certainly raise uncomfortable questions about this country's failure to offer safe haven to the Nazis' main target: European Jews. *Forgotten Victims* provides documentary evidence proving that American officials knew that U.S. civilians and soldiers were in danger, that they were being mistreated (including being placed in concentration camps), and that they were even being murdered by the Nazis. The story of how European Jewry was forsaken by the Western Allies is by now familiar, but this book exposes for the first time the abandonment of American Jews.

From Publishers Weekly Based on original documents and interviews with survivors, this shocking study reveals that Washington officials knew that U.S. citizens were brutalized and murdered in Nazi concentration camps, and failed to take steps to save hundreds, perhaps thousands, of American lives. Bard describes the fate of American civilians trapped in Europe by the outbreak of WW II and the mistreatment of American military POWs, with special attention to Jewish GIs. He discloses the failure of American prosecutors in post-war crime trials to bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against U.S. civilians and captured military personnel. He explores the feasibility of reparations for surviving American victims of the Holocaust who were abandoned by their government. His harsh indictment concludes with a warning that Americans overseas should not count on protection from the U.S. government. Bard is executive director of the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Photos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Dr. Bard's book is the only authoritative account of what happened to some Jewish and Gentile GIs who were sent to concentration camps and who were effectively abandoned by their country." -- Jerusalem Post, December 30, 1994 "Even the names of certain camps where Jews died do not appear in most Holocaust literature. This is true, for example, of the camp at Berga, a German village on the old Czechoslovakian border. Thanks to the researches of Mitchell G. Bard, this camp has at least been placed on the map of locations where Jews were murdered." -- London Times, September 23, 1994 "[A] valuable and needed study.... Bard's account of the horrors which these individuals and others encountered is moving and his criticism of the American government constitutes an indictment of FDR's administration." -- Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall 1996 "[The] astonishing and heretofore untold story of American soldiers caught up in the machinery of the Final Solution, imprisoned and murdered in Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen and other Nazi concentration camps." -- Forward From the Back Cover One common explanation for the world's failure to prevent the Holocaust is that the information about the Nazi extermination program seemed too incredible to believe. Fifty years later, Americans may now also find it difficult to believe that their fellow citizens were among the twelve million people murdered by the Nazis, abandoned to this fate by their own government. The outbreak of war in Europe put tens of thousands of American civilians, especially Jews, in deadly peril, but the State Department failed to help them. As a consequence of this callous policy many suffered - and some died. Later, when the United States joined the war against Hitler, many brave young Americans were captured and imprisoned. Jewish soldiers were at a special risk - they were sent into battle with a telltale "H" (for "Hebrew") on their dog tags, which helped the Nazis single them out for mistreatment. One group of Jewish GIs was sent to the brutal Berga labor camp, which had the highest fatality rate of any POW facility. Other POWs were sent to

concentration camps, where they became victims of the machinery of the "Final Solution". Why is it that none of the hundreds of books about the Holocaust has examined the fate of Americans who fell into Nazi hands? Perhaps it is because the number of American victims was relatively small compared to the total that perished. Perhaps it is due to the perception of the Holocaust as a purely European phenomenon; most people assumed that Americans could not have become victims. But, according to Mitchell Bard, the main reason this story has gone untold for a half century is that much of the evidence has been concealed by our own government. The U.S. government had good reasons to cover up this story. The revelation that Americans were mistreated and that their government knew and failed to do anything about it would certainly raise uncomfortable questions about this country's failure to offer safe haven to the Nazis' main target: European Jews. *Forgotten Victims* provides documentary evidence proving that American officials knew that U.S. civilians and soldiers were in danger, that they were being mistreated (including being placed in concentration camps), and that they were even being murdered by the Nazis. The story of how European Jewry was forsaken by the Western Allies is by now familiar, but this book exposes for the first time the abandonment of American Jews.