

# The Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder

*Abram de Swaan*

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**Abram de Swaan : The Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder** before purchasing it in order to

gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Killing Compartments: The Mentality of Mass Murder*:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. excellent, profound  
By Humble 1excellent,profound. Understanding how "normal men" could commit atrocities and have no guilty conscience. Refutes hannah arndt banality of evil. . why men of the Hamburg battalion were not Ordinary men but ordinary men who had grown up during world war 1 with 2 million German dead, hyperinflation and 22 years of virulent anti jewish propaganda which made jews completely other to them. a compartment where this violence was "ok" and convinced germans of that era they were the victims threatened by jews.. Also also very informative about the fate of turkish Armenians , tutsis and why they were slaughtered and on and on. Stalin's terror China terror etc. What a century! and not over it yet.Also note religious belief had Nothing to do with slaughter0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good overview but wanted more  
By CustomerGood overview but wanted more: more socio-economic-historical analyses that place these awful crimes against humanity in our sweep of history. Instead, we're left feeling that much goes on without our knowing, gets swept under the rug of "little" history - those stories of one tribe or another, or of one people or another, or of one region or another. And, that we all forget.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a huge subject spanning centuries so details of ...  
By N Imes MDThis is a huge subject spanning centuries so details of the histoical events are minimal. However I believe that the author successfully made his case about the methodology of tyrants and Progressives used in the last 150 years to effect mass murder

An incisive exploration of why acts of mass annihilation take place and how people become mass killers  
By historical standards, the early years of the twenty-first century have been remarkably peaceful. Only rarely are people killed by their own kind, and only very, very rarely are they killed by other animals, microorganisms excepted. Nevertheless, even though the statistics should reassure, many people worry about lone killers, murderous gangs, and terrorist bands. At the same time, most people are vaguely aware that even in this relatively calm era, wars have made countless victims. Yet mass violence against unarmed civilians has claimed three to four times as many lives in the past century as war: one hundred million at least, and possibly many more. These large-scale killings have required the efforts of hundreds of thousands of perpetrators. Such men (and almost all were males) were ready to kill, indiscriminately, for many hours a day, for days and weeks at a stretch, and sometimes for months or even years. Unlike common criminals who work outside the mainstream of society, in secret, on their own or with a few accomplices, mass murderers almost always worked in large teams, with full knowledge of the authorities and on their orders. Without exception, they operated within a supportive social context, most often firmly embedded in the institutions of the ruling regime. Unlike terrorists, the mass murderers usually did not want their deeds to be widely known. How people are enrolled in the service of evil is a question that lies at the heart of this trenchant book. The subject here is mass annihilationthat is, massive, asymmetric violence at close range, where killers and victims are in direct confrontation. Abram de Swaan offers a taxonomy of mass violence that focuses on the rank-and-file perpetrators, examining how murderous regimes recruit them and create what De Swaan calls the killing compartments that make possible the worst abominations without apparent moral misgiving, without a sense of personal responsibility, and, above all, without pity. De Swaan wonders where extreme violence comes from and where it goesseemingly without a tracewhen the wild and barbaric gore is over. And what about the perpetrators themselves? Are they merely and only the product of external circumstance? Or is there something in their makeup that helps them become mass murderers? Drawing on a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, political science, history, and psychology, De Swaan sheds light on an urgent and seemingly intractable pathology that continues to poison peoples all over the world.

A strong, wide-ranging contribution to the field of genocide studies, well worth reading.  
Ben Kiernan, author of *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*