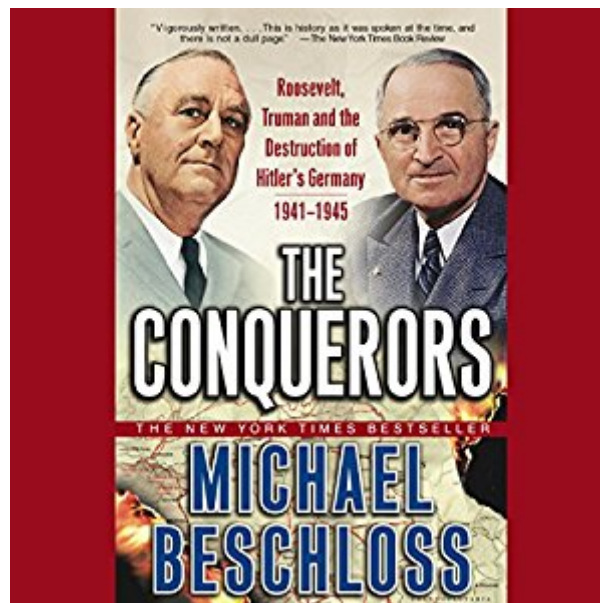




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The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman, And The Destruction Of Hitler's Germany, 1941-1945



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller FDR and Harry Truman fought in private with Churchill and Stalin over how to ensure that Germany could never threaten the world again. Beschloss lets us eavesdrop on private conversations among a cast of historical giants. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Roger Crowley is an author who combines very deep scholarship with a writing style that prevents you from putting his book down. This was my fourth book by Crowley, and I have read the first three twice each. The depth of detail and unwinding of historic personalities makes for a great NOVEL, but its not a "novel" - its an incredibly readable history book. The insights to the evolving leadership personality of the incorruptible Albuquerque is like a novel in itself, yet is only one part of the book. The revelations of tiny historical details are showcased for the historical turning points that effected world history. The TWO meetings of Bartholomew Diaz with Christopher Columbus, one to reject Portuguese sponsorship of his journey west, the other to debrief him on his return from America (he was held in Portugal before completing return to Spain) are huge historical turning points for both East and West. And the classical records he exploits to reconstruct actual conversations (the Portuguese, like the Dutch, kept records of everything) of supporting personnel as well as main historical figures, are masterful in drawing the reader in, and NOT releasing her.

I first encountered Michael Beschloss on PBS, and was taken with his insightful comments on

presidential politics. Since then I've read a couple of his books, including "Presidential Courage." Since I'm a great fan of books about World War II and U.S. Presidents, why would I need to read another one that covers well-trod ground? Because there are endless interpretations of who did what, why, when, etc. Beschloss provides information and interpretation beyond what I've learned before - about FDR's and Truman's governing style, their handling of critical issues, dilemmas regarding war aims and military policy, relationships with other leaders and with their cabinet members, etc. The major focus is on the war against Germany rather than Japan - questions of military strategy, relations with Churchill and Stalin, and particularly views on how Germany should be treated after the war. It's well known that Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau favored turning Germany into a pastoral state; the degree to which he pursued this goal, and his ongoing attempt to pin FDR down as favoring this view, were covered in great detail. Morgenthau's relations with other cabinet members, and the chaotic attempts to gain support for his views, show an administration in disarray concerning critical policy questions as the war drew toward an end. Beschloss also reveals FDR both as a master manipulator of his subordinates and a person who could either change his mind or rely on incomplete information in making decisions about the fate of Germany. Another intriguing aspect of this book is the gossipy revelations about certain members of FDR's administration - e.g., Henry Stimson, Edward Stettinius, Cordell Hull - and how FDR kept them all on edge either by ignoring their advice, or playing one off against the other, or making conflicting commitments. All in all, a picture of a very human administration, given to infighting and personality conflicts, rather than a smooth-running machine with cast-in-concrete goals and actions.

Exceptional book with current research (recently released documents and cabinet member's diaries), up to the time the book was written. Delves into the personal relationship of the two Presidents and their cabinets, with Churchill and Stalin. Narration is by the author and kept my attention. The Audible.com book is an abridged version, however still enough to get the feel of the subject. This is one of my favorites.

FDR & Hitler were as different as two leaders could be. They did have one thing in common & that was their management style. Basically it was: Chaos. All those able men below them were never sure where they stood. Who had the boss's ear? Who did he talk to last? Is he mad at me today? They'd play one advisor against another & it worked. Nobody knew everything except FDR & Hitler & it mostly was in their head. But by November, 1944 FDR was dying & Hitler was a physical & mental wreck. Stalin, Churchill, Ike & later, Truman were up to the task. This book spent a lot of time

on Henry Morgenthau, Treasury Secretary. He was FDR next door neighbor at Hyde Park & his best friend. He abused this special relationship, which allowed him to interfere in post-war plans for Germany. He had no special qualifications but he was a Jew. His plans for all Germans was harsh indeed. His proposal was a complete destruction of German industry. A pastoral Germany pre-Industrial Revolution, pre-unification & pre-Bismark. Germans were to subsist on what they could produce. Germany had not fed itself in the 20th century & this would have led to starvation. One of Morgenthau's favorite lines was: "Three bowls of soup every day for every German." Now FDR hated the Germans & he humored Morgenthau. But FDR's idea was to leave intact Germany's industrial capacity, which at the end of the war was still considerable, & turn it over to Great Britain for their use. At this point Great Britain was bankrupt. Churchill knew, with his keen foresight, that a strong Germany would be an important ally in the coming "Cold War" with the Soviets. Harry Truman was inexcusably kept in the dark on all post war planning. Then FDR died. But Harry was a quick study & rapidly grew into the presidency & was soon up to speed. As Morgenthau & all the old cronies of the previous 12 years discovered, Truman was no FDR.

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