Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion

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For the entire history of human civilization, gold has enraptured people around the globe. The Nazis was no less enthralled by it, and felt that gold was the solution to funding Hitler's war machine. Gold was also on the mind of FDR across the Atlantic, as he worked with Europe's other leaders to bring the United States and the rest of the world out of a severe depression. FDR was hardly the first head of state to turn to gold in difficult times. Throughout history, it has been the refuge of both nations and people in trouble, working at times when nothing else does. Desperate people can buy a loaf of bread or bribe a border guard. Gold can get desperate nations oil to keep tanks running or munitions to fight a war. If the price is right, there is always someone somewhere willing to buy or sell gold. And it was to become the Nazi's most important medium of exchange during the war.

Chasing Gold is the story of how the Nazis attempted to grab Europe’s gold to finance history’s bloodiest war. It is filled with high drama and close escapes, laying bare the palate of human emotions. Walking through the tale are giants of world history, as well as ordinary people called upon to undertake heroic action in an extraordinary time.

Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion Details

Date	:	Published December 15th 2014 by Pegasus Books
ISBN	:	9781605986555
Author	:	George M. Taber
Format	:	Hardcover 500 pages
Genre	:	History, Nonfiction, War, World War II, Economics

From Reader Review Chasing Gold: The Incredible Story of How the Nazis Stole Europe's Bullion for online ebook

Ionia says

It's really all in the details--and you won't find a lack of them in this book. Whilst this is a very interesting book, and very well researched--the details cause it to lag a bit here and there.

I was fascinated by all the struggles various countries went through trying to protect their national treasures from the Nazis, and I loved the information on the various political alliances that were formed around the idea of protecting that gold.

George M. Taber writes intelligently and entertainingly and manages to tell a complete story worth reading in this book, but I could have done without some of the minutiae. The smaller details about the removal of the gold, the loading and unloading, in my opinion, took away from the interesting part of the story, in my opinion.

Overall, I still thought this was a really good book and feel comfortable recommending it to anyone interested in this period of history.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the publisher. All opinions are my own.

Douglas says

The author does a great job of taking a highly complex subject matter, global economics, and turns it into an irresistible story. Although not a chronological telling, he effectively tells of the politics, world events, and rise of the Nazi leadership in Germany, and the often unseen players in world economies-- the central bankers.

Although the book was interesting and hard to put down, I was a little confused about the author's central theme. It is unclear if he is trying to play a neutral teller of events (unlikely given his language) or if there was a broader message that was without thesis or conclusion. Overall, I am glad that I read it and feel I learned a fair amount about events that otherwise would have been buried by history. It deserves 3.75 stars.

Jeff says

(Received this as part of a first reads giveaway)

Chiken C says

Tuesday 3 March; 50 minutees

Saturday 7 March: 40 minutes
MOnday 9 march: 80 minutes
Monday March 16: 50 minutes
Tuesday March 17: 30 minutes
Thursday March 18: 20 minutes
Saturday March 21: National Geographic Magazine 90 minutes
Sunday March 22: 30 minutes
Friday March 27: New Yorker Magazine 80 minutes
Sunday March 29: Week Magazine 40 minutes

Tim says

I've read a lot of WW 2 books but this one was a different angle - talking about the financial aspects. Good story in the beginning but slowed down as things went along. Interesting to see how the different countries handled their gold and their dealings with Germany.

Vinayak Malik says

Here I thought a book about Nazis and Gold would be interesting , the book reads like a ship line itinerary

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Linda Morelli says

The true stories Taber relates are exciting and the people involved in saving the gold were real heroes -- ones who put their lives at risk to move their countries' gold to safety. Taber endowed the narrative with an almost thriller aspect that kept me fully engaged. He also successfully conveyed the real life drama involved with those saving the gold, especially the Norwegian and Dutch efforts. For a WWII buff like me, and for those who saw "The Monument Men" film, this is a must read.

For my full review, visit: http://myshelf.com/history/13/chasing...

Scott Anderson says

I honestly believe either in a lake, some farm or buried under old rubble lies gold stole by the third reich. This was a fascinaticing read, one for the bookshelf, and continual reference for research.

Jack B says

3/27: 30 min
3/28: 30 min
3/29: 30 min

3/30: 30 min
3/31: 30 min
4/1: 30 min

4/15: 30 min
4/16: 30 min
4/17; 30 min

Lisa says

Interesting book, better suited to the boys

Azabu says

Taber reveals one of World War 2’s darkest secrets in this compulsively readable account of how the Nazis funded their war machine. His meticulous research dates back to a 1966 Time assignment when Taber was taked with trying to locate where Belgium’s $204.9 million of bank gold ended up during WW2 Each chapter focuses on a different European country with a map, citing the number of tons of gold in its reserves at the outset of WW2. To achieve Hitler’s diabolical objective of world domination required more financing than the Reichsbank could bankroll. After seizing $150 million in bullion from Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Germans had the funds to invade Poland and beyond despite resistance from Hitler’s top economist, Dr. Horace Greeley Hjalmar Schacht.If only Schacht had prevailed over Hitler! What emerges as truly incredible is how ‘neutral’ parties such as Switzerland-- ‘totally pro-Swiss and amoral when it came to financial transactions with the Nazis’ -- and Sweden laundered stolen gold. Spoiler alert: Taber traces much of the stolen Belgian bullion to Romanian National Bank, where it was traded for oil.

Kristi Richardson says

“There is no doubt that some gold taken from the concentration-camp victims has found its way into bars and today sits in the world’s central banks vaults, probably including those of the New York Federal Reserve .”

“Chasing Gold” by George M. Taber is the story of the Nazi’s quest to conquer all the gold in Europe and eventually the world in their conquest for more land. They needed the money to fund their war machine and used the stolen gold to purchase materials to create more guns, tanks, planes and other war related items. I have always had a hard time answering the question regarding Hitler’s economic policies. I have been told they failed but always wondered how that could be when he was able to run a great army. I now know that he did it all on borrowed and stolen gold from the countries he conquered.

At times the story sounds like a cat and mouse chase as the Allies attempted to get the gold to America before the Nazi’s could find and control it. There were some wins and many misses here, which make this book very entertaining.

The most difficult section for me was the chapter on the concentration-camp gold taken from the victims’ teeth or jewels they had hidden away. It’s a heartbreaking reminder of the cruelty of humankind against others just like them. Of course, they were able to justify it in their own minds by creating monsters of people whose crime was their religion, race or sexual orientation.

There is also a section on the Americans discovering the art and gold hidden by the Nazi’s which is covered completely in “Monuments Men” by Bret Witter and Robert M. Edsel. This was the feel good chapter for me.

Mr. Taber wrote for Time magazine for many years before turning to books. He tells us that most of what is written in “Chasing Gold” was during his tenure at Time and that finally he was able to piece together the whole puzzle of the gold that Nazi Germany stole from the conquered countries.

I found this book to be credible, well researched and catalogued. The maps and pictures made it easier to follow. I received this book from Pegasus books for an honest review.

I highly recommend this book for anyone with an interest in World War II and in the financial world in the 1930’s to 1940’s.

C.J. Ruby says

Seems like this story could have been better than this book told it.

Julie says

This book was recommended to me because I enjoyed Monuments Men and other books about the fate of Europe’s valuables during WWII. But this was not nearly as engaging in its focus on the one commodity that sustained the German war machine: gold. Countries who faced invasion by the Nazis had two options: send their gold reserves overseas for safekeeping or risk it being confiscated by its conquerors. Many countries were smart enough to do the former and a majority had the foresight to get their gold to Britain or America. A majority of the book details the logistical minutiae of packing, loading, and shipping the gold, it’s value and tonnage, and all of the government officials, finance ministers, bank executives, et al, involved in protecting it. It became very redundant, so much so that I found myself skimming a good portion of it.

There were some interesting aspects worth noting, like Hitler’s own blasé attitude towards gold. “Hitler never worried about economic issues because he never understood them. He thought that willpower was all that mattered.” One of the saddest chapters addressed the fate of “Melmer Gold,” or the personal jewelry and treasures of the people sent to death camps. Much of it was melted down to create gold bars, so that reparations could never be made since the impossibility of identifying it, “…would be like trying to identify a grain of wheat in a loaf of bread.”

No doubt, this book is historically significant, but it is very dry. The economical rhetoric just didn’t keep me engaged and I really struggled with the tedium of following the gold either across the Atlantic or into the German coffers.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher.

John says

Fascinating book detailing the role of gold during WWII. As a previous reviewer mentioned, this book has plenty of detail and sometimes too much, which made reading some sections onerous. Overall, a well researched and engaging book with plenty informative anecdotes along the way!