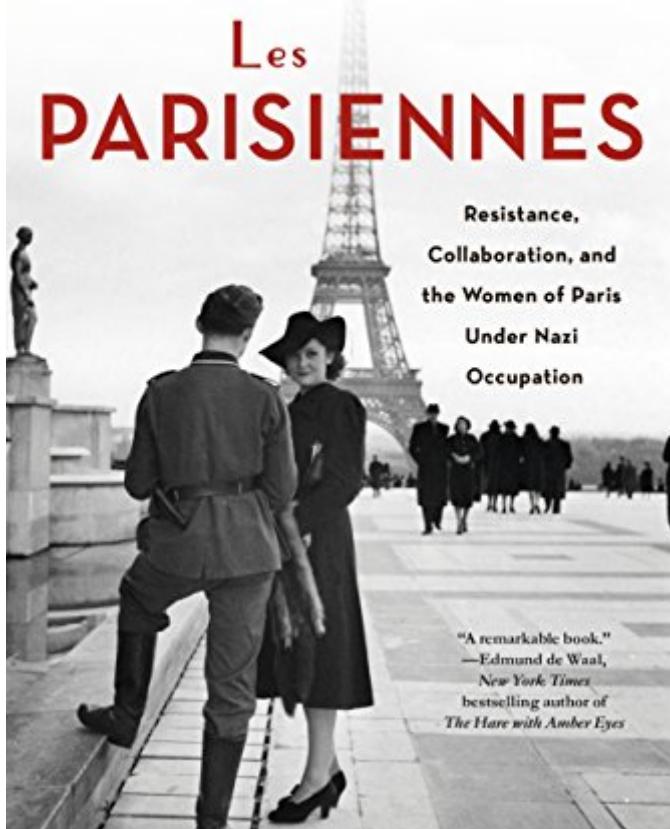


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Les Parisiennes: How The Women Of Paris Lived, Loved, And Died Under Nazi Occupation

ANNE SEBBA

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR



Synopsis

Anne Sebba has the nearly miraculous gift of combining the vivid intimacy of the lives of women during The Occupation with the history of the time. This is a remarkable book.

Edmund de Waal, New York Times bestselling author of *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* New York Times bestselling author Anne Sebba explores a devastating period in Paris's history and tells the stories of how women survived or didn't during the Nazi occupation. Paris in the 1940s was a place of fear, power, aggression, courage, deprivation, and secrets. During the occupation, the swastika flew from the Eiffel Tower and danger lurked on every corner. While Parisian men were either fighting at the front or captured and forced to work in German factories, the women of Paris were left behind where they would come face to face with the German conquerors on a daily basis, as waitresses, shop assistants, or wives and mothers, increasingly desperate to find food to feed their families as hunger became part of everyday life. When the Nazis and the puppet Vichy regime began rounding up Jews to ship east to concentration camps, the full horror of the war was brought home and the choice between collaboration and resistance became unavoidable. Sebba focuses on the role of women, many of whom faced life and death decisions every day. After the war ended, there would be a fierce settling of accounts between those who made peace with or, worse, helped the occupiers and those who fought the Nazis in any way they could.

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Customer Reviews

Other readers beat me to it when posting they thought they were buying a book about women in German-occupied Paris when it was a trudge through hundreds of snippets about people we never heard of. I pre-ordered this book months before it came out and was excited to finally read it. After the first 50 pages I literally had a headache and had to put the book down. If I had written this book I would have narrowed it down to 20 women and devoted whole chapters to their lives. You read about a woman and her trials for a couple of paragraphs and, without warning, another woman comes on the scene. The almost 400 page book hops back and forth to the point where you have to make a decision: do I want to finish this book or just put it in the book case. At around page 200 I had a dreadful thought! Instead of showcasing the plight of the French Jews, she painted a picture that is right out of the Hitler Playbook! They owned everything. They had all the money. They ran all the top businesses, regardless of what they were. They owned all the mansions. They owned all the priceless artworks. The wives and daughters were spoiled with everything their hearts desired. They went to the finest private schools. They knew everyone in society world-wide worth knowing. The smart Jewish families saw the writing on the wall fairly early and left France for England and the US. They were spared the death camps. This woman's husband was Jewish. This man's wife was half-Jewish. This Jewish family considered themselves French first, Jewish second. Guess what? In Hitler's war it didn't matter. They were Jewish. Only one Rothschild actually perished in a camp. The others escaped. Isn't this precisely what Hitler wrote about in his famous autobiography? They (Jews) owned everything in Germany, Austria, France etc. Non-Jews had an almost impossible chance of ever owning these businesses or go into competition with them. She did a great disservice in writing this book. She, unfortunately, fortified the Hitler myth that they ruled Europe through business, the arts, banking. By the end of the book, which felt like walking through five feet of tar, I was exhausted and deeply frustrated. I learned nothing from reading this book. Where is the chapter on the women who dated German soldiers during the war and were held accountable at the end of the war? A few paragraphs about how some went to jail, others never regained their reputations or jobs. Someone should write a book about the women who befriended, dated, and had children with the German soldiers. It is reported there were thousands of French-German children born during the Occupation. That would be an interesting story. She did not concentrate on that aspect of the war. There were the prerequisite tidbits about Coco Chanel and the Duchess of

Windsor. All of which we have read a thousand times in other books. She must have spent a fortune hiring people to research this information for her. And, by all means, buy an English-French dictionary so you can translate all the numerous French sentences she does not bother to translate for the reader herself. She assumed everyone on earth speaks fluent French. Deeply disappointed in this book. It disappoints on many levels. I am giving it away at a book fair this month. Maybe someone else will enjoy it.

Loved the writing and the phenomenal research Ms. Sebba did. It broadened my outlook on this period and softened my heart to all who suffered and had to make impossible choices. I plan to read her other works as well. Impressive reading. I highly recommend it!

Totally remarkable volume. Well researched and thorough retelling of the unknown and unrecognized women who resisted and made courageous choices that made an important difference to each person almost daily. It is an important book about being an upstander..*

I enjoy reading about history in general and WWII is a favorite. And there is so much material available. Read the WSJ's book section every week and found the author and book profiled there. Very much enjoyed the details of life in an occupied capital and how the French fought back.

This book is full of history and great anecdotes about the various (and numerous) people in the book. It is thoroughly engrossing and so very interesting. It is a slow read due to all the details, but I am thoroughly enjoying the book. I'm so glad I bought it.

A well researched work that focuses on the privations, fears, and desperation of ordinary women of occupied Paris during WWII. This book also highlights the often overlooked depths of involvement of French women in the resistance movement.

good choice

Amazing, enthralling

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