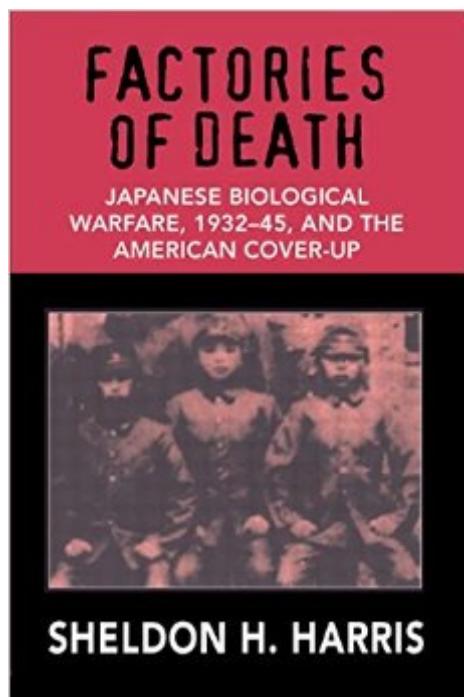


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Factories Of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932-45, And The American Cover-up



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

Author Sheldon Harris has done acredible job in compiling the history of Japan's Biological Warfare Research in World War II. Using a wealth of primary sources, he has pieced together a comprehensive history of the horrors Japanese Army Doctors and Scientific Researchers inflicted upon thousands of people. Using many declassified reports and journals, he has masterfully pieced together the wide-reaching impact Japan's Biological Warfare Research had on Chinese, Russians, Manchurians, and possibly western POWs such as the American, British and Dutch. This is a must-have book for any scholar of World War Two.

When I read this book, I was struck by the difference in histories of the German death camps and the Japanese. What is striking is the apathy toward the Japanese biological and chemical warfare testing by the allies. Is it because the victims were Chinese? Or was it related to an occidental acceptance or oriental suffering? Or was it just money, exhaustion, and the interest by the allies in the field? In any event, the very dryness of this book makes it more compelling. And the cooperation after the war between the US government and the Japanese authorities is shattering. What is even more depressing is the see no evil attitude after the war by the Japanese. Almost no information made it to the Japanese people, and they appear to care less. At least they moved on to making transistors.

The author provides an invaluable history of Japanese Germ Warfare in China. His flawless documentation is to be commended as well as his authoritative recitation of the relentless pursuit of the Japanese military towards developing bacterial weapons of war. The race for a delivery system to spray China with Anthrax and other unspeakable plagues is horrible but fascinating. This is recommended reading for anyone who wants the real truth about germ warfare during WW2, and the continuing search by many countries to develop a germ warfare system today.

I read about this book in a recent newspaper article. I purchased it since the topic was so intriguing. I found the book to be equally intriguing. Factories of Death reads like a novel! The way the author recites the history of the death camps is fascinating, and actually I would have enjoyed an even more in-depth treatment of this subject. I certainly hope the author will be able to write a follow-up to this masterful book.

There are enough citations, footnotes and other references here to keep those with a rabid interest in this subject busy for years. On the down side, portions of the book tended to drag on a bit.

Although some readers might find this book boring and tedious due to too many facts, I believe the author wrote this book not for entertainment but for a more noble purpose. Since this is one of the very few books and articles on this grim subject, the more facts it contains the better it is to a serious researcher. The author covered sufficiently the unethical reasons of the US government's cover-up and permitted those Japanese, including Emperor Hirohito, responsible to avoid prosecution as war criminals. However, why China, under Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, both hated the Japanese with a passion, acted similarly was not explained adequately. I hope more research will be done to clarify this deficiency. I read somewhere that "Justice is not only a matter of punishment. Justice can also be served by having the moral courage to accept responsibility and make recompense when a great wrong has been done, however long ago and far away the event." I sincerely hope this is so. Those Japanese, including Emperor Hirohito, responsible to avoid prosecution as war criminals in exchange for information from the Japanese program. However, why China, under Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong, both hated the Japanese with a passion, acted similarly was not explained adequately. I hope more research will be done to clarify this deficiency.

Sheldon Harris is considered the foremost authority on Japanese atrocities during WW2. Here he

documents the atrocities carried out by Hirohito's scientists in Manchuria in the 1930s and early 1940s. He begins with a chapter or two on Japan's own Angel of Death - the architect of the infamous U731 experiment camp in NE China. It's not particularly engrossing, but I suppose a character profile is necessary. Then we get into the dirt - which is basically a highly detailed account of the depravity waged in Manchuria. Local Chinese communities and POWs were subjected to spine chilling experiments, no less depraved than the low points of Mengel and other Nazis. The most disturbing fact is that the army wasn't the main sponsor at the beginning. It was the Japanese academic community in Tokyo and Kyoto. It wasn't until the army discovered how effective the germs would be against the Allies that they became interested. Then comes the second half which details how US and Soviet forces gave quid pro quos to Japanese scientists for their 'information'. No one who has read anything about the end of WW2 in Europe should be surprised what Harris reveals in here. I found this book quite boring. I didn't manage to stay the course. It took a couple of sessions to near the end. I still haven't finished, some eighteen months after waging war on page one.

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