



IBM and the Holocaust

By Edwin Black

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IBM and the Holocaust is the award-winning, New York Times bestselling shocker--a million copies in print--detailing IBM's conscious co-planning and co-organizing of the Holocaust for the Nazis, all micromanaged by its president Thomas J Watson from New York and Paris. This Expanded Edition offers 37 pages of previous unpublished documents, pictures, internal company correspondence, and other archival materials to produce an even more explosive volume. Originally published to extraordinary praise in 2001, this provocative, award-winning international bestseller has stood the test of time as it chronicles the story of IBM's strategic alliance with Nazi Germany. IBM and the Holocaust provides nothing less than a chilling investigation into corporate complicity. Edwin Black's monumental research exposes how IBM and its subsidiaries helped create enabling technologies for the Nazis, step-by-step, from the identification and cataloging programs of the 1930s to the selections of the 1940s.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Was IBM, "The Solutions Company," partly responsible for the Final Solution? That's the question raised by Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust*, the most controversial book on the subject since Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. Black, a son of Holocaust survivors, is less tendentiously simplistic than Goldhagen, but his thesis is no less provocative: he argues that IBM founder Thomas Watson deserved the Merit Cross (Germany's second-highest honor) awarded him by Hitler, his second-biggest customer on earth. "IBM, primarily through its German subsidiary, made Hitler's program of Jewish destruction a technologic mission the company pursued with chilling success," writes Black. "IBM had almost single-handedly brought modern warfare into the information age [and] virtually put the 'blitz' in the *krieg*."

The crucial technology was a precursor to the computer, the IBM Hollerith punch card machine, which Black glimpsed on exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, inspiring his five-year, top-secret book project. The Hollerith was used to tabulate and alphabetize census data. Black says the Hollerith and its punch card data ("hole 3 signified homosexual ... hole 8 designated a Jew") was indispensable in rounding up prisoners, keeping the trains fully packed and on time, tallying the deaths, and organizing the entire war effort. Hitler's regime was fantastically, suicidally chaotic; could IBM have been the cause of its sole competence: mass-murdering civilians? Better scholars than I must sift through and appraise Black's mountainous evidence, but clearly the assessment is overdue.

The moral argument turns on one question: How much did IBM New York know about IBM Germany's work, and when? Black documents a scary game of brinkmanship orchestrated by IBM chief Watson, who walked a fine line between enraging U.S. officials and infuriating Hitler. He shamefully delayed returning the Nazi medal until forced to--and when he did return it, the Nazis almost kicked IBM and its crucial machines out of Germany. (Hitler was prone to self-defeating decisions, as demonstrated in *How Hitler Could Have Won World War II*.)

Black has created a must-read work of history. But it's also a fascinating business book examining the colliding influences of personality, morality, and cold strategic calculation. --*Tim Appelo*

From [Booklist](#)

The publisher has ordered a print run of 100,000 copies, indicating that they expect high demand for this contentious expose. The author asserts that a collusion existed between IBM Corporation and the government of the Third Reich, wherein IBM supplied the technology enabling Nazi authorities to systematize their persecution of European Jews. Expect much discussion in the press and on the street about this very controversial book. *Brad Hooper*

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Review

An explosive book... Backed by exhaustive research, Black's case is simple and stunning: that IBM facilitated the identification and roundup of millions of Jews during the 12 years of the Third Reich ... Black's evidence may be the most damning to appear yet against a corporate accomplice. --Michael Hirsh, Newsweek.

BEYOND DISPUTE. Black clearly demonstrates that Nazi Germany employed IBM Hollerith punch-card

machines to perform critical tasks in carrying out the Holocaust and the German war effort. He goes on to document that IBM managed to profit from Hitler's state throughout its existence. ...Black establishes beyond dispute that IBM Hollerith machines significantly advanced Nazi efforts to exterminate Jewry. ...IBM and the Holocaust is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Holocaust. --Christopher Simpson, Washington Post Book World

SHOCKING. Thomas Watson chose to tabulate the Nazi census, to accept Hitler's medal, and to fight for control of Dehomag. And he made other equally indefensible choices in his years of doing a profitable business counting Jews for Hitler-choices that are described in IBM and the Holocaust by Edwin Black. This is a shocking book with the help of more than a hundred researchers working in archives in the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, and Israel, Edwin Black has documented a sordid relationship between this great American company and the Third Reich, one that extended into the war years. --Jack Beatty, The Atlantic

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