

The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Libraries in the Twentieth Century



Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century by Rebecca Knuth

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Libraries have long been symbols of knowledge, culture, and progress. They are repositories of human history and thought, and they play a vital role in education and research. However, libraries have also been targets of destruction, particularly during times of war and political upheaval.

In the twentieth century, the destruction of libraries reached unprecedented levels. Totalitarian regimes, such as Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and China, saw libraries as a threat to their authority. They sought to control information and suppress dissent, and they believed that libraries could be used to spread subversive ideas.

As a result, libraries were often targeted for destruction during times of political unrest. In Nazi Germany, the Nazis burned thousands of books by Jewish authors and other "undesirable" elements. In the Soviet Union, libraries were purged of books that were deemed to be **ضد ثوري**. And in

China, the Red Guards destroyed countless libraries during the Cultural Revolution.

The destruction of libraries had a devastating impact on cultural heritage. Millions of books and other 貴重な資料 were lost, and many libraries were never rebuilt. This loss of knowledge and culture has had a lasting impact on the societies that were affected.

However, despite the destruction, there were also efforts to rebuild and preserve libraries. After the Second World War, libraries around the world began to collaborate on efforts to restore damaged collections and rebuild destroyed libraries. And in recent years, there has been a growing movement to digitize library collections and make them available online.

The destruction of libraries is a reminder of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. Libraries are essential institutions for education, research, and the preservation of knowledge. We must never forget the lessons of the past, and we must continue to fight for the protection of libraries around the world.

Case Studies

The following are some specific examples of the destruction of libraries in the twentieth century:

- **Nazi Germany:** The Nazis burned thousands of books by Jewish authors and other "undesirable" elements. In 1933, they organized a nationwide book burning campaign, and they continued to burn books throughout the war. It is estimated that the Nazis destroyed over 20 million books.

- **Soviet Union:** The Soviet Union purged libraries of books that were deemed to be *ضد ثوري*. This process began in the 1920s, and it continued throughout the Stalinist era. It is estimated that the Soviets destroyed millions of books.
- **China:** The Red Guards destroyed countless libraries during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). They burned books, destroyed libraries, and attacked librarians. It is estimated that the Red Guards destroyed over 10 million books.
- **Cambodia:** The Khmer Rouge regime destroyed libraries and other cultural institutions during their rule in the 1970s. It is estimated that the Khmer Rouge destroyed over 90% of Cambodia's libraries.

The destruction of libraries is a crime against humanity. It deprives people of access to knowledge and culture, and it destroys the historical record. We must never forget the lessons of the past, and we must continue to fight for the protection of libraries around the world.

Additional Resources

- IFLA Statement on the Destruction of Libraries
- UNESCO Condemns the Destruction of Libraries in Iraq
- ISIS Burns Thousands of Books in Mosul Library



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