



Interesting Times: An Encounter With the 20th Century 1924-

George Mandler

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This book is an autobiographical account of George Mandler--born in 1924--who grew up in a middle class Jewish family in Vienna. It details the fears and attempts to find a safe haven when Austria was invaded and absorbed into Nazi Germany in 1938, followed by Mandler's escape to England and residence in a small boarding school. The threat of the holocaust and reaction to anti-semitism are explored and the author describes the life of an emigre youth group run by a branch of the Austrian communist party. Drafted in 1943, Mandler is trained in military intelligence and ends up as a front line interrogator with the 7th army in Germany. The training and function of military intelligence and the role of German and Austrian refugees in it are described for the first time in detail. Military intelligence and counter-intelligence work in post-war Germany follows, including the evacuation of a scientific establishment before the arrival of the Soviets.

Returning to New York in 1946, Mandler begins his college training at New York University and the University of Basel, Switzerland. This is followed by graduate training in psychology at Yale and a first position at Harvard for seven years. Highlights of the period include a short episode of peripheral involvement in a Soviet spy scandal. After five years at the University of Toronto, Mandler is given the opportunity of a lifetime--to start a department at the prestigious new San Diego branch of the University of California. He describes the process of building a department and a university in the context of the 1960s, as well as academic life and actions during the turbulent 60s and 70s. Mandler's successful career as a writer and researcher in psychology is described in lay language, as is the professional/scientific bifurcation of the field. The final chapter comments on and describes current academic life and problems.

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