

Meredith Hindley, *Destination Casablanca: Exile, Espionage, and the Battle for North Africa in World War II* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2017).

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In *Destination Casablanca: Exile, Espionage, and the Battle for North Africa in World War II*, Meredith Hindley has written a lively and illuminating history of an underappreciated and understudied facet of the Second World War. Frequently, historians of the war have focused on the European and Pacific theaters. Frequently, historians of the war largely focus on the European and Pacific theaters. If the North African theater is studied at all it is often about the campaigns of Erwin Rommel and desert tank warfare. Hindley's is a much needed work that helps to fill in an historiographical gap by showing the importance of the North African theater in providing a launching pad for the Allied invasions of France and Italy. This is, however, not a book just about the war in North Africa, but also a specific city, Casablanca. Casablanca within the Anglo-American mind may forever be associated with the eponymous film starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, but Hindley demonstrates that the thrilling political maneuverings in the film were not even the half of it. Rick and Ilsa's story was quite ordinary compared to the rest of the goings on in the city.

Hindley shows that after the fall of France, Casablanca became a hub for thousands of refugees including Jews, French soldiers, and a motley assortment of people of all stripes seeking to escape the Nazis. Many thought that they could make the passage from Casablanca to neutral Portugal, Canada, the United States, or South America. However, Morocco came under the control of the Vichy government after the French defeat. The Nazi government, seeking to stanch the flow of people out of Europe, pressured Vichy to take action. In August of 1940 the Vichy government forbade "men between the ages of seventeen and fifty who hailed from Britain, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Norway, and Poland from leaving Morocco" (57). One could still enter Casablanca but now could not legally leave without special approval. Thousands of people from across Europe became stuck in the city, forced to find some way to survive in the midst of the war and all the while desperately seeking underground passage out.

Hindley's narrative rivals that of the best spy novels in showing the covert maneuvering (political and otherwise), that occurred in the pressure cooker of closed-off Casablanca. She showcases the myriad characters passed through, including the cabaret performer Josephine Baker and the itinerant ex-communist intellectual Arthur Koestler. There may perhaps never again be a city with such a concentrated population of spies and underground political actors as Casablanca between 1941 and 1943. In this shadowy world Rick's Café would have been run of the mill. Hindley goes beyond the thriller elements, however, to integrate them with the city's larger role in the Allied war strategy. Shortly after the fall of France, Casablanca and Morocco came to be seen by the Allied leadership as an ideal beachhead for a potential invasion. Hindley moves between the minute political conflicts within Casablanca, to the grand struggles within the Allied leadership in forging strategy, all the while showing the secret activities of Allied agents to create a favorable environment for an invasion. Her account of the invasion of Morocco

Book Review of Meredith Hindley's "Destination Casablanca: Exile, Espionage, and the Battle for North Africa in World War II " and Casablanca in November of 1942 is gripping and also a successful example of the heights to which the new style of military history can rise. She carries her account through to the end of the war and the Allied occupation, showing the political relations set up after the war and the post war consequences of the major figures' actions in Casablanca.

Readers will learn much that is new from Hindley's narrative. She skillfully shows the global nature of the Second World War and the messy dynamic that existed between Allied grand strategy and its dependence on information passed on by covert agents. This is neither a purely military or covert operations history, but rather a fusion of the two. This book is highly recommended and will hopefully stand as a model for future historians of the Second World War.