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this riveting new york times bestselling biography illuminates the life of otto von bismarck the statesman who unified germany but who also embodied everything brutal and ruthless about prussian culture jonathan steinberg draws heavily on contemporary writings allowing bismarck s friends and foes to tell the story what rises from these pages is a complex giant of a man a hypochondriac with the constitution of an ox a brutal tyrant who could easily shed tears a convert to an extreme form of evangelical protestantism who secularized schools and introduced civil divorce bismarck may have been in sheer ability the most intelligent man to direct a great state in modern times his brilliance and insight dazzled his contemporaries but all agreed there was also something demonic diabolical overwhelming beyond human attributes in bismarck s personality he was a kind of malign genius who behind the various postures concealed an ice cold contempt for his fellow human beings and a drive to control and rule them as one contemporary noted the bismarck regime was a constant orgy of scorn and abuse of mankind collectively and individually in this comprehensive and expansive biography a brilliant study in power jonathan steinberg brings bismarck to life revealing the stark contrast between the iron chancellor s unmatched political skills and his profoundly flawed human character

chancellor otto bismarck s greatness lay in what he created the german reich of 1871 this reich was the product of his genius and in it his genius took complete shape in less than a decade german chaos was brought to an end and in its place a homogeneous state began to arise the structure of this state left no room for opposing political forces but rather made ready a roof under which these forces might rally support each other and gain strength bismarck and the creation of the second reich begins as a biography but continues as a description of his political life and the ideas that led to the birth of an authoritarian political culture the community from which bismarck formed his conception of the state was first the family and clan then the landlord caste and finally the people these communities found their unifying force in the kaiser who as their patriarchal head enjoyed divine honors as ruler by the grace of god the existence of the state was justified as the framework within which these communities existed and it had thus a biological as well as a religious content this idea of the state as the supreme moral command of religion was too powerful a driving force to be dropped in favor of the rational view of the state as a potential war machine bismarck reconciled the two concepts by use of the concept of a people in arms an idea which had originated in german history as a means of defense but which was changed into one of aggression in order to become a means of aggression it was changed into a moral precept commanded by religion and indeed into the supreme precept through the unfolding of the political life of bismarck we find the roots of the nazi third reich the inability of the people to educate themselves about politics enough to effect any change or satisfy their own political needs in this loss of control the authoritarian regime grew stronger though bismarck s work led to the creation and implementation of the second reich it is in the third reich that we find the devilish distortion that was its f

an accessible biography of otto von bismarck germany s first chancellor otto von bismarck 1815 1898 has gone down in history as the iron chancellor a reactionary and militarist whose 1871 unification of germany put europe on a path of disaster leading up to world war i but as this new edition of his accessible biography shows the real bismarck was a far more complex character a leading historian of nineteenth and twentieth century history volker ullrich demonstrates that bismarck the founder of the reich was in fact an opponent of liberal german nationalism after the wars of 1866 and 1870 bismarck spent the rest of his career working to preserve peace in europe and to protect the empire he had created despite his reputation as an enemy of socialism he introduced comprehensive health and unemployment insurance for german workers and he was concerned with maintaining stability and harmony far beyond germany s newly unified borders comprehensive and balanced bismarck shows us the value of looking anew at this monumental figure s role in european history

for most people bismarck is the man of blood and iron he coined the phrase himself and he lived up to it but he was much more he had an intellectual ascendancy over all the politicians of his day and his superiority was acknowledged not only by his own people but by all european statesmen the unification of germany the defeat of austria the fall of the second empire the defeat of france the alliance of the german empire and the habsburg monarchy the dismemberment of denmark these are his most obvious achievements no less important was the transformation in the

national consciousness of the german people for which bismarck was also responsible dr eyck has analyzed not only the personality but also the accomplishments of a statesman whose influence on europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century was more far reaching than that of any other man in his time print ed authoritative illuminating and easy to read dr eyck in his excellent book has exposed the many fallacies of which bismarck legend is compounded his analysis is tragic and austere the observer

from marilyn to mussolini people captivate people a e s biography best selling autobiographies and biographical novels testify to the popularity of the genre but where does one begin collected here are descriptions and evaluations of over 10 000 biographical works including books of fact and fiction biographies for young readers and documentaries and movies all based on the lives of over 500 historical figures from scientists and writers to political and military leaders to artists and musicians each entry includes a brief profile autobiographical and primary sources and recommended works short reviews describe the pertinent biographical works and offer insight into the qualities and special features of each title helping readers to find the best biographical material available on hundreds of fascinating individuals

originally published in english in 1986 these volumes are far more than the story of the life of a powerful statesman the name bismarck sums up the entire political social economic and intellectual development of central europe in the second half of the 19th century and the internal and external shape that germany then assumed these books analyse how much of this was bismarck s personal achievement or whether he was the man who put the nation on the disastrously wrong course that reached its fateful culmination in 1933 they examine whether bismarck s success was precisely because he implemented policies for which the time was ripe and did so in ways that were in harmony with the historical evolution of central europe

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