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OFF LIMITS

By HANS HABE

author of *A THOUSAND SHALL FALL*

"Hungarian born, Austrian raised, Hans Habe writes as a German of a phase of history too often glossed over—the first year of the American occupation of Germany. It is a shocking, a horrifying book, picturing man in his depravity: the American victors adopting too often the techniques of the concentration camp, with the difference that their victims did not go to the gas chambers. But the terror was there; the vicious sadism; the passionate glee of retribution and vengeance; the financial greed that took advantage of the have-nots to build bigger and better black markets; the brutal sex excesses and deviations; the ambitions for advancement.

The Germans, bullied and bitter, are shown in the role of playing up to the victors to cover their plotting for reinstatement of the Wehrmacht, and using America's naive belief in their change of heart to restore the Nazi leaders of much of the worst in their military philosophy. Only in the younger generation is there a spark of hope; in them the disillusionment towards Russians and Germans alike, the refusal to work for restoration of the Old Germany, even the hesitation over pushing towards a stronger Germany economically. There are occasional exceptions to the depravity that stands out, despite the efforts of a few to resist it.

The story is told in tightly written episodic form, shifting from one set of characters to another—a sort of revolving stage, pictorially, historically, castwise. Complex human relations and crossing over of lines of plot and character make it a book that demands close reading and thoughtful consideration. Certainly not an easy book, on any score, but one that needed to be written." — VIRGINIA KIRKUS

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