

# HOTEL EXILE

UNCOVER THE INCREDIBLE  
STORY OF ONE PARISIAN  
HOTEL'S ROLE IN WWII

Author: **Jane Rogoyska**

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As a young man I lived in Paris just 300 metres from the Hotel Lutetia, the subject of this poignant and richly layered book. I had no idea that the luxurious hotel had such a remarkable wartime history, and Jane Rogoyska is the perfect author to tell its story.

The book is divided into three parts: pre-Second

World War, when the hotel was the meeting point for German exiles of the Nazi regime; life during the German Occupation, when the hotel was requisitioned by the Abwehr, the intelligence service of the German military; and the months after the liberation of the French capital, when the Lutetia became a reception centre for les absents – the 165,000 Frenchmen and women who were deported east. They were Jews, political opponents and members of the Resistance. Many, particularly the 75,000 Jews, did not return.

Rogoyska writes with eloquence and emotion about les absents and how, on arriving at the Lutetia, they embarked upon the painful journey back towards humanity. One member of the hotel staff recalled that when the survivors of the concentration camps arrived "they were people who had the air of not being people...I don't think they realised it was over".

Ensnared within the luxury of the Lutetia, the survivors gradually began to understand it really was over. For months, relatives came to the hotel in the hope of finding a parent, child or sibling. For some there was the ecstasy of a reunion, but for many just the agony of never knowing. **GM**

