

stoic pioneers comes through strongly as an authentic setting to the wide-ranging story.

The book itself runs to over six hundred pages. Notwithstanding the odd anachronism, I found it an enjoyable read. Its author, Johanna Nicholls is a Jewish writer, who worked as Head Script Editor of ABC TV Drama for many years. This is her first novel.

Jeannette Tsoulos

### THE WORDS TO REMEMBER IT: MEMOIRS OF CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

*By thirty authors including Litzi Lemberg, Peter Roessler,  
Ruth Rack, Peter Drexler, Mark Spigelman, Paul Kornmehl,  
Ruth Leiser, Elizabeth Levy, and many others.  
Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2009, pp 346.*

This is a remarkable book, which provides accounts of salient events in the life stories of thirty members of the Sydney Child Survivors Group. There is a great variety in the stories told here and the episodes and experiences of the Shoah lived by each individual author. This variety makes it a fascinating book to read, although understandably some stories are more moving than others. Despite not having any chance to continue their formal school education during the war years, and often not being able to continue their education in Australia, all contributors write really well in English, and these writing skills add to the appeal of the book.

Although many of the authors were born in Poland, Germany, and Vienna, and they survived wartime hardships there, some were also born in Czechoslovakia, France, Romania, Holland and Hungary. Most authors lost both parents as well as siblings in the Holocaust, but a few were fortunate and had a mother or both parents survive. They all expressed their appreciation in coming to Australia and all express a deep love for their adoptive country.

The stories illustrate how tenacity and an ability to cope with adversity helped in survival. For instance, there is the story of Peter Roessler and his late brother Honza (later Henry), who were deported from Prague to the Lodz ghetto and later to Auschwitz, and who survived all this, thanks to lying about their age so that they could be chosen for labour, and being helped there by a Czech doctor and some other Czech adults. Another moving story is that of toddler Elizabeth Levy who was given a false identity and

brought up as a Catholic in wartime Poland. Later she and her parents escaped with friends to Hungary via Slovakia, keeping up their false identities and surviving from June 1941 to December 1944 in Budapest. Or we read about Ruth Katz, later Leiser, treasurer of the Child Survivors group, who survived with her parents and younger brother Jack by hiding in barns of peasants whom her father had helped, in forests, in holes in the ground, experiencing cold, hunger and living in rags but managing to endure these difficulties until the end of the war.

Nearly all the stories are remarkable. Several are extracts from autobiographies previously published, such as that by Ruth Rack, who came in a *kindertransport* from Germany to England; Nora M. Huppert who was on a *kindertransport* from Czechoslovakia organised by Nicholas Winton; Halina Robinson who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto; and Paul Drexler, whose book I reviewed a few years ago. There is also a heartfelt, kind and outstanding introductory essay by broadcaster Caroline Jones, AO, who has become a personal friend to many of the writers.

This is a book to read and treasure. It can be highly recommended and is an important contribution to Holocaust memories of child survivors in Australia.

Sophie Caplan.

## CHOCOLATE TO ANZAC BISCUITS

*By George Sternfeld, Sydney Jewish Museum Community Stories, 2009, 347p.*

George Sternfeld was born in Warsaw in February 1939, nearly seven months before the Nazi invasion of Poland and the start of World War II. He came from a modest middle-class family, but his handbag maker's father's foresight was crucial in getting the family to Bialystok, in the Russian-occupied part of Poland, and later to the Asian Soviet Union near Chelyabinsk, where they spent six years in relative safety, not having any news of Nazi occupied Europe. Although food was scarce, it was distributed fairly, and they received more nourishing things when a baby sister was born in 1942. This impressed George's father and predisposed him to regard Communism favourably.

When the war finished and Poles were allowed to return to Poland, the Sternfelds discovered that their extended families and Jewish friends had all perished, and that Warsaw had been almost