

nothing about provides the author with the opportunity to educate her readers about the Holocaust and this particularly miraculous rescue of some Lithuanian Jews. She writes that Sugihara was the medicine which sustained life, not the cure. She has her grandmother say that she could survive anything as long as she let life in. Her father, in contrast, as a child at the time, suffered trauma from which he could not escape.

Royal has researched and written this novel to highlight the lifelong trauma carried by survivors which impacts their family relationships. Her research gives her an opportunity to highlight some Jewish customs such as *tahara* (Jewish ritual cleansing of the body before burial). The book is a tribute to the strength of survivors and to the strong moral code which marked the life and behaviour of Chiune Sugihara, Righteous Among the Nations.

Helen Bersten

### SURVIVAL AND SANCTUARY: TESTIMONIES OF THE HOLOCAUST AND LIFE BEYOND

*Translated and edited by Freda Hodge*

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*Foreword by Professor Paul R. Bartrop.*

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This is Hodge's second book, after *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II* (2018). Here, just as in that earlier work, Hodge has translated a number of Holocaust survivors' testimonies. The unifying factor in this case is that six of the seven featured survivors relocated to Australia after the war. (The seventh, David Tuszynski, lived in France, but frequently visited Melbourne.) The testimonies were originally collected in Yiddish by the Melbourne YIVO Committee in 1947–48 and were published in a booklet called *Pages of Pain and Suffering*.

*Survival and Sanctuary* begins with an excellent foreword by the Australian Professor Paul R. Bartrop, Professor Emeritus of History at Florida Gulf Coast University. Bartrop is an esteemed scholar whose many books focus extensively on the Holocaust and genocide. His foreword offers some meaningful reflections on the value of survivor testimonies as historical sources. While noting that such testimonies

are sometimes lacking in historical specificity, Bartrop points out their value in highlighting the lived experience of the survivors, including 'textures, smells, sights and contours of a person's experience' (p. xii). Thus, he claims, such testimonial evidence 'is often more valuable than other forms of evidence when trying to recreate the past beyond the dry data of what, when and how' (p. xii).

Bartrop stresses that such accounts must be taken seriously, pointing out that in the case of some smaller ghettos, or forest partisan groups, there is no other evidence for historians to consult. In such cases, survivor testimony can 'rescue that history from oblivion' (p. xiv). He recommends that a wide range of testimonies should be consulted so that the cumulative evidence is as representative as possible. With the 37 accounts Hodge has translated across her two books, she is contributing significantly to the range of available evidence.

The testimonies in this book were taken very soon after the end of the Holocaust, and as such, remarks Bartrop, 'they carry very fresh scars untainted by post-Holocaust reflection or the tricks that age can play on memory' (p. xvii). The seven testimonies in *Survival and Sanctuary* were originally given and recorded in Yiddish, and published in a small, relatively humble journal. Hodge's translation has freed them from obscurity and made them available to a new audience of English speaking scholars.

Hodge begins her introduction with a brief history of the Jewish presence in Australia, noting that at least eight Jewish convicts arrived with the First Fleet in 1788. She outlines Jewish life in Australia prior to World War Two, as well as the experience and impact of the roughly 35,000 Jewish people who immigrated here as refugees before the Holocaust, or after it was over.

The core element of the book is the translation of testimonies from seven Holocaust survivors: Leon Holzer, Tobcia Blicblau, Maria Roza Kamsler, Rivka Fogel, Shlomo Lipman, David Tuszynski and Mark Fromer. Hodge follows each translated testimony with a summary of the survivor's life, including their relationship with Australia, thereby ensuring that this country, and its offer of sanctuary, runs as a theme throughout the work. Hodge's summary reveals that Holzer moved to Melbourne with the help of Richard Pratt. The two men knew each other from Danzig, and when Pratt established his company, Visy, in 1948, he gave Holzer employment there. They remained friends until

Holzer's death. Blicblau also moved to Melbourne, where she worked first in a factory, and later with the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society. Later, Blicblau spent 40 years in Israel working with the Australian Embassy, before eventually returning to Australia. Kamsler developed a full social life, and enjoyed sports such as horse riding and skiing. Maria rarely discussed the Holocaust. Fogel lived in Melbourne until she was ninety years old, and is buried there beside her second husband. When Lipman settled in Melbourne with his wife, they established a successful clothing business, always determined to share their success with other survivors. They subsequently moved to Sydney, raising their children in a traditional Jewish home. Fromer, an Orthodox Jew since his childhood in Galicia, settled in Melbourne and married another Holocaust survivor. Together, they became an integral part of the Elwood Talmud Torah Hebrew Congregation. Tuszynski is the only featured survivor who did not make a permanent home in Australia. He lived in Paris, but often visited his two brothers and extended family in Australia. Tuszynski became an acclaimed artist, and one of his works hangs in the National Gallery of Victoria.

The testimonies provided by each of these survivors vary in length and fluency, although all have a similar tone: a stark recounting of horrific events. Each of the featured survivors has a different experience of the Holocaust to relate, reminding us that the history of the Holocaust is not one complete episode, but a kaleidoscope of over six million individual experiences. Taken together, this selection covers elements including pogroms, massacres, forced labour, living in hiding, conditions in ghettos, resistance, and several different concentration and death camps such as Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbrück and Auschwitz-Birkenau. This makes the collection valuable, as the sum of its parts adds up to a comprehensive representation of the range of Jewish Holocaust experiences.

The recollections of Maria Roza Kamsler include her memories of the days after liberation. Kamsler describes how she and other survivors wreaked violence on a neighbouring town:

A wild feeling of hate, a desire for revenge, wanting to destroy and rob overcame everyone. Each of us was armed with an axe, a hammer or a bayonet which we found in the camp and even more were scattered all over the town in many streets. People destroyed the

windows of the deserted houses, broke down doors, entered and searched every corner, hacked and broke furniture and glassware. Food and other things which were necessary or valuable were looted. The same thing occurred even in inhabited houses. There was no feeling of shared suffering, no response to entreaty and tears, no excuses or sympathy. We treated the Germans as they had treated us – brutally, crudely and heartlessly. Our wrath was not lessened by the sight of German tears while we were breaking and destroying, beating and robbing (p. 91).

This section of testimony is confronting and unadorned. Kamsler is honest about her own violent acts. Such stark candour is rarely found in later testimonies, when survivors were more likely to polish out the elements of the story which cast them in a poor light, or which they preferred to forget. It is an important aspect of the value of these early interviews.

With *Survival and Sanctuary*, Hodge has done more than simply translate seven testimonies. She has taken some early, valuable oral sources, placed them in an Australian context, and made them accessible to an English-speaking audience. The foreword of the original YIVO publication recounts the words of Professor Shimon Dubnov, ‘who, while being taken to his death, told the surrounding Jews: “Write and record”’ (quoted on p. 18). Hodge has responded meaningfully to that exhortation.

Kip Green