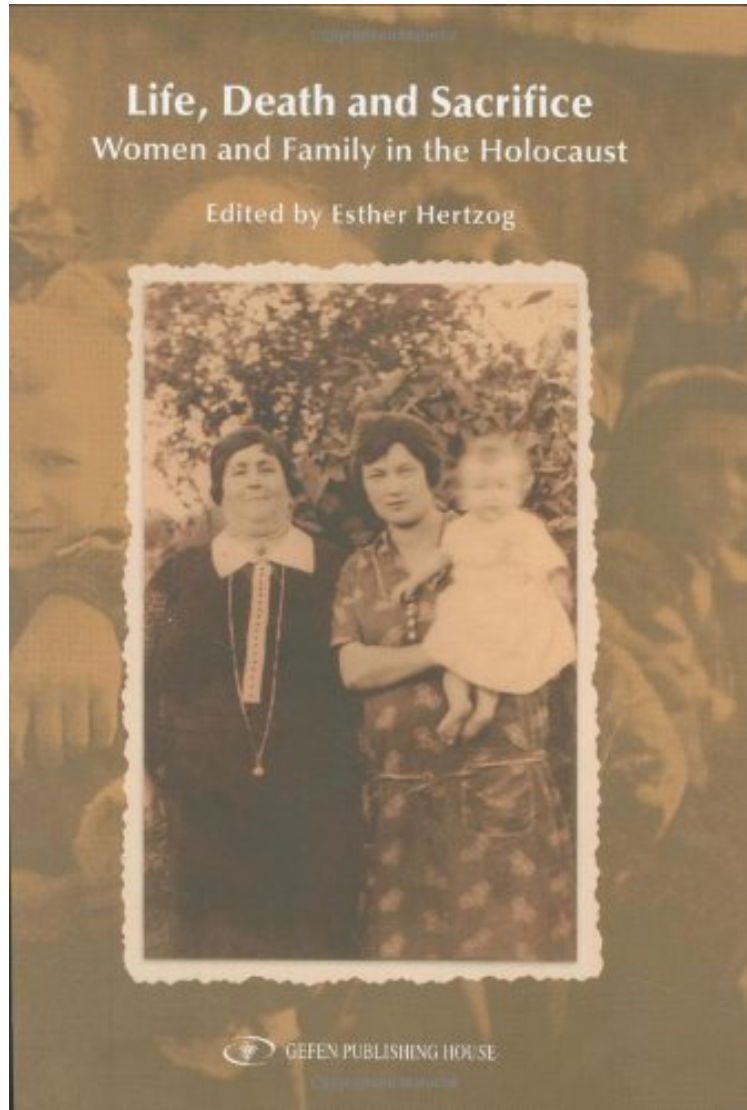


(Mobile pdf) Life, Death and Sacrifice Women and Family in the Holocaust

Life, Death and Sacrifice Women and Family in the Holocaust

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From Gefen Publishing House : Life, Death and Sacrifice Women and Family in the Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life, Death and Sacrifice Women and Family in the Holocaust:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. This book is filled with eye-opening little-known facts By Israel Drazin This is an eye opening easy to read collection of eighteen studies by fifteen prominent sociologists, political scientists, historians, social psychologists, and experts in Judaic studies and women studies. The scholars describe and analyze the thoughts and behavior of Jewish and non-Jewish women who faced threats, pain, and death during the

holocaust. The book reveals much information that was previously unknown. It allows readers to extrapolate from women who faced the holocaust to women who encounter other threats, large and small. Some scholars show that generally women had better social-adaptive skills than men. They were better able to adapt to the changed situations and could make decisions that helped the conditions of their families. Many women were able to take up the roles previously handled by now absent males. The stereotype is that women are compassionate but not heroic, and that men are more skillful in undertaking rescue missions. The stereotype maintains that each sex differs appreciably in moral reasoning. But this is shown to be untrue. One author cites cases showing that "a similar number of (both Jewish and non-Jewish) men and women...were involved in risking their lives to save Jews. Thus, the notion that men are more readily involved in dangerous helping behavior was not substantiated." Women undertook dangerous missions. Women acted as decoys, couriers, double agents, border runners, rescuers, and resistance fighters. Both sexes showed moral and emotional responses to the plight of Jews and both "came to the aid of victims through an outraged sense of justice." "Gender did not necessarily predispose a person to be caring." The traditional hero in movies, plays, and books is a swashbuckling male with women being cast in minor roles. This is not real life. The book is filled with stories, in effect short novellas, about heroic women, Jewish and non-Jewish. But some stories tell about Jewish women who were not heroic and some who were vicious denouncers, who served the Nazi regime and helped destroy Jews. In Auschwitz-Birkenau, for example, mothers with young children were given a choice. They could leave their children to die in the gas chambers, work for the Nazis, and live, or they could stay and die with their children. Only two out of the six hundred mothers left their children and went to work; all of the rest remained with their children to the very end. Some of these stories concern sexual violence by fellow Jews and by the Germans, a subject that has not yet been fully explored. An author points out that rape is "a by-product of the dehumanization process of genocide." She reminds us of the well-documented "sexual violence in Bosnia and Darfur." We are reminded also of the rapes and other types of sexual violence committed in all wars, not only wars of genocide. During the holocaust, the sexual violence took many forms, from outright rape to exploitation of the vulnerability of Jewish females. A story is told, for example, of a proposal by a Jewish manager to take care of a woman and her sister, give them food and protection, in exchange for sex. The woman refused and the Nazis later took her sister. In another story, an SS officer was about to rape a woman, but she was saved because she was menstruating. In still another story, the Jewish Chairman of the Lutz ghetto council was abusing children under his care.³³ of 37 people found the following review helpful. The Impact of the Holocaust on Women, Children and Families By Erika Borsos Dr. Esther Hertzog has edited and produced a scholarly work which is a major contribution to understanding how Nazi destructive forces impacted Jewish women, children and the families during the Holocaust. The book is written from a feminist perspective. The Holocaust is a catastrophic event in the history of the world which singled out specific groups of people for persecution and annihilation mainly Jews, destroyed normal social relations and forever ripped apart the fabric of society. This book is a memorial to the Jewish women, children and families who perished during that time. It serves as a reminder that such man-made evil should never be repeated. The book is well organized into main sections and chapters which emphasize the role of women in survival and adaptation to the horrors they faced, when changes, policies and events disrupted and separated families and in many cases eventually destroyed them. Each main section contains a series of articles, such as, "Gender and Family Studies", "Motherhood Under Siege", "1943: Flight from Home", " 'We're all well and hoping to hear the same from ...' The Story of a Group of Families", and "'Camp Families' in Ravensbruck and the Social Organization of Jewish Women Prisoners in a Concentration Camp". Each chapter is filled with detailed stories and examples of how individuals and groups faced the difficult circumstances with which they dealt. This book is not easy reading due to its painful subject matter. It is often heart-breaking to read about the horrible circumstances and inevitable outcomes. In some situations, despite the best efforts of the mothers to protect their children, they could not be saved. Also of note, specific persecution and sexual violence which was solely directed at women is also covered. It is a sensitive area which has seldom been investigated or written about. To the author's and editors credit, they also mention that the Communists also engaged in this type of violent behavior directed specifically at women victims who were viewed as the enemy. There are first person accounts of survival tactics used in the camps to keep themselves and other prisoners alive. Of particular interest is the section titled, "Gendered Altruism and Women's Leadership" which includes the true story of Sophie Scholl and the White Rose papers. She courageously printed leaflets which opposed the Nazi regime after discovering her brother's involvement in this project. After being arrested for treason, she was given the opportunity for a lighter sentence if she changed her testimony or recanted her involvement but she stood firm and acknowledged fully her participation in the project, recognizing it meant her certain death. She was executed along with her brother Hans and his friend Christoph. Overall, this book is a very detailed and well researched account of factual information. It is based on personal testimonies as well as documented records. It is a major contribution to the growing literature on the atrocities inflicted on women and children who were prisoners and victims of the Holocaust. This book is filled with many stories of courage and faith, and also extraordinary examples of how the human spirit can overcome some of the most horrific events, especially when personal survival is at stake with the ultimate goal of saving children's lives. The book is written in a scholarly manner and therefore is not meant as light reading. It is complete with numerous references which allows the

reader to delve further into any aspects of the subject to expand one's understanding of this complex and multi-faceted topic. Erika Borsos (pepper flower)

The book contains articles by some of the most prominent scholars in the field who tell the stories of women who were humiliated, tortured and murdered; their eternally etched-in-the-memory stories of struggle and survival. This collection of articles is based on two international conferences on women in the Holocaust, held in recent years at Beit Berl Academic College, Beit Theresienstadt, and the Ghetto Fighters House in Israel. The editor, Esther Hertzog, is a daughter of Holocaust survivors, who never spoke about the subject at home. She discovered a feminist perspective on the Holocaust at a conference at Oxford she attended, almost by chance, seven years ago. That experience motivated her to speak with her mother and document their conversations in the article that appears herein.

"...From out of a world of death and destruction, extermination camps, ghettos, starvation and disease, there rises the figure of the woman in the Holocaust... the core of the fascinating studies in this collection. The importance of these research essays is, above all, their historical documentation of situations and events related to women in the Holocaust... "....In the face of imminent death, there was kindness to be seen, self-sacrifice, and the saving of another s life. And from a world that had lost all semblance of humanity came a sense of independence that welled up in the survivors, infusing them with the spirit of life as they emerged from the inferno. 'And what is for me the most moving, the most exciting thing of all, is the ability of those who endured to climb to their feet and shake themselves free of the killing fields, to begin a new life, to start a family...." --Ayala Procaccia, Israel Supreme Court Justice