

Flares of Memory



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In a series of writing workshops at the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, survivors assembled recently to remember the pivotal moments in which their lives were irreparably changed by the Nazis. These "flares of memory" invoke lost childhoods, preserving the voices of over forty Jews from throughout Europe who experienced a history that cannot be forgotten--by them nor us. Including a timeline that chronicles the rise of the Nazis, their devastating campaigns for control of Europe, and the successive edicts that would annihilate millions, *Flares of Memory* consists of 92 brief vignettes arranged both chronologically and thematically. Survivors from Munich, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, and the Netherlands recreate the disbelief and chaos that ensued as families were separated, political rights were abolished, and synagogues and Jewish businesses were destroyed--before and especially after Kristallnacht. "We had entered a twilight zone between memories of earning our keep at our occupations and the fear of becoming game during hunting season," writes one survivor. Others remember the daily humiliation, the quiet heroes among their friends, and the painful abandonment by neighbors as Jews were restricted to ghettos, forced to don yellow stars, and loaded like cattle in trains destined for the camps: "We were completely stripped of all human identity." Vivid memories of hunger, disease, and a daily existence dependent on cruel luck in Dachau, Auschwitz, and other concentration

camps provide penetrating testimonies to the ruthlessness of the Nazi killing machine, yet they also bear witness to the resilience and fortitude of individual souls bombarded by evil. This book also includes poignant recollections of American liberators who were often devastated by the horrors that they discovered after the fall of the Nazis. "A mix of emotions--disbelief, rage--overwhelmed us; tears blinded our eyes," recalls one soldier. Flares of Memory will inspire these emotions and will stay with you, long after you finish its pages.

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