



We Wept Without Tears: Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz

By Gideon Greif

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The *Sonderkommando* of Auschwitz-Birkenau consisted primarily of Jewish prisoners forced by the Germans to facilitate the mass extermination. Though never involved in the killing itself, they were compelled to be “members of staff” of the Nazi death-factory. This book, translated for the first time into English from its original Hebrew, consists of interviews with the very few surviving men who witnessed at first hand the unparalleled horror of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Some of these men had never spoken of their experiences before. Over a period of years, Gideon Greif interviewed intensively all Sonderkommando survivors living in Israel. They describe not only the details of the German-Nazi killing program but also the moral and human challenges they faced. The book provides direct testimony about the “Final Solution of the Jewish Problem,” but it is also a unique document on the boundless cruelty and deceit practiced by the Germans. It documents the helplessness and powerlessness of the one-and-a-half million people, 90 percent of them Jews, who were brutally murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a book that must be read by all who dare draw close to the killing, those who dare to come close—as close as non-survivors can come—to the inferno."—Michael Berenbaum

"Gideon Greif's documentation and analysis of the inner world of the Jews who were forced to be part of the Grief in Auschwitz is a haunting reading experience. It is with rare sensitivity and empathy that Greif approached the last survivors of this unit, who were at the heart of the inferno. They poured their hearts out to him after long decades of silence. The reader is thus acquainted with the detGrief's sails of the death industry, and they accompany and disturb him for a long while."—Dina Porat, Head of the Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, Tel Aviv University
(Dina Porat)

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About the Author

Gideon Greif is a researcher at Yad VaShem, Israel, the principal institution in the world studying the history of the Holocaust. He also was visiting professor at The Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies at the University of Miami.

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