

From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival (Jewish Lives)

By Thomas Toivi Blatt



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When the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Thomas Toivi Blatt was twelve years old. He and his family lived in the largely Jewish town of Izbica in the Lublin district of Poland - a district that was to become the site of three of the six major Nazi extermination camps: Belzec, Sobibor, and Majdanek. Blatt's account of his childhood in Izbica provides a fascinating glimpse of Jewish life in Poland after the German invasion and during the periods of mass deportations of Jews to the camps. Blatt tells of the chilling events that led to his deportation to Sobibor, of his separation from his family, and of the six months he spent at Sobibor before taking part in the most successful uprising and mass breakout in any Nazi camp during World War II. Blatt's tale of escape, and of the five horrifying years spent eluding both the Nazis and later anti-Semitic Polish nationalists, is a firsthand account of one of the most terrifying and savage events of human history. From the Ashes of Sobibor also includes a moving interview with Karl Frenzel, a Nazi commandant from Sobibor.



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From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival (Jewish Lives) By Thomas Toivi Blatt Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1958, when Blatt emigrated to Israel, he sent the story of his incarceration and escape from Sobibor to a notable Auschwitz survivor. The names Auschwitz, Treblinka and Dachau had by then become symbols of the horrors of the Holocaust. But the concentration camp at Sobibor was another site where thousands of Jews had been killed, so Blatt must have been horrified when this survivor wrote in response to his manuscript, "You have a tremendous imagination. I've never heard of Sobibor and especially not of Jews revolting there." Forty years later Sobibor's existence is no longer in question. But even today it is a camp shrouded in mystery, in large part, as Blatt points out, because "very little official documentation" survives of Sobibor's existence or operation--this memoir is one of the few eyewitness accounts. Through first-person narrative and reconstructed dialogue, Blatt describes with chilling objectivity the German occupation of his hometown of Izbica, Poland; early Nazi roundups; the transportation of Jews to Sobibor; his own internment there; the inmate revolt that followed on the footsteps of Nazi defeats by the Russians; and finally his flight to and from his hometown. Although parts of this story were printed elsewhere and have been incorporated into Richard Rashke's Escape from Sobibor as well as a 1987 CBS documentary of the same name, this is Blatt's first full-length account and the result of 40 years of work. Blatt's story is a powerfully written memorial to Sobibor's victims.

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From Library Journal

Among the most common questions asked of Holocaust survivors are why the Jews didn't fight back: Why, it is wondered, did they let their families go to their deaths so easily? The recollections of Blatt, a survivor of the extermination camp Sobibor, in Poland, where Jews staged a successful revolt, addresses these questions in a frank and gripping narrative. Blatt's account demonstrates how the Germans kept Jews in Poland subjugated through random terror combined with promises that the status quo would be maintained if the Jews cooperated. By the time Blatt reached Sobibor with his family, it was too late for resistance. Perhaps the most frightening, and dispiriting, part of Blatt's account is how Christian Poles at times robbed, terrorized, or even murdered Jewish fugitives, such as the Sobibor escapees. A chilling narrative; highly recommended for Judaica collections and Holocaust specialists as well as general readers.?Frederic Krome, Northern Kentucky Univ., Highland Heights

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Review

"One of the era's true sagas." —Jerusalem Post Magazine

"Blatt's story is a powerfully written memorial to Sobibor's victims." —Publishers Weekly

Users Review

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