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978-0-521-58947-5 - In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation

Aaron Hass

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“The most important event in my life occurred before I was born,” one child of concentration camp survivors has observed. The Holocaust did not end with the liberation of survivors after the collapse of the Third Reich, for the legacy of their suffering extends to a generation that never faced an SS storm trooper. With a rich blend of oral history, memoir, and psychological interpretation, Aaron Hass deepens our understanding of the price of that legacy for the second generation.

What are the effects of growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust? Drawing on interviews and survey materials, Hass provides a vibrant account of the experiences of survivors’ children. Now in their thirties and forties, these men and women describe their relationships with their parents and offer their perceptions of the impact of the Holocaust on their families. They give voice to memories and feelings about which some of them have never before spoken. Himself a child of survivors and a distinguished clinical psychologist, Hass writes about the lingering presence of the Holocaust in his own life as well.

*In the Shadow of the Holocaust* is an intimate account of how the survivors’ responses to brutality and deprivation affected their later functioning as wives, husbands, and parents. Hass demonstrates that the range of responses is vast: from the survivor who hid his Jewish identity for fear of persecution and enrolled his child in Catholic parochial schools to the survivor who wore his Auschwitz uniform while conducting the Passover seder. In addition to frequently shared problems including depression, anger, guilt, feelings of being different, and difficulty in separating from parents, the interviews excerpted here reveal a remarkable diversity in the significance of the Holocaust in the lives of the second generation.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521589475](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521589475)

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First published by Cornell University Press 1990  
First Cambridge University Press edition 1996

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-58947-5 Hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-49893-7 Paperback

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*For Rachel and Sarah,  
the third generation*

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## Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Faber and Faber Ltd. for permission to reprint "Shema," from *Collected Poems* by Primo Levi, translated by Ruth Feldman and Brian Swann. I would like to express my appreciation to Michael Nutkiewicz and Florabel Kinsler for their sensitivity and kindness over the years. My gratitude to the children of survivors who shared with me their thoughts and experiences. My thanks to my wife, Rebecca, for her forbearance during the difficult times of this project. Finally, an author could not ask for a more enthusiastic and talented editor than Holly Bailey.

A. H.