



When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland

Nechama Tec

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Everyone knows the name of Anne Frank but few people remember anything about the people who sheltered her. Who were the rescuers and what motivated them to risk their lives for persecuted Jews? Clearly such people deserve to be remembered and honored. And clearly an understanding of their motivations may help us cultivate such behavior in our own day.

This book focuses on such "righteous Christians." Tec, herself a Holocaust survivor helped by Christians, vividly recreates through hundreds of cases what it was like to pass and hide among Christians and what it was like to rescue Jews. Limiting her compass to Poland, where anti-Semitism was particularly extreme, the author interviewed dozens of people now living in many lands and also examined a vast array of published accounts and unpublished testimonies yielding case histories of over 500 Polish helpers. As the book preserves for posterity the heroism of such people as Celka, the impoverished governess, and her paralyzed father, who took into their one-room apartment a Jewish child, refused to baptize her without her family's permission, and even fed her before they themselves ate, or Dr. Felix Kabus, who developed and frequently performed an operation that camouflaged circumcision, or the famous anti-Semitic author who wrote publicly about what was happening to the Jews, the book fills a significant gap in our knowledge of the Holocaust.

Considering the influence of such factors as class, education, religion, political persuasion, and friendship between the victims and rescuers, Tec finds only two common characteristics among this incredibly diverse group: an overpowering need to help others under any circumstances and an intense individualism. The rescuers were "individuals who did not rely on the opinions of others." Tec writes.

About the Author:

Nechama Tec, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, is also the author of *Dry Tears*.



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