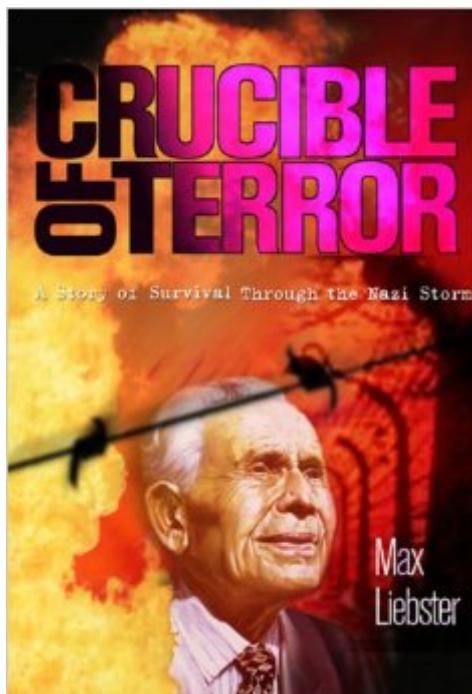


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Crucible Of Terror: A Story Of Survival Through The Nazi Storm



Synopsis

On September 11, 1939, Max Liebster, a young German Jew, learned firsthand what it meant to be an enemy of the Nazi state. After his arrest, followed by four months of solitary confinement in a Nazi prison, Liebster plummets headlong into the nightmare of the camps. Engulfed in terror and anguish, he feels himself drowning in despair when he suddenly encounters a phenomenon that restores his hope and dignity. It is a group of prisoners who wear the purple triangle. They are the Bibelforscher, or Jehovah's Witnesses - persecuted because of their religious beliefs and their absolute refusal to bend to the Nazi ideology of hate. Liebster is fascinated by the failure of the mighty SS to break the spirit of the purple triangles, despite torture and even executions. As Liebster totters between death and life, between despair and hope, the purple triangles help him to carry on.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Max Liebster was a handsome and spirited young man, a Jew, living in Viernheim Germany during Hitler's rise to power, and the ensuing Nazi takeover. His style of writing is spare but powerful ("As I witnessed the Hitler Youth parades, my blood turned to ice. I beheld the heaving of swastika flags. I saw the edge of the abyss.") He describes the false security, then the confusion, and finally, the despair of the Jewish situation in Nazi Germany. He himself was imprisoned in Auschwitz (his father's hometown), Sachsenhausen, and Neuengamme. Like all the concentration camp victims, he witnessed atrocities it is painful even to read about. He carried his father's dead body to the mass crematorium, the last tiny dignity he could bestow upon a broken man. Never bitter, he

describes his wonder at the pervasiveness of the virulent anti-Jewish sentiment that swept the nation. During his incarceration and torment, he converted from Judaism to a messianic Christianity, "Bibelforschers," who were prevalent in the concentration camps. Not the doctrine so much as the living examples of faith that he witnessed won him over - he describes the inner tranquility and compassion that attracted him to the group. His book is valuable on several counts, probably moreso than I can fathom at present. I enjoyed the insights into his traditional Jewish upbringing and belief system - the faith that to him was Judaism. He describes the differences between the devout and the peripheral practitioner, the country and the city Jew. I was touched by the faith of his father, even in such bleak and hopeless surroundings, pronouncing a traditional Jewish blessing on his son, just prior to his own death.

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