

The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp

Rochelle G. Saidel

The first book in English devoted exclusively to the fate of the Jewish women in an infamous concentration camp

Ravensbrück was the only major Nazi concentration camp for women. Located about fifty miles north of Berlin, the camp was the site of murder by slave labor, torture, starvation, shooting, lethal injection, "medical" experiments, and gassing.

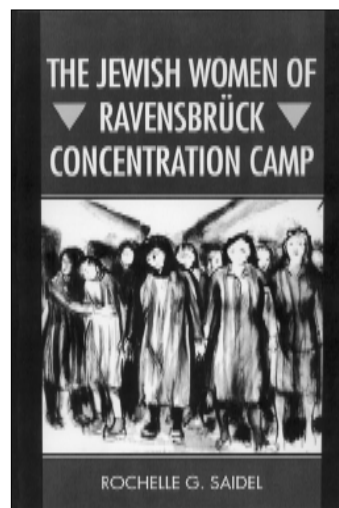
While this camp was originally designed to hold 5,000 women, the actual figures were six times this number. Between 1939 and 1945, 132,000 women from 23 countries were imprisoned in Ravensbrück, including political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, "asocials" which included Gypsies, prostitutes, and lesbians; criminals, and Jewish women (who made up about 20% of the population). Of the 132,000, only 15,000 survived.

Drawing upon more than sixty narratives and interviews of survivors in the United States, Israel, and Europe as well as from unpublished testimonies, documents, and photographs from private archives, Rochelle Saidel provides a vivid, unique collective and individual portrait of Ravensbrück's Jewish women prisoners. She researched for over twenty years to track down these women whose poignant testimonies deserve to be shared with a wider audience and future generations. Their memoirs provide new perspectives and information about satellite camps (there were about 70 slave labor sub-camps), daily camp life such as food talk, friendships, fear of rape and sexual abuse, hygiene issues, punishment, work, and resistance.

On April 30, 1945, the Soviet Army liberated Ravensbrück. They found only 3,000 extremely ill women in the camp, because the Nazis had sent other remaining women on a death march. *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp* reclaims the lost voices of the victims and restores the personal accounts of the survivors.

Rochelle Saidel is Senior Scientific Researcher at the Center for the Study of Women and Gender at the University of São Paulo as well as founder and executive director of the Remember the Women Institute. She is author of *Never Too Late To Remember: The Politics Behind New York City's Holocaust Museum* and *The Outraged Conscience: Seekers of Justice for Nazi War Criminals in America*. She is curator of the exhibit *Women of Ravensbrück: Portraits of Courage* for the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg. A citizen of the United States and Israel, she currently divides her time between Jerusalem, New York, and São Paulo.

Publication of this book is made possible in part by the support of the Five Millers Family Foundation, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, the Richard J. and Joan G. Scheuer Family Foundation, and the Remember the Women Institute, www.rememberwomen.org



APRIL 2004

336 PP. 6 X 9 63 B/W IMAGES

ISBN 0-299-19860-X CLOTH \$29.95

"The histories of these Jewish survivors are very moving. Readers interested in visual historical materials will appreciate the wide range of photographs and illustrations depicting life in this camp."

—Nechama Tec, author of *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust*

"This book is the outcome of over twenty years of indefatigable research in archives and libraries, and of interviews in several countries with survivors of Ravensbrück. Saidel presents their deeply moving stories against a carefully constructed context of the camp's history. . . . This book is clearly a labor of deep commitment and love."

—Ruth Schwertfeger, author of *Women of Theresienstadt* and *The Wee Wild One*



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