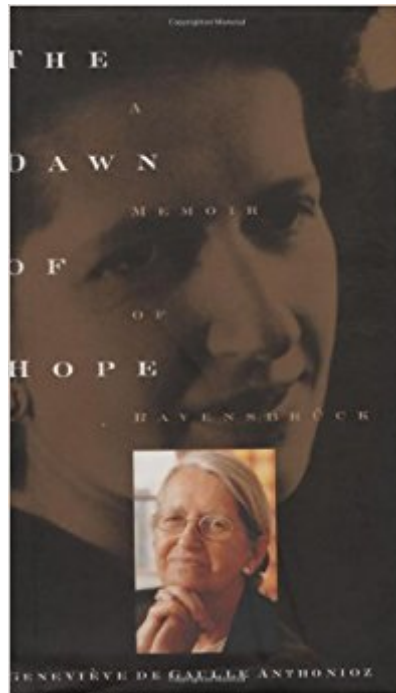




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The Dawn Of Hope: A Memoir Of Ravensbrück



Synopsis

A stirring memoir by General de Gaulle's niece, who as a young woman in the French Resistance was arrested, tortured, and sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1943. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arrested in Paris in 1944 because of her work in the Resistance movement, the niece of the former President of France, General Charles de Gaulle, relates in this short, stark memoir how she was shipped to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in a cattle car when she was in her early 20s. Possibly because she was a political prisoner rather than a Jew, Anthonioz was not immediately exterminated, but was kept in a constant state of fear that every day might be her last. In spare but powerful prose, she documents the condition of the 75 Polish women in the camp who were operated on without anesthesia by a surgeon who later deliberately infected their wounds with gangrene, tetanus and streptococcus. Anthonioz herself was subjected to beatings and near starvation conditions. After several months of performing backbreaking labor, however, she was mysteriously transferred to an area of the camp where inmates were treated less harshly. Shortly thereafter, she was put in a solitary confinement cell. Since she did not know the reason for these changes, Anthonioz expected to be executed momentarily. What kept her from falling into total despair was the kindness of a fellow inmate, a Jehovah's Witness who brought her meals and gifts from other French prisoners. A few weeks after Paris was liberated, she was released from Ravensbrück. In the 1950s, Anthonioz, who is the founder of the international organization Aid in

Total Distress, began her lifelong commitment to easing the plight of the poor. (Nov.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

An important addition to the growing list of Holocaust survival memoirs, this powerful book uniquely records the experiences not of a Jew but of a young Christian activist in the French Resistance, the niece of Gen. Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle Anthonioz joined the Resistance as a teenager, was captured by the Germans in 1943, and then spent time in one of France's most notorious prisons before being shipped to Ravensbrück. There she remained until near the end of the war, mostly in solitary confinement. The power of this reluctantly penned memoir stems from its brevity and reflectiveness. Rather than recount daily events or routines within the camp, she explores the "progressive destruction of what constitutes a human being" and the cruelty of fellow inmates who became barracks chiefs. Although the memoir ends with the mysterious circumstances of her release, it should be noted that the author, sometimes called "the French Mother Theresa," has devoted her life to the Fourth World Movement, an international organization dedicated to helping the poor and homeless worldwide. An uplifting account; recommended for public and academic libraries. Marie Marmo Mullaney, Caldwell Coll., NJ Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This was very well written, but I would've liked to hear a little more about her thoughts and how she cope with solitary confinement. In many ways, her experience in the camps was better than most, because she was allowed more dignity - what she went through was horrible but a lot better than what other people went through. She basically was in solitary confinement, and didn't have to deal with the beatings and the hard work of the people in the regular camp. Still, wondering what was happening to her friends on the outside and never knowing if each day would be her last must of taken an enormous emotional toll, and it's not surprising that the author waited 50 years to tell her story. Sundays are so traumatic that you can't talk about them right away.

Ghanks

This thin little book contains some of the memories of Genevieve de Gaulle Anthonioz (niece of Charles de Gaulle), from the time she was imprisoned in Fresnes Prisons during World War II. A young Catholic, she was jailed because of her efforts as a resistance worker. She watches a co-worker being beaten to death for trying to wash out her underwear. One of her jobs is to sort

through huge piles of dirty, bloody prison uniforms from those who are murdered, to find scraps and buttons that can be reused. Her single cell is flooded with smoke from the ovens. She spends much time in solitude, reflecting on how she will handle her own early death which she is sure is imminent. She is never marked for extinction, and so has a slightly different view of life in the camps than the tellers of most books I've read. Life in one of the worst prisons in France during WWII is not pleasant, although through she can receive mail, smuggled in Christmas presents, and medical care when sick. In her isolation, she survives by befriending the cockroaches in her cell. She secretly makes a Christmas handkerchief for the Jehovah's Witness who brings meals around. She observes the lives of those destined to die, and is deeply moved. Realizing that the only way to bear witness is to survive, she does. It took 55 years for her to be able to write her story - she spent those years raising her children and working to improve the lives of the homeless. Translated from the original French, the tenses used are a little unsettling, without any obvious reason. The text switches from past to present sometimes within the same paragraph. It could have used more editing after the translation. However, for those interested in the Holocaust, this is a very quick read, and offers a look from the eyes of a young non-Jewish girl. A worthwhile read.

Interesting memoir.

A most moving book. You learn of the terrible sufferings experienced in a concentration camp, and the later fruits they would bear.

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