

The Holocaust Historiography Project

Remarkable Nonsense about the Holocaust

Too old to be gassed

Private hell of a charming rabbi

Chasing Shadows

Hugo Gryn with Naomi Gryn
Viking, £16.99

Reviewed by Hyam Maccoby

Rabbi Hugo Gryn was well known as the genial contributor of Jewish wisdom to the radio programme The Moral Maze. [...]

Yet, despite his bonhomie, no one had a deeper experience of human misery and human evil. As a youth, brought up in a wealthy, loving and pious family, he was plunged into the hell of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Most of his family perished, but he survived by good luck and at times good judgment. **He was one of the very few who actually entered a gas chamber at Auschwitz and lived to tell the tale (he had somehow wandered into a crowd of children marked down for gassing and was sent out by a meticulous guard at the last moment as over-age).**

[...]

[...] They were eventually gassed in Auschwitz. **Hugo himself, having escaped the gas chambers by pretending to be a carpenter**, was one of the few survivors of the subsequent death march and came within an inch of death from typhus. His father, however, was too ill to survive more than a few days after the liberation. Hugo made his way back to Berehovo and was overjoyed to find his mother alive, the only other survivor of his immediate family.

[...]

Send all questions and comments to webmaster@historiography-project.org.