

Horror tales in tranquillity

"HANGED AT AUSCHWITZ" by Sim Kessel, Coronet Books paperback, \$1.25.

Despite its grim title, "Hanged at Auschwitz" is not just a compendium of horrors. It is a calm and unemotional autobiographical account of three years in the life of a young French Jew, from the day he was arrested in Dijon in July 1942, until his liberation from a Nazi concentration camp in May 1945. It was translated from the original French by Melville and Delight Wallace.

The author's motivation for telling his story, so many years after the surviving inmates of Auschwitz were liberated, is twofold. He wanted to keep fresh the memory of the martyrs of the death camps and to warn his readers, particularly young ones, who may ignore or misread

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the lessons of Nazism.

Kessel was a twenty-three year old assimilated Jew, a successful small-time professional boxer, living in his birthplace of Paris, when he was arrested. A member of a small Resistance network, he was caught after a mission to pick up some previously hidden guns.

He had only recently

been demobilized from the French army, and still had notions of chivalrous conduct between enemies and of mutual respect between adversaries.

After some months in French jails, Kessel was sent to the deportation camp of Drancy which was the assembly point from northern France for people who would be sent to camps of annihilation inside the German Reich.

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Perhaps the most tragic fact which emerges in this book is the disbelief of the deported in the grim reality of the fate which awaited them, even when forewarned, until actually confronted by day to day life in the camps.

Until it was too late they deluded themselves with the thought that, throughout history, it had been in the slave-owners' interest to keep the slaves alive. Little did they know that the whole of occupied Europe, if necessary, was a reservoir of human resources for the Germans.

This book illuminates the psychological processes which caused distrust among different national groups and among individuals, and which explain the relatively small

scale of efforts at resistance or even cooperation

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among the prisoners.

It also shows, through Kessel's own fate, the peculiar chances which sometimes led to the survival of an individual. In his case the mercy of an S.S. man and of a kapo, who belonged to the "fraternity" of boxers, led to his survival in extreme situations.

An unsensational book, and a valuable addition to Holocaust literature.

Sophie Caplan

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CRIME PAYS . . .

Sydney author, Michael Hervey is to have a book published by the Collier/Macmillan/Cassell group, dealing with some of Australia's most bizarre and sensational crimes.

Considered an authority on Unidentified Flying Objects in the Southern

jects in the Southern Hemisphere, Mr Hervey is also well versed in criminology.

Mr Hervey has also been commissioned by the K. G. Murray publishing group to write the entire contents of a new true crime magazine soon to hit the market.