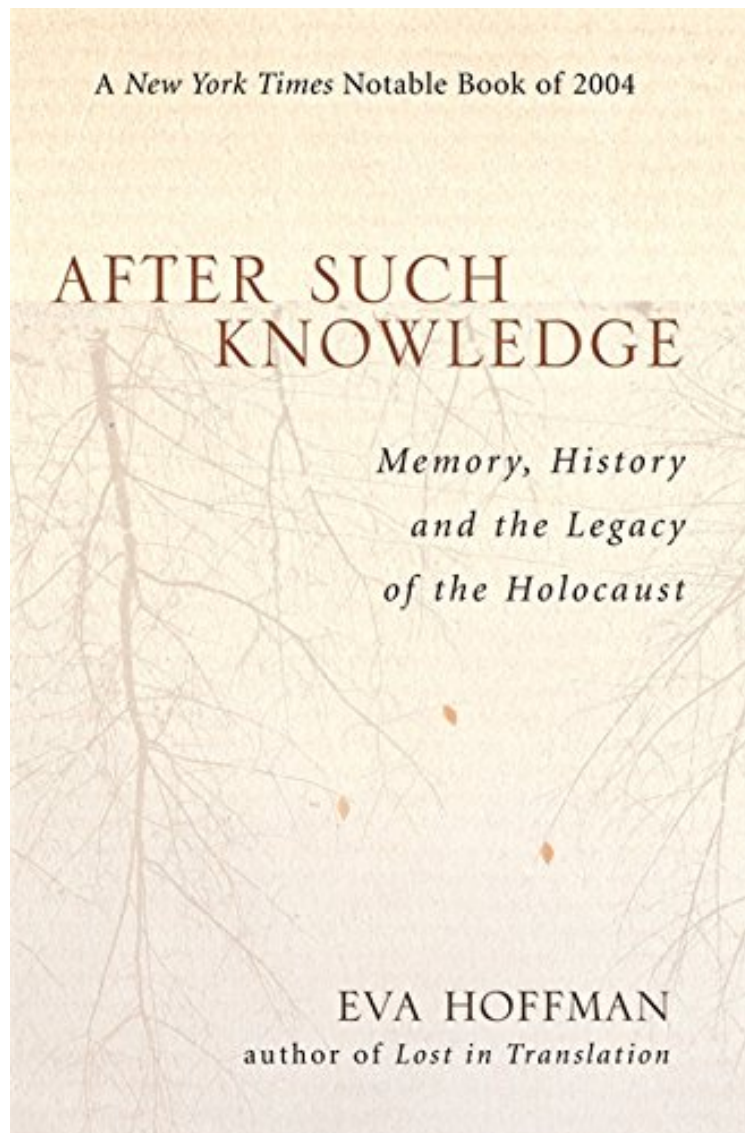


[Download pdf] After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust

# After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust

*Eva Hoffman*

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**Eva Hoffman : After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent writer - good book!By quintessaHoffman is a great writer

of much sensitivity. Great book. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A profound reflection on the Shoah- with a critical omission  
By Shalom Freedman  
This profound work is a reflection of a person of the 'second generation' the Holocaust. It contains a detailed and moving description of the kinds of 'learning' the children of survivors have gone through . It describes the particular burdens including 'significance envy' that the second-generation lives with. It in the course of this is also a memoir in which Hoffman tells the story of her own parents and family. She describes what it meant to grow up first in Poland, then in Vancouver as the child of two people who had been saved by hiding during the war. It is a work written with great intellectual acuity and humane feeling. And its reflections on various themes related to the Shoah, such as emigration, or 'collective memory' are deep and insightful. The book is so rich in thought and understanding that to quarrel with it seems somehow irreverent. But there is it seems to me a major omission in the work. The work centers on the relationship between the first and second generations. But how is it possible to speak of the Shoah without speaking of 'the third generation' also? For clearly one of the major themes of many of the survivors is the theme of continuity of their own families and of the Jewish people. Here I think Hoffman under-emphasizes one major point about the Shoah. The Nazis aim was to destroy the Jewish people entirely. Therefore for many of the survivors the goal of building new families was strongly connected with the goal of keeping the Jewish people alive. Perhaps this was not so in Hoffman's own family. But it clearly is the case for a tremendous share of the survivors of the Holocaust. And thus surely one of the major questions for second-generation people is their own 'duty' to bring a 'third-generation into the world. I again want to emphasize the great value of this work. This review has not even touched upon most of its themes. I have been reading it through 'Yom HaShoah' in Israel and I will just add one thought here. And this I think is something that Hoffman also mentions. And it is how 'ungraspable' the horror is, how ungraspable the immensity of the destruction, how ungraspable too the Evil of the perpetrators, and how ungraspable the fact that so many of the survivors did manage to make 'new lives'. This work in a way is a work of tribute by a child of survivors to those who did manage to somehow, living with all the nightmares and taking them with them to the grave, make new lives.

As the Holocaust recedes in time, the guardianship of its legacy is being passed on from its survivors and witnesses to the next generation. How should they, in turn, convey its knowledge to others? What are the effects of a traumatic past on its inheritors? And what are the second-generation's responsibilities to its received memories? In this meditation on the long aftermath of atrocity, Eva Hoffman--a child of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust with the help of neighbors, but whose entire families perished--probes these questions through personal reflections, and through broader explorations of the historical, psychological, and moral implications of the second-generation experience. She examines the subterranean processes through which private memories of suffering are transmitted, and the more willful stratagems of collective memory. She traces the "second generation's" trajectory from childhood intimations of horror, through its struggles between allegiance and autonomy, and its complex transactions with children of perpetrators. As she guides us through the poignant juncture at which living memory must be relinquished, she asks what insights can be carried from the past to the newly problematic present, and urges us to transform potent family stories into a fully informed understanding of a forbidding history.

"A ground breaking work that should be required reading in any course on the Holocaust or Jewish history." -- History in , May 24, 2005 "[A] beautifully wrought, deftly argued examination of how we might attempt to understand the Holocaust." (Publishers Weekly (starred review) -- XXX  
About the Author  
Eva Hoffman was born in Cracow, Poland, and emigrated to Canada at the age of thirteen. She is the author of three highly acclaimed works of nonfiction, *Lost in Translation*, *Exit into History*, and *Shtetl*, and one novel, *The Secret*. She divides her time between London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she is a visiting professor at MIT.