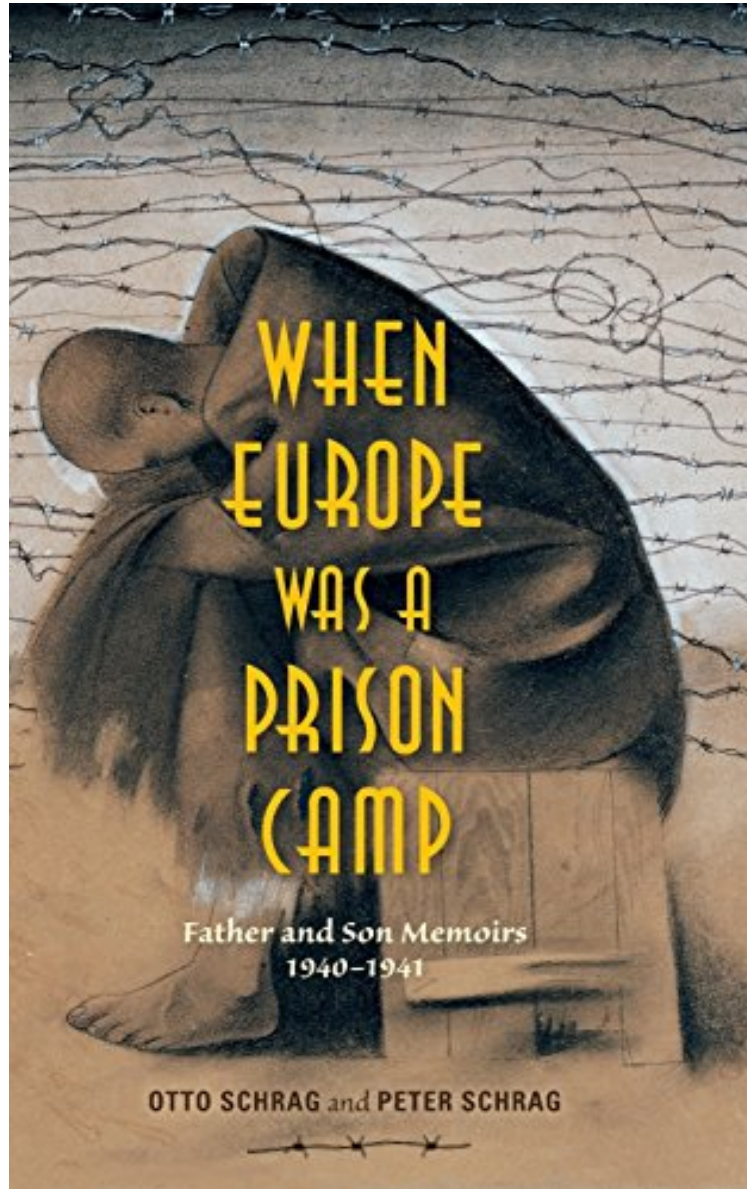


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## When Europe Was a Prison Camp: Father and Son Memoirs, 1940-1941

*Otto Schrag, Peter Schrag*  
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#2039077 in Books Peter Schrag Otto Schrag 2015-08-03Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.00 x 1.00 x 6.25l, .0 #File Name: 0253017696328 pagesWhen Europe Was a Prison Camp Father and Son Memoirs 1940 1941 | File size: 45.Mb

**Otto Schrag, Peter Schrag : When Europe Was a Prison Camp: Father and Son Memoirs, 1940-1941** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When Europe Was a Prison Camp: Father and Son Memoirs, 1940-1941:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Memorable and worthwhile memoir of life in occupied EuropeBy H. GoldmanGripping memoir recounting desperate days on the run as a 9 year old escaping Nazi occupied Europe with his mom, dad and grandmother, with the narrative juxtaposed with another memoir written in the mid-20th century by his father who escaped from a prison camp in France. The story is told in the kind of detail that captures the dailiness of lives trying to survive a world in crisis. One of the truly literate sensitive and faithful-to-the-truth documents of the Holocaust.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Peter Schrag was the editor of the editorial page of ...By Veronica KaufmanPeter Schrag was the editor of the editorial page of the Sacramento Bee. His writing is clear and compelling. I confess I am intrigued by the book especially as it parallels my own family's story.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is a good story about a situation we don't hear aboutBy Mary A HoppIt is a good story about a situation we don't hear about; the imprisonment of Jewish people in Belgium. I found it most interesting, especially because it was written by local journalist.

In a compelling approach to storytelling, *When Europe Was a Prison Camp* weaves together two accounts of a family's eventual escape from Occupied Europe. One, a memoir written by the father in 1941; the other, begun by the son in the 1980s, fills in the story of himself and his mother, supplemented by historical research. The result is both personal and provocative, involving as it does issues of history and memory, fiction and "truth," courage and resignation. This is not a "Holocaust memoir." The Schrags were Jews, and Otto was interned, under execrable conditions, in southern France. But Otto, with the help of a heroic wife, escaped the camp before the start of massive transfers of prisoners "to the East," and Peter and his mother escaped from Belgium before the Jews were rounded up and sent to Auschwitz. Yet, the danger and suffering, the comradeship and betrayal, the naive hopes and cynical despair of those in prison and those in peril are everywhere in evidence.

*When Europe Was a Prison Camp* is a skillfully interlaced narrative that generates empathy and admiration for the people in these various episodes, especially women, who as Peter emphasizes, risked so much to stay alive and keep their families together. It is a greatly entertaining but equally insightful and important read for anyone interested in the history of World War II, the Holocaust, and Jewish history. (H-Net)This book takes a unique approach to a World War II memoir, combining not only the stories of a father and son, but both men's years apart writing about the subject. . . The dual perspectives are invaluable, and create a fresh approach to an important story. (Foreword s)When Europe Was a Prison Camp is a skillfully interlaced narrative that generates empathy and admiration for the people in these various episodes, especially women, who as Peter emphasizes, risked so much to stay alive and keep their families together. It is a greatly entertaining but equally insightful and important read for anyone interested in the history of World War II, the Holocaust, and Jewish history. In its combined format, it is a worthy read and invitation for further scholarly and pedagogical use. (H-Net s)Schrag combines his father's narrative with judicious research and documentary reference to insure clarity and historical accuracy; he also inserts parts of his own memoir, which he wrote before discovering his father's manuscript. . . . 'Through the fog of war,' Peter Schrag observes, 'little can be seen very clearly.' To their great credit, these father-son memoirs help us see through this very dense and sinister fog. (Jewish Book World) When Europe Was a Prison Camp is a brilliant, eloquent, and compelling intergenerational memoir about the escape from Belgium of the Schrags, an assimilated bourgeois German family leading the good life, who overnight became Jews (again) when the shooting started in WWII. Civic order was fractured as these heroes without courage endured the grossest inhumanities. A timely reminder that life for Jews in the Diaspora is inevitably contingent and perilous. (Mark G. Yudof President Emeritus, University of California)With his book, Peter Schrag has vividly added the emotional dimension of his personal experience to the tragic events endured by our families during WWII. (Marcel Bervoets author of *La Liste de Saint-Cyprien*)Powerfully written. A book that deals with paradoxes, dilemmas, and insolubles . . . in an unusual, highly affecting narrative of the World War II experience of Jews but also of non-Jews outside the Nazi concentration and death camps. (Emily Miller Budick author of *The Subject of Holocaust Fiction*)The Schrags' captivating story of emigration, statelessness and internment, which is so shrewdly voiced and dialogued by father and son, transcends the margins of intimate memoirs and becomes a surrealistic, yet real, collective testimony of the tragic farce (Ionesco) forcedly played by millions of undesirables on the absurd theater's European stage. (Pnina Rosenberg author of *Lart des indésirables: l'art visuel dans les camps français*)A powerful account of the forced exile and internment by Belgium and France of refugees from Nazi Germany. Otto Schrag's story brings to light the life-and-death choices these refugees had to face and their dauntless survival strategies. His son, Peter, places his own memories in perspective and supplements the work with a rigorous commentary, revealing the sensitive balance between history and memory, knowledge and emotion. (Anne Grynberg University Professor, l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris, and author)About the AuthorPeter Schrag is a lifelong journalist and author of *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future* (a New York Times Notable Book), and *Not Fit for Our Society: Immigration and Nativism in America*, among other books. A former executive editor of *Saturday* and editorial page editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, he has written for *The Atlantic*, *Harpers*, *the Nation*, *New Republic*, *the New York Times*, and other major publications.Otto Schrag (1902-

1971) was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Germany. Among the last Jews to get a PhD from Heidelberg before the war, he entered his grandfathers beer maltprocessing business. In 1935, he fled Germany, eventually settling with his family in Brussels. With the start of the German invasion, the Belgians arrested him as an enemy alien, thus beginning the events narrated here. In New York in the 1940s, he wrote three well-regarded novels. He returned to Germany in 1950 and successfully rebuilt the business the Nazis had seized. There he wrote another novel and translated *From Here to Eternity* into German.