

### Chimneys and Chambers: The Lingering Smell Of The Holocaust

Michael Weiss



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Like many Holocaust survivors, for a long time Michael Weiss avoided discussing the Holocaust and what happened to him and his family during those years. Now a nonagenarian, he explains: It is difficult for people who did not experience the Holocaust to understand why, for so many years, survivors did not want to talk about their experiences. During the last 70 years since liberation from the Buchenwald concentration camp, my family and friends always wanted me to write about my experiences in the Holocaust. They wanted me to share what I saw and what I went through. They wanted this information for future generations to have an understanding of what happened to the Jewish people in Europe in the time leading up to and during World War II. From those terrible experiences - from those terrible years in the Holocaust - from Michael Weiss, survivor, they wanted to hear the story. But for some reason, I did not want to do it. Maybe it was too hard ... Maybe it was too painful to remember it. When I think about what happened to us, to the Jewish people of Europe, what happened to our communities, to our Jewish life ... My memories of the Holocaust are with me night and day. Then society changed and people started to say the Holocaust never happened. I started to hear that there are professors teaching courses in college today to deny that the Holocaust happened. And I began to hear about people who are writing books saying that the Holocaust never happened. And that people are signing up for the courses, buying the books - and believing. Let me tell you to never forget or be misled - the Holocaust did happen. I saw it. I felt it. I smelled it. After liberation, we really found out the terrible tragedy that had befallen us, the Jewish people. By now, most of us survivors are retired with little to do, except to think of those past bitter memories ... what we cannot and will not forget. They are chiseled in our minds - forever. There were over eight million Jews in Europe during the reign of Nazi terror. The Nazis murdered a million and a half children and another four and half million adults. Six Million. Six Million Jews perished at the hands of the German Nazis. Not only is the Holocaust a story of the persecuted and the murdered, but it is also a story of defiance and courage. This is my story. I was imprisoned in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald. As I have reached the ripe old age of 90, and only a handful of survivors remain alive, I have decided that it is time to tell you this story. It is my duty as an eyewitness to the Nazi atrocities. From Kaszony in the Carpathian Mountains to Auschwitz to Detroit.

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