

Moore, Bob: *Survivors. Jewish Self-help and Rescue in Nazi-occupied Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010. ISBN: 978-0-19-920823-4; 528 S.

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As the theme of rescue efforts during the Holocaust has been published on a consistent basis since the early 1950s new modes of research and analysis in this area might seem improbable. In this wide ranging survey Moore has approached the subject of Jewish survival with a novel comparative methodology which provides a more dynamic way to understand how Jews in different West European territories developed strategies for their own survival – in concert with non-Jews – and how those strategies changed and developed over time. In many previous studies the focus is placed on the rescuer as an outsider who intervenes on behalf of a desperate victim. Moore examines the facts from within the experience of the Jewish victim, whom he explores as a conscious actor attempting to find modes of survival through the ever-changing mesh of entrapment created by the Nazis and their collaborators.

The geo-political scope of Moore's study – the Low Countries, France, Norway and Denmark – is fundamental to the success of this study. In each chapter he examines a clearly identified territory, a specific group and defined timeframe. In this way he is able to disaggregate arbitrary individual rescue from the contextual circumstances in which such rescue occurred and create a more structured understanding of why survival was possible in any given situation at a particular time. The comparative nature of the study, which examines why Jews were more successful in their survival in one country over another, provides sufficiently broad geographic scope to show real differences in the possibility of successful rescue and survival strategies. It also demonstrates that there were similar opportunities across those same territories thereby providing a fruitful comparative analytic framework on the nature and

impact of national and local circumstances on the chances of survival.

In the introduction Moore is clear that survival was rarely if ever due entirely to the effort of the victim alone, who almost without exception required some form of aid. But the outcome of the research is to shift the emphasis away from the 'righteousness' of the aid provider (not withstanding the tremendous risk and bravery involved) to include a fuller picture of the effort of the victim, whom he characterizes as less helpless than previously depicted in many studies. The study successfully shows there is a causal relationship between the level of effort placed on Jewish self-help and rescue efforts through leveraging the prevailing opportunities that existed to find and work with aid-givers.

Throughout the study there is a clear understanding that individual acts of heroism were necessary but not sufficient and that networks played a significant role within the Jewish Community and the wider population. Moore examines the genesis and activity of networks across his chosen geographic area and breaks them down by region and affiliation, demonstrating patterns of behavior, which are similar, but never identical. He explores the extent to which networks within either the Jewish or non-Jewish community worked optimally when the two acted as a single network with no strong boundaries between the victim group and the aid givers.

The study identifies some pathways to successful aid giving and gives some strong examples of success and failure. It consciously avoids exemplifying the role of outstanding acts of individual bravery and altruism as moral standards. On the contrary Moore emphasizes that applying value judgments to the various forms of rescue, may in fact undermine the effort to understand the highly complex nature of aid and rescue. The study is therefore able to move seamlessly between the acts of Christians who may well have been motivated by a religious ethic and the rescue efforts of those operating in the criminal world who were not. As such, the study is focused more on the strengths of networks, making links between group and individual behavior as well as the distinctions between highly planned and entirely opportunistic be-

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havior. The study examines how gray areas of ambivalent behavior in the struggle to survive were the more likely way in which survival occurred than the intervention of the 'righteous' act of the single gentile who emerged from the darkness as a beacon of light.

Moore's work is designed to make more complex our understanding of self-help and rescue and to find new modes of analysis. „Survivors“ succeeds in providing greater levels of granulation in the study of survival within the country of occupation in Western Europe. Through the broad but still focused analysis we encounter a wider spectrum of possibility across the networks he identifies, but with a clear frame of comparative analysis. Moore does not provide a ready answer as to why more Jews survived in one country over another, but he does provide the kind of questions we need to ask with sufficient complexity and ambiguity, if we are ever to understand how victim groups and aid networks were successful in one place over another, and how time, place and political context limited the opportunity or facilitated success.

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