

*Survivor: a journey through ghettos, death camps and fire-bombing to freedom by Roman Halter. With a preface by Martin Gilbert.
Portobello Books Ltd 2007.*

In the year of his 80th birthday Roman Halter has published a brilliant, powerful, moving and haunting memoir of a rural Polish childhood destroyed by the evils of Nazism, and his successful navigation through ghettos, death camps and slave labour to eventual freedom.

Some of the ground in Survivor has inevitably been covered in broader terms in many other places, but this is a deeply personal recollection and as such contains unique elements which make it so affecting and effective.

What remains for me the overwhelming strength of the book is the undaunted humanity of the author, his incredible unwillingness to surrender to despair and, contrary to the widespread experience of returning Polish Jews after the Shoah, part of which Roman shared, his reciprocated love for his childhood nurse and his parents' former servants, all of whom helped him on his return to his home village after his family had been decimated.

Survivor should be added to the lists of essential reading about the Shoah.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh