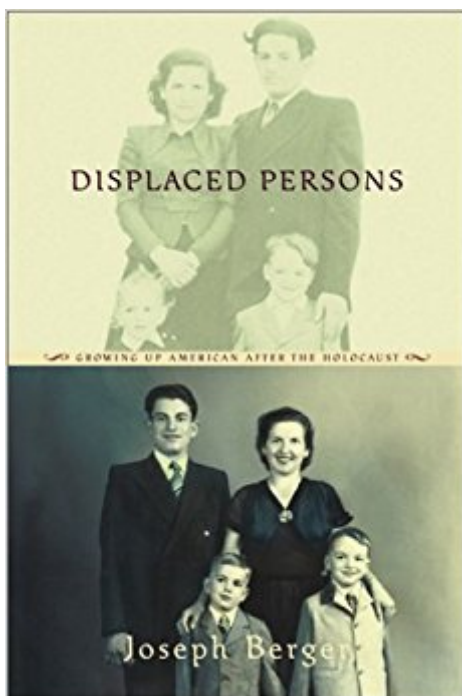


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# Displaced Persons: Growing Up American After The Holocaust



## Synopsis

An account of how one family of Polish Jews, with one son born at the close of World War II and the other son born in a "displaced persons" camp on the margins of Berlin, narrowly survived Hitler's atrocities and managed to emerge anew amid the bewildering landscape of Manhattan's Upper West Side and the Bronx in the 1950s and 1960s. Joseph Berger recreates his parent's experiences in light of his own childhood among refugees in America. He illuminates the plight of 140,000 refugees who came to America between 1947 and 1953, through the eyes of a young boy. The book captures the poignant shading, the telling minutiae and the stubborn intractability of displaced life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In Proustian fashion, this memoir begins with a flood of memories triggered by a seeded roll, a staple of Manhattan bakeries that was an early childhood treat for the author, who, along with his parents and brother, was a Polish-Jewish refugee living on New York's Upper West Side in the 1940s. From the smell and taste of fresh-baked bread, Berger, deputy education editor at the New York Times and author of *The Young Scientists*, tumbles headfirst into a tale about survival in a new country that was dangerous and mysterious as much as it was a haven of safety. Written in simple, elegant prose, the book largely focuses on Berger's parents' lives (particularly before the war). His father, whose Yiddish gave the family vital access to the city's Jewish community even though the author viewed it as "the mark of a conversational cripple," is a quiet man who could be moved to violence when necessary to protect his family. His mother conveys to her children the complex

tapestry of their European heritage. Both come alive in this vivid narrative, softened by a reflective somberness that is only occasionally tinged by nostalgia. Berger frequently interrupts his own story with shorter anecdotes in the voices of his parents, who tell stories about their families and their childhoods that both enhance and illuminate the primary story. By conjuring a complexly interwoven familial history that takes the reader across the boundaries of time, Berger lays the foundation for his thoughts about the larger immigrant experience. Agent, Joel Fishman. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

In this gripping and beautifully written memoir, New York Times reporter Berger tells the story of his family, Polish Jews and Holocaust survivors, who migrated to New York City in 1950. Having been born in Russia in 1944 and arriving in the United States at the impressionable age of five, Berger recounts with humor and pathos the tale of his own coming of age, with his parents' reminiscences as backdrop. The story of such refugees, about 140,000 of whom came to the United States between 1947 and 1953, remains a little-known aspect of Holocaust history. Berger's account is painful at times, as he recalls his own struggle to belong as both he and his parents fought to "shoehorn" their way into American life in the 1950s and early 1960s. His childhood remembrances of simple pleasures like Sunday visits to the bakery, the pleasure of new school supplies housed in cigar boxes, and the proud excitement of the arrival of the neighborhood's first TV set will bring smiles to the faces of general readers. Most touching is the celebration of family, community, and continuity so prized by these survivors. Highly recommended.- Marie Marmo Mullaney, Caldwell Coll., NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Well written and brought out the real life of immigrants and the ordeals they were confronted with arriving in America. These people suffered tremendous upheaval in their lives, lost so much and threw themselves into a new and challenging culture to achieve a better life for themselves and their families. Enjoyed the book.

This is a poignant success story of an immigrant family who came to a foreign country, America, and built a future for themselves and their children. It is an important story for this generation to read and understand.

This book resonated profoundly due to a shared history. I found myself responding very emotionally to the story and my evoked memories, which somewhat surprised me as I thought I had dealt with

the pain thoroughly. I think there are some experiences that never lose their emotional force, no matter how much we have processed them and think we have defanged them.

So much of this book clarified many of my feelings, both known and hidden, as a child of survivors. Thank you Mr. Berger.

This book was a recommended book by my religion class,. I enjoyed the way the book was written. The characters and their stories evolved and blossomed nicely. I recommend this book

Good but why am I forced to review this right now. I, trying to read something else now. Blah blah

Displaced Persons is the story of growing up in the United States, both Joseph's parents are survivors of the Holocaust. Joseph, his little brother, and parents came to the United States in March 1950. They had one relative in the area, unbeknowst to them he had died. Eventually both parents found jobs, Joseph's father working in a factory, his mother making hats. Both the boys were enrolled in school, thus began life as immigrants in another country. I thought this was a wonderful book, it really described so many of the feelings of an immigrant. Shame, about not fitting in, shame in how Joseph looked at his parents. I was pleased that the book included some history about Joseph's mother growing up in Poland before the war. There was very little information about his father's past, I think his father just couldn't articulate something with so much pain. His father, also from Poland, lost both parents, and six sisters. Joseph had one uncle left on his mother's side of the family. There was also a lot of happiness in this book, the over all feeling was very positive which is why I gave it five stars.

Wonderful book.

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