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## Diary of Bergen-Belsen: 1944-1945

*Hanna Levy-Hass*

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**Hanna Levy-Hass : Diary of Bergen-Belsen: 1944-1945** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Diary of Bergen-Belsen: 1944-1945:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Highly Unusual Holocaust Story of a Remarkable WomanBy Marc LichtmanThis is another book I was sure I had reviewed but hadn't!While some people propagate the idea that the best survived the camps, the fact is that to survive many stole food from the weaker. I'm not interested in judging them; this is what capitalist society in general teaches people to begin with, and that's true even in the best of

circumstances. It's generally magnified under the worst of circumstances. So this is a remarkable story about a woman whose socialist beliefs and activism helped enable her to play a big role in organizing collective survival. Modern socialists are not utopians--we don't try to organize little communes where we can have "socialism" in a hostile capitalist world. You can't even complete the road to socialism in a single country, contrary to Stalin (see *The Revolution Betrayed*). But we do try to lead by example, and that's what Hanna Levy-Hass did! That's what Cuba does when it sends internationalist doctors around the world. They make a difference, but they can't be everywhere. They can set an example, and show what is possible. For a Marxist view on Utopianism (which Marx and Engels studied and learned from), see both *The Communist Manifesto* 3rd (third) Edition by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels published by Pathfinder Pr (2008) Paperback and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. While the Jewish question has been present in Marxism from before the *Communist Manifesto*, the most serious study is *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon (1971-06-01). (Don't pay \$35.00 for it, it's a \$25.00 book and in print). Abram Leon traces the reasons for Jewish survival and for anti-Semitism giving a materialist, not a religious answer. Leon died in Aushwitz, and his comrade Ernest Mandel wrote in a biographical note to the book (which is closer to the norm than the story related by Levy-Hass): "Leon was the type least able to withstand the regime of Nazi concentration camps. He possessed a sense of human dignity which found intolerable contact with the degradation and cruelty which became the common denominator of human conduct inside the concentration camps. The nobility of his character was shattered against the implacable bestiality of desperate egoism, just as his body became broken by physical exertions to which it was not accustomed and by malignant disease. After several weeks of labor in a road-building gang, he was sent to a quarantine camp. There one had to devise tricks, grovel before the masters, engage in petty trading, and steal in order to survive. He could not rise above his companions in misery along these lines. Chained to his miserable cot, he passed his last days in reading and meditation. He was certain that the end was near. There came the final 'medical inspection.' The sick destined for the gas chambers were selected. He was among them." Also useful is *On the Jewish Question* by Leon Trotsky (1970-01-01). For Israel, I recommend *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, although I think people who try to treat Israel as if it was still a colonial-settler state are off base. It hasn't escaped its past, any more than the US has escaped the legacy of slavery and genocide against the Indians, but it has become a more or less "normal" capitalist country. I'm of course for seeing a Palestinian state come into being, but does anyone think that the reactionary Hamas, and the bureaucratic Fatah (of today) can lead this? When the Palestinians had, despite limitations, revolutionary leadership, they fought like shown in this small book: *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*. To see their decline amidst the first Gulf War, I recommend *New International no. 7: Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq*. The only way forward to a Palestinian state is solidarity based on common class interests. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. not authentic By Alfred Jacobson A long too-thought-out memoir that could never have been written in a KL. While she's starving to death, she has somehow managed to write copious paragraphs in a journal--a death sentence infraction. Where was the paper from? the pen/pencil? The hiding place for a few hundred pieces of paper. Please!! 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Back in print, but with something missing By Piso Mojado Five stars to Haymarket Books for republishing Hanna Levy-Hass's diary in a better translation than the first English edition (1982). Minus one star for republishing it without the author's thirty-nine page interview by Eike Geisel in *Vielleicht war das alles erst der Anfang: Tagebuch aus d. KZ Bergen-Belsen 1944-1945* (Rotbuch ; 191) (German Edition). Since Levy-Hass left us so little in writing, it is difficult to understand this omission. Amira Hass dedicated this new edition to Eike Geisel. Did Haymarket Books think his 1978 interview of the author was outdated?

A unique, deeply political survivor's diary from the final year inside the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Hanna Levy-Hass, a Yugoslavian Jew, emerged a defiant survivor of the Holocaust. Her observations shed new light on the lived experience of Nazi internment. Levy-Hass stands alone as the only resistance fighter to record on her own experience inside the camps, and she does so with unflinching clarity and attention to the political and social divisions inside Bergen Belsen."

In March 1945, the final month before liberation, nearly 20,000 prisoners died there. Levy-Hass described this form of genocide in her diary: the slow, vile, calculated destruction by hunger, violence, terror, and deliberately sustained epidemics. Her rare description of the final months of the Holocaust is marked by political consciousness, moral understanding, and perceptive observation. Levy-Hass has much to tell us of death and survival. Steve Hochstadt, historian, Illinois College; author, *Sources of the Holocaust* "A compelling document of historic importance which shows, with remarkable composure, that ethical thought about what it means to be human can be sustained in the most inhuman conditions. Hanna Levy-Hass teaches us how a politics of compassion and justice can rise out of the camps as the strongest answer to the horrors of the twentieth century." Jacqueline Rose, historian, Queen Mary University of London; author, *The Question of Zion* There are many testimonies of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps, but very few have the quality and the strength of this diary from Bergen-Belsen by Hanna Levy-Hass. A Jew and a member of the Resistance, Levy-Hass belongs to the group of detainees that as Primo Levi emphasized in *The Drown*

and the Saved had the resources to preserve their humanity against the planned annihilation by the Nazi machine.... The history of the Holocaust is often reduced to a simple conflict between the persecutors and their victims, but it was a much more complex process. It was also the history of the struggle against the barbarism of Twentieth century: and that is the reason why this diary is so important to us. Enzo Traverso, historian, University of Picardie, France; author, *The Origins of Nazi Violence*