

"Kept My Promise Jacob Birnbaum" - The Inspiring Story of a Man Who Never Broke His Word

About Jacob Birnbaum

Jacob Birnbaum, a name that may not be familiar to everyone, but a man whose legacy remains remarkable even today. Born on October 17, 1926, in Austria, Birnbaum became widely known for his unwavering determination and his commitment to keeping his promises. In this article, we dive deep into the life of Jacob Birnbaum, exploring the challenges he faced and the impact he made on the world.

Early Life and Escaping the Nazis

Birnbaum was born into a Jewish family in Vienna, Austria. However, his peaceful life took a dire turn with the rise of the Nazi regime and the onset of World War II. Despite being just a teenager, Birnbaum witnessed the horrors of the Holocaust as many of his family members and friends were arrested and deported to concentration camps.

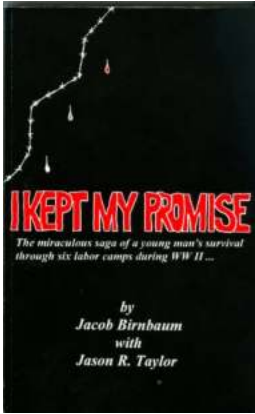
With a strong will to survive and help others, Birnbaum took it upon himself to find a way to escape the clutches of the Nazis. Alongside a few friends, he formed an underground resistance group and managed to secure forged identification papers, allowing them to flee to Hungary.

I Kept My Promise by Jacob Birnbaum (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 7807 KB



Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 210 pages
Lending	: Enabled



The Promise

While in Hungary, Birnbaum made a pact with his father, promising to do whatever it takes to reach the United States and tell the world about the atrocities being committed by the Nazis. This promise became the driving force behind all his actions, propelling him forward even in the face of unimaginable obstacles that awaited him.

From Hungary to the United States

With a determination like no other, Birnbaum embarked on a treacherous journey that took him through multiple European countries. He overcame countless challenges, survived near-death experiences, and miraculously made his way to freedom.

Once in the United States, Birnbaum wholeheartedly embraced his role as a Holocaust survivor and activist. He tirelessly embarked on a mission to raise awareness about the Holocaust through public speaking, educational campaigns, and lobbying for recognition and support for survivors.

The Birth of the Soviet Jewry Movement

However, Birnbaum's biggest achievement was yet to come. In the early 1960s, he became profoundly concerned about the plight of Soviet Jews, who were facing severe persecution and restricted religious freedoms under the Soviet regime. With memories of his own struggle still fresh, Birnbaum knew that he had to act.

Thus, the Soviet Jewry Movement was born. Birnbaum founded the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) and dedicated the next several decades of his life to fighting for the rights of Soviet Jews, demanding freedom of emigration and practicing their religion without fear.

Challenges and Triumphs

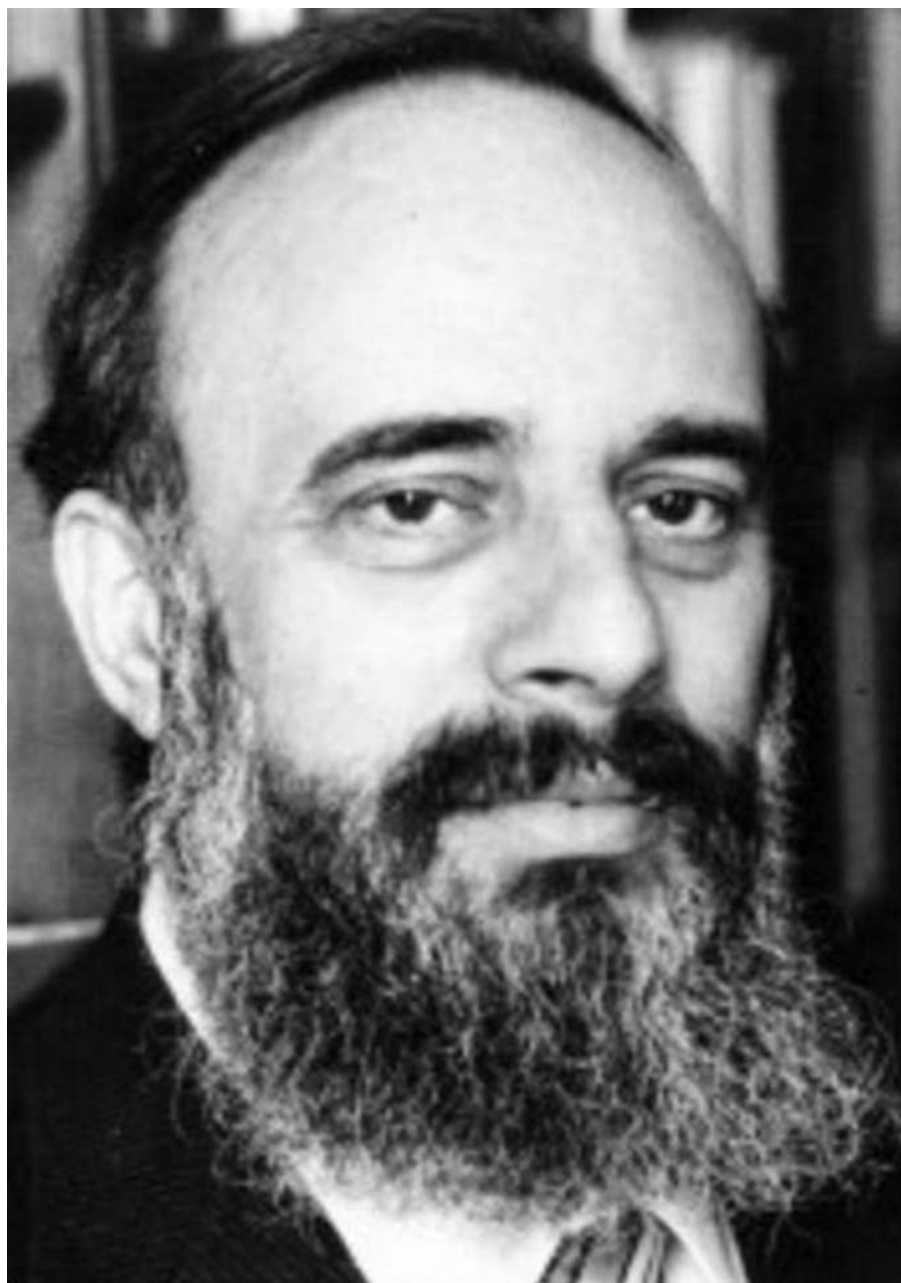
Birnbaum faced numerous challenges during his activism. He dealt with government opposition, threats of arrest, and even imprisonment. However, he remained resilient and stayed true to his promise. Birnbaum's efforts and those of his organization played a significant role in mobilizing public support and putting pressure on world leaders to address the Soviet Jewry crisis.

One of the movement's most significant triumphs came with the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975, which recognized the human rights of individuals, including the freedom to emigrate. The Soviet Jewry Movement sent shockwaves through the international community, leading to the eventual liberation of more than a million Jews from the Soviet Union.

Legacy and Recognition

Jacob Birnbaum's relentless dedication and tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on history. His promise and unwavering pursuit of justice not only saved countless lives but also served as an inspiration for generations to come.

Birnbaum's work has been honored with numerous awards and recognition, including being awarded the United States Congressional Gold Medal in 2011. He passed away on August 9, 2020, at the age of 93, but his legacy continues to resonate with those who strive to make a difference in the world.

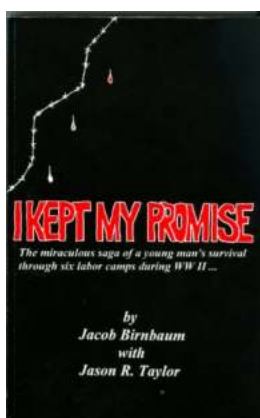


Inspiring Future Generations

Jacob Birnbaum's story serves as a reminder that even in the darkest times and against all odds, one person's determination, integrity, and promise can carry the power to change the world. His extraordinary journey from a Holocaust survivor to an influential activist showcases the strength of the human spirit and the ability to overcome unimaginable challenges.

It is crucial for future generations to learn from Birnbaum's story and understand the significance of keeping promises and fighting for what is right. As his legacy lives on, may it inspire individuals to uphold their word, stand up against injustice, and work towards ensuring a more compassionate and inclusive world for all.

Jacob Birnbaum's life is a testament to the human capacity for resilience, determination, and tenacity. His promise to his father and his dedication to fighting for justice drove him forward, guiding his actions and inspiring countless others along the way. From escaping the Nazis to spearheading the Soviet Jewry Movement, Birnbaum's impact on history is immeasurable. His story is a reminder that no matter the circumstances, an individual's unwavering commitment can truly change lives and shape the course of history. Jacob Birnbaum kept his promise, and his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.



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The words in this book are an eye witness account of a remarkable struggle for survival by a young Polish Jew, during and shortly after the Holocaust. In the prime of life, on April 15th, 1942 -his twentieth birthday- Jacob Birnbaum was torn away from his family and put on one of the last trains sent to a labor camp from his hometown. In this biography, Jacob takes the reader with him, as he relives the incredible chain of events he encountered during his three years of captivity at six different labor camps and his subsequent struggle to regain a normal life amidst the post-war turmoil in Europe. Birnbaum's testimony represents the epitome of the phrase, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

Even though his epic began in 1942, Jacob's photographic memory has made it possible for him to recount his experiences as if they occurred only yesterday. As painful as it was to retrace his steps, the release of this narrative is helping fulfill a promise he made to his parents when they wrote: "Son, you may be the only survivor of our family. Never let the world forget what they did to us." He was the only survivor. And he will never let us forget.

Sadly, Jacob passed away suddenly on May 7th, 2007. He will be dearly missed.

"Jacob Birnbaum's autobiography is a survivor's important testimony. Read it. Make your friends read it. Written with pain and courage, it is his personal way of keeping his "promise" to the victims who perished in Hitler's nightmarish death-camps. To listen to a witness is to become a witness." Elie Wiesel, Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize of 1986, Recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal, author of more than 30 books and Professor of Humanities at Boston University.

"This incredible true story is about the mystery of survival during the Holocaust--a time when few survived to tell what happened to those closest to them. I KEPT

MY PROMISE helps fill that black hole in history, without human faces. It also helps break part of the long dark silence that obscured a colossal failure of western civilization." Sylvia Rothchild, Author and Book Reviewer for the Jewish Advocate.

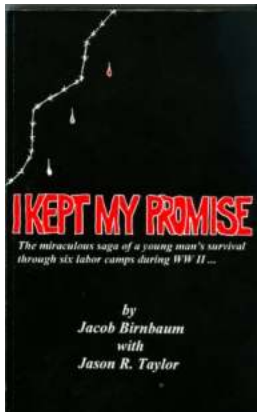
"Readers interested in the less familiar ordeal of Jews who were not deported to the well-publicized concentration and death camps will find much to appreciate in this volume." Lawrence L. Langer, Author and Professor of English Emeritus, Simmons College, Boston.

"I couldn't put this book down. It reads like a novel yet is a very honest painful testimony of a Holocaust survivor. A must for Holocaust collections and an important biography for school libraries. Grades 8 through adult, Highly Recommended." Diane C. Pozar, Library Media Specialist and Reviewer for The Journal for Junior and Senior High School Librarians.

"I won't go into too much detail about his actual experiences, because there is no way to do them justice. The story, being told from Jacob's point of view, tells itself impeccably. When I read it I saw through his eyes, felt what he felt and found myself stopping to catch my breath on several occasions. The power of the story is simply incredible! The primary goal of the book is to educate and inform people from junior high school through the college level. The first person perspective makes it as useful in understanding what happened to the persecuted Jews as 'The Diary of Anne Frank'." A twenty-year-old Bentley College freshman and Writer for the Vanguard student newspaper. Reprinted from the Lexington Minuteman.

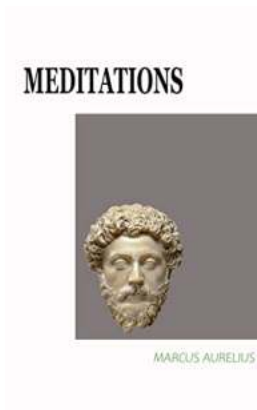
"I Kept My Promise is a poignant account which recalls the horror of the Holocaust and the consequences of sanctioned prejudice and hate. In honoring those who have died, Mr. Birnbaum provides inspiration to the living."

Massachusetts Governor, William F. Weld.



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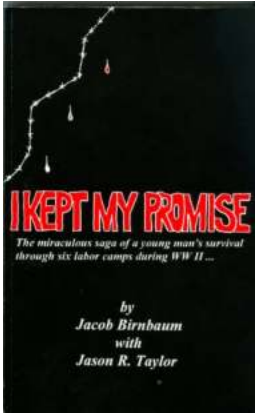
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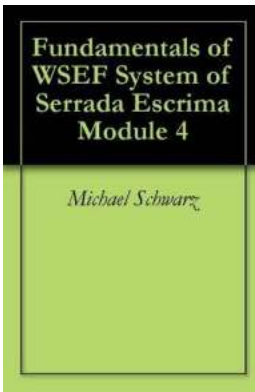
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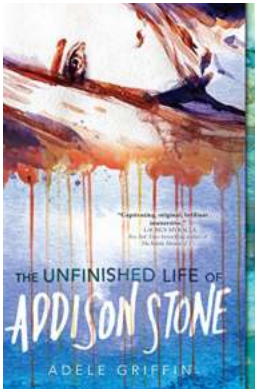
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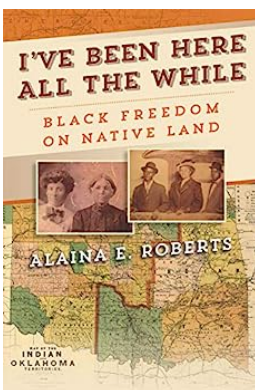
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