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# The ethical turn in considering hidden children's Holocaust testimony as historical reconstruction

**Julie Wheelwright**

*How to balance respect for the testimonial quality of post-Holocaust memoirs while critically analysing their value as historical witness statements? This question is explored through the author's experience of collaborating on a memoir project with a Jewish subject who, as a child, was hidden in a Catholic convent in Belgium during the Second World War. Using the concepts of 'collective memory, memory makers and memory consumers', the author argues that witness statements are most valuable when read and understood within broader issues of political and historical structures. Using the example of Hidden Children's testimony, the author examines how a range of historical actors can be acknowledged and appropriately recognised by comparing memories and by including appropriate contextual detail. The paper points to future research questions into how post-Holocaust memoirs are received and understood as historical artifacts by memory consumers.*

Keywords: memory studies, hidden children, Belgium, post-Holocaust narratives

## **Introduction**

In considering the ethics of writing about Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust in Belgium, Misha Defonseca's memoir, *Surviving with wolves: The most extraordinary story of World War II* (2005), is worth our attention. Defonseca's account of her traumatic childhood in occupied Brussels recounts her Jewish parents' deportation to Auschwitz and her search for them when she walked from Belgium to Ukraine, and back. The memoir was a phenomenal commercial success in Europe:

published first in English in 1997, it was translated into 18 languages, developed as a French feature film and serialised in the *Daily Mail*. According to Defonseca, she was placed with a Catholic family who Christianise her name to Monique De Wael (her real name) but treat her cruelly, forcing her to find food and shelter in the forest where she was cared for by wolves (Defonseca et al. 2005). Despite its huge sales, however, a series of legal cases (and increasing number of skeptics) forced De Wael in 2008 to admit the memoir was based in fantasy rather than fact. Tellingly, she stated that her invented story ‘was not actual reality, but was my reality, my way of surviving ...’ and that ‘there are times when I find it difficult to differentiate between reality and my inner world’ (Dearden 2014). Not only had she falsified her religion (she was Catholic) but her parents had been part of Belgium’s network of resisters, had been caught and died in prison (Eskin 2008). De Wael’s childhood was certainly tragic – but perhaps she felt not tragic enough to garner international attention.<sup>1</sup>

What De Wael violated was the long-accepted principle among writers of narrative non-fiction that in testimonial autobiography there is a ‘writer-reader pact’ that rests on the centrality and moral significance of the author (Freadman 2004: 30). The realistic aesthetics that De Wael employs through her descriptions of remembered events should have constituted an entirely appropriate perspective for reading a Holocaust memoir. As Freadman argues: ‘This is a moral point: we owe those with terrible stories to tell the respect of taking their stories on trust, unless we have good reason for doubting them’ (ibid). What should have alerted readers to the disingenuous quality of De Wael’s text was its lack of detail, its factual errors and its insistence (in the English translation) on the literary stylisation of the child’s voice (Vice 2014: 207).

Although De Wael’s memoir is exceptional and extreme, standing in contrast to genuine Holocaust testimonies published in their hundreds since the 1970s (Freadman 2004: 22), it illustrates an important point about the prevailing climate in which memoir is read as historical reconstruction.

Since the early 2000s, scholars such as Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (2003) have noted the critical weakness in the application of memory and trauma studies by diverse historical actors. Radstone suggested that trauma had ‘become a popular cultural script in need of contextualisation and analysis in its own right – the symptom, the cause of which needs to be sought elsewhere’ (ibid). The conjoining of the ethical turn that currently informs humanities research more generally, (with memory and trauma studies as a transdisciplinary subset), Radstone has argued, still risks obscuring as much as it reveals about the politics of memory (Radstone 2008). Or as Jane Kilby has observed, as memory has arisen as a ‘boom’ or ‘fever’, its politics are still poorly understood by historical consumers and by scholars (Kilby 2002: 201).

Adding to these complexities is the discourse around the relation between history and memory that often takes place outside of the academy (Hodgkin and Radstone 2005: 149; Fass 2006). The rise of movements concerned with memorialising experiences has, for example, coincided with the proliferation of online historical sources and technological changes so that historical trauma memoirs can be self-published and made easily accessible as digital texts. However, these new publishing platforms, while allowing witnesses a means to disseminate their accounts and those of others,<sup>2</sup> are, as Radstone describes it, ‘always already mediated’ (Radstone 2013: 134, 135). One could argue that the gap between the public understanding of this concept by consumers of memoir texts and that of academic critics is growing. For scholars of genocides this question of representation and its reception is particularly sensitive given the paradoxes with which traumatic experience confronts us: as Arruti argues, ‘it is imperative to think through the complexities of the relationship between trauma and representation, and to question the extent to which such representation may be therapeutic (Arruti 2007: 2). De Wael’s adoption of a Jewish identity and her insistence that her alternative to ‘actual reality’ with its own internal logic that emotion should take precedence over fact, is a case in point.

My experience of collaborating on a privately published memoir with Joseph Szlezinger, a retired British Jewish businessman who was hidden in a Catholic convent in Belgium from 1943-1944, provides an opportunity to illustrate this tension between memory as ‘lived experience’ and as ‘historical reconstruction’. In addressing this matter, I placed Mr. Szlezinger’s recall of events within a broader historical context that involved comparing dozens of memoirs that were either published by small presses, by institutions, privately published (as print, e-books and online) along with witness testimonies. To borrow Freadman’s categorisation, such memoirs operate across a spectrum, ranging from witness accounts written at the time, based on recorded interviews or published with an ‘historico-testimonial’ impulse and are rarely given to introspective psychological analysis and are limited in linguistic range (Freadman 2004: 26). The concern then arises from the potential for mis-reading (and mis-writing) personal narratives as substitutes for historical reconstruction that erase the historian’s understanding that ‘the personal is never the same as the social’ (Fass 2006: 111). As historical source texts, they are most valuable when read as part of a larger genre where linguistic patterns, agreement about details of particular historical events and their consequences may broadly coalesce.

Kansteiner’s reference to historical agents as those of collective memory, memory makers and memory consumers is helpful in considering the ethics of sharing professional authority within this context (Kansteiner 2002: 179). As an active ‘memory maker’, I wish to explore, in the first place, how Mr. Szlezinger and I provided his memoir with the necessary references to broader historical actors to ensure its complexity and depth. Since Mr. Szlezinger was born in 1935 and since the memoir largely covered the years of Belgium’s occupation by the Third Reich, it was necessary to provide sufficient background to give meaning and accuracy to his memories. Moreover, the process of gathering this additional material served to memorialize not just Mr. Szlezinger’s family story but the experience of other Jewish people in Belgium who either died in the camps or survived through the a network of resisters. While the resulting text is a first-person, linear narrative, the

inclusion of multiple perspectives acknowledges that an individual memoir makes only a single contribution towards a collective one. Richard Freadman, in his examination of Australian Jewish post-Holocaust memoirs, notes that these are ‘in the deepest sense purposive narratives’ where the need to retain control over the mode of transmission may be made at the expense of accurate recollection and aesthetic sophistication (Freadman 2004: 31). In other words, they may sacrifice nuances of language in articulating their war time trauma, migrant dislocation and later, their gratitude towards the Australian state where they found refuge.

Freadman’s recognition of these memoirs as a grouping, even as a form of collective remembering in print, reveals much about the particularities of post-Holocaust memoirs. For Mr. Szlezinger, the link between autobiographical writing and identity construction can be traced to his attendance at conferences devoted to the experience of Hidden Children in 1995 and 2007. The child survivors of the Holocaust shared their representations of the past at this public gathering, stimulating many to begin writing their experiences. In this paper, I wish to examine how the relationship between individual memories, explored within those of the collective (other relevant memoir and witness texts), illuminates the social function of collective memory. My collaboration with Mr. Szlezinger points to the need for further research into this third category of ‘memory consumers’, an idea expressed by Claire and others as ‘narrative clusters’ where ‘stories are connected, sometimes existing in clusters and extend infinitely, crossing cultures and generations’ (Claire et al 2014: 11). The potential of memoirs such as Mr. Szlezinger’s, produced outside of an academic context, to open up space for the negotiation between individual and collective memory production and its consumption, will be discussed at the end of this paper.

## Memory making

I first met Joseph Szlezinger (known to me as Joe) in 2010 to discuss collaborating on a memoir about his wartime experiences as a Jewish child, hidden in the Soeurs de Ste. Chretienne convent boarding school in Chimay, Belgium. As I describe his intentions for a publishing project in *Shattered dreams to new beginnings* (2016), 'Joe had originally talked about something more modest, a pamphlet perhaps'. His readership would be family and friends who would have published details about his father Samuel who was arrested in Brussels in 1942 and deported from the Malines transit camp to Auschwitz while Joe and his mother Gita went into hiding. When Joe described how his mother, seeking sanctuary, demanded that the priest at a Catholic boarding school offer them protection, I was deeply moved. Even decades after the event, hearing, and witnessing, such a traumatic event, was still shocking. My reaction and my historian's instinct was that Joe's description of this event spoke to his mother's courage and to Jewish resistance, carried an important message that deserved more time and space than a few typed pages.

Thus began a writing collaboration which would span more than five years and pose numerous intellectual and investigative challenges. The first became apparent in gathering information about Joe's wartime memories. Since he was aged five when the German occupation began, his wartime memories were fragmentary and by themselves, not sufficiently detailed to construct a linear narrative. So began the process of researching this historical field where I discovered testimonies of other Hidden Children (a category established in 1991 at the first international gathering of Children Hidden During World War Two<sup>3</sup>), most notably those of Paul Pittermann (2015) and Rachel Benkiel (1968) who were also boarded with the Soeurs de Ste. Chretienne, which proved extremely useful. Moreover, I had access to Joe's 1996 interview for the USC Shoah Foundation, to correspondence between Samuel Szlezinger and his family during the war and to key primary documents, all of which provided necessary context to Joe's memories.



Although our collaboration took place outside of an academic context<sup>4</sup>, Carolyn Ellis and Jerry Rawicki's recent example of 'collaborative witnessing' as a form of 'relational ethnography' offers a useful parallel. They describe a similar process of 'sharing authority' in gathering oral history mediated by the academic and the witness in analysing and constructing the text. As Ellis found in her work with Rawicki, whose family was deported from Plock to a ghetto in Bodzentyn, Poland (Ellis and Radwicki 2013), interviews were central to the process. The primary source for building the narrative of Joe and his family's wartime experience came from a series of recorded interviews conducted between 2011 and 2014. We began by discussing what Joe knew about his relatives who had lived in shtetls northwest of Warsaw, Poland. Although printed documentary sources were scarce, Joe drew upon a rich vein of oral history. I was impressed with how deeply Joe considered my questions, often adding details, correcting my mistakes or assumptions and building on his own memories. Information about his father Samuel's early life in Drobin and his mother's in nearby Raciaz, was supplemented by genealogical sources such as the JewishGen and Vad Yashem databases including Yizkor books, personal family letters and photographs. To ensure that the memoir was transparent in its construction and to acknowledge the work of other writers and scholars, all sources are acknowledged in endnotes and a bibliography.

In the interviews, Joe provided me with information about his family in Poland that he had learned from his mother while details of his early childhood were more difficult to recall. As Primo Levi comments on the fallibility of memory in *The drowned and the saved*, 'a memory evoked too often, and expressed in the form of a story, tends to become fixed in a stereotype, in a form tested by experience, crystallized, perfected, adorned, installing itself in the place of the raw memory and growing at its expense' (Levi 1988: 24). In this paper, I have identified two memories that arose from my interviews with Joe that could be classified as 'cystalised' but which, used in conjunction with other witness testimony and primary sources, illuminate wider historical questions. This relational process moved the narrative beyond individual acts of heroism and survival to reveal the

centrality of collective activities of Jewish and Belgian resistance in subverting the occupying German forces.

There was a powerful theme of saviors in Joe's interviews, the most importance of which concerned his mother. Gita had left Poland in 1924 to live with her brother in Bochum, Germany while still in her mid-teens to learn enough about business to open a haberdasher's shop in Brussels with her husband a decade later. Joe conveyed his sense of a woman with intelligence, and character, who was deeply devoted to her son. When Brussels was invaded in May 1940, the Szlezingers fled the city for southern France and despite the terrible conditions of the St-Cyprien camp where they were interned, Gita found a waitressing job and even visited the American embassy in Marseilles to beg the high commissioner for a transit visa (Szlezinger and Wheelwright 2016). After Joe's father was deported to Auschwitz in September 1942, Gita, desperate to find sanctuary for her son, asked her Belgian landlady to foster him. When the woman agreed on the condition that Gita give up all rights to her son and that he convert to Catholicism, she refused (ibid: 53). Mother and son then went into hiding.

The key scene that depicts Gita's courage in the face of her increasing powerlessness springs from Joe's memory of meeting the man he describes as his savior, Father Clement. Gita had made an arrangement with a sculptor in the Brussels' suburb of Uccle to hide Joe in exchange for a monthly payment. This arrangement ended in 1943 when the sculptor asked Gita to pay for her son's upkeep in advance as it had become increasingly dangerous for gentiles to hide Jews. As Joe recalled:

Whatever the sculptor's motives, my mother told me that one afternoon he had demanded a lump sum, in advance, 'for the duration'. She agreed, saying: 'I'll just take my son out for the day and we'll be back tonight and I'll tell you when I can

bring the money.’ The sculptor may well have considered that he would gain more from handing me over to the Germans than from my room and board’ (ibid: 55).

They walked to a nearby park and sat on a bench. ‘My mother had nowhere to go back to and I had nowhere to go. We both began crying’ (ibid: 56) When a Belgian woman sitting opposite them asked Joe’s mother why she was so distressed Gita turned over the lapel of her coat to reveal the Star of David. Joe remembered this stranger suggesting that he and his mother seek refuge at a nearby boys’ Catholic School where they were led to the headmaster’s office. When they were introduced to a Father Clement,<sup>5</sup> Gita again revealed her Star of David and asked the priest to save her son. When he refused, saying that it would jeopardise the other children in his care, Gita replied: ‘This is a house of God and I am not leaving’ (ibid: 56).

Joe had only his fragmentary childhood memories of Father Clement as a lone rescuer but research conducted by Belgian historian Hanne Hellemans revealed that he was not acting independently and had saved three other Jewish children (Hellemans 2012).

Secondary sources also gave details of the Comité de Defense des Juifs (CDJ) resistance network to which Father Clement and the Soeurs de Ste. Chretinne belonged; formed in 1942 of ordinary Belgians they worked to save the lives of Jewish children by placing them in private homes, institutions, and convents (Vroeman 2008; Marks 1997). Father Clement’s connection to the CJD explains how Joe was provided with identity papers, a ration card and a guardian who accompanied him to Chimay.

A second example where fossilised memory was explored in relation to other historical actors as saviors involved the sisters of Ste Chretienne who performed the physical and psychic work of mother figures; caring for Joe’s physical needs while operating as a

bulwark against the force of mass violence that had brought him to their community. Their actions were rooted in their humanitarian and Christian beliefs; although the Jewish children were compelled to respect the Catholic rituals, the sisters made no attempts to convert Joe. He recalls attending daily mass where he knelt during prayers, genuflected at the altar and even acted as a choirboy. Unaware that other Jewish children were also hidden in the convent, Joe understood his participation in these rituals as necessary to protect his identity (Szlezinger and Wheelwright 2016: 70). Paul Pittermann, an older Jewish child hidden at Ste Chretienne remembered these practices in greater detail and reflected upon their meaning more fully. Pittermann, at first, actively resisted participating in Catholic rituals but was soon warned to comply. ‘I was approached by another boy ... who was two or three years older who whispered a little message from the Mother Superior in my ear: “either you do the same as everyone else, or you return to Brussels”’ (ibid: 70-71). Although Pittermann later recognised the need for such stringency, at the time he felt conflicted about his participation in these forbidden practices (Raas 2013). (While there is no evidence the Ste Chretienne nuns evangelised to their Jewish charges (baptism, for example, would have required them to bring them up as Catholics) other Belgian orders took a different view (Hellemans 2004: 386).)

Moreover, Ste Chretienne’s links with the CJD and the FI were extensive and during police inspections they were concerned with more than the protection of their Jewish boarders. Testimony from an American War Crimes trial in 1946, the memoirs of Father Jean Cassart, headmaster of the College Saint Joseph, (Ste Chretienne’s brother school in Chimay), and the convent records<sup>6</sup>, reveal both the importance of these networks in the area and, specifically, the sisters’ involvement (Martens 1999: 196). The Mother Superior Marie Mechtilde and her senior nuns, ran a supply depot, an ammunitions

dump and a makeshift hospital for the local Maquis, along with an illegal press that produced *La Voix de la Resistance* and *Solidarité*, the only local source of uncensored news during the war. Ensuring that these activities remained confidential, (they were carried out in the convent basement) ran alongside the need to ensure the Jewish children's safety. Inclusion of references to the nuns' links with the Maquis in *Shattered dreams* moved the memoir beyond Joe's individual experience to the wider issues underlying the Soeurs' willingness to accommodate the Jewish children. This inclusion acknowledged scholarly concerns that memoirs based on traumatic events tend to individualise and over-personalise issues that 'ought properly to be regarded (at least in part) as structural and political' (Radstone 33). The recognition of the sisters' political stance during the war, also challenges their role as purely maternal figures. In fact, they broke away from their contemplative, spiritual life, taking enormous risks to resist the occupying forces. Evidence of these wider activities, therefore, also provides a newly gendered reading of women's wartime activities where female domestic roles are transformed under extreme conditions.

### **Collective memory**

Until the 1990s, Joe only rarely spoke with his mother about their traumatic wartime experiences. However, from the age of 10, Joe felt that he and his mother had swapped roles; he helped Gita in the shop, he attended gatherings of returnees from the concentration camps with the hopes of finding his father and was hyper-vigilant of his mother's emotional state. As he describes the time after their reunion in 1945: 'For months I knew that I had to be very quiet and obedient, watching what I said and did because otherwise she would cry hysterically' (Slezinger and Wheelwright op cit: 83). Although Joe observed that the Jewish people who returned to his Brussels' *quartier* were 'all lost souls' the child survivors were schooled to believe that they had no grounds for complaint (Brachfeld 1998: 33; Wolf 2007). Adult children confronted the previous generations' attitude that

‘after liberation, what the hidden children had endured was not deemed worthy of attention’ (Vromen, op cit: 6). In the hierarchy of victimisation, the children occupied a bottom rung. As Belgian historian Jose Govotich, himself a hidden child, has commented: ‘For these children, the task of remembering, therefore, came together with the reconstruction of a sense of personality, and in this process the historian often played the role of therapist’ (Govotich 2010). Joe’s attendance at a Hidden Children Foundation conference, illustrates Govotich’s point:

It was the first time I really remember what had happened to me. ... Two speeches will always remain in my mind. One was from a Jewish lady from Holland whose parents were hidden. She said the children whose parents came back from the camps took over the role of parents to their own parents. I couldn’t believe what she was saying, that’s exactly what happened to me. From the day I came back from the convent until the day [my mother] died, I was like a father to [my mother]. I looked after her (Szelezinger interview 1996).

Like other Jewish child survivors, his parents’ trauma had shaped his post-war life when there was no definitive proof of his father’s death, no body to bury, no grave site and, until the 1990s, no public means to express his grief. Through hearing of other testimonies, he was finally able to hear and see his own experience reflected back to him.

This newly acknowledged identity of the ‘Hidden Children’ resulted in an outpouring of memoirs in the 2000s when Jews whose childhoods had been distorted by the loss of family, of their homes, their culture and even language, were able to articulate and share their experience. The US Holocaust Memorial Museum site now lists 23 memoirs and collective testimonies under this subject heading, the earliest dating from 1982 while many more have been privately published.<sup>7</sup> These narratives, like the international conferences, also performed a collective memorialising function, enabling Jewish adults to thank the people who had saved them from the camps (a

sentiment found in other first-generation Holocaust survivor memoirs according to Freadman (2004: 28)) and even to reunite relatives and friends (Anti-Defamation League 2016). Belgian sociologist Suzanne Vromen, author of a major study of the hidden children and their Catholic rescuers suggests that this shared experience provided a site for a new rhetoric of survivorship and agency (Vromen 2008: 121). Out of this collective experience came a politics which resulted in many members of the Catholic laity and other heroic individuals' being remembered as Righteous Gentiles. (The Soeurs de Ste. Chretienne were given this honour in 2015).

My insistence on the inclusion of multiple perspectives in Joe's narrative, extended its purpose beyond that of recording, as much as memory can realistically offer, his witnessing of events. *Shattered dreams*, therefore, memorialised the experiences of other Jewish children who had, through giving written or recorded expression to their trauma, shaped their identity afresh. By including the experiences of Joe's contemporaries<sup>8</sup> the particularities of Belgian history also emerged such as post-war anti-Semitism, the children's gratitude towards the Catholic clergy who had saved them and the extraordinary resilience of Jewish families in rebuilding their lives. This memoir, seen as part of a 'narrative cluster' about hidden children, fulfills the other purposes of narrative, as articulated by Clair: 'to offer resistance, to heal, to emancipate and to grant future possibilities' (Clair 2014: 11). No story stands alone and even as humble a project as a family history reaches deep into roots that extend infinitely across generations and cultures.

### **Memory consumption and areas for further research**

Narratives written by historians, argues Griffiths, must operate within a duality, explaining our epistemology while acknowledging that 'there are things we don't and can't know. Silence, uncertainty and inconclusiveness become central to the narrative' (Griffiths 2015: 17). This argument for the recognition of history's uncertainty as written text echoes Radstone's recognition about the constructedness of memory; 'even personal

memory flashes, in all their apparent immediacy and spontaneity, are constructions mediated by means of complex physical and mental processes' (Radstone 2005: 135). Although I have attempted to demonstrate instances where the contextualisation of individual memory, in relation to a collective or shared memory can operate to suggest its constructedness, this addresses only half of the question. The other concerns the need for a deeper understanding of, and better research into 'memory consumption'; who writes memoirs, from what perspective and how their intended readers respond to them, have attracted little attention, especially in the burgeoning field of e-publishing. We need to know how the Hidden Child memoirs are received and whether the 'terrible stories' that must be listened to overwhelm the reader's ability to understand the structure of events that produced the Holocaust.

Moreover, fundamental to this process is a need to explore how the inner world of memory operates in relation to the outer world of historical forces; how is experience lived and remembered and how does remembering give shape to the broader contours of influential narratives of events (Radstone 2005: 139) These are all vital and urgent questions that deserve a wider discussion that would extend beyond academia to bridge the gap with the 'memory makers' of self-published autobiographical texts, a concern not only for the trauma of the Hidden Children but writers and readers of all historical narratives.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Sue Vice for an exploration of how translations of DeFonseca's memoir from French into English are consistent with other false Holocaust testimonies which emphasise their materiality and whose distortions are 'the work of many hands'. Vice, S. (2014) Translating the self: False holocaust testimony, *Translation and Literature*, Vol. 23, No. 2 pp 197-209

<sup>2</sup> 'Memoir and biography' are all featured as categories for e-digital books and online platforms such as Kindle Direct Publishing, iBook authors, Kobo Writing Life and Lulu. As an example, Lulu offers 216 entries under the subject heading 'Holocaust', including memoirs by Dorothee E. Kahn,



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*Am I a Holocaust survivor?*, Edward Anders, *Amidst Latvians during the Holocaust*, Victoria Benson, *To no man's glory: A child's Holocaust memoir*, George Topas, *The iron furnace: Holocaust survivor stories* and Victor Breitburg and Joseph G. Krygier, *A rage to live*, available online at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com), accessed on 4 February 2016

<sup>3</sup> According to the Anti-Defamation League website, the Hidden Child organisation joined the Braun Holocaust Institute of the ALD after its conference in 1991. Available online at [archive.adl.org/hidden/history.html](http://archive.adl.org/hidden/history.html), accessed on 3 March 2016. See also Greenfeld, H. (1993) *The hidden children*, Ticknor and Fields, Boston, and Marks, J. (1993) *The hidden children*, Ballantine Books, New York

<sup>4</sup> Since the project was undertaken privately and solely for the purpose of creating a private memoir initially, the university ethics committee was not consulted

<sup>5</sup> Although Joe met Father Clement several times and he is identified in Hanne Hellmann's history, no further identifying details have emerged

<sup>6</sup> As evidence of their involvement with the CJD, the FI and the Red Cross: the Soeurs de Sainte-Chretienne were awarded an order of merit by the Milices Patriotiques of Schaerbeek on 7 June 1964 and on 12 October 1980 Soeur Marie-Adrienne was given a medal by the Le Comite d'Homage des Juifs de Belgique 1940-1945 for her assistance in saving Jewish children and adults

<sup>7</sup> See [www.ushmm.org/research](http://www.ushmm.org/research), accessed on 24 May 2015

<sup>8</sup> A few examples of the range of memoirs consulted include: Liebman M. (2005), *Born Jewish: A childhood in occupied Europe*, Verso: London and self-published sources such as Rosenberg, R. (2008) *And somehow we survived*, Bloomington Indiana, AuthorHouse, and Muchman, B. (1997) *Never to be forgotten: A young girl's Holocaust memoir*, Hoboken NJ, KTVA Publishing

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### **Note on the contributor**

Julie Wheelwright is a senior lecturer in journalism at City University London. She is the author of three books, *Amazons and military maids: Women who crossed dressed in pursuit of life liberty and happiness*, *The fatal lover: Mata Hari and the myth of women in espionage* and most recently, *Esther: The remarkable true story of Esther Wheelwright*. A former journalist and broadcaster, her research interests include the transmission of history in popular media, gendered readings of women at war and memoir as a historical source text.