

Our first 'meet the authors' event

We were extremely fortunate to be able to welcome to Dundee two writers and journalists, Yehuda Koren and Eilat Negev, to talk about their work and their latest book "'Giants: the Seven Dwarfs of Auschwitz, The Extraordinary Story of the Lilliput Troupe'.

The first 15 minutes of their talk was dedicated to describing their craftsmanship – painstakingly piecing together fragments of stories from various resources. This was illustrated whilst describing their previous work entitled "the first lady of fleet street" <http://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Lady-Fleet-Street-Biography/dp/1906779198>

The presentation then moved to describing a moving and inspirational story of survival of a troupe of seven dwarf siblings..." whose story starts like a fairy tale, before moving into the darkest moments of their history; the darkest moments of modern history". We were shown a short video clip of an ITV programme, which was due to be screened at the end of the month.



The following text is taken from the press release of the book:

"At a time when the phrase 'survival of the fittest' was paramount, the Ovitz family, seven of whose ten members were dwarfs, less than three feet tall, defied the fate of so many other Holocaust victims. The irony was that, doubly doomed for being Jewish and disabled, it was their dwarfism that ultimately saved their lives. Their dazzling Vaudeville program, the only all-dwarf show at the time, made them famous entertainers in Central Europe in the 1930s and 40s.

Descending from the cattle train into the death camp of Auschwitz, the Ovitz family was separated from other Jewish victims on the orders of one Dr Joseph Mengele. Obsessed with eugenics, Dr. Mengele experimented on the family, aiming to discover the biological and pathological causes of the birth of dwarfs. Like a single-minded scientist, he guarded his human lab-rats, and subsequently, when the Russian army liberated Auschwitz, all members of the family - the youngest, a baby boy just 18 months-old, the oldest, a 58 year-old woman - were alive. It was the only family that entered the death camp and lived to tell the tale.

The family eventually restructured their lives and became successful performers once again, but the indelible mark of their experiences was carried with them until the end. "

At the end of this fascinating account, community members and guests were given an opportunity to ask questions and engaged the speakers in a discussion about the holocaust and the topic of their next book.

We wish to thank all those who attended the event and especially the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities for their support in bringing Yehuda and Eilat to Dundee.