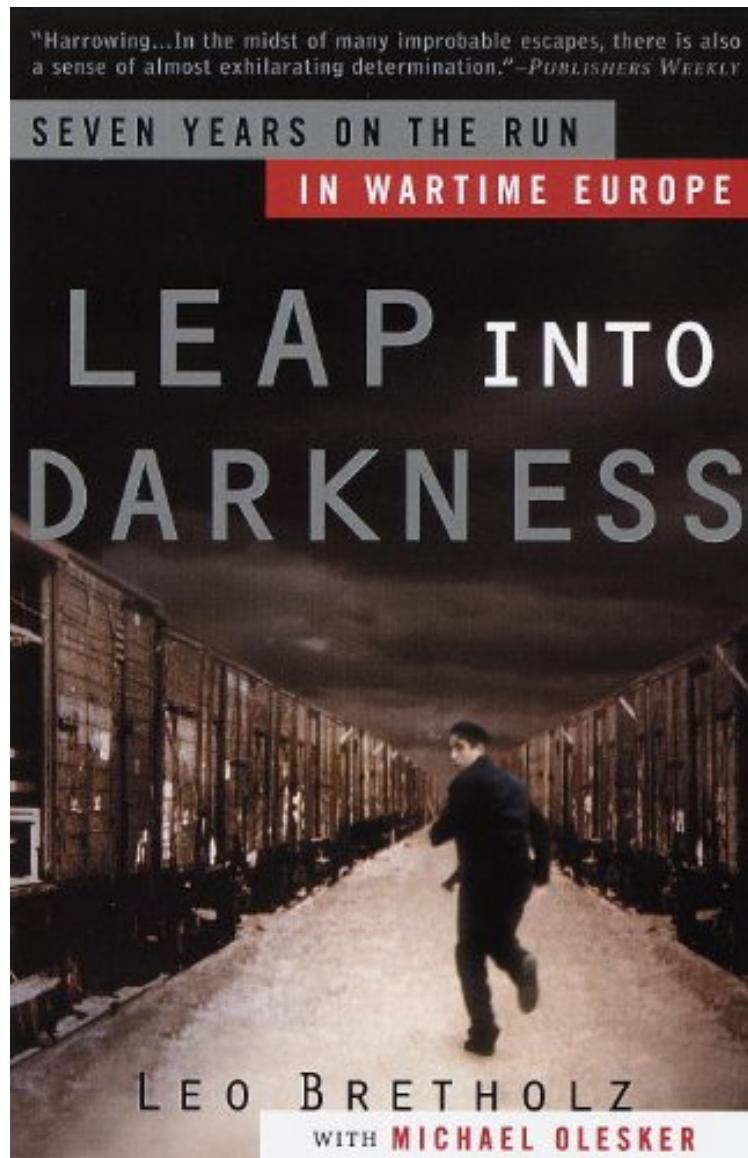


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## Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe

*Leo Bretholz, Michael Olesker*  
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#379014 in Books Michael Olesker 1999-09-14 1999-09-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x .56 x 5.171, .45 #File Name: 0385497059288 pages Leap into Darkness Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe | File size: 67.Mb

**Leo Bretholz, Michael Olesker : Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Leap into Darkness: Seven Years on the Run in Wartime Europe:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Another Harrowing story from The Holocaust~A must read. By

kindred spirit! I have a never ending hunger to learn all I can of the Holocaust to know the truth and pass it on. There are so very many books out there on the subject and some each day as the number of survivors is getting smaller everyday. Not being Jewish myself I still feel lead to do this. I was so taken in by this account. I could feel all of the emotions just like I was there, not like I was looking in from the outside. Leo Bretholz is sent away by his mother in an effort to save his life. Leo goes from one camp to another but always manages to escape. Not once or twice but SEVEN times. It is nothing short of a miracle. The hardest feeling to read about was his guilt in leaving his sisters and mother behind. How do you deal with surviving when you don't know the fate of your loved ones. When the letters stop arriving what then? I think that is what drove him was the hope that in the end they would all be together again. I'll not ruin it and tell you how that turns out. I highly recommend this if you like reading encouraging stories that are true accounts of the holocaust. It is a real page turner and I could not put it down. Thank you Mr Bretholz for sharing this history with us lest we not forget. I thank G-d you survived. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The book has wonderful photos that connect the reader to the people and ...By Daniel S. I have read widely on the Holocaust, and this book is simply riveting, written in a suspenseful and engaging style of English with a high level of vocabulary. I am so thankful to Mr. Bretholz for writing this revealing book which chronicles the hardships of his flight for his life, the palpitating fear, the deaths he witnessed, the innocents he saw die, and the detailed dreadful cruelty of those who were determined to wipe out any and all simply for being "Jewish". It is a sobering insight into discrimination and a lesson not lost that when a nation, a people, a government decide to discriminate against one group of people, for whatever reason, and the horrific consequences that follow, especially when the discrimination is written into law, and it becomes "ok" to discriminate and kill. The book has wonderful photos that connect the reader to the people and places that Leo knew and fled to. The story is detailed as to dates and places and names and events. It is really a historical saga not to be missed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A young man's ordeal By Ozzie The author died recently and when I read his obituary, I was compelled to read his memoir. Amazingly, he escaped several times, including once off a train headed to Aushwitz. He was a young man of only 17 when he escaped Vienna after the Nazi Anschluss. He went to different countries and was captured and escape a number of times. The cruelty of the Nazis (and of conquered people including to his horror, his Viennese neighbors) combined with his ability to survive his escapes is a wrenching story. The author was part of a class action suit against the French railway company which allowed Nazi transports, such as he was on, to take Jews from France to death camps.

A harrowing, action-packed account of the author's series of audacious escapes from the Nazis' Final Solution-- "riveting...a fascinating and moving piece of history" (Library Journal). Young Leo Bretholz survived the Holocaust by escaping from the Nazis (and others) not once, but seven times during his almost seven-year ordeal crisscrossing war-torn Europe. He leaped from trains, outran police, and hid in attics, cellars, anywhere that offered a few more seconds of safety. First he swam the River Sauer at the German-Belgian border. Later he climbed the Alps on feet so battered they froze to his socks--only to be turned back at the Swiss border. He crawled out from under the barbed wire of a French holding camp, and hid in a village in the Pyrenees while gendarmes searched it. And in the dark hours of one November morning, he escaped from a train bound for Auschwitz. *Leap into Darkness* is the sweeping memoir of one Jewish boy's survival, and of the family and the world he left behind.

From Publishers Weekly Bretholz was 17 when, in 1938, the Germans took over his native Austria. His mother, more realistic than other relatives, saw disaster and insisted that he escape, which is what he did for the next seven years, traveling not only through Germany and Luxembourg but to Belgium, France and, briefly, Switzerland, to jails and numerous internment camps. Bretholz relied often on his youthful agility and daring to save himself from much worse; he escaped from a train headed for Auschwitz in 1942. He spent the last years of the war working for the French Resistance, emigrating in 1947 to Baltimore, where he ran a bookstore (frequented by coauthor and Baltimore Sun columnist Olesker). Whether telling of running or hiding, every paragraph in his memoir is harrowing. In one wrenching story, he tells of a young female friend who is menaced by a gendarme while he is forced to stay hidden, "crouched on the floor, helpless, emasculated, sickened." Bretholz is also smartly observant of the Austrians ("First victims,' they will call themselves when the world loses its memory."); opportunistic Swiss; and the French, so many of whom claimed to be Resistance. In the midst of many improbable escapes, there is also a sense of almost exhilarating determination? "I was now a miraculous athlete, a professional escape artist, a young man in perpetual flight. I was indomitable. Also, I was too terrified not to run for my life." For a man who assumed many false identities, the supreme irony came when Bretholz learned his true identity just six years ago? an event that provides a fitting climax to this inspiring and moving book. 40 bw illustrations. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Harrowing...In the midst of many improbable escapes, there is also a sense of almost exhilarating determination." -- Publishers Weekly "Riveting--a fascinating and moving piece of history." --Library Journal "No one can read [this] history without realizing--the remarkable courage of individuals, and the tremendous importance of stories such as this being published for all to read." --Sir Marin Gilbert, author of *The Holocaust* "This loving and lovely memoir should

be read by everyone interested in the daily lives of young Jews caught in the Holocaust. Leo Bretholz's story grabs you, and it won't shake when you've finished the book." --Deborah Dwork, coauthor of *Auschwitz: 1270 to Present*"This memoir is that rarest of all survivors: a man who jumped from a train on his way to a death camp. The reader is with Bretholz at every step, following with mounting tension his struggle to escape." --Raul Hilberg, author of *The Destruction of the European Jews*From the PublisherWith tremendous endorsements and terrific writing, this memoir will take readers across the country by storm. The story reads like a suspense novel as much as a reflection on history's most evil days. A vibrant speaker at 77, Mr. Bretholz and co-author Michael Olesker (columnist, *Baltimore Sun*; news commentator, local CBS-affiliate) plan an active reading and lecture tour.