

VICTOR ZORZA: A LIFE AMID LOSS

Michael Wright



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Front cover photo by Michael Austen
Author photo by Rajkumar

'This masterly account ... has the feel of a thriller about it' – Robert Twycross

Victor Zorza was born into a Jewish family in eastern Poland in 1925. At the age of 15 he fled from the Nazis and sought refuge in Russia, where he was sent to the Gulag and narrowly escaped death in a German bombing raid. When Stalin granted his amnesty to Polish citizens in Soviet exile, Zorza left the country and transferred to England via the Middle East. After the war, he became a self-taught journalist with both *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*, and famously developed a unique analytical style which enabled him to detect early signs of strife in the Communist world. After Zorza's daughter, Jane, died of cancer in an English hospice in the summer of 1977, he committed himself to the promotion of hospice care and his political writing came to an end. A decade later, he returned to Russia to open a hospice in St Petersburg and co-founded the Russian hospice movement. For most of his life, Zorza believed that his family had perished in the Holocaust, yet surprisingly his sister had survived; they were reunited in 1994 after 53 years apart.

Victor Zorza: A life amid loss is the story of one man's determination and remarkable achievement against the odds; it is also a story of pain and spiritual growth. Told through the testimonies of those who knew him best, with contemporaneous photographs and extracts from Zorza's recorded conversations, the book gives an intriguing insight into the contradictory nature of this influential man. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the international development of hospice care, and will appeal to those drawn to the human narrative of twentieth-century conflicts in Europe.

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Human mortality is a rare constant in a changing world. Yet how we die is a matter of growing social, medical and moral complexity and creates one of the major challenges of our times.

Observatory Publications promotes the understanding of death, dying and bereavement; seeks to improve care at the end of life; fosters interdisciplinary perspectives; and encourages the most innovative writers, editors and researchers in the field.

Founded in 2004 by the sociologist Professor David Clark, Observatory Publications is a non-profit venture located within the International Observatory on End of Life Care at Lancaster University, UK.

The Polish refugee who survived Stalin's Russia to become a prize-winning journalist and hospice pioneer