



Reverend Katz Library

New Book Reviews

April 2025

Daniel Huhn, I will come back for you: the undercover Jewish commando who helped defeat the Nazis HOL HUH

A gripping account of hidden identity, military courage, and an against-all-odds reunion.

Four days after Germany's surrender in May 1945, a young British officer took a jeep and headed east into Germany. But this was no ordinary soldier. Manfred Gans was searching for his family. As a Jewish boy in Nazi Germany, Gans had fled to England. As soon as he could, he signed up to fight, serving in the legendary British 'Three Troop', an elite unit made up of German-speaking refugees, and joining in the D-Day Normandy landings. Working undercover, he obtained vital intelligence, helped liberate occupied France and the Netherlands, and saved countless lives on both sides of the front. All the while, he dreamed of being reunited with his family, still trapped behind enemy lines, and with his childhood sweetheart, Anita. As the war ended, chaos reigned in Germany: defeated Wehrmacht soldiers faced columns of American and British soldiers, concentration camp survivors crossed paths with SS guards, and Soviet military roadblocks controlled the route to the east. Manfred overcame all of these, finally reaching the place where his parents had last been seen: Theresienstadt.

Anne Sebba, The women's orchestra of Auschwitz: A story of survival HOL SEB

The first book on the Auschwitz women's orchestra by the bestselling historian of twentieth-century women's lives

What role could music play in a death camp? What was the effect on those women who owed their survival to their participation in a Nazi propaganda project? And how did it feel to be forced to provide solace to the perpetrators of a genocide that claimed the lives of their family and friends? In 1943, German SS officers in charge of Auschwitz-Birkenau ordered that an orchestra should be formed among the female prisoners. Almost fifty women and girls from eleven nations were assembled to play marching music to other inmates, forced labourers who left each morning and returned, exhausted and often broken, at the end of the day to and give weekly concerts for Nazi officers. Individual members were sometimes summoned to give solo performances of an officer's favourite piece of music. It was the only entirely female orchestra in any of the Nazi prison camps and, for almost all the musicians chosen to take part, being in the orchestra was to save their lives. In *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz*, the award-winning historian Anne Sebba tells their astonishing story with sensitivity and care.

Jack Fairweather, The prosecutor: one man's battle to bring Nazi's to justice. HOL FAI

The true story of a Jewish lawyer who returned to Germany after WWII to prosecute war crimes, only to find himself pitted against a nation determined to bury the past. At the end of the Nuremberg trial in 1946, some of the greatest war criminals in history were sentenced to death, but hundreds of thousands of Nazi murderers and collaborators remained at large. The Allies were ready to overlook their pasts as the Cold War began, and the horrors of the Holocaust were in danger of being forgotten.

In *The Prosecutor*, Jack Fairweather brings to life the remarkable story of Fritz Bauer, a gay German Jew who survived the Nazis and made it his mission to force his countrymen to confront their complicity in the genocide. In this deeply researched book, Fairweather draws on unpublished family papers, newly declassified German records, and exclusive interviews to immerse readers in the dark, unfamiliar world of postwar West Germany where those who implemented genocide run the country, the CIA is funding Hitler's former spy-ring in the east, and Nazi-era anti-gay laws are strictly enforced. But once Bauer lands on the trail of Adolf Eichmann, he won't be intimidated. His journey takes him deep into the rotten heart of West Germany, where his fight for justice will set him against his own government and a network of former Nazis and spies determined to silence him. In a time when the history of the Holocaust is taken for granted, *The Prosecutor* reveals the courtroom battles that were fought to establish its legacy and the personal cost of speaking out. The result is a searing portrait of a nation emerging from the ruins of fascism and one man's courage in forcing his people and the world to face the truth.

Jeremy Dronfield, *The boy who followed his father into Auschwitz* HOL DRO

The inspiring true story of a father and son's fight to stay together and to survive the Holocaust. In 1939, Gustav Kleinmann, a Jewish upholsterer in Vienna, was seized by the Nazis. Along with his teenage son, Fritz, he was sent to Buchenwald in Germany. There began an unimaginable ordeal that saw the pair beaten, starved and forced to build the very concentration camp they were held in. When Gustav was set to be transferred to Auschwitz, a certain death sentence, Fritz refused to leave his side. Throughout the horrors they witnessed and the suffering they endured, there was one constant that kept them alive: the love between father and son. Based on Gustav's secret diary and meticulous archive research, this book tells his and Fritz's story for the first time - a story of courage and survival unparalleled in the history of the Holocaust.

Beverly Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell MID MIL

Declared a terrorist menace yet voted into government in a free election, Hamas then used its Gaza power base to launch cross-border attacks that scorched Israel and transformed the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How did a small Palestinian offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood grow to challenge long-established rivals such as the PLO? Who supports Hamas and what is its agenda? How powerful has it become and how strong will it remain? With decades of combined experience researching and reporting from the occupied West Bank and Gaza, Jerusalem, and around the Middle East, Beverly Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell gained unrivalled access to Hamas. Drawing on years of frontline reporting and interviews with members of the group's founding generation and their successors who now lead it, they trace Hamas' path to the shocking attacks of 7 October 2023 and their devastating aftermath. Its critics believe Hamas must be ousted to reach a solution.

Rachel Shabi, *Off white: the truth about Antisemitism* HIS SHA

Why can't we talk about antisemitism?

As claims of antisemitism continue to distort our politics at home and abroad, it has become almost impossible to talk about it constructively, even in private. Instead, we find ourselves in a storm of misinformation, political mudslinging and bad-faith accusations.

There is, however, a way to deliberate more honestly. Looking beyond our polarising headlines and interrogating the reasons racism takes hold, *Off-White* offers urgent analysis of one of the most divisive issues of our time. Taking in the contingency of whiteness, Judeo-Christian mythmaking, pro-

Israel antisemitism, and the Palestinian struggle against colonialism, Rachel Shabi lights a hopeful way forward.

Maya Arad, *The Hebrew teacher: three novellas* F ARA

NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARD FOR HEBREW FICTION IN TRANSLATION

Three Israeli women, their lives altered by immigration to the United States, seek to overcome crises. Ilana is a veteran Hebrew instructor at a Midwestern college who has built her life around her career. When a young Hebrew literature professor joins the faculty, she finds his post-Zionist politics pose a threat to her life's work. Miriam, whose son left Israel to make his fortune in Silicon Valley, pays an unwanted visit to meet her new grandson and discovers cracks in the family's perfect façade. Efrat, another Israeli in California, is determined to help her daughter navigate the challenges of middle school and crosses forbidden lines when she follows her into the minefield of social media. In these three stirring novellas, comedies of manners with an ambitious blend of irony and sensitivity—celebrated Israeli author Maya Arad probes the demise of idealism and the generation gap that her heroines must confront.