



## Reverend Katz Library

### New Book Reviews

March 2024

During the extremely hot weather, hopefully you have a pleasant cool spot at home where you may relax and enjoy some books from the Reverend Katz library. Come in and make your selection from our wonderful varied collection of Jewish themed books.

#### **Rachel Cockerel, *Melting pot: Family, Memory and the Search for a Promised Land* HIS COC**

This is an extraordinarily original way of writing memoir, history and truth. An enthralling book and a wonderful new writer.' On June 7th 1907, a ship packed with Russian Jews sets sail not to Jerusalem or New York, as many on board have dreamt, but to Texas. The man who persuades the passengers to go is David Jochelmann, Rachel Cockerell's great-grandfather. It marks the beginning of the Galveston Movement, a forgotten moment in history when 10,000 Jews fled to Texas in the lead-up to WWI.

The charismatic leader of the movement is Jochelmann's closest friend, Israel Zangwill, whose novels have made him famous across Europe and America. As Eastern Europe becomes infected by anti-Semitic violence, Zangwill embarks on a desperate search across the continents for a temporary homeland: from Australia to Canada, Angola to Antarctica. He reluctantly settles on Galveston, Texas. He fears the Jewish people will be absorbed into the great American melting pot, but there is no other hope.

In a highly inventive style, Cockerell uses exclusively source material to capture history as it unfolds, weaving together letters, diaries, memoirs, newspaper articles and interviews into a vivid account of those who were there. *Melting Point* follows Zangwill and the Jochelmann family through two world wars, to London, New York and Jerusalem - as their lives intertwine with some of the most memorable figures of the twentieth century, and each chooses whether to cling to their history or melt into their new surroundings. It is a story that asks what it means to belong, and what can be salvaged from the past.

#### **Michael A Turek, *And life must go on: A Jewish doctor in Poland during the 1939-1945 war* BIO TUR**

True story of a survivor of the massacre of Jews in Tiktin in Poland in WW2.

On the outbreak of war in 1939, Dr Michael Abraham Turek, was living in the town of Tykocin, in Poland – his birthplace, which had also been the hometown of his Jewish ancestors for 400 years.

Michael Turek had inherited the medical practice that had been built up by his father and his grandfather. The practice was a large one, with many hundreds of patients among the Polish people in the town and in the surrounding farm-districts. He was married with a wife and a baby.

How the terrors of war and racial persecution struck at him and his family is the story told with quiet dignity in this book. Everything seemed lost, as he and his brother were obliged to hide in the fields and forests, receiving help from friendly Polish farmers, while many thousands of other Jews were exterminated. After the storm had passed, he migrated to Australia, where he found security and happiness, and a new life.

Told with sincerity and simplicity, without sensational exaggerations, and with a scientist's respect for facts, this is one of the most moving stories of the modern persecution of the Jews that has ever been written.

**Central Conference of American Rabbis (Publisher), Union Hymnal for Jewish worship MUS CEN**

Complete, fully searchable information about Union Hymnal, Songs and Prayers for Jewish Worship  
Published 1897

**Susan Blumberg-Kason, Bernadine's Shanghai Salon: the story of the doyenne of old China.**

**BIO BLU**

Meet the Jewish salon host in 1930s Shanghai who brought together Chinese and expats around the arts as civil war erupted and World War II loomed on the horizon.

Bernadine Szold Fritz arrived in Shanghai in 1929 to marry her fourth husband. Only thirty-three years old, she found herself in a time and place like no other. Political intrigue and scandal lurked on every street corner. Art Deco cinemas showed the latest Hollywood flicks, while dancehall owners and jazz musicians turned Shanghai into Asia's top nightlife destination.

Yet from the night of their wedding, Bernadine's new husband did not live up to his promises. Instead of feeling sorry for herself or leaving Shanghai, Bernadine decided to make a place for herself. Like other Jewish women before her, she started a salon in her home, drawing famous names from the world of politics, the arts, and the intelligentsia. She introduced Emily Hahn, the charismatic opium-smoking writer for *The New Yorker*, to the flamboyant hotelier Sir Victor Sassoon and legendary poet Sinmay Zau. And when Hollywood stars Anna May Wong, Charlie Chaplin, and Claudette Colbert passed through Shanghai, Bernadine organized gatherings to introduce them to their Shanghai contemporaries.

When Bernadine's salon could not accommodate all who wanted to attend, she founded the International Arts Theater to produce avant-garde plays, ballets, lectures, and visual arts exhibits, often pushing audiences beyond their comfort zones. As civil war brewed and World War II soon followed, Bernadine's devotion to the arts and the people of Shanghai brought joy to the city just before it would change forever.

**Frank Wolff, Yiddish revolutionaries in migration: The transitional history of the Jewish Labour Bund HIS WOL**

This ground-breaking history of the General Jewish Labour Bund in migration investigates how the organisation transformed itself from a revolutionary protagonist in early twentieth-century Russia to a socialist institution of secular Jewish life and Yiddishkeit for Jews in North and South America. By following thousands of activists' paths from the shtetls of Eastern Europe to the working-class Yiddish neighbourhoods of New York and Buenos Aires, Frank Wolff traces the networks that connected these revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic, resulting in a richly detailed social history of this seminal transnational movement.

**Eli Amir, Scapegoat (Tarnegol Kaparot) F AMI**

Based on autobiographical experiences, this book tells of a group of immigrant youngsters from Iraq, Romania, Morocco and Poland who came to Israel in the 1950s. Living and studying on a kibbutz, their shocking encounters with this new way of life turn into a conflict between two cultures, East and West. The events described in this absorbing novel portray a time of great change in the values of Israeli society - a change that left a deep impression on Israeli life and produced the anger and protest which resulted in the social and political revolutions of the 1970s and 80s.

**Corie Adjmi, Life and other shortcomings LIT ADJ**

*Life and Other Shortcomings* is a collection of linked short stories that takes the reader from New Orleans to New York City to Madrid, and from 1970 to the present day. The women in these twelve stories make several different choices: some work, others don't; some stay married, some get divorced; others never marry at all. Through each character's intimate journey, specific truths are revealed about what it means to be a woman—in relationship with another person, in a particular

culture and era—and how these conditions ultimately affect her relationship with herself. The stories as a whole depict patriarchy, showing what still might be, but certainly what was, for some women in this country before the #MeToo movement. Both a cautionary tale and a captivating window into women's lives, *Life and Other Shortcomings* is required reading for anyone interested in an honest, incisive, and compelling portrayal of the female experience.