



## Reverend Katz Library

### New Book Reviews

February 2024

As we reopen the Reverend Katz Library in 2024, we are fortunate to have added some varied and interesting books to our collection! We invite you to read the reviews of some of the new books received and to come and make your selection from our wonderful collection. These are some of the interesting new books awaiting you.

**Jeremy Eichler, *Time's echo: The second World War, the holocaust and music of remembrance.*  
MUS EIC**

**A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR: *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, NPR • WINNER OF THREE NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARDS • Finalist for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction • A stirring account of how music bears witness to history and carries forward the memory of the wartime past • *SUNDAY TIMES OF LONDON HISTORY BOOK OF THE YEAR***

In 1785, when the great German poet Friedrich Schiller penned his immortal “Ode to Joy,” he crystallized the deepest hopes and dreams of the European Enlightenment for a new era of peace and freedom, a time when millions would be embraced as equals. Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony then gave wing to Schiller’s words, but barely a century later these same words were claimed by Nazi propagandists and twisted by a barbarism so complete that it ruptured, as one philosopher put it, “the deep layer of solidarity among all who wear a human face.

With a critic’s ear, a scholar’s erudition, and a novelist’s eye for detail, Eichler shows how four towering composers—Richard Strauss, Arnold Schoenberg, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Benjamin Britten—lived through the era of the Second World War and the Holocaust and later transformed their experiences into deeply moving, transcendent works of music, scores that echo lost time. Summoning the supporting testimony of writers, poets, philosophers, musicians, and everyday citizens, Eichler reveals how the essence of an entire epoch has been inscribed in these sounds and stories. Along the way, he visits key locations central to the music’s creation, from the ruins of Coventry Cathedral to the site of the Babi Yar ravine in Kyiv.

As the living memory of the Second World War fades, *Time’s Echo* proposes new ways of listening to history, and learning to hear between its notes the resonances of what another era has written, heard, dreamed, hoped, and mourned. A lyrical narrative full of insight and compassion, this book deepens how we think about the legacies of war, the presence of the past, and the renewed promise of art for our lives today.

**Howard Jacobson, *What will survive of us.* F JAC**

Lily falls in love with Sam the minute she sets eyes on him. It takes Sam a day or two longer. Curious, because Lily – independent, headstrong, rational – has never quite believed in love; while Sam – confident, passionate, romantic – thought he understood it inside out.

Lily is an award-winning television documentary maker. Sam is an award-winning playwright. Both are in relationships that have quietly expired, but their encounter makes Lily and Sam come alive again. As they begin to work together on the page and on screen, an affair takes hold that they are powerless to resist. Arriving in mid-life, their relationship opens unexpected new worlds and, for Lily, offers her a surprising form of liberation. But what will happen to them when familiarity, illness and

age begin to take their toll? What will survive? Taking us to the edge of desire, love and betrayal across a lifetime, *What Will Survive of Us* reveals what is left of us when we strip away every layer.

**Menachim Creditor, Rabbi, Am Yisrael Chai; Essays poems and prayers LIT CRE**

Am Yisrael Chai is an emergency response anthology of voices from all over the world, grieving and writhing from the horrors perpetrated upon the State of Israel on Simchat Torah 5784, October 7, 2023. Unfathomably terrible images are now forever emblazoned in our eyes, spread through social media where children have seen them as well. The entire Jewish world is in trauma. This was not Poland in 1942. It was 9 days ago in the State of Israel. We bear witness. We must. This is a book of testimony and recollection, response and prayer. That's why the collection bears the title Am Yisrael Chai. This is our life – and we share it, recommitting to life itself, fighting for it, praying for it.

In the immediate aftermath of trauma, one cannot be expected to be thoughtful, mindful, creative. And yet you hold a collection of soulful and eloquent expressions of pain and Global Jewish Solidarity make the choice of title for this collection even more clear, and emphatic: Am Yisrael Chai!

**Jake Wallis Simons, Israelphobia: the newest version of the oldest hatred and what to do about it ISR SIM**

'This is an important and necessary book by a superb and subtle writer. There's no one more qualified to write it than Jake Wallis Simons, both as ground-breaking Middle East security correspondent and Editor of the Jewish Chronicle. It analyses the often-prejudiced coverage and intense scrutiny of Israel that so often veers into obsession and outright demonisation; and traces its origins from Medieval European and Stalinist antisemitism to the present day. It discusses why this nation is judged so differently from others in a supposedly rational and progressive era. A companion in some ways to David Baddiel's *Jews Don't Count*, it is a book that fascinatingly analyses the dark sides of our world today political, national, cultural, and digital - and exposes uncomfortable truths.' SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE

'Award-winning journalist Jake Wallis Simons answers these questions, clarifying the line between criticism and hatred, exploring game-changing facts and exposing dangerous discourse. Urgent, incisive, and deeply necessary, *Israelphobia* reveals why the Middle East's only democracy, which uniquely respects the rights of women and sexual and religious minorities, attracts such disproportionate levels of slander. Rather than defending Israel against all criticism, it argues for reasonable disagreement based on reality instead of bigotry. Through charting the history of *Israelphobia* - starting in Nazi Germany, travelling via the Kremlin to Tehran and along fibre optic cables to billions of screens - and using it to understand contemporary prejudice, this timely book will restore much-needed sanity.' SPECTATOR

**Barbara Winton, One Life: The true story Sir Nicholas Winton BIO WIN**

Sir Nicholas Winton rescued 669 children from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia at the brink of World War II. Most never saw their parents again; nearly all left behind were murdered. This is his story. In 1938, 29-year-old 'Nicky' cancelled a ski holiday and instead spent nine months masterminding a seemingly impossible plan to rescue hundreds of Jewish children and find them homes in the UK. Over 6,000 people are alive today because of his efforts.

What motivated an ordinary man to do something so extraordinary? This book, written by his daughter, Barbara, explores the 106-year life of an incredible humanitarian, a man whose legacy only came to public light decades later. His life story is a clarion call to choose action over apathy in the face of injustice, and a reminder that every one of us can change the world.

**Linda Margolin Royal, *The Star on the grave* F ROY**

*The Star on the Grave* is a powerful and moving novel inspired by the true story of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese Schindler. *The Star on the Grave* is a powerful and moving novel inspired by the true story of Chiune Sugihara, and the thousands of people – including the author – who owe him their lives.

In 1940, as the Nazis sweep toward Lithuania, Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara defies his government and secretly issues visas to fleeing Jewish refugees. After the war, Sugihara is dismissed and disappears into obscurity.

Three decades later, in Australia, Rachel Margol is shocked when her engagement reveals a long-held family secret: she is Jewish. As she grapples with this deception and the dysfunction it has caused, unspoken tragedies from the past begin to come to light. When an opportunity arrives to visit Chiune Sugihara, the man who risked his life to save the Margols during World War II, Rachel becomes determined to meet him. But will a journey to Japan, and the secrets it uncovers, heal the family or fracture them for good.

**Julian Borger, *I seek a kind of person: My father, seven children and adverts that helped them escape the Holocaust* BIO BOR**

In 1938, Jewish families are scrambling to flee Vienna. Desperate, they take out adverts offering their children into the safe keeping of readers of a British newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*. The right words in the right order could mean the difference between life and death.

Eighty-three years later, *Guardian* journalist Julian Borger comes across the advert that saved his father, Robert, from the Nazis. Robert had kept this a secret, like almost everything else about his traumatic Viennese childhood, until he took his own life. Drawn to the shadows of his family's past and starting with nothing but a page of newspaper adverts, Borger traces the remarkable stories of his father, the other advertised children, and their families, each thrown into the maelstrom of a world at war.

From a Viennese radio shop to the Shanghai ghetto, internment camps and family homes across Britain, the deep forests and concentration camps of Nazi Germany, smugglers saving Jewish lives in Holland, an improbable French Resistance cell, and a redemptive story of survival in New York, Borger unearths the astonishing journeys of the children at the hands of fate, their stories of trauma and the kindness of strangers.

**Dara Horn, *People love dead Jews: reports from a haunted present* JUD HOR**

Reflecting on subjects as far-flung as the international veneration of Anne Frank, the blockbuster traveling exhibition called “Auschwitz,” the Jewish history of the Chinese city of Harbin, and the little known “righteous Gentile” Varian Fry, Dara Horn challenges us to confront the reasons why there might be so much fascination with Jewish deaths, as emblematic of the worst of evils the world has to offer, and so little respect for Jewish lives, as they continue to unfold in the present.

Horn draws on her own family's life — trying to explain Shakespeare's Shylock to a curious 10-year-old, her anger when swastikas are drawn on desks at her children's school in New Jersey, the profound and essential perspective offered by traditional religious practice, prayer, and study — to assert the vitality, complexity, and depth of this life against an anti-Semitism that, far from being disarmed by the mantra of “Never forget,” is on the rise.