



## Reverend Katz Library

### New Book Reviews

June 2021

Winter is here and what a wonderful time to spend reading books on topics of Jewish interest. You are welcome to come to the Reverend Katz library to make your selection from our newly received books and treasure trove of books on our bookshelves.

#### **Rabbi Chaim Ingram, Spirals of the soul; Insight into the special days of the Jewish Year. JUD ING**

Rabbi Ingram continues to work extensively with those seeking to return to their Jewish roots. He and Judith serve as aides to the Sydney Beth Din in the teaching and guidance of Gerim (converts to Judaism).

Rabbi Ingram has an honours degree from the University of York and has studied at yeshivot and rabbinical seminaries in the UK and Israel. He has published numerous pamphlets and articles in various journals and is a regular contributor to the Australian Jewish News. He has published four books, Fragments of the Hammer, The Cosmic Diamond and In Heaven's Name Why? on the weekly parasha. Spirals of the Soul explores the Jewish festivals and special days which occur during the Jewish year.

#### **Adi Schwartz and Einat Wilf, The war of return; How Western indulgence of the Palestinian dream has obstructed the path to peace ISR SCH**

Two prominent Israeli liberals argue that for the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians to end with peace, Palestinians must come to terms with the fact that there will be no "right of return." In 1948, seven hundred thousand Palestinians were forced out of their homes by the first Arab-Israeli War. More than seventy years later, most of their houses are long gone, but millions of their descendants are still registered as refugees, with many living in refugee camps. This group—unlike countless others that were displaced in the aftermath of World War II and other conflicts—has remained unsettled, demanding to settle in the state of Israel. Their belief in a "right of return" is one of the largest obstacles to successful diplomacy and lasting peace in the region.

In The War of Return, Adi Schwartz and Einat Wilf—both liberal Israelis supportive of a two-state solution—reveal the origins of the idea of a right of return, and explain how UNRWA - the very agency charged with finding a solution for the refugees - gave in to Palestinian, Arab and international political pressure to create a permanent "refugee" problem. They argue that this Palestinian demand for a "right of return" has no legal or moral basis and make an impassioned plea for the US, the UN, and the EU to recognize this fact, for the good of Israelis and Palestinians alike. A runaway bestseller in Israel, the first English translation of The War of Return is certain to spark lively debate throughout America and abroad.

#### **David Baddiel, Jews don't count; How identity politics failed one particular identity HIS BAD**

Jews Don't Count is a book for people who consider themselves on the right side of history. People fighting the good fight against homophobia, disablism, transphobia and, particularly, racism. People, possibly, like you.

It is the comedian and writer David Baddiel's contention that one type of racism has been left out of this fight. In his unique combination of close reasoning, polemic, personal experience and jokes, Baddiel argues that those who think of themselves as on the right side of history have often ignored the history of anti-Semitism. He outlines why and how, in a time of intensely heightened awareness of minorities, Jews don't count as a real minority: and why they should.

### **Suzanne Rutland, Lone Voice; The wars of Isi Leibler BIO LEI**

Isi Leibler has been a central player in the global Jewish arena for over six decades. The preeminent Australian Jewish leader, he was pivotal in driving the issue of Soviet Jewry onto the international agenda. And he played a crucial role in establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and China and India.

As Australia emerged from Britain's shadow after WWII to punch above its diplomatic weight, so too Leibler propelled the Australian Jewish community into wielding disproportionate influence in global Jewish affairs. A key figure in the World Jewish Congress, he had no hesitation exposing corruption in its leadership or at the Holocaust Claims Conference.

Pugnacious, colourful and principled, he befriended prime ministers, refuseniks, billionaires, Cold War warriors, Marxists and diplomats to further the Jewish agenda, free Soviet Jews, support Israel, and fight antisemitism.

"Gifted with extraordinary energy and a capacity to relentlessly pursue a cause in which he believed, Isi Leibler injected momentum and urgency into any campaign he embraced. These were qualities he brought in a quite breathtaking manner to his heartfelt advocacy of the cause of Soviet Jews ..."

— John Winston Howard, OM, AC, former Prime Minister of Australia

About the author: Emerita Prof. Suzanne Rutland was Professor of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney and the main lecturer in the program of Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Cultures. She has published widely on Australian Jewish history.

### **Heather Morris, The tattooist of Auschwitz F MOR**

Lale Sokolov is well-dressed, a charmer, a ladies' man. He is also a Jew. On the first transport from Slovakia to Auschwitz in 1942, Lale immediately stands out to his fellow prisoners. In the camp, he is looked up to, looked out for, and put to work in the privileged position of *Tätowierer* – the tattooist – to mark his fellow prisoners, forever. One of them is a young woman, Gita, who steals his heart at first glance. His life given new purpose, Lale does his best through the struggle and suffering to use his position for good. This story, full of beauty and hope, is based on years of interviews author Heather Morris conducted with real-life Holocaust survivor and Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooist Ludwig (Lale) Sokolov. It is heart-wrenching, illuminating, and unforgettable.

### **Lisa Emanuel, The covered wife F EMA**

I think I have been here like this – still, but awake; quiet, but wound tight as a spring shoved into a box – since I lay down, not long after dark. But I must have slept, slept then woken, shifted from blessed nothingness to tortured waiting.

Sarah is a smart, young lawyer working endless hours when she falls head over heels for Daniel – handsome, passionate and part of the kind of large, chaotically loving family Sarah longed for as the only child of a single mother.

When Daniel introduces her to a charismatic young couple, Rabbi Menachem Lev and his wife, Chani, despite herself, Sarah is drawn in by their progressive beachside synagogue and the song, feasting and friendship that come with it. By the time she and Daniel move to the Jamison Valley with the other believers, Sarah can't imagine life without the joy, meaning and love they've discovered.

Four years on, youthful fervour has given way to something darker. As the community celebrates the wedding of a beautiful young convert and a much older divorcee, a series of terrifying truths emerges that tear Sarah's world apart, and cause her to question everything – her faith, her marriage and her future.

Intelligent, unusual and gripping, *The Covered Wife* is the debut novel of Sydney author Lisa Emanuel. This captivating story takes us from a seemingly perfect marriage deep into a closed community, and asks 'Where would you draw the line?'

Rachel Givney, *Secrets my father kept* F GIV

Secrets My Father Kept is a captivating novel about love, sacrifice, secrets, and resilience, as the clock inexorably ticks down to a devastating world war. It's February 1939. As the Führer edges towards an invasion of Poland, total war looms in Europe. However in Krakow, seventeen-year-old Marie Karska's primary concern is the unexplained disappearance of her mother fifteen years ago, and her father Dominik's unbreakable silence on the matter. Even his wife's name is a secret he guards closely. Dominik, a well-respected and innovative doctor at the local hospital, has devoted his life to caring for his only daughter. Yet a black fear haunts him - over the questionable act he committed to keep Marie safe. And with German troops now marching to the border, he needs to find her a husband. One who will protect her when he no longer can...But Marie has already met the man she wants to marry: her childhood friend Ben. She's determined that his Jewish faith won't stand in the way of their future together. And nor will her father's refusal to explain the past stop her from unpicking his darkest secret.