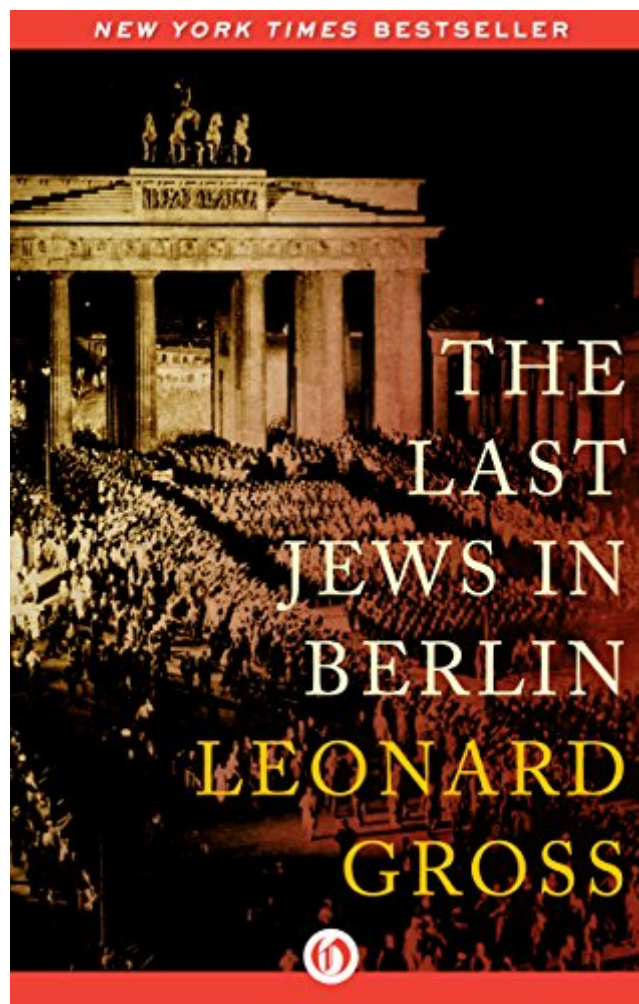


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The Last Jews In Berlin



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller: The incredible but little-known true story of the Jews who went underground in Nazi Berlin at the height of World War II and lived to tell the tale. When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, approximately one hundred sixty thousand Jews called Berlin home. By 1943 less than five thousand remained in the nation's capital, the epicenter of Nazism, and by the end of the war, that number had dwindled to one thousand. All the others had died in air raids, starved to death, committed suicide, or been shipped off to the death camps. In this captivating and harrowing book, Leonard Gross details the real-life stories of a dozen Jewish men and women who spent the final twenty-seven months of World War II underground, hiding in plain sight, defying both the Gestapo and, even worse, Jewish "catchers" ready to report them to the Nazis in order to avoid the gas chambers themselves. A teenage orphan, a black-market jewel trader, a stylish young designer, and a progressive intellectual were among the few who managed to survive. Through their own resourcefulness, bravery, and at times, sheer luck, these Jews managed to evade the tragic fates of so many others. Gross has woven these true stories of perseverance into a heartbreaking, suspenseful, and moving account with the narrative force of a thriller. Compiled from extensive interviews, *The Last Jews in Berlin* reveals these individuals' astounding determination, against all odds, to live each day knowing it could be their last.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book a short time ago, and I started to read it the day I found it in my post box. It is a very captivating book about how 18 Jews survived in the very heart of Nazi Germany during World War. Some managed to keep their families somewhat intact, while others were the only survivor among their entire family. They survived in different ways, but all had at least one person helping them. One of the things I liked the most with this book; was the very fact that it tells the stories of brave and good Germans who risked their lives in order to help fellow citizens. Despite the fact that they had had to live with Hitler's propaganda and terror for more than a decade, they still aimed to do their best. Even though many survivors and rescuers often were lucky, I was amazed about how clever they were and how they managed to stay alive. On the front cover of the book Los Angeles Times is quoted to have written: "[Reads] like an Alfred Hitchcock thriller", and I agree with them. The book was very well written, and it was very hard to put it down. I found myself reading until I went to sleep, and next morning I managed to read another chapter before I went to work. I read the book in no time, and I was only sorry I had finished it. I wanted to keep on reading. The big difference between this book and a Hitchcock thriller is of course that: "The Last Jews in Berlin" is not fiction. The only thing that I missed was photos of the people I read about. Still, the book is so good I find it really deserves five stars

Very worthwhile book. It was fascinating because it dealt with ordinary people in probably the most extraordinary circumstances. These multiple tales of survival explore what it took for persons who could easily be our friends, our neighbors, our family, to heroically survive in the midst of their hometown enemies while undergoing the privations of war. Substantively an excellent book. I would caution you, however, that the tales are presented in a disjointed fashion, and I would recommend taking notes at the beginning on who's who in order to keep up with the players.

Leonard Gross's well-researched and well-documented book about a few of the Jewish 'U-Boats' who survived in hiding in Hitler's 'Juden-Frei' Berlin is truly magnificent. It reads like a thriller but every bit of it is true. I found it informative, well-written and very accessible, unlike similar works, (Such as 'Stella' by Peter Wyden) which, while also well-researched and well-informed, were dry and hard to follow. Less than 1% of the Jews that lived in Berlin before Hitler came into power were there after the fall of Berlin (some having escaped, most having been banished to the death camps),

and the fact that Gross was able to get several of these survivor's stories is just incredible. The characters were truly alive and I acutely felt every joy, every danger, every near capture and had to stop reading several times because it was all too real and terrifying, especially the horrifying concept that some turncoat Jews, their own people, were hunting for them. This is an unbelievably compelling piece of work that deserves to be read by everyone and I cannot recommend it strongly enough.

This is literally one of the best books I have ever read. I got it on a Friday evening from a tiny bookshop in Berlin, where I live, and could not put it down until I finished it the next night. Wonderfully written..factual but reads like a spellbinding story.Gives an entirely new perspective to the reality of Jews in hiding from the Nazis...A reality which is much different from the 'ann frank' experience which we are so well-aquainted with, which is from a child's perspective. This enlightens us to the real day to day plight---the enormous expense, nosy neighbors, how to keep one's self clean so as to not arouse suspicion..having to keep multiple hide-outs simultaneously and constantly be on the move, on the run.. The 'good Germans' who quietly helped them, by turning a blind eye and not asking questions, knowing that the truth and the gravity of the situation in terms of the own personal safety..and the others who did so only for profit.It brought my city to LIFE for me. And I will never look at it the same way again.

Gross is an exemplary writer, letting this story unfold through a spare, unembroidered narration of the harrowing events that affected the lives of a half-dozen different Jews. In this case, reality doesn't need any authorial flourishes to create suspense and terror, and Gross's restraint as a writer highlights his subjects and lets them tell their stories in a very personal way. More than just a war history, this is an examination of the human spirit under siege.

This is one of my favorite books, not only because of the wonderful narrative, compelling characters, and inspiring stories, but because of the variety of circumstances these Jews found themselves in. Some went into hiding, some passed themselves off as Gentiles, some collaborated with the resistance, and all managed to survive. Some had no help and were separated from loved ones, some managed to keep their families somewhat intact. Their struggles, defeats, and victories are inspiring and a testament to the nature of the human spirit.A small note: the stories are not told sequentially, and it may be easier the first time to skip chapters and read each person's tale completely, otherwise it becomes a tad overwhelming to keep track of so many characters.

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