



The Holocaust Averted: An Alternate History of American Jewry, 1938-1967

By Jeffrey S. Gurock

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The increasingly popular genre of “alternative histories” has captivated audiences by asking questions like “what if the South had won the Civil War?” Such speculation can be instructive, heighten our interest in a topic, and shed light on accepted history. In *The Holocaust Averted*, Jeffrey Gurock imagines what might have happened to the Jewish community in the United States if the Holocaust had never occurred and forces readers to contemplate how the road to acceptance and empowerment for today’s American Jews could have been harder than it actually was.

Based on reasonable alternatives grounded in what is known of the time, places, and participants, Gurock presents a concise narrative of his imagined war-time saga and the events that followed Hitler’s military failures. While German Jews did suffer under Nazism, the millions of Jews in Eastern Europe survived and were able to maintain their communities. Since few people were concerned with the safety of European Jews, Zionism never became popular in the United States and social antisemitism kept Jews on the margins of society. By the late 1960s, American Jewish communities were far from vibrant.

This alternate history—where, among many scenarios, Hitler is assassinated, Japan does not bomb Pearl Harbor, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt is succeeded after two terms by Robert A. Taft—does cause us to review and better appreciate history. As Gurock tells his tale, he concludes every chapter with a short section that describes what actually happened and, thus, further educates the reader.

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