

native people with whom she deigns to interact. As if that weren't enough to make Bahr an unsympathetic personality, she treats her fellow backpackers terribly, acting disingenuously to even the kindest, most thoughtful people she meets.

Bahr's self-indulgences aside, and they are very hard to put aside, her work does deserve some praise. Her writing is assured, light, and occasionally funny. In addition, Bahr is courageously honest in her depiction of her stated goal throughout her travels: to have sex. **JMB**



**FIORELLO'S SISTER: GEMMA LAGUARDIA GLUCK**

*Rochelle G. Sidel, ed.*

Syracuse University Press, 2007. 151 pp. \$16.95  
ISBN: 978-0-8156-0861-5

**G**emma LaGuardia Gluck was the sister of Fiorello LaGuardia, renowned mayor of New York City from 1934–1945.

Although this is considered a personal memoir, it incorporates both U.S. and European history. The LaGuardia family was an army family, the father a U.S. Army band leader. The mother was Jewish, a member of a prestigious Italian Jewish family. Gemma stayed in Europe when Fiorello left his position in Hungary to pursue his education and career in the United States. Brother and sister did not see each other again for twenty years. Gemma, who taught English, married one of her students, a Hungarian Jew named Herman Gluck. They moved to Budapest and had two daughters. Yolanda stayed in Budapest with Gemma; Irene left for the U.S. before World War II.

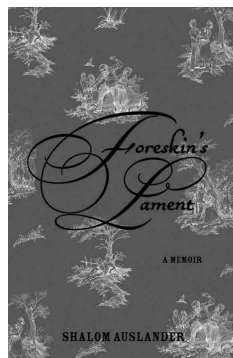
Gemma, Yolanda, and Yolanda's infant

son, Richard, were imprisoned in Ravensbruck, under unusual circumstances, from spring 1944 to the end of April 1945. Gemma's relationship to Fiorello made her invaluable to the Nazis as a "political hostage." She was spared slave labor because of her special status. Already over sixty years old, this probably saved her life.

We learn much about the LaGuardia family, Gemma's, Yolanda's, and Richard's experiences, their liberation as displaced persons and their special treatment in the camps. It is noteworthy that Mayor LaGuardia refused to get them preferential treatment. They had to wait in post-war Berlin, as displaced persons, for permission to enter the U.S.

The original, *My Story*, now out of print, is incorporated into this version, expertly expanded and updated with newly discovered material, by Rochelle G. Sidel, an authority on Ravensbruck concentration camp, and author of *The Jewish Women of Ravensbruck Concentration Camp*, published in 2004.

This is a unique Holocaust experience. It must be read to understand another aspect of the darkest period in human history. Appendix, references. **AS**



**FORESKIN'S LAMENT**

*Shalom Auslander*

Riverhead, 2007. 304 pp. \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-1-59448-955-6

**"**Is life more fun with a foreskin?" It is questions like this, which have plagued Jewish men and women for centuries, that Shalom Auslander seeks to answer in his hilarious new memoir, *Foreskin's Lament*. In Auslander's second published work, the author takes a brutally

honest look at his childhood in an ultra Orthodox home in New York and the effect that upbringing had on his adult life. In the work, Auslander struggles with Judaism and many of the ways he was raised, grappling with Judaism's rules and traditions and the rationale for following them. Auslander uses many of the stories in the book as a form of therapy to work through and make sense of his dysfunctional family. It is to be noted that in his adult life, Auslander has cut off ties with his family and left the world of ultra-Orthodox Judaism. Because of this, some of the language might seem harsh or biting in reference to Jewish traditions that more traditional Jewish readers may still consider important and meaningful. However, many readers will be able to relate to Auslander's voice, having at one point or another also struggled with religion and its guidelines. Overall the book is an extremely funny work, with scenes that depict everything from Auslander's struggle with masturbation and God's retribution to his precocious desire to understand what exactly goes on at the mall on the Sabbath when he is told he must stay at home. While Auslander seems unnecessarily bitter in certain anecdotes, *Foreskin's Lament* is a laugh-out-loud look at one person's struggle to come to terms with his past from a promising new young Jewish voice in the literary world. **ABT**

**A GUEST IN MY OWN COUNTRY: A HUNGARIAN LIFE**

*George Konrad; Jim Tucker, trans.; Michael Henry Heim, ed.*

Other Press, 2007. 303 pp. \$15.95  
ISBN: 978-1-59051-139-8

**A**significant number of Hungarian Jews have had a major impact on post-war scientific, economic, and intellectual life. One need only think of George Soros, Andy Grove, and George Klein to get a sense of the pre-war culture that produced such stellar intellects. The majority of these child and adolescent Holocaust survivors fled Hungary after the war.

The author of this memoir, the noted nov-