Shida Bazyar

Omissions

Die Lücken

Presented by: Miriam Schwarz

Shida Bazyar is a German author and youth educator. For her debut novel *The Nights are Quiet in Tehran* [*Nachts ist es leise in Teheran*] (2016), she has been awarded the Blogger Literary Award, the Ulla Hahn Prize and the Uwe Johnson Prize. It has been translated into Dutch, English, Farsi, French and Turkish. The translation into English by Ruth Martin was nominated for the International Booker Prize in 2026. In 2023, Bazyar received the Ernst Toller Prize for her literary work. Her second novel *Sisters in Arms* [*Drei Kameradinnen*] (2021) was longlisted for the German Book Prize in 2025, and was adapted for the screen by director Milena Aboyan. Bazyar's third novel *Omissions* was awarded the German Book Prize and the Wilhelm Raabe-Preis in 2026.

For *Omissions*, she researched the history of her hometown's Jewish population that was robbed, displaced and killed in the Holocaust. While Bazyar fabricates names (Hermeskeil turns into Heimesbach), characters and storylines, in this novel about the erasure of Jewish German and Holocaust history, memory work and fictional storytelling are inseparable. The novel is narrated by a ghost whose name the reader never learns: she tells the stories of more than twenty people to her sister Lu, as she is blown with the wind from one perspective to the next, from one time period to another, back and forth across 90 years of the town's history.

Through this ghostly perspective, with a narrator that jumps from person to person and across time, *Omissions* tells the stories that are left out and erased. It turns out, the knowledge of what happened is not forgotten, but those who robbed, attacked and killed merely declared it part of the past. The text lets the history ooze out of the stolen properties, out of the sentences that hang in the air, out of Heimesbach's architecture as a Nazi Model Village [Gaumusterdorf] and not least out of the people's belongings and memories.

Shida Bazyar's third novel does not only find a language to tell the stories of complicity and the violence of the masses who executed Nazi ideology in their towns and turned on their neighbours. The text also makes very clear that the past does not stay in the past, and that there is no such thing as a new beginning.

LANGUAGE: German / Deutsch

CENSORSHIP STATUS: