



The 75th National Jewish Book Awards

PROGRAM BOOK

March 25, 2026

Elisa Spungen Bildner
President, Jewish Book Council

Joy Grenadier Greenberg
Co-President, Jewish Book Council, NJBA Celebration Co-Chair

Naomi Firestone-Teeter
CEO, Jewish Book Council

Jonah Platt
Ceremony Host

**Samuel G. Freedman in conversation with
Elisa Spungen Bildner**
Winner of the Mentorship Award

Dani James & Zeeva Bukai
Winners of the Holocaust Memoir and Debut Fiction Awards

Linda Sterling
NJBA Celebration Co-Chair

**Julia Ioffe, Pamela Nadell, Sarah Hurwitz in
conversation with Jonah Platt**
Winners of the Autobiography and Memoir, American Jewish Studies,
and Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice Awards

Presentation of the 75th National Jewish Book Awards
See pages 6-29 for detailed information on each winning title

Eli Sharabi
Winner of the Jewish Book of the Year Award
Presented by David Everett

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Photo by Zusha Goldin

Ceremony Host

Jonah Platt

JONAH PLATT is one of America’s most trusted voices on modern Jewish identity, culture, and current events. He is host of the world’s #1 Jewish culture podcast, *Being Jewish with Jonah Platt*, known for its deeply honest and personal conversations with notable Jewish figures and allies, including Jason Alexander, Van Jones, Tiffany Haddish, Bernard-Henri Lèvy, Cindy Crawford, and Sheryl Sandberg.

A celebrated entertainer, Jonah’s credits span screen, stage, and studio—from acting in the Oscar-nominated *Being the Ricardos* and Broadway’s *Wicked*, to writing for multiple TV comedies, voicing beloved animated characters, and producing his first feature film, *The Mensch*, shooting this fall. He is a sought-after singer and musician, an award-winning vocal arranger, and director of improv and theater. He is co-writing the musical adaptation of Lois Lowry’s bestselling novel *The Giver*.

A deeply engaged advocate for Jewish life and values, Jonah Platt is a trusted source of clarity, comfort, and courageous conversation—both at home and around the world.

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This list is current up to March, 16, 2026

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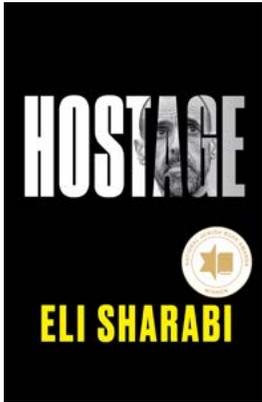
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WINNERS





Jewish Book of the Year
Everett Family Foundation Award

Hostage

ELI SHARABI; EYLON LEVY, TRANS.

Harper Influence, an imprint of HarperCollins

On October 7, 2023, Eli Sharabi was dragged barefoot from his home in Kibbutz Be’eri by Hamas terrorists who had also surrounded his wife and daughters. He was then plunged deep into the tunnels beneath Gaza where he was tormented, starved, and deprived of humanity for 491 days. But from the moment he was kidnapped, he transformed himself so that he could survive and return to his family. “There is no more regular Eli. From now on, I am Eli the survivor.”

The relationships Sharabi developed with his fellow hostages sustained all of them. Amidst the squalor and beatings, they began a ritual of searching for one good thing each day, even if the only good thing was the absence of a negative thing. Facing unbearable challenges, they found hope through gratitude.

Hostage is the first memoir released by an Israeli captive of October 7th, and it has been compared to Eli Wiesel’s *Night*. Sharabi’s memoir is an urgent visceral account in the present tense. His decision to write this book himself, without the voice of another writer, makes it immediate and transfixing. Sharabi has “seen and touched rock bottom” and found his way back to life. He has given us “testimony, not just narrative.” Under two hundred pages, *Hostage* is grim but essential reading.

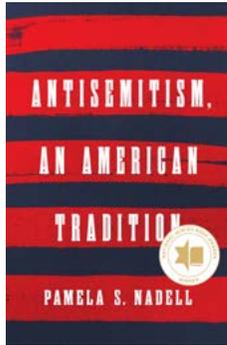


Photo by Gabriela Bhaskar

Mentorship Award
in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel

Samuel G. Freedman

This year, Jewish Book Council will present the Mentorship Award in Honor of Carolyn Starman Hessel to journalist, professor, and author Samuel G. Freedman. His dedication to the publishing industry and long-standing work to uplift Jewish literature have helped countless Jewish books reach millions of readers. “Sam Freedman changed my life as a writer,” said Gal Beckerman, who submitted the nomination on Freedman’s behalf. “He believed in me before I believed in myself, pushed me to take my work seriously, and helped open so many doors. With tough love and deep generosity, he guided me through the daunting process of writing a book as if it were his own. What he did for me, he did for dozens of writers.”

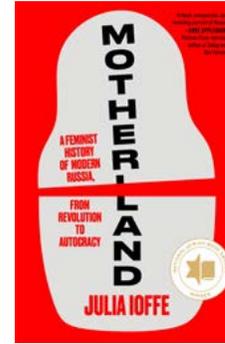


Antisemitism, An American Tradition

PAMELA S. NADELL

W.W. Norton & Company

Pamela S. Nadell's well-written and all-too-timely volume places the current upsurge in American antisemitism into historical perspective, tracing this bleak "American tradition" from 1654 to the present. Her book highlights the long-term impact of antisemitism upon its victims—women and men alike—recounts major antisemitic incidents across time, and contextualizes key episodes appropriately. She engages readers with powerful stories and well-documented facts. "Anyone who has been scared, perplexed, or surprised by the current expressions of antisemitism in America should read this book," Ambassador Deborah E. Lipstadt has written. "Anyone who has not should read it as well."



Autobiography and Memoir: The Krauss Family Award In
Memory of Simon & Shulamith (Sofi) Goldberg

Motherland: A Feminist History of Modern Russia, from Revolution to Autocracy

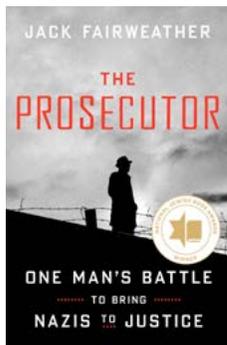
JULIA IOFFE

HarperCollins Publishers

Julia Ioffe's *Motherland: A Feminist History of Modern Russia, from Revolution to Autocracy* is a tour de force of female, Jewish, and national histories. To be Russian, and to be a woman, is to live with an almost unbearable history of pain. Yet, as Ioffe's layered reporting demonstrates, the sociopolitical obstacles women faced were not insurmountable (despite the best efforts of Russian men).

Ioffe has set herself the seemingly impossible task of weaving the stories of modern Russian women—the famous, infamous, and unknown—with her own family narrative of persecution, survival, and immigration. Guiding readers through the long twentieth century and beyond, Ioffe introduces us to Marxist revolutionaries and the punk band Pussy Riot; Nina Khrushcheva, Raisa Gorbacheva, and Yulia Navalnaya; and the remarkable Jewish matriarchs in Ioffe's family. We meet liberated socialist women who work, and single women in Putin's Russia who attend seminars on landing wealthy husbands. In the new-yet-old Russian empire, patriarchy, propaganda, and pregnancy are all intertwined.

Near the beginning of this stunning memoir, Ioffe recalls a moment during her teenage years when her mother read aloud "Requiem," Anna Akhmatova's poem about Stalin's purges. Ioffe, who left Russia at seven years old, did not possess sophisticated Russian skills, but she grasped enough of the poem to be certain of one thing: "That afternoon I set sail on the dark and churning seas of Soviet history—my history." It is to our great benefit that Ioffe has continued to claim Soviet history as hers, to dream about Moscow, and to wield the immense power of her intellect to help illuminate the vast, beautiful, tragic country of her birth.



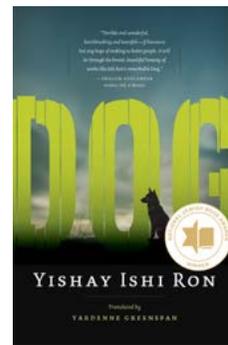
Biography: In Memory of Sara Berenson Stone

The Prosecutor: One Man's Battle to Bring Nazis to Justice

JACK FAIRWEATHER

Crown

The Prosecutor: One Man's Battle to Bring Nazis to Justice by Jack Fairweather is the untold story of Fritz Bauer, a gay, Jewish lawyer who returned to postwar Germany to demand accountability when that nation was desperate to forget its dark past. This biography reads like a thriller, detailing Bauer's tenacious fight against a government and legal system still riddled with former Nazis and spies determined to silence him. The book highlights how Bauer, against overwhelming odds, helped track down Adolf Eichmann and initiated the landmark Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, which finally forced the German people to confront their collective complicity in the Holocaust. This biography is more than a piece of history; its vital moral lessons on courage, truth, and the enduring importance of justice resonate powerfully in a world still grappling with indifference, Holocaust denial, and rising antisemitism.



Book Club Award: The Miller Family Award in Memory of Helen Dunn Weinstein and June Keit Miller

Dog

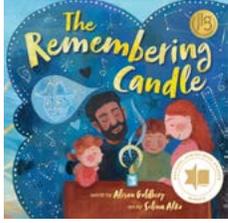
YISHAY ISHI RON;
YARDENNE GREENSPAN, TRANS.

Soncata Press

Yishay Ishi Ron's *Dog* is a novel that demands attention. With raw honesty and quiet force, Ron draws the reader into the inner life of a combat soldier returning from the 2014 operation in Gaza, carrying wounds that are invisible, corrosive, and devastatingly persistent. At its core, *Dog* is a novel about post-traumatic stress, addiction, and isolation—and about an unexpected, fragile path back toward humanity through the bond between a broken man and a stray dog.

This book arrives at a moment when post-traumatic stress disorder is a critical and growing issue within Israeli society. The psychological injuries borne by soldiers returning from the recent conflict in Gaza represent one of the most profound—and least acknowledged—long-term costs of war. Ron does not romanticize trauma or redemption; instead, he paints with painful clarity what it means to live with a war that does not end when the fighting stops. In doing so, he deepens our understanding of the mental health crisis facing many veterans and, by extension, the society to which they return. This is a book that deeply matters—one that will hopefully raise consciousness about a tragic and often overlooked consequence of war.

Ron writes with the memory of lived experience, and that authenticity gives the novel its emotional gravity. *Dog* is unflinching, compassionate, and acutely humane. It stayed with you long after you finish, not only as a powerful read, but as a necessary act of witness. We strongly encourage others to read it—not just for its literary merit, but also for what it helps you see, feel, and understand.



Children's Picture Book: Tracy and Larry
Brown Family Award

The Remembering Candle

ALISON GOLDBERG; SELINA ALKO, ILLUS.

Barefoot Books

The Remembering Candle, written by Alison Goldberg and illustrated by Selina Alko, is a picture book that invites readers into a child's exploration of the meaning of the yahrzeit candle, traditionally lit to mark the anniversary of a loved one's death. The story begins as the child's mother introduces a special candle that will burn for twenty-four hours in memory of his grandfather. Curious about why this candle must burn for an entire day, the child embarks on a journey of remembrance and reflection.

As the candle slowly melts, the child recalls memories of his grandfather—sharing photographs with a younger sibling, playing a favorite game, and pointing out a constellation his grandfather once taught him to find. Throughout the day, he tracks the candle's progress.

The following day, with the candle halfway finished, the child creates a collage to honor his grandfather. His aunt visits and shares stories, and the child and his mother play piano together, just as his grandfather once did. After dinner, in the darkness, the candle's remaining light casts shadows on the wall, representing all that the child has remembered and learned.

As the candle is finally extinguished, the child understands its purpose: "So that we have time for our memories to reach us, and we can connect them together, and keep them shining bright." *The Remembering Candle*, with Selina Alko's beautiful illustrations, offers an age-appropriate way to explore a subject that can often be sad and confusing for a child.



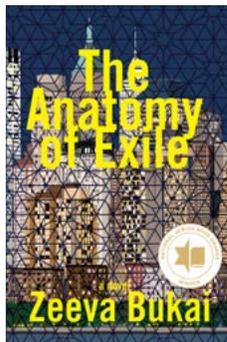
Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice:
Myra H. Kraft Memorial Award

As a Jew: Reclaiming Our Story From Those Who Blame, Shame, and Try to Erase Us

SARAH HURWITZ

HarperCollins Publishers

Six years after her stunning debut, Sarah Hurwitz has returned with *As a Jew: Reclaiming Our Story from Those Who Blame, Shame, and Try to Erase Us*, a book that meets this charged moment with beautiful integration of her own learning alongside reflections about her identity and upbringing. This book looks at some of the thorniest questions about Israel and antisemitism and greets them not polemically, but with an adept hand that puts deep historical research into conversation with her own personal reflections as a speechwriter, hospital chaplain, and the other roles she has taken on throughout her life. Just as with *Here All Along*, the power of *As a Jew* comes from Hurwitz's ability to deftly bring the reader along on her journey, guiding us with humility and openness through the annals of Jewish text and history. Hurwitz makes herself vulnerable as a narrator and puts forward a profound case for why today's Jews need a thick identity informed by tradition, community, and integrity. This book speaks to our current moment and serves as a welcome relief in this unsettled time.



Debut Fiction: Goldberg Prize

The Anatomy of Exile

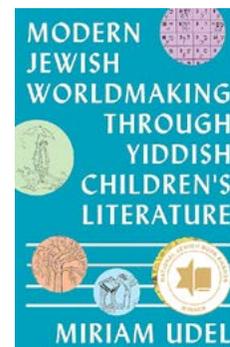
ZEEVA BUKAI

Delphinium Books LTD

Zeeva Bukai's *The Anatomy of Exile* is a brilliant work of art. Bukai's rich, evocative prose portrays a family saga shaped by love, loss, and the kind of exile that never truly leaves you—even when you return. Through the eyes of Tamar Abadi, an Ashkenazi Israeli married to Salim, an Arab Jew, the novel explores what it means to be exiled from one's country, one's family, one's marriage, and even from the idea of return itself.

Tamar is burdened with the secret of her sister-in-law Hadas's forbidden love affair with a Palestinian poet. When Hadas is murdered, Tamar's world fractures, and her grief-stricken family moves to America. As the story unfolds, Tamar struggles to preserve her identity, her marriage, and her family. When her daughter Ruby falls in love with a Palestinian boy, Tamar fears that the same fate that befell Hadas might await Ruby. Cultures collide—Israeli, Palestinian, and American—as Tamar wrestles with Hadas's secret, Ruby's forbidden love, her failing marriage, and the ongoing challenge of maintaining a sense of self in exile.

Bukai is an author to watch, and *The Anatomy of Exile* is a book not to be missed.



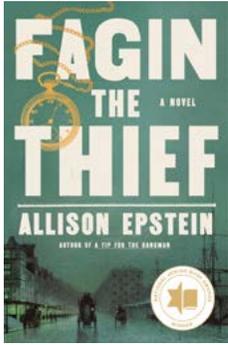
Education and Jewish Identity: In Memory
of Dorothy Kripke

Modern Jewish Worldmaking Through Yiddish Children's Literature

MIRIAM UDEL

Princeton University Press

Miriam Udel's *Modern Jewish Worldmaking Through Yiddish Children's Literature* explores how stories for children became blueprints for modern Jewish life. Drawing on Yiddish tales, poems, and plays from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Udel treats children's literature as a window into the political and social landscape of the Jewish community. Udel demonstrates that children's literature, often overlooked, addresses critical issues facing Jews at the time, including concerns about the rise of Jewish secularism, the opportunities in democracy, the changing social status of the Jewish people, and the collective responsibility of Jews in the modern age. She traces how writers used this literature to imagine a "better world" for Jewish children and, through them, for the Jewish people as a whole. Her literary analysis and framing of the historical context make her argument both rigorous and accessible. For readers interested in Jewish history, Yiddish culture, or the politics of childhood, this is an important work that underscores the need to explore children's literature as deeply as we explore authors writing for an adult audience.



Fiction: JJ Greenberg Memorial Award

Fagin the Thief

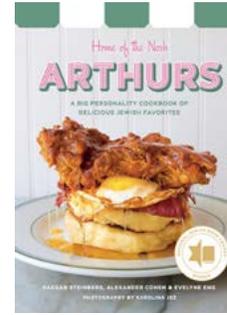
ALLISON EPSTEIN

Doubleday, an imprint of Penguin Random House

Fagin The Thief by Allison Epstein reimagines Fagin from Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, humanizing and complicating one of the most problematic fictional Jews in Western literature. In Dickens's depiction, we know little about Fagin. Epstein imagines the world Fagin inhabits in colorful and vibrant detail. She gives him a first name, Jacob; unpacks his relationship with his doting mother; charts his course to the streets; and explains how he ends up meeting Bill and Nancy, two key characters in his arc.

Lovers of Dickens will glean so much from this book, which fleshes out the inner life and external world of this literary personage. Those who have never read *Oliver Twist* will find a fully drawn, sympathetic character whose story stands on its own. Throughout the novel, Epstein raises many universal questions: Are problematic people born or made? Can a character like Fagin ever escape the prejudices around him? Is stealing ever righteous or justified?

In the vein of some of the most thought-provoking books of the past few years—such as Percival Everett's *James*—*Fagin The Thief* changes some of the plot points of its source material. In doing so, it keeps the spotlight on Fagin, making the book far more than a redo of Dickens's. This is a book that is rich, alive, nuanced, and gritty. Readers will come away from it feeling deeply for a character whose unfortunate depiction in literature necessitated a steady hand like Epstein's to correct that injustice.



Food Writing & Cookbooks: Jane and Stuart Weitzman Family Award

Arthurs: Home of the Nosh

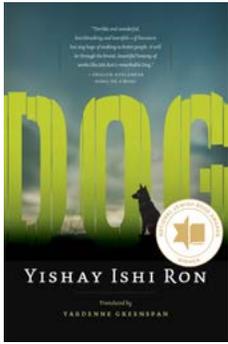
RAEGAN STEINBERG, ALEXANDRE COHEN & EVELYNE ENG

Appetite by Random House

Arthurs: Home of the Nosh is a joyful, big-hearted celebration of Jewish food that brings new energy to the evolving story of Jewish cuisine. Beautifully designed, accessible, and filled with recipes that will inspire the home cook, it highlights Canada's vibrant Jewish culinary landscape while expanding the conversation about what a "Jewish restaurant" can be.

Rooted in Montreal's spirited Jewish community, the book channels the exuberant personality of Arthurs Nosh Bar—a beloved neighborhood spot where Ashkenazi classics meet Sephardic heritage, and every dish carries a memory, a joke, or a family tale. With more than 115 recipes, the authors invite readers into their world of famed teetering pancake towers, shimmering challah French toast, and lox and latkes, alongside Moroccan favorites like *salade cuite*, traditional slow-cooked dafina, and many more dishes that honor generational food memory.

Warm, funny, and a little cheeky, the writing captures the restaurant's charisma and delivers storytelling, information, and delicious food in equal measure.



Hebrew Fiction in Translation: Jane Weitzman Award

Dog

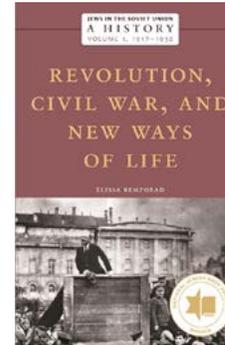
YISHAY ISHI RON;
YARDENNE GREENSPAN, TRANS.

Soncata Press

This page-turner of a novel will immerse the reader in unsettling circumstances. Geller is an elite soldier whose combat experience has left him with profound post-traumatic stress disorder; his subsequent heroin addiction has left him bereft of family and homeless in Tel Aviv. This expertly written journey of a scarred soldier stays with the reader long after the book has been read.

When he takes responsibility for a stray dog, the vulnerable protagonist begins a tortured and perhaps unintentional path to redemption. The characters in Geller's orbit—from his troubled, fractured IDF unit; to his broken family; to Doris, his caring new friend—are skillfully and compellingly drawn.

The author uses his own experience with severe PTSD to illustrate a challenging topic with grace.



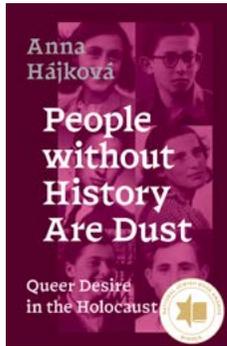
History: Gerrard and Ella Berman Memorial Award

Jews in the Soviet Union: A History: Revolution, Civil War, and New Ways of Life, 1917–1930, Volume 1

ELISSA BEMPORAD

New York University Press

Through the extensive use of a variety of Russian, Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew sources, Bemporad sheds new light on the critical years of revolution, violent civil war, and slow reconstruction that Russian Jewry experienced in the critical years 1917–1930. Distinguishing carefully among the several ethnic groups comprising the Jews of Russia, she sheds new light on the tumultuous and little known post-revolutionary period of the 1920s. She skillfully dissects the ruptures in Jewish life while also emphasizing its continuities, explaining the coexistence of new trends and old cultural practices among the millions of Soviet Jews. While the Soviets recognized and transformed Jewish collective interests, such as their fidelity to the Yiddish language, they strictly denied others, such as Jews' national and religious identities. Bemporad's discussion reveals how Yiddish culture as well as Jewish ethnological museums were manipulated and transformed into tools of indoctrination. At the same time, she does not minimize positive features of the new system such as the mobility of Jews (particularly Jewish women) and the official fight against antisemitism. This pathbreaking volume is particularly sensitive to changes in marriage and family life and the sovietization of many facets of everyday Jewish life wrought by the new Bolshevik ideology, providing new insights into the broader contexts of modern Jewish history.



Holocaust: In Memory of Ernest W. Michel

People without History are Dust: Queer Desire in the Holocaust

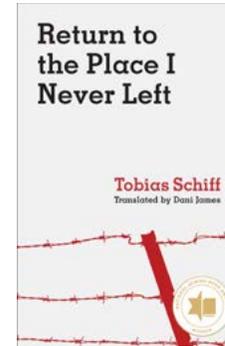
ANNA HÁJKOVÁ; WILLIAM ROSS JONES, TRANS.

University of Toronto Press

In *People without History Are Dust: Queer Desire in the Holocaust*, historian Anna Hájková pioneers a transformative “queer Holocaust history.” Carefully uncovering the long-silenced lives of Jewish victims and survivors who experienced same-sex desire, Hájková draws on extensive archival research to weave together stories of well-known figures such as Anne Frank and Gad Beck with lesser-known individuals like Molly Applebaum and Margot Heuman. Her work looks to relationships defined by deep emotional bonds, as well as those characterized by harsher realities, such as sexual barter and sexual violence.

Hájková approaches her work with sensitivity, empathy, and understanding. By centering marginalized identities, she challenges the idea that history should be sanitized. Hájková contends that acknowledging the diversity of human behavior under extreme conditions does not diminish the victims. Instead, it restores their humanity.

Hájková’s *People without History Are Dust* calls for an inclusive approach to history. She offers a crucial corrective to past practices that effectively erased queer experiences and maintained a “normative” narrative of victimhood. Hájková crucially reminds us that those whose stories are forgotten or suppressed are reduced to “dust.”



Holocaust Memoir Award: In Memory of Dr. Charles and Ethel Weitzman

Return to the Place I Never Left

TOBIAS SCHIFF; DANI JAMES, TRANS.

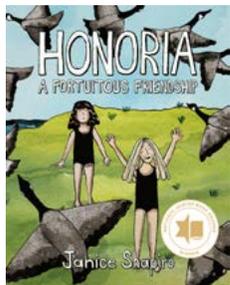
Wayne State University Press

This compelling personal memoir is an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of the experiences of Holocaust survivors. It is written in free form verse that immediately places us in the mind of Tobias Schiff, who was a teenager when he and his family were deported from Antwerp, Belgium. The text reads like a stream of consciousness, without punctuation, creating an intimacy in which we feel as if we are there, with him, hearing the bark of German orders.

Schiff spent thirty-three months in eight Nazi concentration camps. He suffered through harsh labor, starvation, cold, exhaustion, disease, and beatings. But he was also fortunate: he was with his father and then his cousin at critical times, and he understood and spoke German. Schiff was determined to study his oppressors so that he could outwit them. He took many risks and more than once he miraculously managed to talk his way out of what seemed to be a path to certain death.

After the Holocaust, Schiff, the sole survivor in his family, returned to Belgium where he became a diamond broker and photography store owner. He devoted his later years to speaking about his Holocaust experiences in high schools.

Dani James’s masterful translation preserves the rhythmic accents and style of the original Flemish text for English readers.



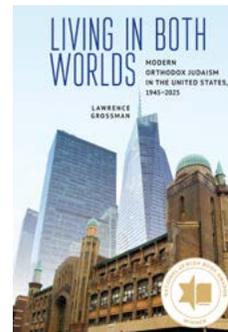
Middle Grade Literature

Honoria: A Fortuitous Friendship

JANICE SHAPIRO

Fantagraphics

Janice Shapiro's *Honoria* is special for the candid, straightforward, and honest way it navigates a complex friendship between two young girls. Seen through the eyes of pre-teen Ida, *Honoria* has all the trappings of historical interest: literary and artistic luminaries like Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, a languid summer in the south of France, the fraughtness of growing up Jewish in the fading Jazz Age. But the wealth of detail and colourful setting are a backdrop to the real heart of the book, which is the way that two very different girls cautiously circle each other, as they try to decide whether a potential friendship is worth the risk of hurt in their already-tumultuous lives. Shapiro perfectly captures the aching desire to be friends with a girl who's way cooler than you, just as she perfectly captures the slow realization that effortless coolness can be a front for desperately needing connection and friendship. As the girls navigate their differences, their burgeoning friendship, and - yes - Ida's relationship to her Jewishness, *Honoria* feels real, lived-in, and full of richness for young and adult readers alike.



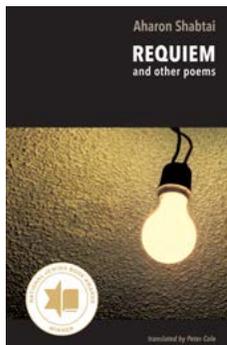
Modern Jewish Thought and Experience: Dorot Foundation Award in Memory of Joy Ungerleider

Living in Both Worlds: Modern Orthodox Judaism in the United States, 1945–2025

LAWRENCE GROSSMAN

Academic Studies Press

Highly informative and engagingly written, *Living in Both Worlds* sets the development of the Modern Orthodox movement in historical context, mapping out the major denominational shifts and antimodernist trends. Grossman clarifies the importance of this exploration, given current demographic trends that project that by the end of the twenty-first century, Orthodox Jews may very well constitute the majority of American Jewry. Methodically, Grossman documents how Orthodoxy, a movement considered in the mid-twentieth century to be outmoded, ill-suited for American life, and a “marketing disaster,” and thus riddled with defectors to Conservative Judaism, turned the tide and began to thrive, building institutions, programs, defenders, and factions, too. Bringing the story right up to the present day, he also grapples with current schisms that threaten the coherence of the term Modern Orthodoxy, as well as its challenges post-October 7th. As such, he poses a final question that returns us to the aspirations inherent in the book's title: Given continued rightward shifts, and the rise of American antisemitism, “[w]ill it be possible, ever again, to live comfortably in both worlds?”



Poetry: Berru Award in Memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinfeld

Requiem & Other Poems

AHARON SHABTAI; PETER COLE, TRANS.

New Directions Publishing

Line after line, stanza after stanza, Aharon Shabtai's *Requiem* is a masterclass in the power of poetic restraint. As the pieces in this rich and arresting collection unspool (each beautifully translated from the Hebrew by Peter Cole), Shabtai's poems demand the reader's attention precisely because they never ask for it. Living at the intersection of the magnificent and the mundane, *Requiem* presents poems that speak directly to the global Jewish experience without allowing that experience to exist in the absence of its necessary assessment. Here are poems about land and war, family and death, hostages and neighbors, and mortality and great governmental dissatisfaction—all written with such precision, such exactitude and might (and yes, at times even humor) that the result is one of the most quietly contusional books of contemporary poetry published in recent memory. Astute and prophetic, profound and full of heart, *Requiem* by Aharon Shabtai is a book that hands its readers a humanitarian's trowel, an excavational tool ready to unearth "someone opening their eyes, someone who speaks with compassion,/someone listening/someone learning and wise/someone waiting and thinking/someone guiding someone/down a path of kindness, affection/...the gardeners of peace."



Scholarship: Nahum M. Sarna Memorial Award

A Woman Is Responsible for Everything: Jewish Women in Early Modern Europe

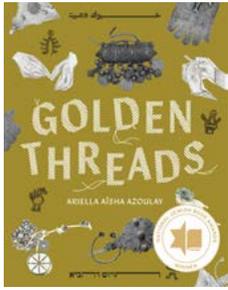
DEBRA KAPLAN & ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

Princeton University Press

A Woman Is Responsible for Everything portrays the lives, practices, networks, and writings of the neglected half of Ashkenazic Jewry from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries—namely, women. Debra Kaplan and Elisheva Carlebach have assembled a wealth of sources drawn from community records and archives across Western and Central Europe; personal notes and laundry lists; prayers and custom books; letters and memoirs; as well as a rich trove of stunning images depicting Jewish women immersed not only in their everyday activities, but also in their holiday preparations and festivities.

The book traces the changing roles of Jewish women within families and Jewish communities in the early modern period. Its focus ranges from women on the margins to those who assumed important communal functions. By combining many previously unknown stories with well-known works such as Glikl of Hameln's memoir and Rivkah Tiktiner's book of morals, the volume illustrates the diverse voices of Jewish women in their families and communities, while also showing the ways in which their participation was often subject to regulation and control.

These women's stories—"truly hiding in plain sight," as the authors note—will change the way we study and understand this era of Jewish history.



Sephardic Culture: Mimi S. Frank Award
in Memory of Becky Levy

Golden Threads

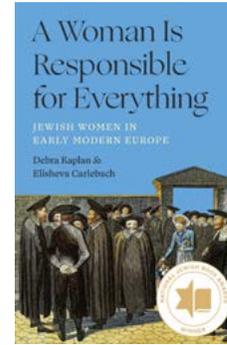
ARIELLA AÏSHA AZOULAY; HAGAR
OPHIR, ILLUS.

Ayin Press

Golden Threads is a luminous ode to Sephardic life in 1920s Fès, Morocco that celebrates the languages, landscapes, sounds, and intimate rituals of a Jewish mellah. Through eight-year-old Rachel's curious eyes, the book honors intergenerational conversation and exchange, grandmothers' amulets, and the artistry of gold thread—a living Sephardic culture grounded in family, faith, and craft. The richly illustrated scenes capture sensory memory, inviting readers to experience Jewish and Muslim artisans and their families in community. The book celebrates coexistence and interdependence through memories and storytelling.

At the heart of the narrative is the craft of filigree and gold-thread spinning. By lingering on techniques, tools, and the delicate labor of jewelry-making, the book elevates artisanal knowledge as a pillar of Sephardic continuity. As the evocative refrain states: “no machine could embroider like us.”

The judging committee was especially impressed by how the book's text and images converse to create a richly layered, immersive experience. Hand drawings, glossaries of images and definition, archival photographs, and other expressive illustrations appear alongside the story to evoke memory, place, and craft. This multimedia approach invites readers to read, look, and learn simultaneously. The result is an engaging format that models how storytelling, visual culture, and history can intertwine to illuminate Sephardic life for audiences of all ages.



Women's Studies: Barbara Dobkin Award

A Woman Is Responsible for Everything: Jewish Women in Early Modern Europe

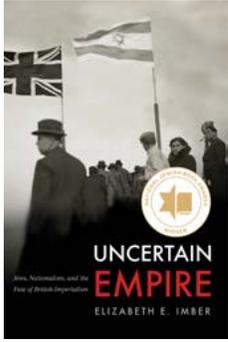
DEBRA KAPLAN & ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

Princeton University Press

Jewish women of the Early Modern period (1300–1600) did not sit quietly at the proverbial footstools of their husbands; we knew they shaped the Jewish ambience of their homes, influenced the Jewishness of their offspring, ritually prepared bodies for burial, enabled their husbands' Torah learning and leadership, and acted as midwives. But this book offers more detail into the contributions of Jewish women during this era: the women's *hevrot* they created and their sophisticated distribution of communal resources to those in need; they voted for office and kept detailed archival records; they repaired to the non-Jewish civil courts when the local *beit din* insufficiently addressed their property rights, inheritance, compensation, and more. This work explores the Torah scroll covers they inscribed with names of female family members, the writings they studied, the books they commissioned.

How did authors Kaplan and Carlebach present this new material in such a systematic and strategic manner? They combed *pinkassim*, the archival notebooks and records that communities maintained with great care and pride, many of which are now housed at major libraries around the world. The authors went beyond: they looked at every scrap of paper, made every connection—scouring each list, will, court case, and tzedakah chart they could find—their research focused on informing readers about women's roles and status in early modern European Jewish communities.

Their final gift to the reader appears in the concluding chapter, where the authors analyze why so many of women's parallel leadership roles were lost in the final period before Emancipation. But we leave this to the reader to explore. Suffice it to say that this book is a treasure of information, analysis, and insight. It is also a work of justice, reclaiming women's role in Jewish communal life and celebrating it centuries later.



Writing Based on Archival Material: The JDC-Herbert Katzki Award

Uncertain Empire: Jews, Nationalism, and the Fate of British Imperialism

ELIZABETH E. IMBER

Stanford University Press

Uncertain Empire offers a deeply original reframing of Zionist history through the lenses of empire, nationalism, and global Jewish political life. Elizabeth Imber's masterful use of archival sources across the British Empire, from Jerusalem and Johannesburg to London and Calcutta, illuminates how Jewish leaders and communities negotiated competing visions for Palestine under shifting imperial and anti-colonial dynamics. By tracing concrete case studies of figures such as Chaim Arlosoroff, Moshe Shertok, Helen Bentwich, Rachel Ezra, and Hermann Kallenbach, Imber unpacks the "politics of uncertainty" that defined Jewish political thought between 1917 and 1948. The result is a richly nuanced account that challenges simplified narratives of Zionism, revealing instead a complex mosaic of alliances, ambitions, and global entanglements. In doing so, *Uncertain Empire* reshapes our understanding of the British Empire's central—often contradictory—role in shaping modern Jewish political identity, and merits the JDC-Katzki Award for its scholarly ambition, methodological rigor, and lasting contribution to modern Jewish historiography.



Young Adult Literature

I Wish I Didn't Have to Tell You This: A Graphic Memoir

EUGENE YELCHIN

Candlewick Press

I Wish I Didn't Have To Tell You This, a graphic memoir by Eugene Yelchin, chronicles Yelchin's days as a Jewish university student and young adult in the Soviet Union. His friendship with a *refusenik* and a forbidden romance with an American student attract trouble, and his naivete about the dangers around him only exacerbate the tensions. Following questionable advice, he takes a job with a theater company in Siberia to avoid the draft, and finds himself caught between his ambitions, survival instincts, and the Soviet bureaucratic machine.

Yelchin's expressive black and white artwork is an ideal accompaniment to a text that is darkly witty, harrowing, and nuanced in its depiction of life as a young, Jewish artist in the Soviet Union. His characters leap off the page, providing sharp insights to the relentlessly Kafkaesque nightmare Yelchin learns to navigate. The novel's balance of humor, cynicism, and blunt honesty make for a sophisticated approach to the subject matter that is nevertheless compulsively readable and accessible for teens. It is an essential read about coming of age as a young artist in a totalitarian regime, and a testament to human tenacity against even the darkest and most frustrating realities.



Naming an award is a fitting way to honor a special person or remember a loved one. Thank you to all of the individuals and foundations that have supported the National Jewish Book Awards and Jewish Book Council programming and resources.

**JEWISH BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD:
EVERETT FAMILY FOUNDATION AWARD**

Endowed by the Everett family in 2003, this prestigious award honors the best nonfiction book of the year.

AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES: 350 AWARD

The Celebrate 350 Committee commemorated the 350 years of Jewish life in America and conducted a year-long series of celebrations. This award provides the opportunity to remember the event and honor books that will contribute to the next major milestone.

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIR: THE
KRAUSS FAMILY AWARD IN MEMORY OF
SIMON & SHULAMITH (SOFI) GOLDBERG**

This award was dedicated to the memory of Simon and Sofi Goldberg by their daughter, Carmel Krauss.

**BIOGRAPHY: IN MEMORY OF SARA
BERENSON STONE**

Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, Sara Berenson Stone (1915–2018) was a devoted philanthropist and voracious reader. One of a handful of Jewish students at Duke University, she graduated in 1935 and moved to New Orleans, where she began her eighty-year long advocacy for Jewish causes. A prolific reader of fiction and nonfiction, Mrs. Stone had a particular interest in biographies pertaining to the Jewish experience. This award honors writers whose work has elucidated the lives of those, past and present, who exemplify what it means to live, work, and

think as a Jew. By the high quality of their writing, our award winners have given their subjects and themselves an honored place in our literary canon.

**BOOK CLUB AWARD: THE MILLER FAMILY
AWARD IN MEMORY OF HELEN DUNN
WEINSTEIN AND JUNE KEIT MILLER**

The Book Club Award recognizes an outstanding work of fiction or nonfiction that inspires meaningful conversation about Jewish life, identity, practice, or history, and which has the potential to nurture Jewish continuity. The award recognizes the power of books to promote Jewish community and thought-provoking discussions.

**CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK: TRACY AND
LARRY BROWN FAMILY AWARD**

An illustrated story or nonfiction book designed to be read aloud to children ages 3 to 8 years old or a board book intended for children 0–3 years old. This category should also include early readers and chapter books if they are intended for readers in the same age-range. The award will be shared by the author and illustrator.

**CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LIFE AND
PRACTICE: MYRA H. KRAFT MEMORIAL
AWARD**

This award is dedicated to the memory of JBC Board member Myra H. Kraft by Robert Kraft and family. Myra loved to read, and for many years served as the leader of the Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice Award panel.

DEBUT FICTION: THE GOLDBERG PRIZE

This prize is supported through a generous grant by the Samuel Goldberg & Sons Foundation.

EDUCATION AND JEWISH IDENTITY: IN MEMORY OF DOROTHY KRIPKE

Dorothy Kripke was a prominent writer of books for Jewish children, including the *Let's Talk About . . .* series, stimulating interaction between children and parents. This award, created by her family, cherishes the memory of Mrs. Kripke.

FICTION: JJ GREENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD

The Fiction Award is endowed by Jewish Book Council past president and board member Blu Greenberg and her husband, Rabbi “Yitz” Greenberg, in loving memory of their son, JJ Greenberg. This is an eternal tribute to JJ’s love of reading, especially Jewish fiction.

FOOD WRITING & COOKBOOKS: JANE AND STUART WEITZMAN FAMILY AWARD

This award recognizes a cookbook or work of food writing — including, but not limited to, memoir and history — that explores Jewish identity, history, and culture through a culinary lens.

HEBREW FICTION IN TRANSLATION: JANE WEITZMAN AWARD

A work of contemporary Israeli fiction, originally published in Hebrew, that has been translated from Hebrew in the current judging year.

HISTORY: GERRARD AND ELLA BERMAN MEMORIAL AWARD

The Bermans, lovers of Jewish history, endowed this award to ensure the continued study of our glorious past and to honor outstanding books in the field.

HOLOCAUST: IN MEMORY OF ERNEST W. MICHEL

This prize honors writers who produce exceptional books on the subject of the Holocaust. Ernest Michel, born in Mannheim, Germany, survived six

years in forced labor camps, including two and half years in Auschwitz. He and two friends escaped from a death march from Auschwitz four weeks before the end of World War II. He was the only survivor to serve as a correspondent for the German news agency DANA at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial in 1945. After arriving in America, he began to speak about his life experience and started working for the United Jewish Appeal. He served as Executive Vice President of New York UJA from 1970 to 1989, served as the organizer and chairman of the World Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in 1981, and was a founding trustee of the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. In 1993, he published his memoir, *Promises to Keep: One Man’s Journey Against Incredible Odds*.

HOLOCAUST MEMOIR: IN MEMORY OF DR. CHARLES AND ETHEL WEITZMAN

A nonfiction book that recounts an individual’s experiences during the Holocaust, including memoirs written by survivors, co-authored books in which a survivor works with a writer to tell his or her story, accounts of a survivor’s experiences written by a member of his or her family (such a child or grandchild), or by another author that has access to and uses primary documents. A recently discovered or recovered diary or memoir written by someone who did not survive the Holocaust is also eligible.

MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE: DOROT FOUNDATION AWARD IN MEMORY OF JOY UNGERLEIDER

POETRY: BERRU AWARD IN MEMORY OF RUTH AND BERNIE WEINFLASH

The Berru Award for Poetry is dedicated to the memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinflash, who were respected leaders in their northern New Jersey community for over fifty years. A dynamic couple with both substance and style, they were not just avid readers, but also were astute critics, honing in on what spoke to both them and to the world at large. The arts were an important part of their lives. Ruth, a former actress and a lively and gifted orator, chaired the Cultural Arts Committee for many years at the JCC on the Palisades in Tenafly,

New Jersey. She also designed programs in local schools, introducing children to the lives of famous historical activists in order to spark interest in working to make this a better world. Bernie, an active member of many boards, served for over twenty years on the board of the Jewish Book Council. A true humanitarian, he believed that when people came together for a communal purpose, positive momentum would be ignited. With intellect, compassion, and vision, both Ruth and Bernie immeasurably enriched the Jewish community, understanding the important relationship between Jewish culture and Jewish survival.

SCHOLARSHIP: NAHUM M. SARNA MEMORIAL AWARD

Dr. Nahum M. Sarna was a leading biblical scholar who touched many lives through his work at Brandeis University, and through the written word in his books. His family, headed by sons Jonathan and David, established this award in his memory.

SEPHARDIC CULTURE: MIMI S. FRANK AWARD IN MEMORY OF BECKY LEVY

Mimi S. Frank, a past JBC Board member, endowed this award in memory of her grandmother, Becky Levy, who shared with her Sephardic recipes, a love of cooking and baking, and her culture from Tekirdag, Turkey.

WOMEN’S STUDIES: BARBARA DOBKIN AWARD

This award honors a leading figure in Jewish philanthropy and an outspoken advocate for Jewish women’s rights. This award was established by Barbara Dobkin’s friends, who wish to honor her extraordinary devotion to this cause.

WRITING BASED ON ARCHIVAL MATERIAL: THE JDC-HERBERT KATZKI AWARD

This award honors a book of modern historical writing published in English based on archival material that includes footnotes and bibliography.

ABOUT JBC



כ"ג חשוון - כ"ד כסלו תשפ"ו NOV 13 - DEC 13, 2025

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Jewish Book Council

Jewish Book Council celebrates and champions books that reflect the diversity and richness of Jewish experience. By connecting readers, authors, and all who value literature, we create opportunities for essential conversations and vibrant engagement with Jewish life and community. Each year, JBC reaches 900,000 readers with its vibrant digital presence; distributes books to nearly 2,000 Nu Reads subscribers; works with nearly 300 touring authors; facilitates over 1,400 events; and presents over twenty literary awards, including the National Jewish Book Awards and Natan Notable Books.

MAJOR PROGRAMS

JBC Book Clubs: This is the central address for over 3,000 of Jewish book clubs. It offers book clubs a one-stop shop to improve their reading experiences and enhance their conversations. JBC Book Clubs provides reviews, discussion questions, and reading lists. In addition, it offers features designed just for book clubs, such as guides to starting a new club, a personalized book recommendation service, and the opportunity to “host” authors through video chats.

JBC Network: The JBC Network serves as a coordinating hub for book tours for Jewish authors and Jewish-interest books, sending nearly 300 authors to over 130 communities across North America

each year, as well as providing year-round resources and support for program coordinators.

JBC Read On: This program is a speakers’ bureau for authors who have previously participated in the JBC Network. Read On connects these authors to additional venues.

Jewish Book Marketing Grants: Jewish Book Marketing Grants are a new initiative to provide marketing and promotional support to book projects from the very beginning, before they have even reached a publishing house.

Jewish Book Month: This special month on the Jewish calendar is traditionally observed during the thirty days before Hanukkah. As part of the

celebration, JBC advises local communities on exhibits, fairs, book clubs, author speaking tours, and book-related programs. JBC also prepares educational and promotional materials.

Jewish Literary Conferences: JBC sponsors an annual conference for writers of adult books and another for writers and illustrators of children’s books. Both conferences are designed to assist aspiring writers.

Natan Notable Books: Natan Notable Books is a twice-yearly award for non-fiction books on Jewish themes. The award highlights vital books and authors, and brings innovative and important ideas to the attention of diverse audiences.

National Conference Support: Jewish Book Council serves as a resource for national conferences directed at the Jewish community, providing speakers, arranging book displays, and organizing book sales at events.

National Jewish Book Awards: Conferred annually since 1950, the awards are presented by category, and are intended to recognize authors of outstanding English-language books of Jewish interest and to encourage the reading of quality books of Jewish content.

Nu Reads: Jewish books deserve space—in our homes, in our conversations, and on our shelves. But in today’s publishing landscape, these books need champions. Nu Reads is a curated, reader-powered book subscription series that builds community, strengthens the Jewish literary market, and ensures Jewish voices are heard—and read.

Paper Brigade: A collection of articles, interviews, fiction, poetry, and visual arts, JBC’s annual literary journal reflects today’s diverse Jewish literary landscape in America and abroad.

PB Daily: The digital arm of Paper Brigade, PB Daily, provides daily updates on the world of Jewish literature from around the web, including information on new Jewish-interest books, reviews, feature articles, interviews, and videos.

Unpacking the Book: Jewish Writers In Conversation: Unpacking the Book is an annual literary series, administered in partnership with the Jewish Museum in New York City and Tablet magazine, that brings together Jewish-interest authors for conversations about contemporary Jewish life and identity.

Website: www.JewishBookCouncil.org features thousands of book reviews, reading lists, book club questions, event listings, information on JBC programs, and more.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

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Foremost Catering
GOLDA
Jewish Broadcasting Service
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Ethan Segal
Temple Emanu-El
West End Strategy

We wish to publicly acknowledge and thank the people who served on the panels of judges for the 75th National Jewish Book Awards program:

Michlean Amir
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Ethan Berlin
Karen Berman
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to the 75th National Jewish Book Award winners on your incredible literary achievement! Jewish Book Council is a nonprofit that supports writers and readers through awards, year-round events, book club resources, and much, much more. Please consider supporting JBC's work to promote great literature, helping to educate and connect our community.

And one more shout-out, if I may: I'm so appreciative of the dedication and hard work of JBC's board and staff.

With Gratitude,

ELISA SPUNGEN BILDNER
PRESIDENT, JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL

CONGRATULATIONS

to all the award winning authors
of the National Jewish Book
Awards and their meaningful
contributions to Jewish literature.

A special thank you to Naomi
Firestone-Teeter and JBC's staff,
as Jewish Book Council celebrates
75 years inspiring and bringing
together authors and readers
across Jewish communities
throughout the world.

JOY AND ALAN GREENBERG

MAZEL TOV

to each and every winner of a
National Jewish Book Award, with
gratitude from a lifelong reader.

Congratulations also to Naomi
Firestone-Teeter and the amazing
team at Jewish Book Council for
their work every day to ensure
Jewish stories are told, and shared.

STACEY MINDICH

**MAZEL TOV TO ALL
OF THE WINNERS!
THANK YOU TO
THE INCREDIBLE
JBC STAFF**

JANE AND STUART WEITZMAN

CONGRATULATIONS

to the winners for their
outstanding contributions to
the literary world! And thanks
to Naomi and our wonderful
staff for all they do!

LINDA AND BRIAN STERLING

Mazel tov,
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winners & nominees!

**Your words are the light
we need in this world.**



To the winners of the 75th National Jewish Book Awards

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Stanley B. Burns, MD & The Burns Archive



In 1947, the Irgun launched the SS Ben Hecht, a ship carrying Jewish refugees through the British blockade of Palestine. Photographer Wallace Litwin was hired to document the voyage.

Unlike other blockade runners that attempted to evade capture, the mission of the Ben Hecht was deliberate: to confront the British authorities and bring the treatment of Jewish refugees to the front pages of the world's newspapers.

Litwin recorded the journey in more than 250 powerful photographs. Preserved today in the Burns Collection, these images form a remarkable visual account of one of the most dramatic voyages in the struggle for Jewish statehood.

A Ship, a Camera, and a Defiant Voyage Toward Jewish Statehood

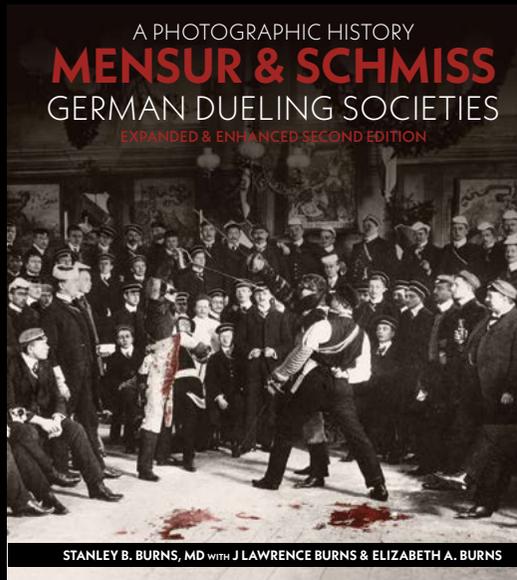


burnsarchive.com

To the winners of the 75th National Jewish Book Awards

Congratulations

Stanley B. Burns, MD & The Burns Archive



MENSUR & SCHMISS

A chance conversation in 1977 between Dr. Stanley B. Burns and a German Jewish physician led to the discovery of a remarkable chapter of Jewish history: the participation of Jewish students in the ritualized fencing duels of German universities.



BOOZE, BRAVADO, & BLOOD The *Mensur*, a highly regulated ritual in which the participants, or *Schlagende*, slash sabers at each other from a set distance. Also referred to as academic fencing, this test of courage, stamina, and fortitude evolved from the duel and has been practiced in Germanic countries since the eighteenth century. *Landmannschaften*, *Burschenschaften*, *Corps*, and other exclusive student fraternities often required *Mensur* participation for membership. These violent challenges frequently resulted in a scar known as a *Schmiss*. This facial scar was cherished as a badge of honor, signifying masculinity, bravery, and high social position.

This second edition is an expanded and enhanced revision of the first photographic history of this fascinating cultural custom (published in 2017), presenting celebrations and social functions alongside all elements of the *Mensur*: the preparation, fight, and aftermath with combatants, seconds, referees, spectators, and attending surgeons. Over 100 photographs have been added to the more than 175 images in the first edition. This revised compilation includes a foreword by Dr. Clemens Marschall, contemporary nineteenth-century perspectives by Mark Twain, Jerome K. Jerome, and an English student, a list of appearances of *Mensur* in media and entertainment, and a section on mailed photographic postcards. This book vividly documents the camaraderie, courage, and ceremony of the art of *Mensur*.



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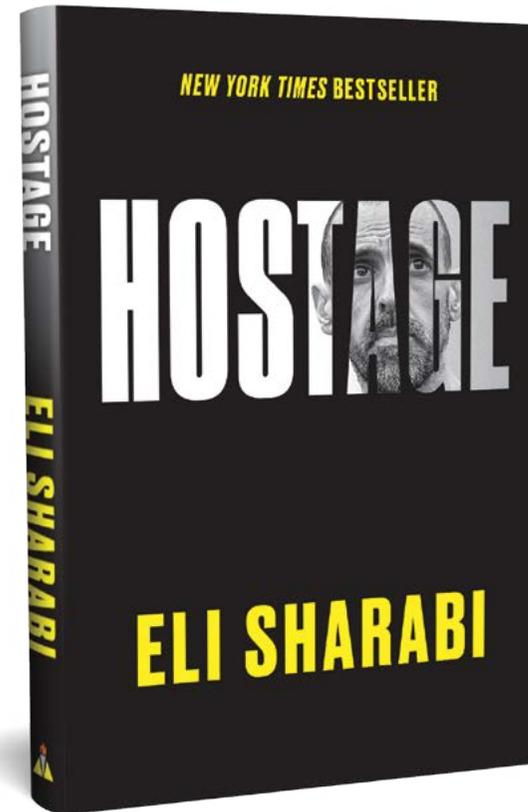
WITH THANKS TO
JEWISH BOOK
COUNCIL, FOR
ALL THAT YOU
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SUPPORT.

RISA PERLMUTTER GOLDSTEIN

HARPER INFLUENCE CONGRATULATES

ELI SHARABI

AUTHOR OF THE
75TH NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK AWARD'S
BOOK OF THE YEAR

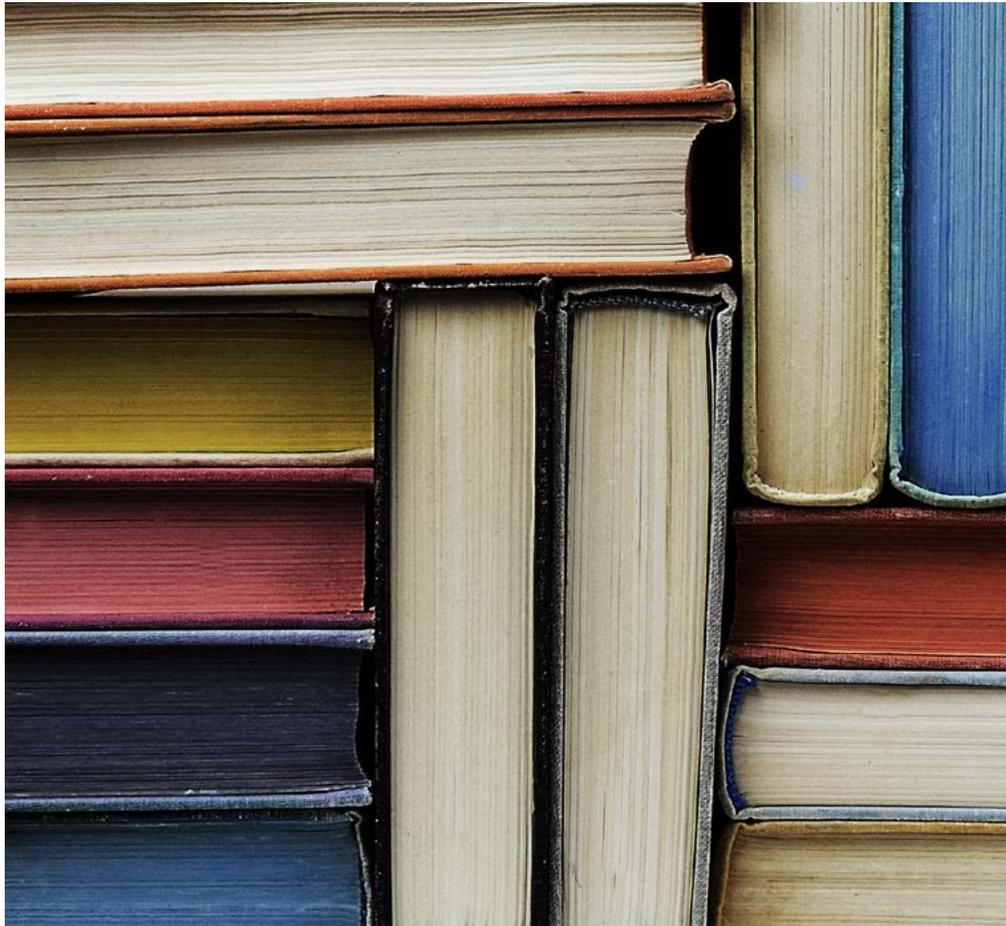


Blake Ezra

**"Mr. Sharabi is a man
of adamant moral and
spiritual strength."**

—The Wall Street Journal





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to the winners of the 75th National Jewish Book Awards! Your work enriches our community and keeps Jewish stories, ideas, and scholarship vibrant and alive. We also thank Jewish Book Council for its dedication and generosity in supporting this meaningful work that celebrates and promotes Jewish literature.

BECKY AND DAVID SCHAMIS

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AND TO ALL THE
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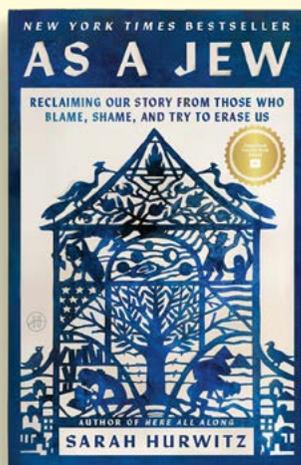
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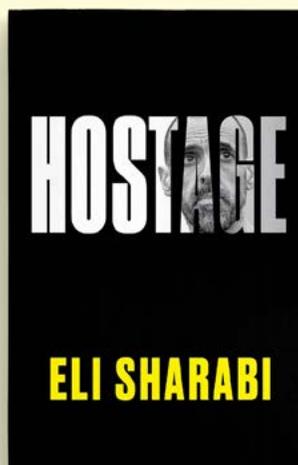
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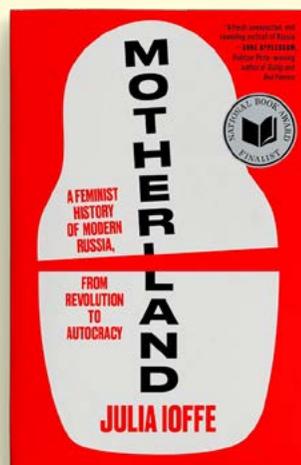
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