

# World Jewish History

Bibliography compiled for the Contemporary Jewish Writing Class

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by Gabor Por - May 7, 2015

Available online at [JewishBookWorld.org/tag/cjw/](http://JewishBookWorld.org/tag/cjw/)

## 2013 and 2014 National Jewish Book Award Winners and Finalists:

- **Contested Land, Contested Memory: Israel's Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe** by Jo Roberts (Dundurn, 2013) 304 pages, **SCL\***  
Vividly narrated, with extensive original interview material, it examines how these tangled histories of suffering inform Jewish and Palestinian-Israeli lives today, and frame Israel's possibilities for peace. - <http://amzn.to/1KQ2Mhy>
- **The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe** by Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (Princeton University, 2014) 448 pages, **SCL\***  
Illustrated throughout with rare archival photographs and artwork, this nuanced history casts the shtetl in an altogether new light, revealing how its golden age continues to shape the collective memory of the Jewish people today. - <http://amzn.to/1FSqycC>
- **Herzl's Vision: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State Shlomo** by Shlomo Avineri (BlueBridge, 2014) 304 pages, **SCL\***  
In this concise, illuminating biography, the renowned Israeli political scientist and public intellectual Shlomo Avineri portrays Herzl's intellectual and spiritual odyssey from a private and marginal individual into a Jewish political leader. - <http://amzn.to/1F20mM5>
- **Kafka: The Years of Insight** by Reiner Stach (Princeton UP, 2013) 696 pages, **SCL\***  
Tells the story of the final years of the writer's life, from 1916 to 1924--a period during which the world Kafka had known came to an end. Stach's riveting narrative reflects the latest findings about Kafka's life, draws readers in with nearly cinematic precision. - <http://amzn.to/1F8FKng>
- **My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel** by Ari Shavit (Spiegel & Grau, 2013) 464 pages, **SCL\***  
As it examines the complexities and contradictions of the Israeli condition, it asks difficult but important questions: Why did Israel come to be? How did it come to be? Can Israel survive? Culminating with an analysis of the issues and threats that Israel is currently facing, it uses the defining events of the past to shed new light on the present. - <http://amzn.to/1PsWg0l>
- **We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American Jewry, A Documentary History** by Gary Philip Zola (Southern Illinois UP, 2014) 480 pages, **SCL\***  
Provides a fascinating chronicle of American Jewry's unfolding historical encounter with the life and symbolic image of Abraham Lincoln, shedding light on how the cultural interchange between American ideals and Jewish traditions influences the dynamics of the American Jewish experience. - <http://amzn.to/1RhNpmz>

## More recent books about World Jewish History

- **1929: Mapping the Jewish World** by *Hasia R. Diner* and *Gennady Estraikh*, eds. (NYU Press, 2013) 255 pages  
Surveys the Jewish world in one year offering clear examples of the transnational connections which linked Jews to each other - <http://amzn.to/1lma1xX>
- **Anonymous Soldiers: The Struggle for Israel, 1917-1947** by *Bruce Hoffman* (Knopf, 2015) 640 pages, **SCL\***  
Tells in previously unknown detail the story of how Britain struggled and ultimately failed to reconcile competing Arab and Jewish demands and uprisings - <http://amzn.to/1FSs6U2>
- **The Jewish Community of Cuba: Memory and History** by *Margalit Bejarano* (The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2015) 353 pages  
combines the fruits of academic research with the personal reminiscences of protagonists, creating a collective narrative of Cuban Jews, particularly those who migrated to Miami, on their historical experience prior to the Castro revolution. - <http://amzn.to/1H4K9Ib>
- **Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation** by *Yossi Klein Halevi* (Harper, 2013) 608 pages, **SCL\***  
A nuanced, in-depth look at these diverse men and the conflicting beliefs that have helped to define modern Israel and the Middle East. - <http://amzn.to/1kLcUC>
- **Shocking Paris: Soutine, Chagall and the Outsiders of Montparnasse** by *Stanley Meisler* (Palgrave, 2015) 256 pages, **SCL\***  
Soutine arrived in Paris while many painters were experimenting with cubism, but he had no time for trends and fashions. This book explores the short, dramatic life of one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. - <http://amzn.to/1zPskum>
- **Traditional Society in Transition: The Yemeni Jewish Experience** by *Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman* (Brill, 2014) 223 pages  
An account of the circumstances of Yemeni Jewish existence in the wake of major changes since the second half of the 19th century. It follows this community's transition from a traditional patriarchal society to adjusting to the challenges of a modern society. - <http://amzn.to/1JSNiLP>
- **Turkish Jews in Contemporary Turkey** by *Rifat N. Bali, Laurent-Olivier Mallet* (Libra, 2015) 292 pages  
A selection of articles by scholars on the social and cultural situation of Turkish Jews in the last two decades. Tensions created by political events in Turkey and/or by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the bursts of anti-Semitism ... - <http://amzn.to/1EeXSpQ>
- **The Underground: The untold story of how a handful of Jews helped spark a spiritual revolution in the Soviet Union** by *Yaakov Astor, Rabbi Mordechai Neustadt* (Judaica Press, 2014) 472 pages  
Two great catastrophes befell the Jewish people in the 20th century -- The Holocaust and the destruction of Jewish life in the Soviet Union, behind the "Iron Curtain." The destructive effect of the latter is relatively unknown. Yet, in some ways it was no less devastating. - <http://amzn.to/1F8HIUA>

\* Books marked with SCL are available at the Sonoma County Library