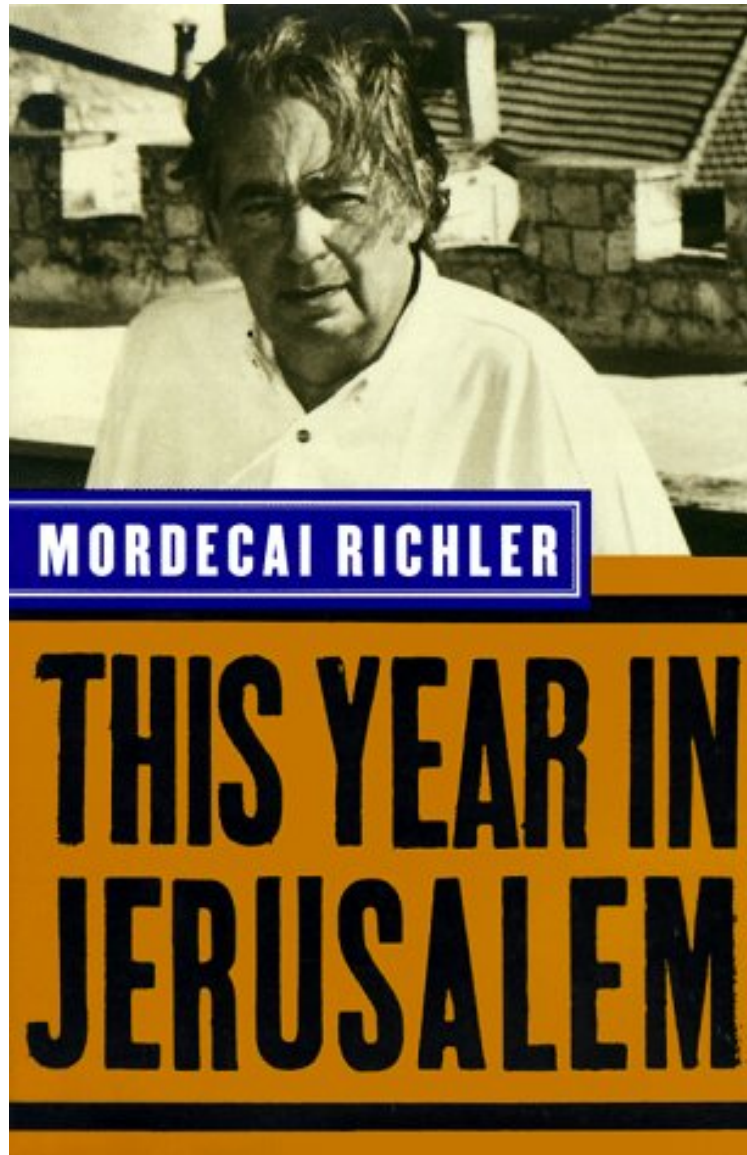


[Download] This Year In Jerusalem

This Year In Jerusalem

Mordecai Richler

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Mordecai Richler : This Year In Jerusalem before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised This Year In Jerusalem:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting, intimate look at Judaism and IsraelBy Naya PMr. Richler weaves a rich story of present-day and past Israel, of Jewish Americans and Canadians, and of the relationships between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Holy Land. The book begins and ends with his own

story, though, as a Canadian Jew growing up in Montreal, of youthful yearning to help rebuild Israel, and his eventual succumbing to his place as a Jew in a home other than Israel, realizing that he is perfectly at home in Canada, that that in fact is his homeland. His insights are deep in this book and I'm glad to have read it, coming away with a better understanding of Israel and Judaism. I think it should be on the syllabus for Middle Eastern studies university classes. Having said that, sometimes required reading is tough to get through, and I did find this book took me longer to read than some other books I've read lately. It was well-written, except that the dialogues seemed to all sound the same. Other than the author, the characters all seemed to personify the loud, pushy, ignorant foreigner. Overall, a good book, but I couldn't bring myself to give it four stars because it wasn't so much that I liked it, more that I feel enriched to have read it. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. I grew to like this one By Renee @ Mother Daughter Book Reviews ***THIS REVIEW CONTAINS SPOILERS*** This was a difficult one for me. It could be because it took me longer to read it than normal (i.e., 2 weeks) which probably resulted in me taking longer to get into the story. When I was about 1/3 in, I was resolved to give it 2.5 stars, but as I read on and got more into it, I began to really get engaged. One thing is undeniable: Mordecai Richler is a brilliant writer. Barney, the main character of the book, is richly developed. In fact, this is what caused the struggle within myself: I absolutely detested the main character. I found him pathetic and unlikeable to the extent that I decided it was ok to not like a book simply because I couldn't stand the main character. But, as reluctant as I am to admit this: he grew on me to the extent that it wasn't about him being unlikeable, so much as I could have sympathy for the circumstances of his life. So, at the end of the day, there are some incredibly funny moments in the book and I would recommend this book because the writing itself and the development of the main character (in narration) is outstanding. Richler really made the characters come to life. ***SPOILER ALERT*** One last note is that I have to say that the resolution that comes at the end of the book was something I felt was necessary. I don't think I could not have made a 4 star rating without that resolution. 6 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A journal by the every-day Richler By Abbas LAs an Arab and a former Montrealer with an interest in the Middle East, I was looking forward to reading this book. Besides the joy of reading about the city's past I found interesting how Diaspora Jewish communities dealt with their place as Jews in Western societies and with Zionism since and before the establishment of Israel. It was fascinating to see how closely-knit (or self-obsessed?) Jewish communities were. Through his childhood, Richler only seems to interact with Jews (as do other members of his community), only getting access to the real world when he leaves Montreal and his conservative community. Having been raised there, Richler had spoken better Hebrew than French. Richler also reveals, as he discovers himself, that Zionism is not as rosy as it is perceived. Much of the Zionist 'training' Jews received is implied to be a sort of brain-washing, promoting the idea of Palestine as a 'land without people for a people without land'. The strong Zionist solidarity among children, as well as patriotism for a land they had never seen, could not have come without it. His critical attitude towards Zionism and recognition of what he sees as the need for Jews to have a place to call home comes together to make a good read. This book is not overly political or disturbingly ideological. It's just Richler in an average person's shoes.

"In 1944, I was aware of three youth groups committed to the compelling idea of an independent Jewish state: Hashomer Hatza'ir (The Young Guard), Young Judaea, and Habonim (The Builders). Hashomer Hatza'ir was resolutely Marxist. According to intriguing reports I had heard, it was the custom, on their kibbutzim already established in Palestine, for boys and girls under the age of eighteen to shower together. Hashomer Hatza'ir members in Montreal included a boy I shall call Shloime Schneiderman, a high-school classmate of mine. In 1944, when we were still in eighth grade, Shloime enjoyed a brief celebrity after his photo appeared on the front page of the Montreal Herald. Following a two-cent rise in the price of chocolate bars, he had been a leader in a demonstration, holding high a placard that read: down with the 7cents chocolate bar. Hashomer Hatza'ir members wore uniforms at their meetings: blue shirts and neckerchiefs. "They had real court martials," wrote Marion Magid in a memoir about her days in Habonim in the Bronx in the early fifties, "group analysis, the girls were not allowed to wear lipstick." Whereas, in my experience, the sweetly scented girls who belonged to Young Judaea favored pearls and cashmere twinsets. They lived on leafy streets in the suburb of Outremont, in detached cottages that had heated towel racks, basement playrooms, and a plaque hanging on the wall behind the wet bar testifying to the number of trees their parents had paid to have planted in Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. I joined Habonim -- the youth group of a Zionist political party, rooted in socialist doctrine -- shortly after my bar mitzvah, during my first year at Baron Byng High School. I had been recruited by a Room 41 classmate whom I shall call Jerry Greenfeld..."

From Publishers Weekly Richler's sharply observed memoir—a yeasty mix of travel, reminiscence, history and political commentary—charts his odyssey from the activist Zionism of his youth in Montreal to his current belief that Israel is "the legitimate home of two peoples" and that the Israeli Jews' displacement and dispossession of native Palestinians was not justified. The book's centerpiece, Richler's 1992 trip to Israel amid rioting in Gaza in support of a hunger strike by more than 3000 Palestinian prisoners, culminates with a visit to a Palestinian refugee camp. There he interviews a woman whose son, a stone-throwing protester, was arrested and tortured by Israelis and, after his release,

shot to death by Israeli soldiers. Novelist and screenwriter Richler also visits struggling kibbutzim and traces the history of the kibbutz movement. On the 1993 peace accord, he predicts that if the Likud party returns to power soon, the Palestinians will get no more than the Gaza Strip and Jericho and can forget about statehood. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In this predominately autobiographical work, novelist Richler (Solomon Gursky Was Here, LJ 4/1/94) focuses on his youth in Montreal in the Forties and two visits to Israel. Rejecting his Orthodox Jewish upbringing, he passionately embraced Zionism in his early teens and became an active member of the Habonim. By his early adulthood his ardor had cooled, and he settled in London. He disassociated himself completely from things Jewish, relating an incident from the Fifties when he invited a friend to sample Jewish cuisine in Paris-only to find that the restaurant was closed for Yom Kippur. His first trip to the Jewish state, in 1962, was prompted by a journalism assignment. And he didn't return until 30 years later-again on a subsidized mission. There is no indication that in the intervening years he was interested in Middle East affairs. During both trips he sought out left-wing spokesmen, so his fervent espousal of the Arab Palestinian cause appears vacuous. Not recommended. Carol R. Glatt, VA Medical Ctr., Philadelphia Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist In an insightful and perceptive book, Richler mixes memoir, history, and political commentary in exploring the idea of Israel as a homeland for Jews as well as Palestinians. Richler, a Canadian Jew, writes of the Montreal of his youth and the three youth groups there that were committed to the concept of an independent Jewish state; of his maternal grandfather (a celebrated Hasidic scholar); of his divorced mother, who ran a kosher boardinghouse in Canada's Laurentian Mountains during the 1940s; and of his Hebrew teachers and his friends. He discusses his visits to Israel and his friends who emigrated to Israel and settled in kibbutzim. Richler's caustic and keen examination of the state of Israel and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, combined with his warm reminiscences, makes this an important book by an important writer. George Cohen