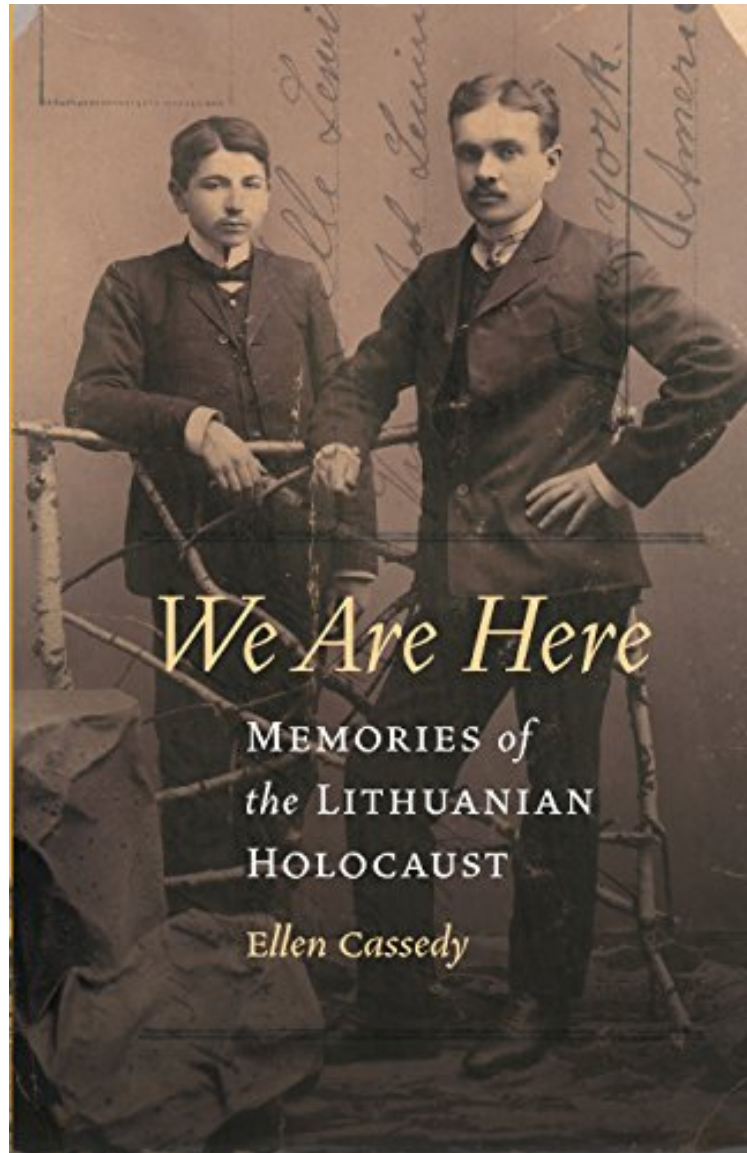


(Read now) We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust

We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust

Ellen Cassedy

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Ellen Cassedy : We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. In her quest she finds no easy answer to any of the questions she has By Bernard Terway We Are Here a book about a perplexing part of history, WWII, a country, Lithuania, a massacre of almost the entire Jewish population. Ellen Cassedy learns of her family history, their part in this historic time and place and makes it her mission to go to Lithuania, to learn Yiddish, to interview Jews and Lithuanians and come to an

understanding of what happened, why it happened, who did what to whom and what is ongoing to find the truth. In her quest she finds no easy answer to any of the questions she has. Her determination to learn Yiddish and to bring some understanding to the horrors of the time takes her on a long, complicated journey. If one is to look at the title and the content of the book, one can go in blaming one side for the atrocities, one can go in and blame the other side. Everything has two sides, but, I think, Ellen Cassedy has shown us that there is a third side in this story. First, there is a lot of blame to go around, a lot of hatred to vent. Rightly so, on both sides and each side has blame for the actions of the side they are on. After reading her interviews, the third side emerges. Yes there is blame, there is a horror story there, but there is a way to remember what happened and look with open eyes and minds and come to an understanding of the time it happened, learn a lesson from what happened, and teach what happened so it will never happen again. Certainly there are those who will not agree with what Ellen wrote, but what she wrote and from the words of the people who are working on understanding, there can be something good to come out of this. The hope is for better understanding, better education and better working together to not let this be forgotten, but to move on to make it never happen again.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book for everyone
By CBoston
Many of us are Litvaks, and not too many of us know our past. This book is an intriguing, balanced introduction to understanding both Jewish history in Lithuania and the Jewish present there today--and comes in a readable, enjoyable exploration of one woman's search for her roots and her path towards tolerance. I recommend this book not only for Jewish readers, but for all those with Lithuanian roots who want to better understand how others have experienced and continue to experience Lithuanian history. In fact, I recommend this book for NON-Litvaks who are simply interested in understanding that there is no benefit to playing the suffering sweepstakes--whose pain is worse--but rather, we must try to join together in understanding that we must all move towards a world where EVERYONE works against all kinds of hate and resentment. That is the brilliance of this book--we move towards that revelation together under Ellen Cassedy's skillful and compelling guidance.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The ambiguity of human behavior
By Stuart A Seidel
Ellen Cassedy provides invaluable insight into the complexities of life in the Jewish ghettos of Lithuania during during World War Two. From the distance of decades following those events, many of us fall pretty to the comforts of moral certainty, judging the behavior of people who lived -- and died -- in those times, without having an appreciation of the circumstances that dictated their actions. Cassedy makes such certainty far less absolute, compelling her reader to re-evaluate long-held beliefs about what Jews did to one another, how some cooperated with the Nazis and how some remained passive.

Winner of the 2013 National Book Prize from Grub Street, the 2013 Towson Prize for Literature, the Silver Medal for History from the 2012 ForeWord Book of the Year Awards, the 2013 Prakhin International Literary Foundation Award, and the 2013-14 Best Book Award from the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. Shortlisted for the 2014 Saroyan Prize.

Ellen Cassedy's longing to recover the Yiddish she'd lost with her mother's death eventually led her to Lithuania, once the "Jerusalem of the North." As she prepared for her journey, her uncle, sixty years after he'd left Lithuania in a boxcar, made a shocking disclosure about his wartime experience, and an elderly man from her ancestral town made an unsettling request. Gradually, what had begun as a personal journey broadened into a larger exploration of how the people of this country, Jews and non-Jews alike, are confronting their past in order to move forward into the future. How does a nation--how do successor generations, moral beings--overcome a bloody past? How do we judge the bystanders, collaborators, perpetrators, rescuers, and ourselves? These are the questions Cassedy confronts in *We Are Here*, one woman's exploration of Lithuania's Jewish history combined with a personal exploration of her own family's place in it. Digging through archives with the help of a local whose motives are puzzling to her; interviewing natives, including an old man who wants to "speak to a Jew" before he dies; discovering the complications encountered by a country that endured both Nazi and Soviet occupation--Cassedy finds that it's not just the facts of history that matter, but what we choose to do with them.

Brilliantly balanced, totally engaging, and constantly penetrating. Jewish Book World Magazine, Jewish Book Council
Cassedy resists Lithuanian attempts to place Jewish and Lithuanian suffering side by side. She listens to all the voices and perspectives attempts to know and comprehend rather than judge. Christopher R. Browning, New York of Books
Weaves together a historical quilt that provides an important context to a complex narrative. Jerusalem Post
Challenges us to think again about what it means to remember the Holocaust in the present. Laura Levitt (Temple University), H-Judaic, H-Net s
Deeply moving. offers a unique perspective." Saulius Suziedelis, Millersville University, PA
Pioneering. will reach out to all those who care about not replaying in this new century the disasters of the century that has just ended. Michael Steinlauf, author of *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*
This eloquent book can help us to reach out, open our hearts, and rediscover one another in a spirit of mutual understanding. Hon. Valdas Adamkus, former president of Lithuania
Engaging, informative, thought-provoking. Compelling Stories: Jewish Lives Lived "An intimate, personal and investigative approach." Baltimore Jewish Times
Immersing herself in the study of Yiddish was like a prayer for her, a connection to her people. Jewish Forverts
A most captivating read. Cassedy offers an extraordinary perspective, human and moving, to concerns that

often are hidden by tired clichs, sentimentality, or anger. A rare document. Samuel Bak, survivor of the Vilna ghetto and author of *Painted in Words* Those spiritually and intellectually brave enough to accompany Ms. Cassedy will be rewarded by sharing in her revelations and insight. Ina Navazelskis, journalist specializing in Central European and Baltic affairs

About the Author Ellen Cassedy has explored the world of the Lithuanian Holocaust for ten years. Her work has appeared in *Ha'aretz*, *The Huffington Post*, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal*, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, *The Jewish Daily Forward*, *Hadassah*, and other publications.