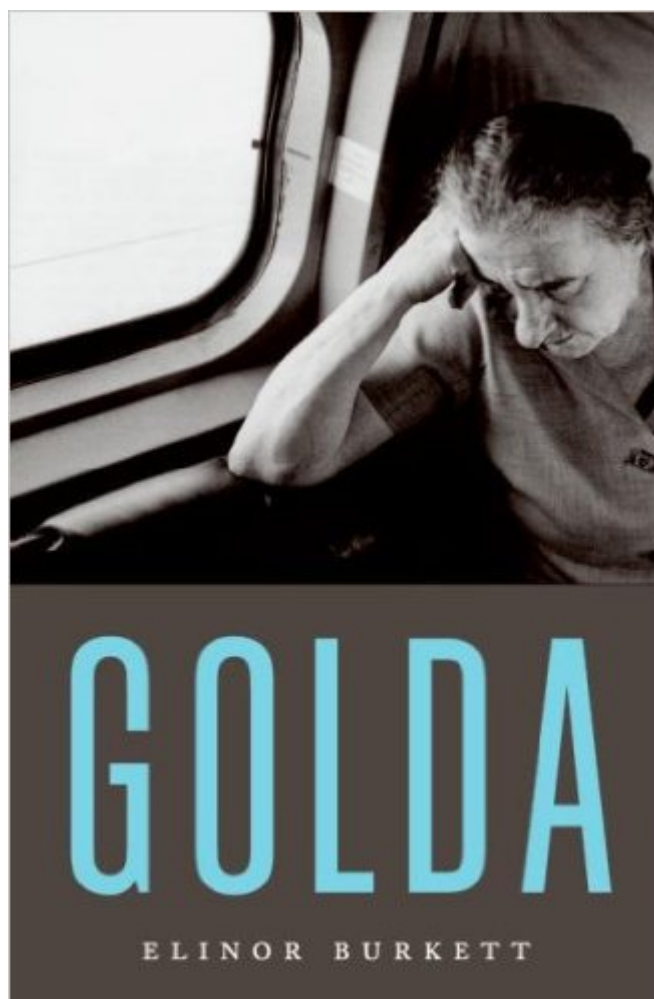


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Golda



Synopsis

The first female head of state in the Western world and one of the most influential women in modern history, Golda Meir was a member of the tiny coterie of founders of the State of Israel, the architect of its socialist infrastructure, and its most tenacious international defender. Her uncompromising devotion to shaping and defending a Jewish homeland against dogged enemies and skittish allies stunned political contemporaries skeptical about the stamina of an elderly leader, and transformed Middle Eastern politics for decades to follow. A blend of Emma Goldman and Martin Luther King Jr. in the guise of a cookie-serving grandmother, Meir was a tough-as-nails politician who issued the first prescient warnings about the rise of international terrorism, out-maneuvered Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger at their own game of realpolitik, and led Israel through a bloody war even as she eloquently pleaded for peace. A prodigious fundraiser and persuasive international voice, Golda carried the nation through its most perilous hours while she herself battled cancer. In this masterful biography, critically acclaimed author and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Elinor Burkett looks beyond Meir's well-known accomplishments to the complex motivations and ideals, personal victories and disappointments, of her charismatic public persona. Beginning with Meir's childhood in virulently anti-Semitic Russia and her family's subsequent relocation to the United States, Burkett places Meir within the framework of the American immigrant experience, the Holocaust, and the single-mindedness of a generation that carved a nation out of its own nightmares and dreams. She paints a vivid portrait of a legendary woman defined by contradictions: an iron resolve coupled with magnetic charm, an utter ordinariness of appearance matched to extraordinary achievements, a kindly demeanor that disguised a stunning hard-heartedness, and a complete dedication to her country that often overwhelmed her personal relationships. To produce this definitive account of Meir's life, Burkett mined historical records never before examined by any researcher, and interviewed members of Meir's inner circle, many going on record for the first time. The result is an astounding portrait of one of the most commanding political presences of the twentieth century—a woman whose uncompromising commitment to the creation and preservation of a Jewish state fueled and framed the ideological conflicts that still define Middle Eastern relations today.

Book Information

Hardcover: 496 pages

Publisher: Harper; 1st edition (April 29, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060786655

ISBN-13: 978-0060786656

Product Dimensions: 6 x 2.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (33 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,073,161 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #155 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Women & Judaism #829 inÂ Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Middle East #1304 inÂ Books > History > Middle East > Israel & Palestine

Customer Reviews

From Kenneth Ellman, Newton, New Jersey, 07860, ke@kennethellman.com This is a well done and very readable book about one of the most important leaders of Israel and one of the most accomplished female political leaders anywhere, ever. The fact that Golda Meir was born in Russia in abysmal poverty as many of our families were in the time of the Czar, then emigrated to and lived in the United States and worked as a school teacher in Milwaukee and then later became the Prime Minister of Israel should be beyond any one book to fully capture. However this author Elinor Burkett has successfully accomplished a reasonable and comfortable presentation of history recreating the place of Israel and the Jewish people and the life, role and participation of Golda Meir. It appears the documentation and research is carefully done. Many of us remember Golda Meir because we lived during her time of conflict, most memorably the extraordinary 1973 war when Israel and the Jewish people were faced with tests and choices of the greatest danger and risk. When the then Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was unable to function and became incompetent (to this day I do not understand what happened to the mind of Dayan at that time) somehow this "Ich bin a Yiddischer tochter", who had become Prime Minister of Israel a land in perpetual war, was able to lead the Country and People. There are many extraordinary events, which although previously known are again recounted in this book. Some of them may bring you to tears. The story of the visits by Golda Meir as the then Ambassador to the Soviet Union from Israel, to the Choral Synagogue in Moscow during the time of the Stalin terror can leave you dazed. Tears and tears of joy are the memory of those Soviet Jews that haunts you.

Golda Meir-the redoubtable mother of modern Israel- was a great woman leader in the tradition of the Prophetess Deborah, Boudicca and Queen Elizabeth I of England. She was a great patriot and visionary dedicated to building, serving and defending her nation and people. Elinor Burkett has written a well researched, highly readable and interesting biography. It's one main flaw however is

that the author gives too critical an appraisal of the basis Golda's strong leadership- a determination that never again will Israel fall and the Jewish people be defenseless and at the mercy of their enemies. When outsiders sneered that Golda had 'the Masada complex' she responded "It is true that we have a Masada complex. We also have a Hitler complex. We also have a pogrom complex". Israel was re-established in the shadow of the Holocaust, and hundreds of thousands of its first citizens were Holocaust survivors. Israel, fighting for survival since its rebirth, has always lived in the shadow of genocide and a second Holocaust. In the last ten years in particular, Israel has been desperately fighting for her life, with so much of the world determined to hound her out of existence. With Israel's six million Jews comprising the world's largest Jewish community, and 40% of world Jewry, Jewish survival is still the issue. Israel's people face a second Holocaust on two fronts. On one front Israel is faced with a nuclear attack by Iran whose Hitlerite President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has constantly vowed to 'wipe Israel off the map' with the vast nuclear arsenal he is building up. Israel can no longer rely on the support of the USA with Barack Obama having redirected American foreign policy towards the Islamist Axis, with an adversarial attitude to Israel.

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