

“A herculean task to assemble such a mighty anthology. This volume argues for the richness and variety in Jewish political, cultural, and aesthetic life.”

—*Lila Corwin Berman, Temple University*

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The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization

Volume 8: Crisis and Creativity between World Wars, 1918–1939

The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization is a comprehensive, ongoing project gathering material from biblical times to the 21st century to create an unprecedented collection, revealing Jewish creativity, diversity, and cultural contributions around the globe. Over the next five years all ten volumes in this collection will be released. Each volume of The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization puts in context the impact a specific period had on the Jewish people as well as the impact Jewish people had on that period.

Featuring selections by both acclaimed and underappreciated writers, artists, and thinkers, The Posen Library is notable, too, in the unexpected, rarely seen perspectives it offers on many well-known experts and works. The Posen Library puts the sacred and the secular side by side, with primary sources translated from an extensive array of languages, many available for the first time in English and offered here for researchers, educators, students, and readers to discover. Unlike an encyclopedia, The Posen Library, curated by leading Jewish studies scholars, puts readers directly in touch with the original works, unmediated by interpretation. The works span a wide range of genres: religious and political writing, nonfiction, fiction, memoirs, painting, photography, sculpture, and architecture. To make the material accessible to everyone who reads English, the project includes the interactive Posen Digital Library as well as 10 beautifully produced print volumes to be published by Yale University Press.

On April 7, 2020, Yale University Press will publish *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization, Volume 8: Crisis and Creativity between World Wars, 1918–1939*, edited by Todd M. Endelman and Zvi Gitelman. “This volume is intended to introduce readers to

a world that they did not know existed. We stress the richness of the writing and reflection throughout the Jewish world,” explains Endelman.

“Our selection of materials in many languages—many of which were translated for this volume—and in many subject areas helps the reader and viewer recreate the issues, personalities and divergent views of that time,” continued Gitelman.

“Rapid, dramatic change characterized the short twenty-year interval between the two world wars (1918–1939),” write Endelman and Gitelman. “In Europe, economic crises after 1929, strident nationalist movements and militant radical parties, political polarization and the erosion of liberalism, and the slide from democratic to authoritarian norms undermined Jewish hopes for stability and security, especially in the new states that emerged in Eastern and Central Europe. In West European societies and in North America, the challenges were less dire,” they observe, “but daunting nonetheless. However, despite the economic downturn of the 1930s, Western Jews (both native born and immigrants) continued to move into the middle class. In the United States, the Jewish community emerged as a significant influence in American and world Jewish politics. In Palestine, then under British control, the Jewish population grew rapidly, becoming more ideological and secular. If the less than 10 percent of European Jews who lived in Western democracies in the 1930s felt a sense of unease, then in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Germany there was a palpable feeling of impending trouble, if not catastrophe.”

Organized by genre, *Crisis and Creativity between World Wars* showcases Jewish social, political and cultural thought, scholarship and innovation in religious thought, and visual culture, fiction, drama, and poetry. Gorgeously illustrated, this volume of *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, will be cherished by anyone interested in the global story of Jewish culture and civilization.

“The Posen Library challenges the primacy of religion as the dominant mode of Jewish life and culture over the centuries,” explains Editor-in-Chief Deborah Dash Moore. “It is a somewhat controversial way of approaching the Jewish past and Jewish culture and civilization. The Posen Library explicitly contends that how Jews earned a living, related to each other in community, and decorated their homes is as worthy of understanding as how Jews wrote commentary on Torah.”

Publishing Details

The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization, Volume 8: Crisis and Creativity between World Wars, 1918–1939

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About the Editors

Todd M. Endelman is professor emeritus of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. He was educated at the University of California, Berkeley, and Harvard University. Before moving to Michigan, he taught at Yeshiva University and Indiana University. He is the author of *The Jews of Georgian England* (1979), *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History* (1990), *The Jews of Britain* (2002), and *Broadening Jewish History* (2012). His book, *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History* (2015) was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Prize.

Zvi Gitelman is professor emeritus of Political Science and Preston R. Tisch Professor Emeritus of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. He has written or edited eighteen books, the most recent of which is the edited volume, *The New Jewish Diaspora: Russian-speaking Immigrants in the United States, Israel and Germany* (Rutgers University Press, 2016). In 2012, Cambridge University Press published his *Jewish Identities in Postcommunist Russia and Ukraine: An Uncertain Ethnicity*, which drew on two large surveys he conducted with two colleagues in Russia. His current research examines the political uses of history in post-Communist states and in World War II in the USSR.

About The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization

The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization is comprised of The Posen Digital Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization (PDL), available at posenlibrary.com, and the 10-volume print anthology of Jewish culture being published by Yale University Press. The Posen Library is a collection curated by leading Jewish Studies scholars offering unprecedented access to excerpts from thousands of primary sources reflecting Jewish creativity, diversity, and culture worldwide, spanning biblical times to the twenty-first century. Many of these original sources are works translated into English for the first time.

The Posen Digital Library (PDL) currently includes 1,241 primary sources—including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture, fiction, poetry, literature, cartoons, prayer book passages, first-person accounts, and so much more. As each print volume of The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization anthology is released, the entire collection will ultimately grow to more than 6,500 sources, approximately 90 percent of which will be available to a worldwide audience through the PDL.