



Recollections of Jerusalem

Anya Berezina Derrick

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Recollections of Jerusalem vividly opens up to us a world very different from our own. It affords the rare opportunity to see major world events through the eyes of one shaped by them, but unable to influence them.

At the outset of World War II, the author, still a young child, travelled to Jerusalem with her mother on pilgrimage. Prevented by the conflict from returning to their home in Yugoslavia, they began a new life, intimately entwined with the city of Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem Anya was raised in the spirit of Holy Russia, manifested in the life of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, the Mount of Olives convent, the Gethsemane convent, and the Bethany School. Her spiritual life was nurtured by St John (Maximovitch) of Shanghai and San Francisco, Archbishop Antony (Sinkevich) of Los Angeles, Archpriest George Grabbe, Mother Mary (Robinson), and in particular the English priest-monk Lazarus (Moore). Through Anya's eyes, we gain new perspectives on their lives and ministries.

Her experiences in Jerusalem would sustain her faith during later years, following her marriage in America, when the Church was geographically distant from Anya and her burgeoning family. Ultimately they would lead her back to the Holy Land with her husband and children.

From a historical perspective, these recollections offer a window into the struggles and aspirations of the Russian diaspora after the Communist takeover of their ancestral homeland. It shows how events such as the Bolshevik revolution, the Russian civil war, and the Arab–Israeli conflict have shaped present realities.

Recollections of Jerusalem Details

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From Reader Review Recollections of Jerusalem for online ebook

Mimi says

Interesting, and sweet, memoir about growing up in Jerusalem, moving to the US, and then returning to the West Bank to work in the late 70s. She's a parishioner at a local church, although I've not met her. I was fascinated by her impressions of the politics of the West Bank.

Dcn Peter Markevich says

One perk of working for a publishing house is getting to read the book before it's released :) Seeing as I work for the publisher, though, it probably wouldn't be fair to post a review.

So I'll just leave it at this being a valuable read for anyone looking to understand the Russian emigre mentality and their hopes and aspirations upon losing their homeland. Anya's memoirs also open a personal window on the Arab-Israeli conflict, both from her childhood and later years as a librarian in the West Bank.

Jeanette says

This was an interesting read, which I won on Goodreads First Reads Giveaway a while ago. This is not the usual type of book I read, but glad that I did. I learned a fair amount about the life of Anya, her family and the hardships she endured in the Holy Lands during WW2. Recommended.

Stuart says

Recollections of Jerusalem is the autobiography/memoir of Anya Berezina Derrick. Anya Derrick was born in Yugoslavia in the 1930s. She was named after her grandmothers, both named Anna, and her birthday was close to the feast day of St. Anna. Her mother was a nurse and her dad was stationed at a military base near Belgrade. Unfortunately, he took ill with tuberculosis. Anya and her mother were on a pilgrimage in Palestine when World War II broke out, and Anya's mother was hoping to bring back a garment for Anya's father to wear which had been blessed on Christ's burial place. Unfortunately, they were never able to see him again. They were unable to return to Yugoslavia, and were forced to seek asylum in Palestine in 1939. Her father died in 1944, and her mother died without ever finding out what happened to him or where he was buried.

The book isn't all heartache and tragedy, though there is a bit of it in this book. This book also is the coming of age of a young girl. We see and get to read her interactions with great spiritual fathers and mothers, like Fr. Lazarus Moore, St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Mother Mary and Archbishop Antony. We also get introduced to her husband Wayne and her children. She tells a cute story about giving birth to twins, her 13 month old son hearing the birth sounds, and climbing out of his crib to come see what all the noise was. I

can't imagine having that many children that young, but she was blessed. Other stories in this book include her visit to the Holy Land with her oldest son, and her family's eventual return to the Holy Land during President Carter's tenure in office.

I'm not really sure how to review this book in all honesty. It's like reviewing someone's life, and how do you do that? In this book I learned a bit about Serbia, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Holy Land in the time of World War II and afterwards. It was an interesting read, and one you should check out if you are interested in any of the subjects I just mentioned.
