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MLA AWARDS FENIA AND YAAKOV LEVIANT MEMORIAL PRIZE IN YIDDISH STUDIES TO JUSTIN CAMMY AND TO JORDAN FINKIN AND ALLISON SCHACHTER

New York, NY – 7 December 2022 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is awarding its eleventh Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies for an outstanding translation of a Yiddish literary work to two works. Justin Cammy, professor of Jewish studies and of world literatures at Smith College, is receiving the award for his translation of Abraham Sutzkever’s *From the Vilna Ghetto to Nuremberg: Memoir and Testimony*, published by McGill-Queen’s University Press. Jordan Finkin, rare book librarian at Hebrew Union College, and Allison Schachter, associate professor of Jewish studies and English at Vanderbilt University, are receiving the award for their translation of *From the Jewish Provinces: Selected Stories* by Fradl Shtok, published by Northwestern University Press. The prize is awarded each even-numbered year and is given alternately to an outstanding translation of a Yiddish literary work and to an outstanding scholarly work in English in the field of Yiddish.

The Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies is one of nineteen awards that will be presented on 6 January 2023, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in San Francisco. The members of this year’s Leviant prize selection committee were Naomi Brenner (Ohio State Univ., Columbus) and Harriet Lisa Murav (Univ. of Illinois, Urbana). The committee’s citation for Cammy reads:

Justin Cammy’s translation of Abraham Sutzkever’s *Vilna Ghetto* brings a particularly powerful and riveting account of the destruction of the Jewish community of Vilna to English readers for the first time. From its opening line, the narrative combines elements of Sutzkever’s lyrical voice with vivid recollections and documentation of Nazi atrocities and Jewish resilience. In addition to this compelling memoir, the collection includes translations of Sutzkever’s testimony and diary from the Nuremberg trials as well as three reminiscences from his experiences in Moscow in the 1940s. Cammy’s deft introductions to the different sections; the detailed and thoughtful afterword, written with Avraham Novershtern; and the extensive footnotes, maps, photographs, chronology, and place-names create an essential volume for the study of East European Jewish literature, culture, and history.

The committee’s citation for Finkin and Schachter reads:

From the Jewish Provinces, Jordan Finkin and Allison Schachter’s translation of the Yiddish writer Fradl Shtok’s short stories, is a slim volume bursting with luminous prose. These twenty-four stories, set in the towns and Hasidic communities of Eastern Europe and the new spaces of Jewish life in the United States, feature the voices of young women as they seek love and try to realize their desires. The translators skillfully render Shtok’s poetic and evocative language into English, particularly in their fluid translation

of the free indirect discourse (*style indirect libre*) that gives these characters their unique and modernist voices, making Shtok's long-forgotten stories available and accessible to new audiences.

The Modern Language Association of America and its 20,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

Established in 2000 by the family of Fenia and Yaakov Leviant, the award honors those writers who have published an English translation of Yiddish literary works and scholars who have written a cultural study or critical biography in the field of Yiddish or edited a work on Yiddish folklore or linguistics. The prize is presented under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards.

Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, for African Studies, for East Asian Studies, for Middle Eastern Studies, and for South Asian Studies; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. A complete list of current and previous prizewinners can be found on the [MLA website](#).