



The Fall of a Sparrow: The Life and Times of Abba Kovner (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and C)

Dina Porat

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The Fall of a Sparrow is the only full biography in English of the partisan, poet, and patriot Abba Kovner (1918–1987). An unsung and largely unknown hero of the Second World War and Israel's War of Independence, Kovner was born in Vilna, "the Jerusalem of Lithuania." Long before the rest of the world suspected, he was the first person to state that Hitler was planning to kill the Jews of Europe. Kovner and other defenders of the Vilna ghetto, only hours before its destruction, escaped to the forest to join the partisans fighting the Nazis. Returning after the Liberation to find Vilna empty of Jews, he immigrated to Israel, where he devised a fruitless plot to take revenge on the Germans. He then joined the Israeli army and served as the Givati Brigade's Information Officer, writing "Battle Notes," newsletters that inspired the troops defending Tel Aviv. After the war, Kovner settled on a kibbutz and dedicated his life to working the land, writing poetry, and raising a family. He was also the moving force behind such projects as the Diaspora Museum and the Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature. *The Fall of a Sparrow* is based on countless interviews with people who knew Kovner, and letters and archival material that have never been translated before.

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