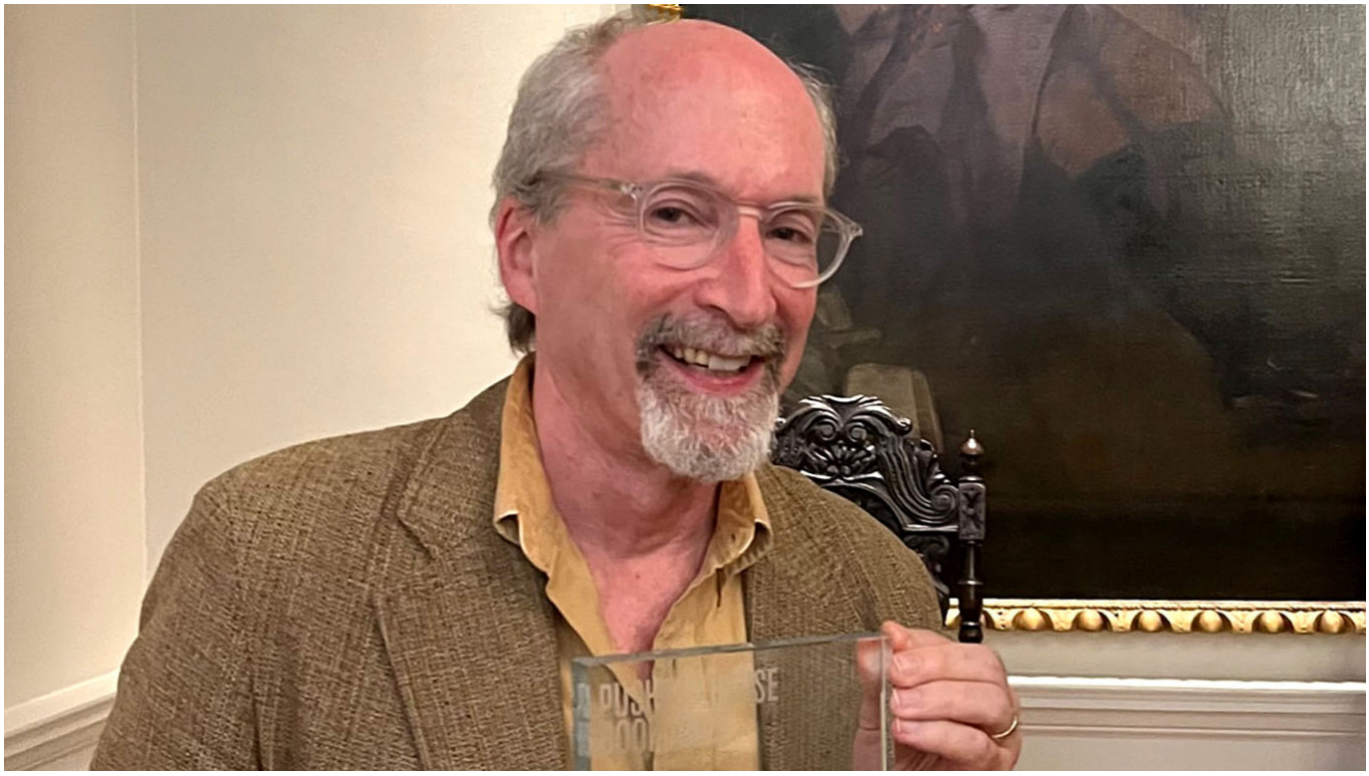
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Benjamin Nathans' 'To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause' Awarded 2025 Pushkin House Book Prize

By Michele A. Berdy

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On Thursday evening this year's Pushkin House Book Prize was awarded to Benjamin Nathans for his book "To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Soviet Dissident Movement," published by Princeton University Press.

The jury also gave a special recognition award to "Patriot" by Alexei Navalny, translated by Arch Tait and Stephen Dalziel, making the year's awards a tribute to resistance to authoritarian regimes.

At the ceremony in London Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, chair of the Book Prize judging panel, noted that "Nathans offers an account of Soviet dissent as a unique form of legalist resistance to the repressive state that emerged from within the Soviet system. He grants the Soviet

dissidents the dignity of being understood on their own terms— as Soviet citizens and moral agents trying to challenge and improve the system from within. This image of principled individuals who took on themselves the mantle of civic responsibility for changing the system underscores their values and their sacrifice. The book's empathy, archival richness and intellectual insight are unforgettable."

At the event the six nominated authors — and translators — talked about their books, which ranged widely in style and subject matter. In addition to the authors awarded, the other nominees were: Howard Amos for "Russia Starts Here: Real Lives in the Ruins of Empire"; Lucy Ash for "The Baton and the Cross: Russia's Church from Pagans to Putin"; Sergey Radchenko for "To Run the World: The Kremlin's Cold War Bid for Global Power"; and Donald Rayfield for "A Seditious and Sinister Tribe': The Crimean Tatars and Their Khanate."

The award was presented by Elena Kostyuchenko, a journalist, writer and LGBTQ+ activist, who was awarded the Pushkin House Book Prize 2024 for "I Love Russia: Reporting from a Lost Country."

Since 2013 the Pushkin House Book Prize has been awarded to a non-fiction book published in English about Russia and its neighboring countries and cultures, past and present. The Prize has been made possible by support from Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith and the Polonsky Foundation.

Excerpts from all the nominated books can be found in The Moscow Times' Arts and Life section here.

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