

Bohemian spa to reassert itself — either in reality or, more likely, through the future lens of historical scholarship — as a counter-world of interanimating Jewish cultures.

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Karlip, Joshua M. *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 2013. x + 378 pp. Notes. Index. \$45.00: £33.95.

JOSHUA M. KARLIP's *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* is a meticulously researched study of an extraordinarily fecund and fateful period of modern Jewish history. But readers must be aware that the title — which is probably more the choice of Harvard University Press than the author — is misleading. Karlip's PhD dissertation from the Jewish Theological Seminary (2006) on which this work is based, 'The Center that Could Not Hold: Afn Sheydveg and the Crisis of Diaspora Nationalism', is an accurate description of the book. Those who are expecting a comprehensive sweep, encompassing the many varieties of Jewish nationalism, even within a single generation, will be disappointed. This is not what this book offers. Yet if one possesses a fair amount of knowledge of European Jewish history, *The Tragedy of a Generation* is certain to be greatly appreciated.

In a rather odd way, however, the book delivers more than it promises, even with a title of such wide berth. While it mainly comprises an analysis and contextualization of a journal, *Oyfn sheydveg*, and its three key figures — I. M. Cherikover (1881–1943), Zelig Kalmanovich (1885–1944), and Isroel Efroikin (1884–1954) — and ends in a thunderous clap with the Holocaust, it also may be seen as prefiguring the mind-set which led numerous Jews from universalist outlooks to embrace orthodoxy, 'essentialist' (p. 307), and authoritarian forms of Jewish nationalism, uncompromisingly bound to the territory of Palestine (later Israel) (p. 255).

The thrust of the study is these men's conception of, and evolving thought concerning Yiddishism and Diaspora Nationalism. Inherent in this emphasis are the strains they initially rejected: Zionism, Marxism (class struggle) and separatist varieties of Jewish orthodoxy. Yiddish culture and language was supposed to serve as the chief unifying force for Jews, while 'Jewish statelessness' was to be 'celebrated' (p. 151). Central to Karlip's analysis is his explication of the extent to which the forms of supposed 'nonreligious' Jewish nationalism were deeply beholden to traditional Judaism: 'A reading of their *Oyfn sheydveg* articles in light of their biographies unsettles our assumptions

regarding the categories of the secular and the religious, the cultural and politically radical and the conservative. More fundamentally, it questions the long-held assumptions of historians that secular Jewish nationalism's break with traditional religious Judaism proved total and irreversible' (p. 3). In a standard formulation of a dissertation-turned-book, Karlip states that 'My study reveals that Diaspora nationalists and Yiddishists, long before the crisis of Nazism, constantly sought to both rebel against the religious tradition and to draw inspiration from it' (p. 4). Certainly this thesis is well-supported. Yet how different is it from the ideas of classics such as Moses Rischin's *Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), Jonathan Frankel's *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1882–1917* (Cambridge and New York, 1981), Ezra Mendelsohn's *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Worker's Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge and New York, 1970) and David Weinberg's stellar (but often overlooked) *Between Tradition and Modernity: Haim Zhitlowski, Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am, and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identity* (Teaneck, NJ, 1996)? In the author's own generation, this sensibility is far from absent in the sophisticated scholarship of, for example, Barry Trachtenberg in *The Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish, 1913–1917* (Syracuse, NY, 2008) and Kenneth Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

Rather than the purported thesis of the book its greatest contribution may be its scope: tracing what happened to these people and their thought in the fires of Nazism. 'On the eve of World War II and during the Holocaust', Cherkover, Kalmanovich and Efrogin 'paradoxically sought to salvage their cultural vision by severing it from its base in the Jewish revolution. Whereas proponents of all trends of the cultural revolution had sought to synthesize Jewish with European cultures, these men struggled to save Diaspora nationalism and Yiddishism by envisioning their return to a state of pre-modern Jewish political and cultural isolation' (p. 5). In many respects, these men, who had virtually no power themselves, were prophets: modern Israel in the second decade of the twenty-first century harbours, to no small extent, this character. The growing enclaves of Jewish ultra-orthodoxy, and other right-wing Jewish constituencies in the United States, Britain and Europe are foreshadowed here as well. The self-conscious detachment, even scorn, for 'liberal European [and American] culture' (p. 11) is one of the dominant sources of tension in Israel and the Diaspora, and a tie that binds the Christian fundamentalist 'Tea Party' with Netanyahu's vision of a greater Israel. While the substantially revised views of Tscherkover, Efrogin and Kalmanovich can be attributed to being 'crushed "under the hammer of history"', those who have adopted similar approaches in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have done so mainly of their own volition. But today's proponents of such views often

justify themselves, ahistorically, as responding to that very same ‘hammer’ which pounded the *Oyfn sheydveg* cohort. This splendid, scholarly work — like the thinkers to whom it is a tribute — offers a great deal of food for thought. Perhaps, inadvertently, Karlip also supplies a warning: that isolation, even if the ghetto is self-imposed and militarily mighty, is far from splendid.

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Pauly, Matthew D. *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923–1934*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, ON, Buffalo, NY and London, 2014. xx + 456 pp. Map. Illustrations. Biographical sketches. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$85.00.

ALTHOUGH it is perhaps a coincidence that Matthew D. Pauly’s impressive volume on the policy of Ukrainization in Soviet Ukraine coincides with the current Ukrainian crisis, its publication invokes an unintended emotional response. Might Ukraine, in fact, have escaped today’s fate and the calamity in the Donbas, if the 1920s policy, which sought to foster a strong republican identity with the help of Ukrainization, had succeeded?

Pauly’s new book brings to light extensive archival material and offers a unique insight into the workings of the Soviet nationalities policy on the micro-level of the school. In contrast to many extant contributions focusing on ‘high-level political debates’ (p. 3) of early Soviet nationalities and language policies in different republics, the author approaches the subject from the opposite direction with the view ‘from the archive’ foregrounding the everyday, the mundane, and the individual, that made up the fabric of the policy’s implementation at local level.

Crucially for our understanding of its achievements and failures, linguistic and cultural Ukrainization was an essential part of a comprehensive educational programme based on a ‘progressive methodology’ and aiming to create a distinct Ukrainian system of primary and secondary labour schools. Progressive education included teaching through the so-called ‘complex method’, in which the curriculum was organized around thematic complexes and promoted *kraieznavstvo*, or local studies, as its source for content material. More importantly, however, in the formalist fashion typical of the 1920s, the progressive method prescribed the form — complexes — but encouraged students’ creativity, independent research and personal input into their content. The Ukrainian system of primary schooling was thus intended as a form promoting civic education of a conscious, responsible and active citizenry of the republic, achieved by means of the Ukrainian language and its new role as a