

Hoffman, Stefani and Mendelsohn, Ezra (eds). *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews*. Jewish Culture and Contexts. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 2008. ix + 320 pp. Illustrations. Notes. Index. £36.00: \$55.00.

SINCE Jonathan Frankel published *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* in 1981, everyone following who studied Russian Jewish politics and political culture has been, directly or indirectly, his student. As Benjamin Nathans states in the introduction to *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews*, a *festschrift* in Frankel's honour, '[t]he widening of the study of Russian Jewry to include not just politics but political culture, not just ideologies but identities, and, most important, the shift from analytic categories defined by historical actors to those selected by historians themselves found expression in a pathbreaking work of scholarship by the man in whose honor the present volume appears' (p. 3). Frankel's legacy is evident in the wide range of scholarship in this volume assessing the intersection of politics, culture, state policies and Jewish self-definition in late imperial and revolutionary Russia.

The paradox of 1905–07 is that Jewish political participation, and with it the hope for civil equality, occurred simultaneously with anti-Jewish violence that reinforced the impression that Jews would always be treated exceptionally within the empire. The essays in the first two sections of this book all deal with the countervailing trends of Jews simultaneously becoming legally less exceptional and yet ever more the focus of the tsar, the army and the monarchist right's animosity. To open the book, Abraham Ascher provides an excellent overview of the many historiographical approaches to the Revolution of 1905. Rather than an inevitable failure or, as Lenin believed, a 'dress rehearsal', Ascher emphasizes that at the time, all of the actors very seriously contemplated the possibility of reform. As Richard Wortman points out in the subsequent chapter, however, Nicholas II never abandoned his faith in pure autocracy, and hence he insisted on personally issuing the October Manifesto to ensure the public understanding of his personal rule. For Nicholas, the revolution reinforced the centrality of the Jews as a nefarious group seeking to rupture the bond between the tsar and his (Russian Orthodox) people. Robert Weinberg suggests that to the monarchist right, the Jews wielded a power in the Duma (and in general) completely disproportionate to reality. In a similar vein, Semion Goldin argues that by 1905, Russian military leaders had also become incapable of seeing any capacity for loyalty among the Jews. Goldin explains how between 1905 and 1914, with the tsar's backing, the army moved toward a racial definition of Jewishness, barring even converted Jews and their offspring from the officer corps. Even Jewish enfranchisement could be a double-edged sword; as Theodore Weeks demonstrates, antisemitism became a central component of Polish nationalist politics in no small part due to the electoral politics that followed the revolution. Yet, at the same time, Jews also benefited from many of the revolution's results, not least from liberalization of the press. As Dmitrii Eliashevich points out, the specific features of Jewish censorship ended in 1906 — there would be no 'Jewish censor' or prejudicial treatment of Jewish languages again until 1914.

The essays in the book's third and fourth sections all touch on the relationship between politics and culture, especially in the years following the revolution. As Kenneth Moss demonstrates in his chapter, pre-existing arguments about the role of politics in Jewish culture, and vice versa, crystallized following 1905. We can see manifestations of this trend in Hannan Hever's chapter on Yosef Haim Brenner, who following 1905 sought to purge politics and ideology from his writing, and Barry Trachtenberg's discussion of the creation of a non-partisan 'Yiddishist' culture. Scott Ury suggests that politicization in general and nationalism in particular could provide an outlet for frustrated young men who had assimilated the European discourse of alienation. Both Vladimir Levin and Brian Horowitz's chapters discuss how new and old cultural institutions altered the leadership and politics of Russian Jewry. On the one hand, Levin shows how cultural organizations formed by socialists had to avoid politics in order to stay open, and on the other hand, Horowitz demonstrates how older organizations such as the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment (OPE) become increasingly politicized and more explicitly focused on creating Jewish national cultural autonomy. As Jeffrey Veidlinger points out in his chapter, 'The Jews, who had so few legal rights and so much to gain from a civil society, were among the most vocal proponents of the movement to establish formal voluntary associations within the public sphere' (p. 200). To close the fourth section, Mikhail Krutikov's chapter argues that in the Soviet period Yiddish writers such as Lipman-Levin and Der Nister were able to preserve a narrative of the 1905 Revolution with Jewish heroes by otherwise maintaining ideological orthodoxy.

The book's final section deals with 1905's impact in the United States. Rebecca Kobrin carefully breaks down the factors motivating Jewish immigrants from Russia following 1905 and finds that the rule of law and participatory democracy in America attracted many Jews frustrated by their lack of political rights and economic integration in Russia. Kobrin argues that many Jewish immigrants formed their liberal values in Russia, not after coming to the United States. Eli Lederhendler confirms this view in his chapter when he suggests that Jewish immigrants expected the United States to function as the antithesis of Russia, and proposes further that Jews sought to preserve their distinctiveness in American society by continuing to defend and identify with Russian Jews. While both essays acknowledge the economic, technological and social reasons for heightened immigration between 1903 and 1907, they also correct the emphasis of recent interpretations by pointing out that politics did matter to immigrants. As Nathans aptly observes, and the essays in this volume confirm, 'it is virtually impossible to write about Jews, power, and culture in late imperial Russia — not to mention a host of related topics — without engaging the questions and arguments raised by Frankel over the course of his scholarly career' (p. 4).

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