

Reese's new study provides both a useful description of conditions in the army and a provocative set of assertions concerning the effects of those conditions.

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Freeze, Chaeran Y. *A Jewish Woman of Distinction: The Life and Diaries of Zinaida Poliakov*. The Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry. Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2019. xvi + 397 pp. \$29.99 (paper). ISBN 987-1-68458-001-9.

"May God make you like Poliakov," was the blessing that the Moscow Rabbi Maze pronounced in his eulogy for Lazar Poliakov in 1914 (p. 105). In the Russian Empire, Poliakov, like Brodsky or Ginzburg, was not merely a family name but a symbol of Jewish wealth, an object of intense envy, admiration, and loathing. The Poliakovs' rise to wealth began during the reign of Nicholas I with the opening of new economic opportunities for enterprising Jews such as tax farming. But their real fortune was to be made later in the lucrative railroad construction business during the 1860s–1870s, which in turn laid a foundation for private banking. While the Ginzburgs resided in St. Petersburg and the Brodskys in Kiev, the Poliakovs made Moscow their home. Lazar Poliakov, known as Russia's "railway king," moved into a spacious house on the prestigious Tverskoy Boulevard in 1870, when his eldest daughter Zinaida (1863-1952) was seven years old. The Poliakovs spared neither effort nor money to mitigate the inherent anti-Semitic feelings of the Russian ruling classes by cultivating important bureaucrats. A staunch monarchist, Lazar was friends with people like Mikhail Katkov and Konstantin Pobedonostsev known for their conservative nationalism. Another cherished family friend was Moscow Governor-General Prince Dolgorukov whose tolerance was handsomely reciprocated by grateful Moscow Jews.

At the age of twelve, Zinaida started a diary and kept it, with interruptions, until her death. The diary offers a close look into the daily life of an aspirational upper-bourgeois Jewish family as it tries to establish itself in Moscow high society. Her strong-willed mother Rozaliia, with whom Zinaida had uneasy relationship, "raised her daughter to be a cultured lady of leisure and consumption, not a merchant and entrepreneur like herself" (p. 30). Zinaida grew up immersed in Russian culture, and remained attached to it to the end of her life. Like Christian young women of her standing, she spent her time attending balls, theater, and races, entertaining guests, and paying visits. One exception was religious observance. The family kept the laws of kashrut at home and celebrated Jewish holidays in a private synagogue adjacent to their house. On December 25, 1885, Zinaida recorded: "All Orthodox Christian people celebrate Christmas today. But we belong to the Semitic family, also to the Poliakov clan, and celebrate ... my birthday tomorrow" (p. 269). The diary reflects Zinaida's growing interest in social life and her father's affairs, but also her lack of concern about the situation of Jews in Russia. As Freeze suggests, "Zinaida deliberately excluded herself from stories of Jewish suffering during the pogroms of 1881, which she almost totally ignored" (p. 6).

As every upper-class Jewish family, the Poliakovs were deeply preoccupied with finding the right husbands for their daughters. Zinaida married Reuben Gubbay, a scion of a wealthy Anglo-Indian Jewish family, at the relatively late age of twenty-eight. Their marriage was not a happy one, partly because Reuben did not share her attachment to Russian cuisine and customs such as celebrating the New Year with champagne. In the end, Zinaida Poliakova outlived everyone she knew as a child, experienced the loss of family fortune, separation from Russia

after the October Revolution, and the Nazi occupation of France, and died in poverty in Paris, where her only possession was a family vault in Montparnasse Cemetery.

Chaeran Freeze translated the first four notebooks of the diary that were written between 1875 and 1887, which “provide rich insights into the world of Jewish elites and their intimate ties to Russian officialdom” (p. 7). The translation is accompanied by detailed annotations and a comprehensive introduction which takes up half of the book. The research that went into this publication is truly outstanding, covering a wide range of subjects that until now have remained understudied, such as the role of Jewish entrepreneurs in the Russian economy, the everyday life of privileged Russian Jewish families, and the role of women in developing a modern hybrid Russian-Jewish identity.

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McGeever, Brendan. *Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. xi + 247 pp. \$99.99. ISBN 978-1-107-19599-8.

This thoroughly researched, highly readable, and important book merits broader readership than its inflated price tag is likely to yield. It focuses on the Bolshevik response to the emergence of antisemitic violence in 1917 and during the Civil War, mainly in Ukraine. Anti-Bolshevik forces were the overwhelming source of the violence, but the central concern here is the Red Army. “Antisemitism,” the author demonstrates, “was present within both the counter-revolutionary *and* revolutionary movements” (p. 5). Although Bolshevik forces may have been responsible for a small fraction of Civil War pogroms, “antisemitism was a considerable problem in the majority of Red Army units in Ukraine” (p. 90).

The argument proceeds on two tracks. First, Brendan McGeever seeks to explain how “revolutionary politics and counter-revolutionary antisemitism” could exist “not only in conflict but in articulation as well,” with Bolshevism and antisemitism “often co-extensive projects in the popular imaginary” (pp. 30, 111). Several factors are invoked. For one thing, given its often loose employment of rhetorical labels like “speculator”—rarely understood by a peasant audience in the Marxist sense intended—“Bolshevik revolutionary discourse could overlap with antisemitic conceptions of Jewishness,” while “categories of class struggle were sometimes deployed in ways over which the Bolsheviks had no control” (pp. 97, 6). Moreover, “the broader weaknesses of the Bolshevik project in Ukraine” fed antisemitism (p. 119). In this light, McGeever demonstrates how Leninist centralization of power, often bemoaned as violating popular will, could be “crucial in preventing the Red pogroms” in the former Pale (p. 74).

At the same time, centralization in Moscow led to the dismantling of the initial Soviet campaign against antisemitism, pressed and led largely by Jewish leftists who were latecomers to Bolshevism. This is McGeever’s second track. He argues persuasively that while Bolshevism was always opposed to antisemitism and its non-Jewish leaders firmly committed to suppressing pogromist activity, most Bolsheviks tended to view the problem through the lens of defending the revolution rather than defending Jews. And while resistance to violent antisemitism often led Jewish workers to the Bolshevik cause, it was a group of non-Bolshevik Jews, diasporic nationalist socialists, and left Zionists who in 1918 and 1919 most consistently and urgently addressed the issue. “The closer one stood politically to a Jewish socialist-nationalist project,” McGeever concludes, “the more likely one was to elevate the status of (and hence take more seriously) the campaign against antisemitism” (p. 182).

Nevertheless, in their efforts to bring an end to the pogroms and respond to the emerging specter of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” both Bolshevik leaders and their Jewish socialist allies could end up unwittingly reinscribing “certain antisemitic representations of Jewishness” (p. 186).