

conspiracy, because of the importance of bragging and the complex relations between the individual and the group.

Equally striking is the tendency to dismiss the cultural importance and wider appeal of anarchism as a result of the monograph's revision. Thus, Messer-Kruse concludes that "the Haymarket bomb [...] snuffed out the very movement that had created it", which is plainly false, unless one adopts an incredibly narrow view of anarchist activism. The creative and symbolical importance of Chicago is dismissed, on the basis that it rested on an erroneous assumption of innocence. After reading the book, one concludes that this may well be the case, but may not have mattered as much as Messer-Kruse suggests; after all, to name just one example, the cult of Ravachol in France and beyond shows that anarchists did not shrink from celebrating actual terrorists as martyrs of the capitalist order.

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SLUCKI, DAVID. *The International Jewish Labor Bund after 1945: Toward a Global History*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ [etc.] 2012. 266 pp., \$45.95. doi:10.1017/S0020859013000072

It is commonly assumed that before World War II the general Jewish Labor Bund strongly influenced Jewish history, but that after the war it became marginal and ultimately a story not even worth telling.<sup>1</sup> Libraries and bookshelves all over the world mirror this assumption. Whereas many books controversially discuss a once mighty Jewish socialist party in Tsarist Russia and independent Poland, there is not a single study of its long postwar presence. David Slucki's book changes this, and at the same time tackles many of the assumptions that comfort modern Jewish history. Instead of reiterating the idea that, once the state of Israel had been created, anti-Zionist movements became irrelevant to the historiography, Slucki asks what happened to the Bund during and after its radical postwar transformation, and how members of the formerly strong movement dealt with its concurrent decline.

For Slucki, this history started in 1947. By then, two years after the end of World War II, the Bund had lost thousands of its followers to German mass murder as well as some of its most important leaders to Stalin's terror. With the Soviet occupation of Poland, the Bund, having been declared illegal, finally lost its territory. Simply to ensure its existence the Bund had to alter its paradigms and shift its focus from eastern Europe to a global setting. In 1947, leading Bundists met in Brussels and created the International Jewish Labor Bund, with, at its centre, the World Coordinating Committee. Its tasks were to develop a transnational organizational structure and to mediate between the many Bund groups around the world.

1. This "failure" is sometimes dated to well before the Holocaust; see Bernard K. Johnpoll, *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland 1917–1943* (Ithaca, NY, 1967).

Slucki's description of this process and of the debates conducted in the wake of this decision not only fills a gap in the history of one of the most important Jewish parties, it also captures the ruptures and doubts that were formative to this process of reorientation. In a chapter highly relevant to recent research on displaced persons, Slucki demonstrates that DP camps and many of the cities in eastern and western Europe where survivors gathered also became political battlefields. In these locations, several traditional parties tried to situate themselves in the unknown Jewish postwar world. This was accompanied by attempts to maintain their structurally conservative norms on organization and their ideological beliefs. Mostly because of the absence of a formal party organization, various highly heterogeneous Bundist groups emerged all over the world. From then on, Slucki demonstrates, no central Bundist party organization existed in Poland, and numerous newspapers, as well as the movement's emissaries, became the most important vehicles "through which the World Coordinating Committee connected Bundists" (p. 38).

The centrepiece of his book is an analysis of developments in four contrasting case studies, namely the Bund in France, in the United States, in Melbourne, Australia, as well as in Israel, where it witnessed "its own mortality" (p. 10). These case studies reveal the differences Bundists encountered in those destinations. Local situations much more than ideology or transnational relations impacted their aims and the scope of their work. Until the late 1950s several of these Bundist organizations thrived quite well. But, because of their ageing membership, the disappearance of the Yiddish language, and the problem of communicating Bundist goals to the younger generation, the Bund went into a sharp, and ultimately fatal, decline. This was a slow process, however, which varied from one place to another. On the one hand, the Bund in Israel, for instance, struggled to gain any social relevance beyond very narrow circles in Tel Aviv. Politically, it voiced opposition within the state to Zionism, while supporting a local, multicultural Yiddish life. In Melbourne, on the other hand, the Bund concentrated much more successfully on social and cultural work. It even managed to create the *Sotsyalistishe Kinder Farband* (SKIF), a Bundist children's organization that is still in existence today. However, this came at a cost. With the loss of Yiddish as a lively *folkssprakh*, in Melbourne too the mother tongue "became a symbol rather than a living language in SKIF life" (p. 169). The same could well be said of its formerly highly relevant positions on class war and socialism.

But these changes prompt questions regarding rupture and perseverance. Slucki strongly emphasizes the internal struggles experienced by the Bundists when they had to invent a transnational organizational structure from scratch. He shows that these processes were as controversial as they were creative, because they profoundly challenged fundamental Bundist beliefs. Most importantly, Slucki asserts that before the Holocaust the Bund "did not allow for the spread of the Bund", not even for "any kind of formal transnational ties" (p. 27). This is correct to the extent that the Bundist leadership in Russia and Poland never formally integrated into the party apparatus such decentralized Bundist organizations overseas that had been founded by emigré rank-and-file Bundists. As part of the core party organization, however, the Foreign Committee in Geneva was a crucial but genuinely transnational element of the party leadership during its Russian period.<sup>2</sup>

Even though Slucki acknowledges that Bundists migrated all over the world well before World War II, he does not look in any detail into what these Bundists did once they

2. From 1901–1903 it was located in London. See Claudie Weill, "Russian Bundists Abroad and in Exile, 1898–1925", in Jack Jacobs (ed.), *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Bund at 100* (New York, 2001), pp. 46–51.

had arrived. Bundist organizations abroad existed from the earliest years, and their transnational ties were of great importance to the Bund, mostly for financial reasons.<sup>3</sup> The Bund received support from and regularly sent delegates to these foreign institutions; some of them even gained official recognition as external representatives of the Bund.<sup>4</sup>

Even though many of these aspects go beyond the focus of Slucki's study, they help to raise some important questions about the comparisons he makes. For him, the postwar situation is sufficient to explain the differences in how, in its various destinations, the Bund managed to recreate a new Bundist life. And, indeed, his arguments are supported by a huge variety of local sources and official reflections in Bundist journals and books. But when, in some places, as in the US, France, and Argentina, local path dependency started in the 1900s while in other locations, such as Australia and Israel, it did so only after 1945, the question arises whether such early transnational networks really were of any relevance to the postwar Bund. It is more likely that some of the fundamental problems that Bundist activists such as Emanuel Szerer and Emanuel Patt encountered after the war in New York would have been familiar to local predecessors such as Nokhem Khanin, A. Litvak, or Abraham Kaspe. Internal transnational networks were fundamental to the Bund throughout its existence, and so even though everything was different in the postwar Jewish world, not everything was new.

To be fair, there is little research available for Slucki to build on, and in drawing his fragmented picture he does so with an eye to detail and with great care. This pioneering book is outstanding in many respects, mostly because it successfully integrates the manifold regions into a single global history of a movement in terminal decline. Being more than a global party history, it explores a whole cultural archipelago hitherto absent in postwar Jewish historiography. But precisely because of that it is likely to provoke contrasting responses from different readers. For those interested in the "Jewish politics" outlined by Jonathan Frankel and Ezra Mendelsohn, which restricts historical relevance mostly to national questions and the socio-economic politics inherent in party programmes, the postwar Bund is barely of any interest.<sup>5</sup> On that front everything was lost. But the history presented here allows one to challenge such assumptions and to consider the cultural short-term and long-term impact such movements had.

In a sense, Slucki present a story of devotion and persistence in times of extreme disorientation. This is of great relevance not only to cultural Jewish history but also to research on social movements and to migration studies. Unfortunately, Slucki undersells his findings when he states that "ideology was the major factor that continued to bind Bundists worldwide" (p. 11). In the present reviewer's opinion, Slucki is writing much more about identity than about ideology. It was this contested identity that drove the activist to try to bring together incompatible parts of one story: the inability of the Bund to restore its former greatness and its importance for members in postwar migration.

3. Early hints of these dynamics can be found in Jonathan Frankel, "Jewish Politics and the Russian Revolution of 1905", in *idem, Crisis, Revolution, and Russian Jews* (Cambridge, 2009 [1982]), p. 63.

4. See Frank Wolff, "Eastern Europe Abroad: Exploring Actor-Network in Transnational Movements and Migration History, The Case of the Bund", *International Review of Social History*, 57 (2012), pp. 229–255.

5. Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge, 1984); Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York [etc.], 1993).

However, these are remarks raised by and not against the book. With good reason, Slucki considers this study to be a beginning. And, indeed, it does represent a huge step towards a global history of Jewish life which earnestly integrates the southern hemisphere. Slucki not only successfully abandons the “narrow geographic perspective” (p. 4) formative to the historiography of the Bund, he also calls for new ways of thinking and of writing global Jewish history, before and after the Holocaust.

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BROOKE, STEPHEN. *Sexual Politics. Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day*. Oxford University Press, Oxford [etc.] 2012. xii, 284 pp. Ills. £65.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859013000084

Studies of the British Labour Party in the twentieth century rarely dwell for long on sexual politics. One reason, as Stephen Brooke notes in his intriguing study of *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from 1880s to the Present Day* was that the highpoint of the party's success – the 1945–1951 Attlee government – coincided with a relative retreat from an interest in sexual issues. But that this neglect was overdue for treatment would have been obvious to anyone attempting to convince sceptical, but progressively minded, friends of the virtues of voting Labour at the 2010 General Election. In the face of unanswerable complaints about Labour's record on privatization, civil liberties, and military intervention, one of the strongest defences of “New” Labour in government was its record in repealing Section 28, equalizing the age of consent, and introducing civil partnerships. Brooke, it seems, has written a history for our times: one in which, what he calls “the ambiguous but rich relationship between sexuality and socialist politics” (p. 2) forms the core.

In fact, Brooke's purview is rather narrower than this quotation, and the book's subtitle, might lead potential readers to believe. For although he is prone to refer to “socialist politics” and “the British Left” his focus is resolutely upon the Labour Party (usually the national or parliamentary party) and rarely embraces the broader socialist movement around it. Brooke's justification for this is twofold. First he argues that Labour was a key player in the sexual reforms of the twentieth century, indeed that Labour was pivotal at key moments, a fact that has been undervalued in previous accounts. Second, and related, Brooke argues that the category of “class” should no longer be a “stranger at the feast” of British history, including the history of sexuality. Much of the debate about sexual reform, especially before 1967, Brooke contends, was framed in class terms and this made Labour, the focal point for class politics, also the focal point of sexual reform.

Following an introductory chapter outlining the ideas of sexual reformers of the “socialist revival”, including Edward Carpenter, Karl Pearson, and Olive Schreiner, *Sexual Politics* divides into three substantive sections. The first, and by far the most convincing,