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Basil III (1925–29), Constantinople established closer links with the Balkan churches. According to Škarovskij, the Phanar sympathized more with the diaspora than with the Russian Orthodox Church, which suffered intense persecution. During the relatively long reign of Patriarch Photius II (1929–35) relations between Greece and Turkey improved, but Moscow's attempts at reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Exarchate in Western Europe foundered.

The Second World War brought the Russian Orthodox Church into a new position: a change of attitude occurred after Stalin sanctioned the appointment of Metropolitan Sergei as the Russian Patriarch in 1943. From that point, the Russian church became involved in the political expansion of communism to neighboring countries. Meanwhile, Hitler's Third Reich aimed to manipulate the Orthodox populations of the regions under its control. Škarovskij's account of German occupation policy illuminates the fascinating story of religious survival during wartime. Also absorbing is the discussion of Stalin's revived plan for Panslavic solidarity in the Balkans. Remarkably, by the end of the war, relations between Constantinople and Moscow had improved.

In the post-war period, the Russian Patriarchate began to challenge the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome and Constantinople. With the support of the Soviet regime, the Moscow Patriarchate – touted as the Third Rome – sent delegations abroad. The pan-Orthodox Slavic conference held in Belgrade in 1946 and the celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of the autocephalous Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow in 1948 reflected Stalin's flexibility in disseminating the Marxist message. Patriarch Alexei undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and attempted to bring the region under Russian influence.

A senior delegation led by Russian Metropolitan Nikolai to London, Paris, and the United States in 1945 sought to extend control over the diaspora. Soviet leadership also employed religion in its foreign policy when dealing with regions within its vicinity. For example, the Polish Orthodox Church was compelled to recant its autocephaly, and the Latvian and Estonian Churches were forcibly incorporated under Russian jurisdiction. Thus, the expansion of the Moscow Patriarchate mirrored the extension of the political ideology of communism.

Škarovskij's reporting of the relationship of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Bulgarian community within its territory demonstrates the generally amicable relations between Sofia and the Mother Church in the period under review.

In the last subsections of the book, Škarovskij describes the construction of various Russian Orthodox churches, hospitals, and monastic establishments within the Ottoman Empire, on Mount Athos, and within modern Turkey. The heritage of the Russian church in the heartland of the Orthodox commonwealth is emphasized.

Although the book lacks a general thesis and contains little analysis, the author is to be commended for a lucid survey of an important period of recent Eastern Orthodox Church history. Major personalities and complex events crowd the narrative, which includes descriptions of the smaller Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe, diaspora communities, as well as Mount Athos. Most importantly, the study provides serious researchers with a useful guide to unpublished sources.

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ZEEV LEVIN: Collectivization and Social Engineering. Soviet Administration and the Jews of Uzbekistan, 1917–1939. Leiden: Brill, 2015. XVII, 254 S., 28 Abb., 1 Kte. = Eurasian Studies Library, 5. ISBN: 978-90-04-29470-7.

The opening of the previously unavailable Soviet archives at the outset of the 1990s provoked a rush by Western and post-Soviet scholars to rediscover the Soviet modernity. After the first wave of scoops went down, the second wave on the eve of the new millennium brought better documented and more mature case studies on various regions, including Central Asia, that underwent communist party building, nationalities policies and socialist campaigns. By

the 2010s, this wave went back, as some authors withdrew from digging the archives and others re-orientated themselves to later periods. The third wave came with the scholars' anticipation of the 100-years' anniversary of the February and October Revolutions of 1917. The newly published works by authors engaged in long-term archival research appear as studies more advanced than before. The monograph by Zeev Levin on the history of Central Asian Jews during the first two Soviet decades is one of them.

Cross-referencing along various archives in Moscow and in Central Asian Republics with a small touch of oral testimony is the core value of Levin's research. Moreover, the author demonstrates an ex-

traordinary (for a Western scholar) familiarity with Russian and Soviet historiography on Jewish communities in Central Asia. The profound knowledge of this literature distinguishes the author's general approach to the Soviet history (perhaps unnoticed by himself, Levin applies Marxist analysis when he writes on class composition and ideology of the Jewish groups). Some other newly introduced approaches to the history of Central Asian Jews employ oral history and life narratives (THOMAS LOY: *Bukharan Jews in the Soviet Union. Autobiographical Narrations of Mobility, Continuity and Change*. Wiesbaden 2016) and have developed a principally more critical approach to the Russian imperial and Soviet historiography. This de-constructivist approach, however, released these authors from the heavy burden of presenting a truly detailed analysis of the Soviet secondary sources and literature. Though Levin rightly corrects their mistakes and fills in gaps, his complete neglect of post-colonial discourse and its authors (not to be found in the Bibliography) raises concerns about the otherwise needed reflectivity. For instance, the reference to anthropological research of the 1910s that identified physical features as ethnic features (p. 8), requires more elaboration on the scholar's attitudes to such ethnographic methods.

The profound knowledge of archival sources and Soviet literature empowered Levin with a comprehensive understanding of the Soviet departments, their purposes and practices. His approach to the Soviet reform appears sociological: he recognizes the city versus village conflict behind the NEP and analyses the establishment of *kolkhozes* and cooperatives through the prism of urban-rural migration (in particular detail in Chapter 5), depicting the special social composition of rural and urban groups, literacy levels and involvement of Jewish women in public labor. While documenting the emigration and immigration of the Jewish population in and from Central Asia in 1916–1925, the increase of Ashkenazi Jews and decrease of Bukharan Jews, Levin focuses on such essentialist categories as land, settlement, property, funding.

The monograph depicts the establishment of the party and state organs on the basis of affirmable nationalities' identities and politics (TERRY MARTIN: *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY, London 2001). Levin describes the affirmative actions in favor of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union in the 1920–30s, but also highlights the concern of many Jewish activists about “*Evseksia*,

the Jewish Section of the RCP(b)”: why did the Soviet regime withdrew from granting the Jews the status of a Soviet nation with its own territory? The author notices that Soviet official support to vernacular written languages did not prevent Russianization (pp. 193–194). However, Levin's monograph could win even more if the author had contextualized his findings on the example of the Soviet Central Asian Jews within the broader literature on the ‘holy alliance’ between the communists and national leaders in the 1920s and first part 1930s.

Importantly, Levin notices the lack of planning and communication between local branches and Moscow. He pays a tribute to the study of the center-periphery relationships and depicts the weakness of the first Soviet decrees not accompanied by budgets and lacking capacities for implementation on the ground. He emphasizes the distance of Central Asia from Moscow and concludes on the rapture between the Moscow Bolsheviks' visions of Central Asian development perspectives and the reality on the ground. These conclusions stand remarkably different from some other recently published research claiming the dominance of one colonial plan (CHRISTIAN TEICHMANN: *Macht der Unordnung. Stalins Herrschaft in Zentralasien 1920–1950*. Hamburg 2016). At the same time, Levin avoids analytical scrutiny of the sources, upon which the conclusions are drawn and does not conceptualize on the dialectics of center-periphery relationships. For example, the Reader gets well informed about the local petitions preserved in republican and provincial archives that tell about the initiatives from below, as well as about the central archives' files revealing the center's accusations of mismanagement against these local bodies. However, it is exactly at this moment, that the Reader wonders if these dialectics are characteristic of colonial and imperial administration and whether and how it influenced the production of the concepts of Socialism in Moscow and in Central Asia.

Levin stresses multipolar center-republic-minority relationships, following the already proven in scholarship findings (ADRIENNE LYNN EDGAR: *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton 2006). He notices that no other group in Central Asia but the Jews enjoyed substantial support by the center, as they managed to establish and use a couple of lines to the hub power in Moscow to resist the unwillingness of the republican authorities to grant the Jews good land, means and status (p. 132). Thus, the book draws a very interesting picture of the establishment of a special Uzbekistan

“Komzet, separate from the all-Union Komzet, Committee for the Settlement of Toiling Jews on the Land” and relatively independent and periodically even antagonistic against the Central Committee of the RCP(b). The author spots the controlling and mediating role of the old leaders of the Jewish community between the newly established Soviet state structures (legislation, tax collection and civil registration) and the Jewish population (pp. 32–34). He elaborates on the integration of Jewish communities into communist power structures, supported by wide circulation of propagandist newspapers in Jewish-Bukharan language among the Jewish communities in Uzbekistan (till 1933 when the Hebrew script was switched to Latin characters) in parallel to active learning of Russian at schools (pp. 216–271). The author depicts how “sectarian” principles of the organization of labor and educational activities gave way to the internationalization of economy in the Soviet Union in about 1932. He notices that even then, with other nationalities enrolled into Jewish schools and factories, the latter retained the label “Jewish”. This phenomenon can be observed even today (from the reviewer’s interviews in Kyrgyzstan): certain educational bodies (of hard and technical science) are considered to be the best if they are run or outnumbered by the Jewish groups. Levin questions the lack of effort by the Jewish communities’ leaders to influence the establishment of Soviet Uzbekistan, but he avoids problematizing the current under-representation of Jews in governmental and administrative structures of the independent Central Asian states.

The book attracts the Reader’s attention by controversial conclusions on the Soviet anti-religious campaigns in Central Asia in the 1920–30s. At the outset of the 1920s, they were, as the author rightfully notices, yet limited to atheist propaganda in new communist media and confiscation of the synagogue property (in 1922). The author points out that a complete abandon of religious practices and social norms was never attainable: even though the number

of synagogues radically diminished, the unofficial prayer quorums continued to meet. In the face of such norms as circumcision the Soviet authorities remained powerless even at the close of the 1930s (pp. 48–50). The author goes further and suggests that the distraction of mosques and repression against the Muslim clergy did not wipe away the prayers and rituals practiced at home (p. 51) and claims that this *unofficial* sector continued operating without interference (while well-established specialists as Stephan Dudiognion or Michael Kemper consider the 1960s to be the division line for the religious communities’ reconsolidation in Central Asia). This idea if further researched may throw light on the success of “SADUM, the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan” in 1943.

The troubling controversy of describing the Soviet regime’s helplessness to fight against the “believes of the past” comes when Levin compares it with the unsuccessful official struggle against antisemitism and its prejudices. The example depicted by the author in detail (upon the communist journal *Pravda Vostoka* as a source) shakes a general perception of Bolshevik anti-religious propaganda as utmost unfair. Indeed, in Levin’s story the Soviet juries rightfully albeit inefficiently acted against the groundless acquisitions (in blood libel) of the Jews (pp. 53–56). One would expect, however, that the author would go into a more theoretical debate on the approaches to the sources, as it remains unclear how to draw a line between a ritual brutally suppressed by the regime and a dangerous prejudice called for escalating violence. Instead, the author writes that “religion, just like antisemitism continued to exist in Soviet society as [...] stubborn and ‘embarrassing’ undercurrents that refused to yield to the will and aspirations of Soviet social architects [...]” (p. 57). Here again the Reader gets confused whether and in which aspect the author shares such a categorization of religion by Soviet ideologues.

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