zealous attempts to Judaize the citrus industry is quite relevant today. He argues: "We are not alone in this land; there are people here who preceded us. Fate has destined us to be their neighbors forever. We cannot alienate ourselves from them by building a Chinese Wall. We are committed to dwelling with them, producing with them and trading with them. Thus, we cannot boycott them, shun their goods, refuse to hire them and patronize only produce and labor that is 'one hundred percent' ours ...." (quoted on p. 44).

It is in the context of this quote that we can read Karlinsky’s situation of Jewish citiculture in the context of Zionism as a European settler movement, demonstrating how early leaders such as Smilansky explicitly modeled their ventures on European colonial experience, yet at the same time saw private enterprise as crucial to the national rebirth of the Jewish people because of the same focus on working the land and renewing the body that motivated Labor Zionist ideology as well.

Among other important discussions is his argument that most of the Jewish-owned land, until well into the Mandate period, was not owned by the Jewish National Fund or other “national” or public institutions but rather by private entrepreneurs, many of them involved in the citrus industry. And his brief portraits of some of the leading Jewish citrus growers (and much briefer discussions of their Arab counterparts) provides important threads for social historians to use in getting deeper into texts such as the shari‘a court records or similar documents where the names of these people often appeared, at least through the Ottoman period, as participants in joint ventures or in buying land.

The second main argument of California Dreaming concerns the specifically “California model” upon which the Palestine citrus industry was based by the Mandate period. It turns out that California was the best model for Palestine, and particularly Jewish citrus growers to follow, not just because of how similar the climates and soils were, but because of the “unique synthesis of advanced technology, centralized organization, and the integration of private entrepreneurship and government activity” that allowed the industry and its profits to grow steadily while simultaneously helping to build the local economy (p. 111).

At the same time, the integration of modern technologies into Palestine was crucial to the Jewish growers maintaining their low margin of profitability in a context where the largely mixed Jewish-Arab work force constantly was putting pressure on them to raise wages. Here it would have been good to have had some documentary evidence as to the struggles of Palestinian Arab growers, who also were among the leaders in the Levant at incorporating the latest advances from Europe and the United States and whose struggles no doubt compared in interesting ways with their Jewish counterparts. Yet Karlinsky does discuss Arab citiculture as far as he could obtain documentation from the Hebrew language sources. He points out that this industry was well developed at the onset of Zionist settlement and continued to control around 40–50 percent of the exports throughout most of the Mandate period, despite heavy Jewish investments and modernization of the industry. What is clear from California Dreaming is that the spatial and economic expansion of Jewish citiculture in Palestine had a profound impact on the economic, and, equally important, on the political-territorial development of the country and that the subject warrants further research that would mine the kinds of sources Karlinsky did not use in order to gain a fuller understanding of how Jewish and Palestinian Arab forces, entrepreneurs and workers alike, competed and cooperated in one of the primary arenas of interaction in pre-1948 Palestine.

FIRST SOVIET JEWS


Reviewed by Lenni Brenner

Ziva Galili is the Chair of Rutgers University’s history department and a specialist on Russia’s Menshevik Party. Boris Morozov is an ex-Soviet archivist, now at Tel Aviv’s Cummings Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies. Galili contributed three
essays and Morozov one that explain seven soviet documents found in now-opened secret police archives on Zionist prisoners exiled to Palestine, 1924–34, and fifteen other documents from Zionist and British sources during Communism’s transition from Leninism to Stalinism.

When the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky took power in 1917, in coalition with the peasant Left Socialist Revolutionary Party, opposition was allowed in workers soviet or councils. They anticipated more revolutions in postwar Europe and that these comradely industrialized societies would solve the economic problems of the backward empire they inherited. Revolutions occurred but failed. By 1921, devastating imperialist invasions, supporting former Tsarist pogromists who had slaughtered over 200,000 Jews, turned the new Soviet Union into an economic basket case, dependent on capitalist charities to help survive plagues generated by war and famine.

With nothing substance-wise to offer economically, repression inexorably replaced persuasion. Rival parties were outlawed, Bolshevik factions forbidden. Also in 1921, Lenin, outstanding in dedication to principles, fell ill and ceased directing the government. We now understand that this combination of circumstances marked the beginning of the USSR’s degeneration, the context in which these documents are read most valuable.

Ethnic parties in the Ukraine and elsewhere were outlawed, but in 1924 Felix Dzerzhinskii, head of the GPU political police, opposed imprisoning Zionists:

I do not understand at all why they are being persecuted on the basis of their Zionist affiliation. The majority of their attacks on us are based on our persecution of them. . . . The workers (the real ones) will not follow them, but their cries connected with their arrests will reach the bankers and ‘Jews’ of all countries, and will do us no small amount of harm. (p. 91)

The main pressure for outlawing Zionism came from the Jewish section of the Communist Party’s Central Committee. A 1923 “Evsekshtiia” Memorandum declared:

[W]orkers, Red Army and peasant masses do not identify Soviet power with Jewish power and have not been infected with hatred for the Soviet organs nor with anti-Semitism. Any overly favorable approach to the Jewish bourgeois threats discrediting the party in the eyes of labouring non-Jews, no less, and even more than Jews. (p. 86)

With millions of impoverished Jews in the USSR to be helped, and certainty that “regime change” would trigger renewed pogroms, American Jewry’s Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) became a rare friendly voice toward Moscow in capitalist circles. But exiling Zionists to Siberia made it difficult for the JDC to raise funds from foreign Jews. A grotesque compromise was found: Arrested Zionists were sent to Siberia, then, as passengers on Soviet ships, to Palestine, tickets paid by the World Zionist Organization. There the British Mandatory admitted “over a thousand Zionists from Soviet Russia,” possibly 1,300, “during the decade from 1924 to 1934.” (p. 1)

As with every document collection, if the documents do not themselves provide a rounded context, it is the task of the editors to do so. In this regard the book fails. While the book’s 22 Soviet and Zionist documents contribute to Zionism’s history, they do not really add to our basic understanding of the movement or Britain’s support for it. Although an essay by Galili mentions “the anti-Soviet sentiment that underlay British tolerance towards victims of the Soviet regime” (p. 42), there is nothing in the book giving us the intense anti-Semitism of that “sentiment.” For example, Galili fails to mention such relevant material as an 8 February 1920 article in London’s Illustrated Sunday Herald by Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary and Britain’s leading patron of the former Tsarist pogromshchiki, who had explained:

Nothing could be more significant than the fury with which Trotsky has attacked the Zionists generally. . . . The cruel penetration of his mind leaves him in no doubt that his schemes of a worldwide communist State under Jewish domination are directly thwarted and hindered by this new ideal, which directs the energies and the hopes of Jews in every land towards a simpler, a truer, and a far more attainable goal.

If we see this collection primarily as a contribution to Soviet studies, it is more successful. To be sure, it does not fully explain the Soviet Union’s policies toward Jews in general or Zionism in particular, then or later. But it serves well to make readers think factually about Leninism and the stages of the Soviet Union’s degeneracy into Stalinism.

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