

The Beilis trial lasted from 25 September to 29 October 1913. By the suggestion of the authorities, half of the 12 jury members were chosen from peasants. The prosecution hoped that their opinion could be manipulated more easily than that of educated Kievans. The accusation of Beilis was supposed to become an accusation against all Russian Jewry, so the authorities gave special attention to the preparation of the trial. They not only carefully selected the members of the jury, but also sent to the trial a prosecutor, Oskar Vipper, from St. Petersburg.

However, in spite of all the efforts of the Black Hundred organizations and the authorities to prepare well the ritual process, “the evidence against Beilis was critically weak” (43). The prosecution, which did not have enough evidence against Beilis and tried to avoid losing altogether, split the indictment into two questions: whether the murder of Andriusha Iushchinskii was ritual and whether Beilis is guilty of committing it. The jury answered positively to the first question: seven-to-five jury members judged the murder as ritual. On the second question, about Beilis’ involvement in the murder, the vote of the jury was “reportedly split evenly, six-to-six” (65). According to Russian law, “a tied vote went in favor of the defendant” (65), so Beilis was acquitted and released. So both sides, liberals and conservatives, proclaimed their victory. The liberals celebrated the acquittal of Beilis, while conservatives were happy that the case was considered as a ritual murder. The Black Hundred newspaper *Dvuglavyi orel* stated on 30 October 1913, “One Jew is Acquitted, All Kikes Are Found Guilty” (67).

Beilis’ ordeal did not end with his acquittal. He received threatening letters and decided to emigrate from Kiev by the end of 1913. Beilis immigrated with his family first to Palestine and then to the USA, where he lived until his death in 1934.

Weinberg shows that the Beilis trial “tarnished the tsarist regime’s reputation in the court of world opinion” (62). The accusation of Jews of ritual murder in the beginning of the twentieth century was considered anachronistic throughout the civilized world. The trial demonstrated the backwardness of the tsarist regime, the anti-Semitism of the Russian authorities, and their ruthless persecution of Jews.

The documents and illustrations published in the book are a valuable addition to the monograph. They give the reader a better notion of the time, place, and political atmosphere, in which the Beilis Affair took place. Weinberg’s work is an important contribution to the Russian Jewish history field, which will be interesting for both scholars and a popular audience.

Victoria Khiterer
 Millersville University
 victoria.khiterer@millersville.edu
 © 2015, Victoria Khiterer
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2015.1019776>

Swans of the Kremlin: ballet and power in Soviet Russia, Christina Ezrahi, Pittsburg, University of Pittsburg Press, 2012, xi + 322 pp., \$27.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8229-6214-4

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy depicted the attendance of a Soviet ballet performance as a diplomatic gesture in a letter to Chairman Nikita Khrushchev:

In closing, let me say that I noticed with appreciation your friendly gesture in attending the concert offered by Benny Goodman in Moscow last week. I myself look forward to attending a performance of the Bolshoi Ballet when it comes to us in the fall. (Beschloss 1991, 395)

Russian writers and intellectuals of the nineteenth century were trapped in a love-hate relationship with the ballet: the romantic poet Pushkin glorified the Russian peasant ballerina Istomina, while the realist writer Tolstoy tore the French dancer Louis Duport to shreds. Yet by the early twentieth century, the Russian school of ballet was unstoppable, and Sergei Diaghilev seized upon the opportunity to return the Ballets Russes in all its self-orientalizing frenzy back to its European point of origin. The subject of Christina Erzahi's astute and timely study, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia*, is how exactly the ballet became Soviet.

What Erzahi argues is that, while the ballet adopted the bureaucracy of the Soviet regime, its practitioners clung to the imperial heritage as a double performance of memorialization and resistance. Erzahi identifies the conundrum inherent in "the Soviet cultural project:"

As the decree of 1957 illustrates, ballet benefitted from a state policy that promoted high culture as a core value of Soviet civilization, but the artistic autonomy of the Kirov and Bolshoi Ballet companies was seriously compromised by the regime's demand for ballets on Soviet contemporary themes. (100)

No doubt certain monolithic ballets, such as the pantomime-heavy drambalet "Russia" Has Come into Port (1964), sacrificed artistic integrity to conform to the prescribed worker industrial narrative, but did this differ from nineteenth-century ballets set on peasant pastoral themes? The ballet always balanced the predilection of a despotic directorate (be it tsar, party leader, or choreographer) with the sensationalist taste of the public. Erzahi pinpoints the perfect metaphor when she writes of the 1917 revolution, following which the Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai used to stroll in the dispossessed fur coat and house gardens of imperial ballet dancer and royal mistress Matilda Kschessinskaya: "Just as Kollontai had put Kschessinskaya's ermine coat around her shoulders, the Soviet regime adorned itself with ballet" (2).

Erzahi's introduction, seven chapters, and conclusion span the production histories and anecdotal antics of the Kirov and the Bolshoi Ballet during the first half of the Soviet era. Her theoretical framework of Bourdieu, de Certeau, and Foucault complements her juxtaposition of the minutiae of artistic council meetings with the real political impact of the ballet productions. Of particular interest to ballet neophytes is her chapter on the 1956 tour to London, in which artistically favored but politically spurned prima ballerina Maya Plisetskaya was replaced by past-peak yet ideologically ideal Galina Ulanova on the Bolshoi's first trip "beyond the Iron Curtain." The book progresses both chronologically and thematically toward the final two chapters, in which Erzahi offers Leonid Iakobson's *The Bedbug* (1962) and Yuri Grigorovich's *Spartacus* (1968) as the ultimate examples of ballet artists' struggle within ideological dictates for "artistic repossession." Erzahi's meticulous appendices, containing biographical entries of significant personages and synopses of relevant ballets, will not only be useful to dance scholars but also to cultural historians and area-studies specialists unfamiliar with the figures and events of ballet history.

Swans of the Kremlin does more than fill the lacuna of English-language Soviet dance scholarship. The broad scope, extensive use of archival sources, and showcasing of oral interviews position Erzahi's monograph alongside the eminent work of Tim Scholl on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian ballet and Lynn Garafola on the Ballets Russes. Particularly important in the growing field of Russian performance studies, Erzahi's work testifies to the rich potential of dance as a platform for cultural, historical, and political commentary. Just as ballet has been dismissed as an elite and trifling art form, dance scholarship

has been perceived as lacking in rigor and research. *Swans of the Kremlin* manages to disprove both preconceptions: in her analysis of the artistic significance and political machinations of Soviet ballet, Erzahi informs our understanding of one of the most important institutions of the Soviet regime and of national culture.

Reference

Beschloss Michael. 1991. *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Krushchev, 1960–1963*. New York, NY: Edward Burlingame Books.

Natalie Rouland

Independent Scholar

Email: roulandn@gmail.com

© 2015, Natalie Rouland

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2015.1019777>

Nationalism and the rule of law: lessons from the Balkans and beyond, by Iavor Rangelov, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, xi, 217 pp., US\$95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1107012196

As a scholar with a keen interest in the Western Balkans, Iavor Rangelov is acutely aware of some of the central questions that emerged after the collapse of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s: What is the relationship between nationalism and the rule of law? Are they mutually reinforcing or conflicting? And, finally, can the rule of law be used to harness the negative potential of nationalism in the Balkans, and if so, in what way? Rangelov posits these questions within a broader framework of the contemporary literature on the rule of law and nationalism. This allows him to claim that the lessons from the Balkans resonate well beyond the region.

Rangelov offers a thorough overview of major concepts and European practices related to policies of ethnic citizenship, transitional justice, and international criminal justice. He also provides a balanced interpretation of the emerging complex web of relations between ethnic citizenship and liberal democracy in Slovenia, identity formation and transitional justice in Croatia, and finally, societal polarization in the context of international justice in Serbia. The two parts of the book are well integrated, as each chapter in Part One (Nationalism and the Rule of Law) provides a broader European context and the conceptual support for the cases that are being discussed in Part Two (Three Cases from the Former Yugoslavia). Simply, through the Balkan cases Rangelov aims to elucidate the broader tensions between nationalism and the rule of law as well as the role of international legal norms in managing this tension.

Overall, how successful is Rangelov in his endeavor? Rangelov argues that there exists a void in the literature covering the relationship between nationalism and the rule of law. Even though one may agree with the need for a more systemic account of the relationship between the two, one can hardly accept Rangelov's claim that the relationship between the two "has been largely neglected by scholars," or that there is a lacuna in the literature on the extent to which the rule of law shapes our sense of national identity. Certainly, the classic in the field is Brubaker's exceptional interpretation of the rise of German and French nationalism through the lenses of their respective legislative systems (*Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*). More recently, Wayne Norman and Will Kymlicka have done something similar in the context of citizenship in diverse states, while, in his *Multicultural*