

Howard N. Lupovitch. *Transleithanian Paradise: A History of the Budapest Jewish Community, 1738–1938.*

West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2023. xiv, 306 pp.

Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Figures. Tables.

Maps. Paper.

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In this interesting book, Howard N. Lupovitch, professor of Jewish history at Wayne State University, explores Budapest Jewry from its eighteenth-century origins as a small community in Óbuda under the protection of the Zichy noble family, to the early nineteenth century when it was a collection of illegal immigrants in Pest, to its spectacular growth by the late nineteenth century into one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe. Indeed, by that time, Budapest contained over 200,000 Jews, who formed 25% of the total population of the city. Most of these Jews were acculturated and Magyarized, and they participated in the economic and cultural life of this exciting metropolis, but many were Orthodox Jews who had linguistically Magyarized but remained deeply embedded in Jewish religious tradition.

Lupovitch explains this spectacular growth not in terms of the changing legal status of Jews in Hungary from outsiders to citizens, explored by other historians, but rather in terms of Jewish-noble relations and the impact of the natural environment, especially the great flood of 1838. Not only did Jews live in Óbuda under noble protection, but the early Jewish immigrants to Pest had the protection of the Zichy and Orczy noble families who controlled parts of Pest, especially Terézváros, outside the walls of the inner city, and accorded Jews commercial rights unimpeded by the hostility of the Pest burghers. Then, in the aftermath of the great flood, the Pest burghers rewarded the Jews, who had participated in rescue activities, with the right to reside and do business in Pest. These rights preceded the 1840 liberalization of Jewish economic and residential rights in Hungary. Like the city itself, the Jewish community grew rapidly after 1838. Lupovitch does recognize, of course, the economic forces that led Pest to become a major commercial center that attracted Jewish settlement, and he acknowledges the impact of political liberalism on the extension of citizenship to Jews later in the century.

Much of *Transleithanian Paradise* is devoted to the Jews who lived in the unified city of Budapest after 1873. Lupovitch argues that even the acculturated Jews, who concentrated primarily in the Pest districts of Terézváros and later Lipotváros, inhabited two worlds, both Magyar and Jewish. They identified with Neolog Judaism, a traditional form of Reform Judaism, attending such synagogues as the Dohány Street synagogue, completed in 1863, which, with its grand Moorish style, announced that Jews belonged both to the Hungarian people and to its capital city. They, and the Orthodox Jews who also resided in large numbers in the city, created many Jewish institutions which insisted the Jews were both Jewish and Magyar. The book's title implies that this large, dynamic Jewish community lived in paradise, although the last chapter, on antisemitism and anti-Jewish restrictions in Trianon Hungary, reveals the limits of paradise for the Jews.

The book, however, contains many serious problems. In the first place, Lupovitch does not adequately explain why the Jews in Pest spoke German for much of the nineteenth century, switching to Magyar (while remaining bi-lingual) only in the 1860s. Secondly, Lupovitch should have explained the geographical origins of Jewish immigrants to Pest more accurately. He says they came from "Central Europe" and Galicia/Ukraine, but such terms are misleading and inaccurate. Jews migrated to Budapest from other regions of the Kingdom of Hungary: from the western region of what is today Slovakia (these are his "Central European" Jews),

and from other regions near Pest county. But there is no evidence that they migrated from Galicia/Ukraine, that is, from northeast Hungary, what is today largely in Ukraine (but was in Czechoslovakia and Romania in the interwar period). These Jews had come from Galicia several generations earlier, but almost no Jews migrated directly from Galicia to Budapest. Third, Lupovitch does not fully explain Neolog Judaism or the Neolog-Orthodox schism. Fourth, Lupovitch should have more pointedly addressed the importance of liberalism for Jewish success. The book is also filled with sloppy mistakes. Lupovitch calls the German-Jewish schools both by their proper name, *Normalschulen*, and also, inexplicably, *Nationalschulen*. He says Jews formed 8% of the population of the Kingdom of Hungary, when they formed 4%. He assumes that large numbers of illegal Jews were unique to Pest, but Vienna, where Jews did not enjoy noble support, also contained many illegal Jews in the middle of the nineteenth century. Finally, Lupovitch provides no evidence for many of his claims.

Criticisms aside, *Transleithanian Paradise* provides a good overview of a large and interesting Jewish community in a period when liberal Hungary kept antisemitism in check.

Magdalena Waligórska. *Cross Purposes: Catholicism and the Political Imagination in Poland.*

Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2023. xii, 376 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. \$120.00, hard bound.

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On April 8, 1861, a Jewish teenager joined a crowd marching through Warsaw, falling in line behind a cross-bearing priest. When a shot rang out and the clergyman fell, seventeen-year-old Michał Landy took up the cross and led the procession until he himself was gunned down; thus was born the legend of the cross-bearing Jewish martyr of the Polish Nation. Roughly a century later, in the “model socialist city” of Nowa Huta, local authorities sent workers to remove a cross marking the site where permission had been granted, and later withdrawn, to build a church. A crowd of women gathered “in defense of the cross”; mere hours later, the protest turned into one of the largest street riots seen in Communist Poland.

Both events revolved around a cross, understood as a material object and cultural symbol. Both events brought marginalized groups—Jews and women, respectively—center stage. Both were inflected with religious ritual, but neither was a religious event. Both have the potential to help us understand how populists today weaponize the cross for secular ends.

These are two of the historical scenes reconstructed and deconstructed by cultural historian Magdalena Waligórska in her rich, genre-bending volume *Cross Purposes: Catholicism and the Political Imagination in Poland*. The subtitle is misleading, as the book is not a historical monograph about Catholicism, but instead a creatively designed series of six chapter-length meditations on how modern politics entwines the sacred and the secular. Each chapter combines pioneering sourcework with a multi-layered heuristic framework drawing on history, politics, anthropology, sociology, and religious and cultural studies. The result is a must-read volume for any student of Poland—and a creative methodological intervention across multiple disciplines.

At first blush, the figure of the cross—“a ubiquitous, unmarked, and almost transparent element of the public realm” (26)—may seem a rather banal choice to anchor a study of modern Poland. But Waligórska decouples the symbol from theology, revealing a tangled mass of