

overdetermined. One of the more interesting questions might therefore be not why the terror campaign against the military leadership was launched in 1937 but why the hammer had not fallen earlier. Whitewood has a surprising answer to this question: Stalin. Even at the very end, he argues, the fact that the doomed generals were demoted nearly two weeks before they were arrested suggests that there was some restraining force at play. With the top Stalinists in the Red Army (K. E. Voroshilov and S. M. Budennyi) already on board with the purge strategy and NKVD chief N. I. Ezhov insistently ringing alarm bells, who else could have slowed the process down? Who else indeed.

On this point, as on several others, Whitewood is in the realm of informed speculation. The most revealing archival documents Whitewood deploys are the ones showing the persistence of Civil War conflicts in the bureaucratic struggles of the 1920s and 1930s. There are no smoking guns showing exactly why the final decision was made to arrest the army leadership, and we should not expect them. Or rather, Whitewood argues that we ought to take seriously the language of the terror documents we already have. Yezhov pursued the commanders and Stalin authorized their execution because both believed that there really was a military conspiracy sponsored by domestic and foreign enemies. He thus aligns himself with scholars who argue for a reactive model in which Stalin ordered the terror out of panic rather than Machiavelian calculation. One might have wished, though, for a bit more engagement with the rest of the recent literature on the Great Terror to flesh this out more. One wonders, say, whether Whitewood's reactive and fearful Stalin fits into or complicates Timothy Snyder's argument that Poles were disproportionately targeted in the Terror. These, presumably, are directions that future scholars can pursue, and they will be glad to have this volume as a resource when they do so.

JOSHUA A. SANBORN
Lafayette College

Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia. By Simon Rabinovitch. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014. xiv, 374 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$65.00, hard bound.

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Simon Rabinovitch's *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* provides an intellectual and political history of autonomism, a stream of Jewish nationalism that worked for the rights of Jews in the Diaspora. Rabinovitch explores the impact of the work of autonomism's main theoretician, the historian Simon Dubnow, on Russian Jewish society as well as its role within Jewish nationalism writ large and the larger context of Russian political life and legal thought.

Rabinovitch defines autonomism as an effort to protect Jewish identity and community on two fronts. Internally, it sought to combat assimilation by creating a secular Jewish national culture and a modern alternative to the traditional *kehillah* (communal structure). Externally, it worked to secure the place of Jews within Russian society by fighting for their emancipation as a group with legally guaranteed rights and a Jewish caucus in the Duma, along with the establishment of democratic institutions in Russia.

This book stands alongside a number of recent studies by younger scholars including Kenneth B. Moss, Kalman Weiser, Joshua Shanes, Joshua M. Karlip, Jess

Olson, and myself on aspects of Diaspora Nationalism, a movement that—unlike its rival Zionism—envisioned the future of the Jews in the lands of eastern Europe. It also contributes to a growing body of work that rethinks the categories of modern Jewish politics established by such prominent historians as Ezra Mendelsohn and Jonathan Frankel.

Like Karlip, Rabinovitch calls into question the dichotomy between traditionalists and modernizers, arguing that “nationalism was the bridge between the traditional world and the modern world” (6). More central to his argument, Rabinovitch stresses points of commonality between liberals and nationalists by emphasizing the former’s support for Jewish rights and for elements of the autonomist program. His study thus builds on the work of Benjamin Nathans in reassessing the older pejorative view of liberal communal leaders as “assimilationists” who abandoned the Jewish people in pursuit of acceptance into Russian society.

The author argues that as such leaders shifted from the political to the cultural arena during and after World War I, they created institutions that “became a surrogate for genuine political mobilization.” In this way, they demonstrated the growing national consciousness of liberal elites and marking “Russian Jewry’s transition to a politicized and self-conscious national group” (162). Rabinovitch’s description of these institutions as part of a “Jewish public space” (274) complements Jeffrey Veidlinger’s work on the creation of (as his title puts it) a *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (2009).

In evaluating the record of Diaspora Nationalism some have pointed to its reliance on the goodwill of non-Jewish regimes as the movement’s Achilles heel, made tragically obvious by the 1930s. Others have noted that unlike its rivals that promised a form of dramatic redemption, either through revolution in Russia or the creation of a Jewish homeland, autonomism could only offer a modest hope of legally-secured rights. Since this goal was shared broadly, there was little distinctive about the platform of autonomist parties to draw supporters to their ranks.

Rabinovitch flips such an assessment, viewing this apparent weakness as the most salient evidence of the movement’s success. He argues that while parties devoted to a specifically autonomist platform had only limited electoral victories, their “principle tenet . . . became the central trust of Jewish political life in Russia.” In fact, he continues, by 1917 “Jewish autonomy had become the single positive political demand that spanned the Jewish ideological spectrum,” from liberal integrationists to Revisionist Zionists (2). In this reading, the movement’s lack of electoral success was in fact a result of its deep impact. Yet even as a consensus built around autonomism, the political entities that emerged following WWI were by and large hostile to the principle of national rights for Jews, thus limiting what it could achieve in practice.

While Rabinovitch makes a convincing case for the wide influence of autonomist ideas, he sometimes seems to define the movement too broadly. For example, he claims support not only for the explicitly autonomist Folkspartei but also for Zionist and Orthodox parties in the 1917 elections to the Russian Constituent Assembly as a sign of the its strength. Similarly, in stressing the porousness of boundaries among political camps he overstates his argument in asserting that by 1919 the distinction between Diaspora Nationalists and Zionists was essentially moot. Nevertheless, this important study significantly extends our knowledge of Russian Jewish intellectual and legal history and is essential reading for those interested in modern Jewish politics and the place of minorities in late imperial and revolutionary Russia.

CECILE E. KUZNITZ
Bard College