

London has an almost complete collection of everything ever published on this campaign, but a study of his bibliography indicates that Warren was seemingly unaware of its existence when writing his book. There are certainly some surprising gaps in his use of secondary sources, such as his failure to examine the work of Daniel Marston on the Indian army. Equally, nothing seems to have been taken from the vast treasure of official documents – war diaries, accounts of battles, formal and semi-formal correspondence – that are bursting at the seams of files in the National Archives in Kew. For these two reasons an otherwise excellent account remains deficient. The subject still awaits exhaustive – and less dispassionate – treatment, the best of which still remains that by Ian Lyall-Grant and Kazuo Tamayama (1999).

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***Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War and the Holocaust.* By David Shneer.** Rutgers University Press. 2012. xiii + 283pp. \$32.50.

The research on Soviet perceptions of Jewish suffering during the Second World War has for a long time been one of the neglected themes of the constantly growing field of Holocaust Studies. Whilst we can easily consult books depicting the Nazi policies in the conquered eastern territories, we still lack extensive knowledge about the involvement of the Soviet propaganda machinery in treating the news about the mass murder of the Jews. It has generally been assumed that Stalin avoided any overt stressing of the Jewish experience under the Nazis because of the rampant anti-Semitism in the Soviet leadership *and* among various Soviet nations. As John Klier and other historians have asserted, in cases when the Soviet government during the war spread the information about Jewish suffering, it was only as a means to court the support of ‘mighty’ American Jews for the Soviet war efforts (John Klier, ‘The Holocaust and the Soviet Union’ in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 276–95, at p. 281).

Simultaneously, the Jewish experience was crudely suppressed when information obtained about the Nazi racial war was shared with the Soviet people. Yet Karel C. Berkhoff, analysing the real-time depiction of ‘the Holocaust’ in the Soviet media, challenged this notion and concluded – describing the Soviet policy as full of contradictions: ‘explicit reports [on the Holocaust] did exist and were more numerous than has been assumed’ (Karel C. Berkhoff, ‘Total Annihilation of the Jewish Population: The Holocaust in the Soviet Media, 1941–45’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, n.s. x (2009), 61–105, at pp. 62 and 77).

In *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes* David Shneer further questions many of the previous misconceptions and highlights the complexity of the Soviet responses. Analysing hundreds of photographs depicting Nazi atrocities, taken during the war in liberated territories by Soviet Jewish photographers, Shneer discusses how Soviet journals and newspapers treated the Holocaust and the ways in which they presented the atrocity stories to the home audience. Tracing the careers of Soviet Jewish photographers, Shneer convincingly argues that the Soviet wartime depiction of the Nazi atrocities was not as rigid and universal as previous historians assumed. Although the party line was clearly set and the photographers knew *what* they had to take pictures of, their artistic licence gave them the opportunity to decide *how* they staged and edited the photographs. Subsequently, the editors’ task was to navigate through the changing party directives or to sense the complex climate in Soviet society, with its renewed stress on integral Russian nationalism. Shneer suggests that although from 1942 onwards the Jewish victims depicted in the photographs were gradually transformed into ‘peaceful Soviet citizens’, the photographers still found a way to imply, indirectly, the victims’ Jewishness (p. 105). Furthermore, readers of the Soviet Yiddish press (*Eynikayt*) had a more detailed understanding of the Jewish suffering than those reading only Russian newspapers. This study hence brings to our attention new and significant avenues of understanding the ways in which Soviet society in unoccupied territories responded to the gradually unfolding Jewish catastrophe in eastern Europe.

However, it would be erroneous to consider this book as just another contribution to Holocaust Studies. In fact, Shneer moves beyond this narrowly defined field and contributes to our contemporary knowledge of the social and cultural history of Soviet Jews. He traces the origins of photojournalism in tsarist Russia and the newly born Soviet Union, documenting it as an essentially Jewish profession. This Jewish involvement in the new artistic profession confirms previous conclusions by historians of western European Jewry, such as Michael Berkowitz (p. 16). Discussing the pre-war years, Shneer documents how Jewish photographers were enlisted in the propaganda presentation of the new socialist regime, including its 'positive' solutions to the minority questions. They travelled on editorial assignments through the vast empire and helped to create the visual image of a new Soviet Jew (Birobidzhan). Additionally, the last chapter of Shneer's book analyses the fate of the Jewish photojournalists and of their work after the war, when challenged by Stalinist anti-Semitism and the campaign against cosmopolitanism.

In particular, Shneer offers challenging conclusions regarding various perceptions of Jewish identity by the Soviet Jews themselves as well as by other nations in the Soviet Union. He shows how the photographers had to deal with constantly changing environments in Soviet society and the unpredictable politics of the Kremlin leadership. During the 1930s they mostly accepted the unwritten order of assimilation and Russianized their Jewish-sounding names. Yet the war, resurgent anti-Semitism, concerns about family members left behind the German lines and later encountered evidence of Nazi crimes reminded them of their roots. Moreover, those who survived the purges of the 1930s faced the anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1940s and 1950s. Although they mostly survived late Stalinism, their careers were deeply affected. As Shneer concludes, 'The photographers' own sense of Soviet Jewish identity changed over time, . . . changed in various contexts [and the Jewishness] was not experienced the same way by all the photographers' (p. 231). Indeed, their longing for acceptance as equal Soviet citizens led them on several occasions to marginalize the Jewish narrative in the atrocity photographs. With the party screws tightening following the Soviet victories in 1943, these Jewish photographers became aware of their vulnerable position, because they were perceived as members of a particular ethnic minority whose loyalty was constantly doubted.

Throughout the book Shneer struggles with the issue of the photographers' identity, but as he proves, its fluidity challenged even the photographers themselves. He admits crudely imposing identity when framing his research by considering the (Jewish) nationality written after 1932 in their passports as the decisive factor as to whether to include particular individuals in the book (p. 7). Identity can be a messy category and it is indeed doubtful whether we should try to impose it on people who were themselves puzzled about their own belonging. However, I am tempted to agree that this is possibly the only feasible manner in which to pursue this research. Facing the uncertainty of these fast-changing years, the individual photographers identified themselves as Jews on certain occasions, but as Russians or Soviets on others. Shneer asserts that the photographers' Jewishness affected the way they took their photographs (p. 8). Nevertheless, although such generalizations and simplifications are indeed useful, Shneer could go beyond the presented framework and examine whether the representation of 'the Holocaust' as perceived through *Soviet Jewish* eyes differed and in what sense from the one perceived through *Soviet* eyes. This is missing from the book and weakens Shneer's conclusions.

Despite these minor comments, I consider Shneer's book, which is accompanied by countless examples of wartime Soviet photographs, a fundamental contribution to our contemporary knowledge of wartime Soviet Jewish history which will hopefully further stimulate interest in the topic. Indeed, we will not have to wait for too long, because the University of Pittsburgh Press is preparing the publication of a book by British film historian Jeremy Hicks which examines the Soviet cinematographic encounters with the persecution of the Jews between 1938 and 1946 (*First Films of the Holocaust: Soviet Cinema and the Genocide of the Jews, 1938–46*). Holocaust scholars will appreciate the

opportunity to contrast Hicks's and Sneer's conclusions, offering diverse perspectives on the so far still under-researched eastern part of the European continent.

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***Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland.* By Michael Meng.** Harvard University Press. 2011. xiv + 351pp. £25.95.

'A city and a nation was literally rising from the dead. Then, one afternoon, I was taken out to the former ghetto . . . Here there was not much to see. There was complete and total waste, and a monument.' These lines, written by W. E. B. Du Bois in 1952 after his visit to Warsaw, encapsulate different encounters with the physical spaces and shattered sites of Poland's capital in the first years after liberation from German occupation. The urban district of Muranów, Warsaw's centre of pre-war Jewish life, which the Germans levelled to the ground after having crushed the ghetto uprising in April 1943, was not included in the historic preservation and reconstruction programme. Whereas the ruined landscape of the Old Town was perceived as part of a sacred heritage of the Polish nation worthy of preservation and restoration, urban planners, historic preservationists and politicians did not regard Jewish sites as culturally valuable and hence felt no obligation to rebuild the Great Synagogue on Łomackie Street. Apart from the odd exception, they regarded the area of the wartime ghetto, in which the Germans had crowded together 380,000 Warsaw Jews in 1940, as an empty space that could be reserved for constructing a socialist future. It was decided to clear away the rubble and to build a socialist-realist housing complex in Muranów. Michael Meng argues that the space of the wartime ghetto evoked 'the anxiety of the Holocaust' among Poles. Thus, he interprets the appropriation and transformation of the area, where Jews lived, suffered, died and were selected for deportation trains to the death camp of Treblinka, as a collective management strategy for erasing the spatial markers of a discomfiting and 'abject past' that they did not wish to confront.

However, the attempts to obliterate the reminders of persecution, deportation and mass murder of European Jewry, as well as the general disregard for Jewish communal property, were not specific to Polish society alone. Such phenomena also occurred in post-war Germany, the very land of those who organized and perpetrated the Holocaust. In his analysis of how Germans, Poles and Jews – individuals and different groups of people – have dealt with and interpreted various Jewish sites (mostly synagogues and cemeteries) Michael Meng demonstrates that the encounters, which this process entailed, developed 'in related ways across local, national, and political borders' (p. 15).

Meng identifies a common pattern generally distinctive to both democratic and communist societies in Poland and Germany: ranging from the deliberate destruction and neglect of historic traces of Jewish life in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s to the preservation and restoration of Jewish sites from the 1970s onwards. According to Meng, this shift materialized 'first on the local level as church groups, city leaders, political dissidents, and ordinary residents became concerned about the neglect and erasure of Jewish sites since 1945' (p. 7). In the 1980s, and particularly post-1989, these spaces were transnationalized and 'attracted local, national, and international attention from a wide variety of people who imbued them with diverse meanings' (p. 260). Meng states that a new mode of public memory, which he terms 'redemptive cosmopolitanism', has subsequently emerged.

Meng examines the changing attitudes towards Jewish sites from 1945 to the present day by focusing on the examples of Berlin, Warsaw, Potsdam, Essen, and Wrocław. He brings these five cities together by way of an 'analytical kaleidoscope', that is 'a shifting analytical gaze that moves from city to city to reveal multiple perspectives on the common themes of memory, urban space, tourism, cosmopolitanism, the Cold War, and postwar Jewish life' (p. 12). With regard to the conception of time, the author is indebted to Reinhart Koselleck, who emphasized that temporality is multi-levelled. Meng thinks of