established in 1939. From then on, private initiative was discouraged and the state regained control of those private initiatives that had sprung up during the previous thirty years.

Ener’s book is undoubtedly a major contribution to our understanding of the politics of poor relief in the nineteenth century. She has resurrected the poor from amid the enormous diversity of sources under which they had been buried. Through her detailed accounts of individuals, she has also succeeded in bringing them to life in a more literal sense. Finally, her colonial discourse on poverty also rings true and gives new insights into how imperialism justified its colonization of Egypt. There are, however, serious flaws too. One of the most serious is the fact that the last part of the book is too cursory and fails to do justice to the subject. In effect, Ener’s study really only covers the long nineteenth century, from 1800 to 1919; the post-1919 period is addressed in less than a chapter. Her book totally neglects even the secondary literature on the interwar years, let alone that for the period between the end of World War II and Nasser’s coup d’état.

Secondly, though she refers throughout her book to a rhetoric of poverty since the rise of the new elite at the end of the nineteenth century, she scarcely analyses it. It is regrettable that she makes so little reference to such well-known Arabic newspapers as al-Liwa’, al-Jarida, or al-Mu’ayyad, or to other famous pamphlets or books written in the period, to illustrate how the “politics of poverty” was played out in the increasingly popular nationalist press. A third omission is that Ener does not really trace the gradual transformation of the traditional Islamic discourse on benevolence into a more rational and utilitarian discourse on poverty. Finally, although her concept of “managing” the poor is an interesting substitute for the more totalitarian one of surveillance, one does have the feeling that this concept is still too loose and ambivalent. Although the great strength of her work is that it includes the intent as well as the effect of reformers, in many cases, such as that of the juvenile delinquents described in one of the final chapters, she should give more credit to the scholars she criticizes. When she does come across examples of surveillance and control in both intent and practice, she would do well to acknowledge their existence and incorporate them into her conclusions and theoretical framework.

Roel Meijer


The ultra-conservative Tsarist regime was well aware of the dangers of freedom of the press and speech during the nineteenth century. Despite the need to modernize the backward Russian economic and social structures, the authorities’ fear of new political ideas and foreign influences retained the upper hand. Censorship of books, journals and newspapers severely hampered new developments and drove enlightened writers abroad.

Within the multi-ethnic framework of the Russian Empire, the Jews constituted an exception. They had been absorbed by Russia during the three partitions of Poland in the second half of the eighteenth century, but they could not find a place within the Russian social scene. They were neither nobles nor peasants, neither of the Orthodox Church nor of the Catholic Church, and they lived within their own religious and social confines. For a long time the repressive policy of the Russian government thwarted the wish of enlightened Jewish intellectuals to publish books and journals in Hebrew. There were
some abortive endeavours to publish cultural journals, but due to censorship and lack of financial backing these journals lasted just a few a years.

Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, was an old and important centre of Jewish learning, and its Hebrew presses continued to produce traditional Hebrew religious works throughout the nineteenth century. However, thwarted by censorship and lack of funds, only two new Hebrew journals appeared. The first was published in 1841, but had to cease publication after just two issues. The second journal, *Ha-Karmel* (Vine Leaf), also had Russian and German supplements and was planned as a weekly and later as a monthly magazine. Between 1860 and 1880 fifty issues appeared. Several other endeavours came to nothing.

It was only at the end of the nineteenth century, after the foundation of the Jewish Social Democratic Party (Bund) in Vilna in 1897, that the cultural and political inertia of the Jews was transformed into feverish activity. In the early days of socialist propaganda among the Jews in the Russian Empire, the Jewish revolutionaries (mostly students at Russian universities) had become aware that the mass of the Jews could be reached only if they were addressed in Yiddish, their own language. From 1897 onward, the Bund therefore launched a propaganda offensive by publishing Yiddish newspapers, political and cultural journals, and brochures, many of which had to be printed outside the Russian Empire and smuggled into the country. Bund publications were also printed in Vilna, but the Bundist presses were seized by the secret police in 1898 and many of the collaborators were exiled to Siberia. It was not until after the outbreak of the Russian revolution of 1905 that the modern Jewish press could be established in Vilna.

From 1905 to 1928, eighty-nine journals were published in Vilna, most of them in Yiddish. Within a few years, the Yiddish language, which eastern European scholars had considered unfit for intellectual intercourse, had become an accepted vehicle, not only for political propaganda but also for literary and scholarly publication. Alongside the modernization of Hebrew, Yiddish changed from being a despised “jargon” into an acknowledged Jewish language. Even the Zionists, who favoured Hebrew as the language of a modern Jewish nation, had to acknowledge the importance of Yiddish as a language for political propaganda. At the Czernowitz conference in 1908 the cultural importance of both languages for Jewish life in general all over the world was officially recognized. Also, Zionist political propaganda had to use Yiddish, and at least seven Zionist journals appeared in Yiddish in Vilna up to 1928. The Bund was by far the most important organization in Jewish publishing in Vilna. It continued to publish even during World War I. But once Vilna had been incorporated into the new independent Republic of Poland in 1920 and the Jews officially recognized as a national minority, the number of Yiddish periodicals increased.

Marten-Finnis’s intensive research in libraries in Vilna, Kiev, Moscow, Paris, London, and New York has yielded a bibliography of ninety-five publications, many of which are rare or were even previously unknown. In her analysis, she describes the development of the Yiddish written language alongside that of the Bund’s socialist propaganda. The new political and social movement had to create a completely new vocabulary in Yiddish to explain its aims and ideals. Using a wealth of examples, the author shows how the idiom of Bundist publications was influenced by the Russian underground press as well as by the traditional Hebrew method of exposition through dialogue. After the Russian revolution of 1905, the Jewish socialist press could develop more or less unhindered. Consequently, the Bund was able to publish new literary journals in Vilna, in which young Yiddish writers presented their work.
Susanne Marten-Finnis has opened up a hitherto unknown field. She has not only brought to light the importance of Vilna’s Jewish press for the modernization of Jewish life in eastern Europe, she has also set out new ways to study the origin and development of Yiddish as a modern language. Her book is an excellent introduction to a fascinating subject.

Rena Fuks-Mansfeld


This book is a welcome contribution to the little researched subject of Jews and the labour movement in western European cities. We learn a lot about Amsterdam, London, and Paris, their Jewish workers and their efforts to improve material and political conditions. Each case is set within the framework of a multi faceted analysis: (1) the origin and status of the Jewish community and the workers within it; (2) general socio-economic conditions and labour movements within the “host” societies; (3) general and labour attitudes toward Jews and Jewish workers, and the presence/absence and/or character of anti-Semitic hostility; (4) trade union and political activities of Jewish workers.

In contradistinction to London and Paris, the presence of Jewish workers in Amsterdam was not mainly the result of recent migrations. The Jewish community was an old ethnoreligious minority and recognized as such. Anti-Semitism contributed little to the self-awareness of a distinct Jewish “ethnicity”. This distinctiveness was strengthened among workers due to their concentration within the diamond industry. But such peculiarities and others did not constitute a barrier to the gradual integration into general trade-union and political (social democracy) activities. Two processes were particularly helpful in this respect: the recognition of Jewish holidays by the general unions and the decline of religiosity among Jewish workers.

Massive Jewish migration to London at the end of the nineteenth century produced more problems and hostility than in Amsterdam. This contributed to the development of separate Jewish trade-union and political movements. Nationalism and anti-Semitism (especially during the Boer War) contributed to this development. But after 1904 relations with the general English trade unions and labour movements improved. When anti-alien bills and acts resurfaced in 1911, Jewish workers were sufficiently integrated into the British left to demand equal treatment.

Before 1914 (the scope of the book) eastern European Jewish migration to Paris was not as massive as to London. However, it was sufficient to scare the native community, who were involved in efforts to direct the Jews elsewhere. This contributed to the creation of a separate Jewish labour subculture. General ambivalence toward immigration as well as the Dreyfus Affair had a similar impact. After the affair, Jewish workers and the general leftist movements could grow closer. The figure of Bernard Lazare was prominent in this rapprochement, leading among others to the creation in 1911 of the first Paris labour paper in Yiddish – with the help of the CGT.

Karin Hofmeester has done a good job in highlighting the similarities and differences between the experiences in the three cities. Although starting from different points of