

Ch. 6 by Anna Pilarski is a generative analysis of the word order in Yiddish interrogation sentences compared with their German and Polish equivalents, especially as far as left or right dislocations are concerned. The conclusion of the rather complex analyses of some token sentences declined in the three languages is that the processes of topicalization and focalization within the Yiddish complementizer phrases are closer to Polish than to German.

The last chapter, by Michał Gajek, deals with the lexical influence of Yiddish on Polish. It covers a wide variety of lexemes at several sociolinguistic levels from Jewish *Kulturwörter* to low registers connected with slang. Gajek provides interesting insights about how to distinguish Yiddish from German loanwords once they are integrated into the morphophonemic system of Polish (241–43).

The book displays a clear Polonocentrist way of describing the impact of the contact with Slavic languages on the genesis and development of Eastern Yiddish. This methodological choice is largely justified by historical considerations: the coincidence of Ashkenaz II with the territories of the Rzeczpospolita and the fact that before WWII Poland was home to more than 3 million Yiddish-speaking Jews out of a total population of 35 million (in 1939). This intense intertwining between Polish and east European Jewish history explains why most Slavisms of Yiddish actually go back to Polish.

This stimulating book changes the focus in evaluating the Slavic and especially Polish component in Eastern Yiddish: it goes far beyond the lexicon and even the borrowing of grammatical structures, as it also involves the concept of intertranslatability (especially in Chs. 2 and 6).

My only criticism toward this crucial contribution to the linguistics of Eastern Yiddish is the choice of “the so-called linguistic transliteration” instead of the YIVO spelling. Although the authors justified their avoidance of the latter (xii–xiii), the alternative spelling they use is not thoroughly consistent: the use of <x> and <š> instead of <kh> and <sh>, respectively, is welcome because it established a one-to-one equivalence between the Yiddish graphemes <ך/כ> and <ש> and their transliterations whereas <kh> and <sh> are digraphs. However, the use of <j> and <c> instead of <y> and <ts>, respectively, in order to transliterate the consonantal use of <ײ> and the affricate <ײז> is less successful as they seem to be mere Polonisms. Here and there, there are some typographical errors. I mention two of them in order to facilitate the task of an eventual reedition of this excellent book that really deserves to be reprinted: ethnolect, not *ethnolect (4), and *etcetera* is pleonastic; *et cetera* is sufficient (178).

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. *Cursed: A Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom.*

Trans. Ewa Wampuszyc. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023. xv, 570 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Tables. \$44.95, hard bound.

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Numerous scholars have analyzed the Kielce pogrom of July 4, 1946. One might assume that no fresh insights could be added to this tragic narrative. Yet, the book under review convincingly demonstrates that no monograph can be considered definitive. Historians will always

uncover untapped primary sources, ask new questions, and propose innovative conclusions. This is precisely what Joanna Tokarska-Bakir has done. A professor and chair at the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Slavic Studies, she specializes in cultural anthropology and religious and literary studies. While her scholarly contributions span various fields, her research on violence, prejudices, antisemitism, and the Holocaust stands out as particularly significant.

Initially published in 2018 as a comprehensive Polish edition spanning two volumes totaling 1,575 pages, the reviewed book sparked intense debate. Although on a smaller scale, it resembled and continued the public discussion that followed the publication of Jan T. Gross' *Neighbors*. In its English iteration, *Cursed* excludes the second volume of the Polish release—comprising 807 pages of crucial documents on the pogrom. The reviewed work represents a slightly abridged version of the Polish first volume. Nevertheless, its portrayal and interpretation of events remain chillingly consistent.

Cursed presents a “social portrait” of the pogrom, or, in other words, the biographies of both victims and perpetrators. It challenges the oversimplified narrative of a struggle between supporters and opponents of the newly established Soviet-controlled regime after 1944 in Poland. Rather, it reveals that the local police (MO), the army (WP), and the security service (UB) were saturated with demoralized, antisemitic individuals with backgrounds in various pre-war and wartime right-wing organizations, many of whom had perpetrated violence against Jews previously. The rivalries between these institutions further exacerbated the situation, hindering effective intervention.

Multiple factors contributed to the outbreak of the pogrom. Many Kielce residents had appropriated Jewish property during the war and were afraid that survivors would try to recover it. Opportunistic individuals exploited any pretext to plunder Jewish assets in the post-war chaos. Even the new local administration members engaged in the “privatization of power,” state-supported looting. The Catholic Church was unfriendly towards Jews, disseminating rumors and blaming the victims following anti-Jewish incidents not only in Kielce but also in other locales. Ignorant segments of the population embraced blood libel accusations, alleging the illicit transfusion of Christian blood into exhausted Jews. As the author observes, “During the Kielce pogrom, shops and restaurants functioned as social networks through which flowed vodka, murder, and robbery” (321). For various reasons, the central authorities, the ruling party, and even the Central Committee of Polish Jews “turn[ed] a blind eye to, or even den[ied], the alarming reports about antisemitism” (161).

A “pogrom tinder” appeared in Kielce. “This tinder consists of four ingredients: traditional antisemitism, with blood libel at its core; a supply of easy-to-mobilize social experiences, i.e., the widespread wartime murder of Jews; as well as two sources of fear, namely the fear that owners of post-Jewish *kamienice* [apartment houses] would return and the outrage associated with ‘Jews acting above their station’” (476). A coincidental trigger started an avalanche. No provocation was necessary, and the author did not find the slightest indication of it in the primary sources.

Approximately 600 Jews lived in Kielce before the pogrom. Most likely, forty-nine were murdered in various parts of the city. The pogrom triggered panic, and only 168 Jews remained in Kielce, housed in the UB building. However, the threatening news came from nearby towns. Jews were murdered there and on the trains before and after the pogrom. Following the decision of the Polish central authorities: “All Jews from the Kielce region were forcibly dispersed across the entire country” (71). “In police accounts and situation reports from the first months of 1946, attacks, robberies, and murders are recorded almost every day” (177); “. . . it appears that in 1945–46, despite the end of the war and the encroachment of the Soviets, Jews continued to be excluded from the law in the Kielce province” (158).

Cursed is a meticulously researched micro-study that offers a hyper-empirical reconstruction of events. It elucidates the identities and motivations of perpetrators and interprets the

pogrom through anthropological, social, and psychological theories of violence. The text is richly documented and expertly crafted, effectively conveying the escalating horror of the pogrom. It represents a scholarly work of the highest caliber, essential reading for anyone interested in Polish-Jewish history, while specialists in the field would benefit from consulting the original Polish version.

Brian K. Goodman, *The Nonconformists: American and Czech Writers across the Iron Curtain.*

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2023. X, 352 pp. Notes. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$45.00, hard bound.

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Brian Goodman's book is clever, elegantly written and meticulously documented. The study is convincingly framed as an important contribution to American Cold War studies: "Despite increased attention to the so-called 'Third World', the socialist 'Second World' has largely remained a 'terra incognita' for Americanists, especially outside the borders of the former Soviet Union" (19). The detailed analyses combine thorough historical contextualization with inventive use of archival sources and fine close readings of literary texts. The announced theme is "the surprising continuities between American and Czech literary cultures during the Cold War" (11). The main merit of this work is its emphasis on the reciprocity of cultural transfers between Czech and American 'dissident' literary circles. The comparative method is thematized in the introduction, which stages the interaction of the writings of Václav Havel and Arthur Miller in the pages of the American magazine *Cross Currents* in 1983. The issue published the first excerpts in English from Havel's most famous political essay, "The Power of the Powerless" (1978), alongside Miller's monologue dedicated to Havel, in which the American playwright affirms: "In some indescribable way we are each other's continuation" (11). The book consists of a prologue: "Ginsberg's File", Introduction: "A Novel Fusion": on American-Czech literary transfers, six interpretive chapters ("The Man Who Disappeared": American and Czech reception of Kafka, "Behind the Gold Curtain": F. O. Matthiessen in Prague in 1947, "The Coward's Guide to World Literature"): Josef Škvorecký's translations of American literature as the creation of a "dissenting" canon in the 1950s, "The Kingdom of May": Ginsberg's visit to Prague in 1965, "The Tourist": Philip Roth's trips to Prague and his contacts with Czech dissent in the 1970s and 1980s, "Across the Gray Zone": the activities of the semi-official Jazz Section and the trial of its members in the 1980s) and an epilogue ("Everything goes": on cultural and political developments after 1989).

Although the book focuses mainly on the Cold War period, from the late 1940s to the 1980s, Goodman takes us back to 1930s America and guides us through the reshaping of left-wing New York intellectual circles, especially around the cultural magazine *Partisan Review*. By following the intellectual trajectory of one of the book's key figures, the leftist Harvard professor of American literature F. O. Matthiessen, the book reaches back to the 19th century and the "American dissenting literary tradition", as formulated in Matthiessen's key work, *The American Renaissance* (1941).