



Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish experiences of the First World War in Central Europe

edited by Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady and Julia Barbara Köhne, New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2019, x + 407 pp., \$130 (hardback), ISBN-13: 978-178920-018-8

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Schmidt does a remarkable job showing the myriad ways Bebel shaped social democracy. By the 1870s, Bebel viewed himself as a Marxist and a revolutionary, but he never advocated radical actions that might lead to sweeping reprisals by the state. Instead he believed that, as capitalism moved inexorably towards its collapse, the movement's task was to organize workers to defend their interests in the current system while preparing them for the socialist future. For 40 years he pursued these aims as an author, as the SPD's chief spokesman in the Reichstag and as a participant in the factional battles – national and international – that repeatedly rent the movement as contradictions between its revolutionary ideology and its reformist strategy became manifest. A tough but flexible infighter, Bebel excelled at defending the SPD against its critics and holding the party's rival factions together.

Schmidt also devotes ample space to Bebel's private life. Torn between his stressful public obligations and the duties and pleasures of family, Bebel was dependent on his wife, Julie, whose help was often key to his success in business and politics as well as his emotional well-being. It is ironic that as Bebel grew older and ever more popular among the people, he grew increasingly isolated as his wife and many old comrades died. At the end all that remained was politics, which he pursued to the last.

One can always find issues that need further development in such a compact work. For example, it would have been interesting to learn more about Bebel's relationship with his long-time party co-chair, Paul Singer, who is hardly mentioned. However, such quibbles are minor. Overall, Schmidt succeeds admirably in locating Bebel's life in the context of the emerging labour movement. Equipped with a timeline, glossary and bibliography, the book will be useful to readers at all levels.

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Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish experiences of the First World War in Central Europe, edited by Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady and Julia Barbara Köhne, New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2019, x + 407 pp., \$130 (hardback), ISBN-13: 978-178920-018-8

The conventional wisdom about the Jewish experience in Central Europe in the First World War has long held that Jewish hopes that their wartime sacrifices would end antisemitic slander, prove Jewish patriotism and definitively guarantee Jewish inclusion in the nation came to naught in the face of rising antisemitism. Indeed, the infamous 'Jewish Census' in the German army in 1916 so humiliated Jewish soldiers, the scholarly consensus held, that they became disillusioned about the possibility of their integration in Germany. This excellent collection of articles on Jews in Central Europe during the First World War draws on recent scholarship that has called this consensus into question and definitely demonstrates that most Jewish soldiers in Germany felt that their wartime experience at the front bound them to their comrades in the trenches and deepened their sense of belonging to the German nation.

Antisemitism existed, to be sure, but they mostly ignored it or took it in stride, assuming that it was the military hierarchy or ignorant civilians who denounced Jews as cowards and military shirkers, not their fellow soldiers, with whom they shared the fear of death in a brutal, industrialized war. Not only was the comradeship of the trenches genuine, it persuaded some non-Jews to abandon their preconceived negative views of Jews and allowed Jews to demonstrate male virtues that guaranteed their place in the German nation.

In their introduction to the volume, editors Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady and Julia Barbara Köhne emphasize that there was no single Central European Jewish experience in the First World War, but rather diverse experiences which depended on background, gender, social status, geography, and religious and political ideology. The articles in the volume reveal significant differences between acculturated liberal German Jews (the overwhelming majority of Jews in Wilhelmine Germany) and Zionists, and they remind us that the early scholarly consensus was based on the memoirs of the latter, who had long insisted that antisemitism was endemic in Europe and Jews should reject their naïve hope for full integration in Germany. Indeed, one of the best articles in the volume, Michael Geheran's 'Rethinking Jewish front experiences', convincingly demonstrates that Jewish soldiers interpreted their experience of comradeship and their encounters with antisemitism in terms of views of they already held. Thus, acculturated Jews emphasized that the good relations they had with fellow soldiers in the trenches inoculated them from the antisemitism of some officers. Antisemitic slights therefore did not undermine their self-understanding as Germans. On the other hand, those who already felt alienated in German society, whether for personal reasons or Zionist ideology, were much more likely to insist that antisemitism had caused a permanent break between Germans and Jews. While acculturated Jews almost never mentioned the Jewish Census in their diaries, letters and memoirs, Zionists regarded it as a symbol of German–Jewish rupture.

Similarly, Jason Crouthamel's impressive chapter on comradeship in the trenches analyses both Jewish and non-Jewish wartime diaries and letters and concludes that both Jews and non-Jews felt deep bonds at the front. Moreover, they understood manliness, heroism, bravery and death in terms of behaviour, not as 'essential' characteristics. As a result, Jews and non-Jews alike understood Jewish valour as a German trait, such that Jews were included in the nation. Moreover, many Jews felt that their good relations with fellow soldiers at the front helped them withstand the petty antisemitism they experienced. Both Geheran and Crouthamel insist that it was only the Stab-in-the-Back legend – which blamed Jews (and leftists, usually conflated with Jews) for Germany's defeat – that upset Jews since it disregarded their sacrifice for the nation.

Another chapter which supports the contention that Jews remained a part of the German nation until the Nazi period is the interesting chapter by Florian Brückner on German war novels, especially those written in the 1920s and 1930s by conservative nationalists. Although many of these authors were antisemitic, their widely read World War I novels did not employ antisemitic rhetoric or exclude Jews from the German *Volksgemeinschaft* (national/racial community). Instead they focused on comradeship at the front and how the war had steeled a new generation of Germans to lead the nation. Only during the Second World War did war novels read the Jews out of the German nation.


Like most collections of essays, *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion* contains both excellent and less impressive chapters. Devlin Scofield's chapter on Alsations in the

German army is a very interesting study of another minority group in Germany, the Alsatians, German-speaking (or rather Alsatian-speaking) residents of the territory annexed from France in 1870/1871, which provides an important counterpoint to the experience of Jews. Scofield argues that the fact that the German army command suspected the Alsatians of disloyalty and discriminated against them propelled the Alsatian soldiers into a pro-French stance. Andrea Sinn's chapter on Jewish women on the home front makes the important claim that work on the home front opened up new avenues for Jewish integration in Germany, but unfortunately it does not provide adequate evidence to back up that claim, nor does it extend into the last two years of the war when antisemitism flourished. Sabine Hank's chapter on Jewish women in Berlin during the war provides much detail about Jewish women's war work, but that detail does not support her claim about integration. On the contrary, her chapter provides evidence that Jewish women devoted all their attention to the needs of fellow Jews during the war. Moreover, Christine Krüger's essay comparing Jews in France and Germany during both the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War is excellent on French Jews but weaker on German Jews. I fear that Krüger's concern for transnational Jewish solidarity has led her to ignore important dimensions of German-Jewish life. Similarly, Sarah Panter, who argues for the fluidity of German identity, makes important points about how American and British Jews coped with being labelled 'German' during the war, but she misunderstands the situation in Austria-Hungary.

Indeed, although the editors claim that the volume is about Central Europe in general, and it does include some chapters about the Habsburg Monarchy, its strength is clearly Germany. Tamara Scheer's chapter, 'Habsburg Jews and the Imperial Army before and during the First World War', makes the important point that antisemitism in the Austrian army was often simply rhetorical flourish to structural friction. Soldiers who were upset that letters from home or their pay arrived late blamed the non-commissioned officer in charge, who in the Habsburg army was often Jewish, so they combined ordinary anger with anti-Jewish invective. Yet Scheer misunderstands the Jews of Austria-Hungary. She insists that Jews were all German speakers, but in fact most Jews spoke Yiddish, and many spoke Hungarian, Polish, Czech or German. She exaggerates the number of Austrian officers who married Jews before the war. The chapter is also filled with mistakes. She has attributed the words of Arthur Schnitzler about antisemitism to me (in my book on the Jews of Vienna), claimed that regiments in the Habsburg army were based on language when they were based on province, and provided an inaccurate description of the Galician Jewish refugees. On the other hand, Philipp Stiasny's piece on the depiction of Austrian Galicia in Hollywood and German films in the interwar period provides a charming analysis not so much of Habsburg Galicia or its Jews but of how both centres of film production depicted them in the 1920s.

The editors are to be commended for going beyond traditional historical concerns to include literature, film and even psychology. The volume contains an interesting analysis by Glenda Abramson of a novel, *Mr Lublin's Store*, by the Hebrew writer S.Y. Agnon, in which the Galician-born Israeli criticized German Jews for their faith in integration. It also contains a chapter by Julia Barbara Köhne on German psychologists of Jewish origin who supported German militarism, although I am not convinced by her psychological explanation for why they ignored the Jews.

Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion is an important collection of essays which mostly deal with German Jews in the First World War. It may not do all it promises, but it does a masterful job at reminding us that German Jews were indeed part of the German nation, however defined, before the Nazis.

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Death to Fascism: Louis Adamic's fight for democracy, by John P. Enyeart, Urbana, Chicago and Springfield, University of Illinois Press, 2019, xii + 216 pp., £19.99/\$25.00 (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-252-08432-4

Death to Fascism follows the career of journalist and novelist Louis Adamic throughout the tumultuous decades of the first half of the twentieth century. Born to Slovenian peasants in 1898 and emigrating to the United States as a teenager, Adamic became recognized in literary circles for his sharpness in challenging accepted views of American identity. Promoting 'cultural pluralism', Adamic encouraged immigrants in America to 'participate in the continual process of collectively synthesizing and re-formulating the beliefs and values that define the nation in order to feel a sense of civic solidarity with the Anglo Protestant majority' (3). Adamic found commercial success in the 1930s with his book *The Native's Return* (1934), and he began giving speeches on anti-nativism and championing democracy as the antithesis of fascism. Adamic was at his most influential during the Second World War, when he was an advisor to government officials on the political situation in Yugoslavia and writing and giving speeches to help rally public opinion behind the United States's military alliance with Tito's Yugoslavia.

However, Adamic began to lose his influence in the years following the Second World War, as his anti-colonialism and support of Tito put him in the firing line of the postwar anti-communist witch hunt. This occurred despite the fact Adamic had never been a communist, and had been historically critical of socialism, Marxism and the Soviet Union. Adamic's life came to an end under suspicious circumstances in 1951, and his historical role has largely been forgotten. The author seeks to remedy this, and places Adamic at the forefront of a liberal antifascist movement, shifting the focus away from the primacy of the Communist movement in antifascism.

Death to Fascism is the result of painstaking research by John Enyeart, in which Adamic's career and ideas embellish a compelling narrative of the political struggles of the period. Enyeart weaves together the questions of Americanism, immigration, antifascism and foreign policy in a coherent and engaging fashion.

Nevertheless, Adamic was dogged throughout his career by a shallowness in his political analyses. Despite being the central themes of *Death to Fascism*, there is little interrogation by Adamic or the author of the meaning of fascism and democracy. This is perhaps best illustrated by Adamic's assertion that Hitler's politics could be defeated 'with a call for compassion' and that the world needed an 'idea' that was 'positive and constructive and so sound from the best human angle and so simple that [it] will sing and whirl all over' (5). There is no attempt to make sense of the conditions which led in the rise of Hitler and fascism; to Adamic, fascism was an 'idea' which could simply be defeated with a better one.

The narrative of *Death to Fascism* is led by the primacy of rhetoric and ideas, abstracted from the wider material and ideological context. Consequently, the book repeatedly indicates that Adamic, as a 'master storyteller', convinced Americans to support a military alliance with Tito. While Adamic may have played a role in helping to bring