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The Vanishing Jewish Anarchists

A Review of Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History Of Jewish Radicalism

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At the close of 2016, Verso books published *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History Of Jewish Radicalism*, by Alain Brossat and Sylvia Klingberg. Eager to learn more about Jewish radicalism of all stripes, one CrimethInc. agent sent away for a copy of this book. The results were surprising, as detailed in this full report to Verso.

Dear Verso Books,

I am sad to say that I recently received a defective book and I would like a full refund. The book I ordered was *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History Of Jewish Radicalism*, but instead I received an incomplete version. It seems that any mention of anarchy, anarchism, anarchists, and even anarcho-communism has been left out completely from my copy. When looking in the index I found that my copy was missing even the most notable Jewish radicals, who happen to be anarchists, such as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Also, there is no mention of the anarchists who participated in the 1905 uprising, the Bialystok anarchists,¹ or the notable anarchist group, The Black Banner. When the authors got to the assassination of Symon Petliura on page eight, there was not one mention of his assassin, Sholem Schwartzbard, a Jewish anarchist. I noticed, too, that the numerous Jewish anarchist newspapers were missing, as well as the Jewish anarchists who wrote, compiled, edited, and printed those papers, such as anarchists David Edelstadt and Saul Yanovsky.

Ironically, the title of the book I received is “Yiddishland” and yet Baruch Rivkin is not mentioned once in my copy. Rivkin, an anarchist, diligently wrote on the subject of “Yiddishland,” and arguably coined the term. It grieves me that I was sold an incomplete

version of a “History of Jewish Radicalism.” I am sure it was an honest mistake and not false advertising, since there is not one point in history when communists or socialists have attempted to erase anarchism, anarchists, Jewish anarchists, or Jews from its pages.

For a history of Jewish anarchism in the United States please refer to *Di yiddishe anarkhistishe bevegung in emerika* (The Jewish Anarchist Movement in the United States: A Historical Review and Personal Reminiscences) by Joseph Cohen. Within the 557 pages of that lovely book, you will find a beautiful description of Jewish anarchism. However, there is little to no mention of Jewish communism. Maybe that is because it is a history of Jewish anarchism and not Jewish communism. If it were to include both Jewish anarchism and Jewish communism, then it could be boldly titled *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History Of Jewish Radicalism*.

I would like to return this book and be given a full refund.

Thank you.

¹ All the members of the first anarchist group in the Russian Empire, which was formed in 1903 in Bialystok, were Jews. Yiddish-speaking Jews participated in the International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam in 1907.