

commune.⁶⁶ Although Itkina touches on the artistic language of Gorshman's drawings, both their inherent artistic qualities and their place in the context of contemporary art are not defined. The reader learns about the documental qualities of this series, but thirsts for a closer interpretation of their content. For example, the author does not analyse what one can learn from these works on the artist's view of the Soviet agricultural settlement of Jews, which was a sort of communistic substitute for Zionism.

In conclusion, what is most praiseworthy about this issue of *Iskusstvo* is that it introduces to current Russian art criticism the idea that the "Jewish element" and the "Jewish experience" are meaningful aspects in research dealing with the modern Russian and Soviet artists who identified themselves as Jews. In Russia, this idea has

⁶⁶ Gorshman was not the only artist who was commissioned to "draw reports" of Soviet Jewish communes. For example, Issachar Ber Rybak (1897–1935), Meer Akselrod (1902–1970) and Lev Zevin (1903–1942) fulfilled the same commission.

hitherto been far from obvious. Moreover, the articles here are an important contribution to filling in the large gaps in factual information that still exist in this field. However, just because there are so many gaps, it is presently unwise to attempt general statements and formulistic speculations that several of the authors present. Before such generalizations can be made, additional efforts must also be made to form a bridge between the current research in Jewish art and the achievements of contemporary Jewish studies. Such a synthesis will perhaps lay a basis of scientific reliability for the trend towards the creative verbal interpretation of visual images and culturological generalizations that characterize the articles in *Iskusstvo*.

Ilia Rodov

Akselrod and Zevin even worked together with Gorshman in the same community in Crimea: Goodman, *Russian Jewish Artists*, p. 218; Elena Akselrod, *Meer Akselrod* (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 35 f. and p. 121.

Book Review

Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995. xviii + 350 pp., B/W illustrations. \$48

It is debatable whether or not this book ought to be reviewed in a journal devoted to *Jewish* art. If Jewish art is narrowly defined as the artistic output of Jews, then the depiction of the Jew in the art of Christendom falls outside the scope of our inquiry. Unavoidably, however, the interface between Jewish and Gentile society, as reflected in material culture, is central to the understanding of Jewish art. This, perhaps, is the point at which the whole subject comes alive, and makes the subject of this book relevant to the concerns of *Jewish Art*.

Felsenstein's study, as its title implies, deals with the very obverse of "Jewish" art – anti-semitica: the negative portrayal of the Jew in visual and literary sources during the period known in English history as the "longer" eighteenth century.

Recently, the reputation of the English for "liberalism" towards the Jews has taken a beating. Since the Readmission under Oliver Cromwell in 1656, the Jews have enjoyed 300 years of uninterrupted settlement in Britain and they have been spared the physical violence and displacement so common on the Continent. However, it is instructive to recall that medieval England invented the Blood Libel (Norwich 1144) and was the first country to expel its Jews in 1290.

As Felsenstein amply demonstrates, the legacy of Jew hatred (anti-semitism, as he rightly points out, is an anachronistic term when applied before the late nineteenth century – but no other label has effectively taken its place), endured throughout the almost 400 years when England was officially *judenrein*. There circulated the most odious beliefs regarding the Jews,

comparable with anything encountered in Germany; that they were inveterate usurers and doubledealers, that they had a secret passion for pigs, that they indulged in barbaric rituals such as circumcising adults, drinking the blood of Christian children and consorting with the Devil himself. Such notions, perhaps reinforced by the absence of real Jews to measure them against, found their way into representations of the Jew in art and literature, high and low. Moreover, they went through a process of “mutation” from overtly theological prejudice – the Christ-killer and the Wandering Jew damned forever for refusing to accept “the true Saviour” – into more “modern” economic, social and political forms: “rich” Jew brokers and “poor” old clothes men conspiring alike to exploit the hardworking Englishman and overturn the Christian character of the Constitution.

The persistence of popular Jew-hatred goes a long way towards explaining the grudging acceptance of a new Jewish community in Britain from the seventeenth century onwards – and also, by implication, the attitude of forbearance and of “keeping a low profile” which came to characterize British Jewry and is evident up to the present day. Full civil and political emancipation of the Jews in Britain, if ultimately successful, was a long time in coming, over one hundred years in fact. Today, the key date of 1858, when Lionel de Rothschild took his seat in the House of Commons, is more often recalled than 1753, when Henry Pelham’s extremely limited Jewish Naturalization Act was reversed on account of Tory objections, voiced in anti-semitic attacks in the press and elsewhere, and as a result of mob riots in the streets.

Skim over the introductory nod in the direction of social psychology and get on to the “meat” of the book, the literary analysis of texts at which Felsenstein, as a scholar of English literature, clearly excels. He appar-

ently spent ten years researching this book and it shows in his complete mastery of his sources and meticulous attention to detail. Songs and ballads, folktales and proverbs, chapbooks, political tracts, conversionist pamphlets, newspapers and satirical prints all come under his penetrating gaze. Some little known but important archives are mined including the Israel Solomons collection at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York and the Cecil Roth and Alfred Rubens collections in Leeds and London. The chapter dealing with the portrayal of Shylock on the English stage is particularly entertaining, especially the career of Charles Maklin, a maverick Irish actor who almost single-handedly created the vicious caricature of the Jewish moneylender in the eighteenth century. Art historians will appreciate Felsenstein’s treatment of the Jewish stereotypes in famous engravings by William Hogarth in the series *A Harlot’s Progress* (1732) and *Election* (1757) and in the scurrilous cartoons of George Cruikshank and Thomas Rowlandson. A selection of these are reproduced in the text in high quality black and white. Whilst self-consciously narrative based, Felsenstein’s analysis opens up art history as a vital resource for the study of racial prejudice.

Indeed, the visual aspect of Felsenstein’s research is taken up in an exhibition entitled “The Jew as Other: A Century of English Caricatures 1730–1830” mounted at the JTS to coincide with the publication of his book. The book itself forms a nice companion to Brian Cheyette’s *Constructions of ‘the Jew’ in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). Cheyette, incidentally another Leeds University Anglo-Jewish scholar of English literature, continues the story begun by Felsenstein into the twentieth century.

Sharman Kadish