

ABSTRACT

ELISHEVA BIKHOVSKY'S NOVEL *SIDE-STREETS*
REPRESENTING A NON-NATIONAL, MINORITY HEBREW CULTURE

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This essay argues that Elisheva Bikhovsky's 1920s Hebrew novel (*Simtaot*), set in post-revolutionary Moscow, embraces Jewish cosmopolitanism to imagine a non-national, minority Hebrew culture. Bikhovksy focalizes the novel through the perspective of her two central protagonists: Ludmilla Vivyen, a promising young Russian poet, and Daniel Royter, a Hebrew writer who is attempting to gain acceptance in Russian literary circles. Through various unconsummated erotic relationships between Jews and non-Jews, the novel meditates on the conflict between minority and nationalist literary cultures and highlights the tensions and interrelations between two different linguistic, cultural, and national systems: Soviet national minority policy and Jewish ethnic nationalism in Palestine. Neither is presented as ideal; rather the novel attempts to situate Hebrew at the interstices of Soviet and Zionist ideologies, envisioning a minority Hebrew that transformed through its encounters with non-Jews.