

Reviews of Books

THE JEWS IN AMERICA: A HISTORY. By Rufus Lears. Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company. 1954. xiv, 382 pp. \$6.00

According to the standards of musical composition, the overture of an opera ought to contain an indication of every important theme in the entire *opus*. Perhaps by intention, Rufus Lears has included within the initial chapter of his book, *The Jews in America: A History*, elements of many of the major themes which for him stand out in American Jewish history. This chapter he entitles "Overture in Minor." Already in the "Overture," we find mention of the inter-relatedness of world Jewry, the spiritual creativity of Jewry, the ubiquitous and numerous contributions of Jews to the milieu in which they find themselves, their steadfast loyalty to Judaism, the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, the striving for civil and religious rights, and the historic yearning for Zion, all of which are points of emphasis which, throughout the book, Lears finds it necessary to make.

But whatever the specific aspect of American Jewish history with which he may be dealing, Lears brings to it a deeply rooted love for his people and its works, a passion which, in its lyric commitment, sometimes takes the place that might have been reserved for more sober historical analysis. Indeed, there are times when his admiration for the glories of our past or compassion for the sufferings of our people compels him to expand upon topics not strictly within the scope of American Jewish history.

It is this depth of feeling which Lears brings to his subjects that lends to his style the interest, color, and verve for which it is noted. But aside from the lyricism of Lears's style, he is able to manage with dexterity specific subjects requiring detail and to present lucidly a descriptive outline of the progression of events.

Lears's treatment of certain subjects, such as Jewish immigration to the United States, is exceptional. He touches not only upon the forces compelling immigration, but also upon the reaction of the United States government and the American Jewish community to large influxes of Jews from Europe.

Lears, with his roots embedded within the spiritual soil of

Eastern European Jewry, at home in its idiom, and in tune with its spiritual yearnings, writes of this component of the American Jewish community with facility and familiarity. With his first-hand knowledge, he is able to describe with equal ease the religious and cultural background of the group on the one hand, and its role in the American economy on the other.

Finally, Lears's continued interest in the internal organizational structure of the American Jewish community results in one of the better aspects of the book. Though its causes are not investigated, he describes the proliferation of beneficial and charitable societies and lodges in the mid-nineteenth century, in the post-Civil War period, and at the outset of the twentieth century. The difficulties and rifts attendant upon the organization of the Board of Delegates of Civil and Religious Rights (1878) are traced, and at the same time an attempt is made to show how the American Jewish community, growing ever more prosperous, became, through organizations like the Joint Distribution Committee, the "Big Brother" of world Jewry, reaching height after height of great philanthropic achievement. In discussing communal alignments, Lears throughout the book makes use of the terms "right," "center," and "left." The "right" is described as that aristocratic and wealthy segment of the community, of German origin at the outset, which was concerned with manifesting its patriotism to America and maintaining its position of affluence and influence in both the Jewish and the general community. The "left" he characterizes as Socialist and anti-Zionist, and the center as the religiously traditional Zionist masses. Lears follows through American Jewish history all our defense organizations, briefly discussing each, and the two pages (pp. 260-61) which describe the forces behind the struggles between the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress are particularly good.

The fact that we rarely find in the field of Jewish history a book free from apologetics shows that we have not yet reached the stage of inner security which would make for more mature historical writing. In fact, apologetics constitutes the backbone of most Jewish historical writing, while the listing of the "Jewish Contribution," the concern with the achievement of equal political and religious status, and the explaining away of negative Jewish types complete the muscle, sinew, and vital organs of our histories, creations which seem ever haunted by the spectre of anti-Semitism. And *The Jews*

in America is no exception to the rule. Anti-Semitism is, of course, a major concern in Lears's book, much space being devoted to its incidence in the period immediately preceding the Civil War and during the Civil War, General Order No. 11 of 1863 becoming almost an obsession as it appears and reappears throughout the book.

It is not that the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in American history is not deserving of thorough study, but that so much heat is expended on proving to the world its injustice, while so little light is given for its understanding; and analysis of its causes and dynamics remains at a minimum. To Lears, who dwells so much upon it, anti-Semitism remains a "baffling phenomenon."

Lears defends his conscious use of apologetics by claiming a necessity on the part of a minority group to do so. This implication of a necessity for apologetics clearly reveals a lack of understanding of the dynamics of anti-Semitism, since the forces that produce and govern it are never affected one iota by the absence or presence of apologetics. And see the impossible, anomalous, and paradoxical position in which we are placed by an apologetic approach: We must be "a people to whom it was almost a fashion to deny the so-called martial values" (p. 232), and, at one and the same time, be abundantly found among the great military heroes of every war; we must have more than our statistical share of enlistments, heroes, and casualties; we must be anti-imperialistic during the Spanish-American War and at the same time respond with wild enthusiasm to the bugle-calls of manifest destiny; if Jews were to be found in the slave trade, it must be shown how the English royalty and nobility were involved in it, too; if we favor cultural pluralism, we must show how the Jews would be in this respect no different from any other group; if we extol the value of Yiddish, we must show that all languages are in a certain sense corrupt jargons; a point must be made of showing that Jewish labor was anti-Bolshevik; and though Lears deals with Jewish organizations in some detail, those Jewish societies, such as the ICOR, which had anything to do with the U.S.S.R. are conspicuous by their absence. Finally, the usual, the inevitable declarations of contemporary, as well as historic, Jewish loyalty to America must be made.

The Jewish contribution is given wide play especially in terms of individuals and "great men." We are told of Jewish finance behind the world explorations, of the role of the Jews in developing the resources of the New World, of charters of privilege granted because the Jews were useful and beneficial, of leadership in the development

of navigation, and in shipping and ocean commerce during the colonial period, with little or no explanation of why all these individuals played this role in society. Entire chapters, such as "In the Warp and the Woof," are devoted to the voluminous listing of the cultural and material contributions of individual Jews to America. Every war we ever fought is introduced only as a spring-board to page after page of names of Jewish military heroes and home-front leaders. From the Sheftalls and the Frankses to the Strauses, the Guggenheims, the Schiffs, the Warburgs, and the Lehmans, our men of renown are mustered out into the vast army of the Jewish Contribution, phalanxed for our communal security. Instead of reading lists of names, we should like to learn just *why* many Jews were able to rise to positions of wealth and to exert cultural and social influence in colonial America. Instead of reading a descriptive outline of Jewish farming, in which the author feels compelled to include every minor instance from the early nineteenth century and following, we should like to know the motivation for the real call for a Jewish farming movement in the late nineteenth century. Instead of merely bemoaning the vicissitudes and the weakness of Jewish religious development in America, an attempt might have been made to relate them to such factors as the lack of a central religious authority. We should like, instead of repeating the old story of the established Jew's distaste for the "inelegance" of the newcomer, to understand the hard feeling between the Sephardim and the Germans, and between the Germans and the Eastern Europeans. In terms of general historiography, Learsi is some thirty years behind the times when he still views World War I as "the war to save the world for democracy" and throws the burden of the guilt for that war upon the heads of the German peoples. At the same time, he misses the opportunity to show the extreme sensitivity of the American Jewish community to the pressures of patriotism and "preparedness."

In Learsi's philosophy of Jewish history certain values are highlighted. The actuality and ideal of *Klal Yisrael* are given constant emphasis, in both the vertical and the horizontal sense. Again and again the author repeats that the history and destiny of American Jewry are never distinct or separate from the history and destiny of world Jewry. While charting the struggle of the American Jew for equal rights, Learsi never loses sight of the fortunes of European Jewry; and the rabbinic saying, "All Israelites are responsible for one another," is quoted by Learsi more than once.

Especially is Jewish destiny linked by Learsi to Zion, "the little land along the eastern Mediterranean where Jewish history began and reached its apogee." A considerable amount of space is devoted to the history and development of world Zionism — the *aliyot*, cultural Zionism, Theodor Herzl's activity, the Zionist Congresses, colonization, the growth of the *yishuv*, the Balfour Declaration, the War of Independence, the post-war struggles of Israel, *Aliyah Bet* — all being reviewed in considerable detail. Alignments within the Jewish community are often viewed from the perspective of their relationship to Zionism. Learsi is also anxious to show that while Zionism was by and large a secular force, it was not anti-religious but strengthened rather than weakened loyalty to the faith.

Despite the substantial decline of Jewish religious life in America as compared to Europe, the falling away from ritual observance and from the study of Torah, Learsi pictures Judaism and the synagogue in America as the real and effective centripetal forces and as the highest values in Jewish life. It was not the hope of gain that led Jews to the New World, says Learsi, "but rather the longing to find a place where they could live by the faith of their fathers" (p. 25). Despite their dispersion in the western United States, the synagogue was the central bond of the Jews of the German immigration, as well as the core of the inner life of East European Jewry. But as yet "the problem of inculcating the millennial heritage in the children of the community upon which depended its continuity and ultimate survival, remained unsolved" (p. 200).

And so for Learsi, as for most rabbis, Jewish educators, and scholars today, the great desideratum of American Jewry is the development of a strong and vibrant American Judaism, and the establishment of a Jewish community rich in knowledge of Torah and fruitful with spiritual creativity.

Cincinnati, Ohio

HERBERT BRONSTEIN

FOR ZION'S SAKE — A BIOGRAPHY OF JUDAH L. MAGNES. By Norman Bentwich. *Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America*. 1954. ix, 329 pp. \$4.00

The book *For Zion's Sake* is a biography of Judah Leon Magnes, one of the great spiritual teachers and moral leaders in Jewish life during the first half of the twentieth century.

One finds it strange that the biographer should have been Dr. Norman Bentwich, the senior legal officer of the British Mandatory Government in Palestine, who might easily have come into disruptive conflict with Magnes' protesting spirit.

This did not happen. Rather did the biographer develop the story of a brilliant career with deep affection; objectively, yet with admiration breaking through on almost every page.

Most novelists create a personality that comes to life by the magic of their literary talent. Bentwich found a living personality, the magic of whose genius inspired him to write a story as absorbing as any romance. He accomplishes it, in the main, by letting his hero speak from his treasured letters and documents, giving the book something of the character of an autobiography. To be sure, he was extremely fortunate in having available an abundance of material from Magnes' archives, and of help from Mrs. Magnes, and from numbers of friends. Bentwich does a great service in calling these to the attention of the public.

The reader of *For Zion's Sake* will note, before he has finished many chapters, the author's interesting way of presenting the life of Magnes, in keeping separate the various interests of his career.

He divides the book into thirteen chapters, a prologue, and an epilogue, and these chapters appear under three main divisions: (1) presenting Magnes' life in America; (2) dealing with his stay in Jerusalem; and (3) the story of his later activities in America and Jerusalem.

The separate chapters have cleverly descriptive captions, colorful and provocative of interest, as one may see from my quoting just some of them: "The Rebel Rabbi"; "The Builder"; "Pacifist and Revolutionary"; "At the Crossroads"; "The Moral Statesman." One gets the impression that the author was inspired by his devotion to the subject to put in relief the drama of Magnes' career.

The author somewhat puzzles the reader by footnotes referring to future chapters. He skillfully explains this in his preface, when, speaking of Magnes, he writes: "Both in America and in Palestine he was active on three planes at one and the same time. In New York he was rabbi of a Temple, Zionist leader, and organizer of the vast community. In Jerusalem he was Chancellor — and then President — of the Hebrew University, administrator of bodies which linked the National Home with American Jewry, and political leader and thinker. Each of these activities affected the other; and the chapters

of the book which recount them must be read together to give a true picture." Then Bentwich adds ingeniously: "Magnes himself had a tri-focal look — on the immediate need, the long-distance plan, and the world horizon — and the reader needs tri-focal glasses."

Let us, then, put on our tri-focals and scan the various horizons of Magnes' career, as told by the biographer. The superficially analytic reader will feel a strange frustration. Magnes was rabbi in more than one New York congregation, but not for long, for he did not succeed in lifting their vision to his own.

He was a Zionist leader — at first a maverick among the leaders, rising, as he did, a shining star from the West, out of the firmament of Reform Judaism. Yet his Zionism could not for long stand the strain of the materialistic and political goals which the wars pushed to the fore. So he who was the hero of the Jewish youth of 1905 became to them, in later years, a dissenter and enemy.

In New York he became the head and front of an imposing plan of complete community organization, the Kehillah, but after significant years of success, it broke down because leadership and finances were lacking.

Looking at the scene in Jerusalem tri-focally, we find the same story of alleged failure. For years he was chancellor of the institution which was the child of his dreams: the Hebrew University. He raised funds for it from the distinguished and the wealthy who caught the fervor of his dreams. He co-opted great scholars for its faculty, but even here a day came when he had to step down to let others rise above him in the University leadership.

The University did not fail, but Magnes became the victim of clashing hatreds — to him an abnormal condition involving Arab and Jew — and he lost in popularity among a majority who could not match his idealism and optimism.

In Jerusalem, too, he became administrator of bodies which linked the National Home with American Jewry. Effectively, he used his genius for organization, utilizing the common need of war time to weld together Arab, Jew, and Christian. Again failure dogged his steps. His pacifism, which in agony he forswore, as it referred to Hitler's tyranny, but remained deep within his soul, led to the charge of alleged appeasement of the British government, and to harsh criticism expressed by "the chauvinistic narrow and terroristic Nationalists."

Again, Magnes suffered his greatest defeat when he made his

stand against the maximalist demands of Arab and Jewish leaders. War had displaced and made homeless hundreds of thousands of his people. To approve any plan that would open to them, without limit, a haven in Palestine seemed to Magnes the acceptance of the inevitability of war — and he hated war. He proposed, then, “Union for Palestine” — “Union between Jews and Arabs” within a binational state.

In spite of all his personal charm and his spiritual force, the plan was rejected. The “Ihud” proposal failed. Neither his optimism concerning the possibility of the peaceful in-living of Jew and Arab, nor his deep conviction for pacifism caught the imagination of world leaders. The alternative was a Jewish State — and war.

Once more, Magnes seemed to be the symbol of failure!

Why, then, was his biography written? Why spend time on a review of it? Because Magnes’ failures were glorious failures which had in them the essence of spiritual triumph and achievement.

As a rabbi, he was not able to realize the vision of a unified Jewry — but he will be remembered as one who never faltered in his spiritual convictions.

As an organizer of a vast community, he built no lasting Kehillah, but out of his untiring efforts came into being agencies still living today, promoting Jewish education, and world philanthropies.

As a Zionist leader, whose work culminated in the Ihud, he disappointed myriads of his followers, but history will long remember his unswerving labors for peace.

He saw the child of his vision, the Hebrew University, slip from his leadership — but, in the words of the biographer, it is yet “a great unifying influence in Jewish life, . . . the Institution where the force of the spirit should be felt, and the voice of humanity heard.”

Finally, his alleged failure as a political leader and thinker waits upon the judgment of history. As notable an achievement in war and in uneasy armistice as the State of Israel is, it lacks men who speak with Magnes’ organ tones of spiritual authority. The binational state, as envisaged by Magnes, will probably never be attained — but what must be sensed by the present State of Israel is this thought, uttered by Magnes: “Unless we hold up to ourselves and to others, our great prophetic ideals, . . . (we) will merely be adding another raucous voice, talking of its nationalism, its rights and wrongs done to it, in danger of not surviving because . . . (our cause) . . . has lost its spiritual universal power.”

Let this final word be said: Along the marginal fields of Magnes' career there are broken temples. But, as Chesterton once said of history in general, these temples are not abandoned forever. So, some day a band of travelers may stand before the ruins, see in the broken pillars the symbol of a forgotten ideal, and be inspired to rebuild.

Norman Bentwich has set forth the life of Magnes in such a way that this hope may well become reality.

New Orleans, La.

EMIL W. LEIPZIGER

THE PEOPLE AND THE BOOK: THE BACKGROUND OF THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA. A tricentennial exhibition at the New York Public Library sponsored by the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation, October-December, 1954. An annotated list of illuminated manuscripts, rare books, authentic documents and related materials. Compiled by Joshua Bloch. *New York: The New York Public Library.* 1954. 134 pp. \$2.00

Unlike most Tercentenary book exhibits which concentrated on American Jewish books, the New York Public Library exhibition, skillfully collected, cataloged, and annotated by Joshua Bloch, head of the Library's Jewish Division, comprised a collection of books and manuscripts from many places and times "which reveal in a telling manner the character and cultural value of the great spiritual treasures Jews carried with them . . . in every age." Judging from the catalog alone, one can surmise that the exhibit succeeded admirably and pleurably in showing the "role Jews played in the advancement of the cultural life of the world."

The reviewer did not have the opportunity to view the exhibit and, to this extent, approached the catalog much as its future users will — without emotion-laden memory of what must have been a truly magnificent display. The array of some of the finest illuminated manuscripts taken from the New York Public Library, from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and, to a much lesser extent, from the American Jewish Historical Society, the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Princeton and private collectors, represents outstanding beauty along with being an excellent selection from the range of Jewish literature. The printed books, too, were selected from among the rarest, the

most interesting, and the most pertinent of Hebraica and Judaica.

As if to placate those who might question whether "backgrounds" of Jewish life in America are legitimate material for a Tercentenary exhibit, American material is included in the form of a group of specifically Jewish printed books and two manuscripts that are not especially Jewish: Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus" and a Benjamin Franklin letter in which he hopes that America will become "the Asylum of all the Oppress'd in Europe." Despite the importance of these American manuscripts, they seem out of place among monumental illuminated Bibles, Esther Scrolls, Haggadahs, and even unilluminated Talmud manuscripts, works of Maimonides, and the translation into Hebrew of Avicenna's *Canon*. The American printed books, on the other hand, generally are appropriate; but I venture the opinion that the exhibit would have been more unified and impressive if modern, secondary books by Bokser, Darmesteter, Deutsch, Mielziner (all, for some reason, on the Talmud), and perhaps a few others had been omitted. In the presence of such a wealth of original manuscript material, moreover, one wonders why any facsimiles were used.

The notes on each of the 111 items and occasional general notes are somewhat uneven, but many of them should prove permanently useful. Jacob ben Asher's *Arba'ah Turim* (Pieve di Sacco, 1475) is not the first printed Hebrew book (p. 101) but probably the first of the dated ones to go to press.

As befits a great exhibit, the catalog is beautifully printed and bound. If only color illustrations had been made, or glossy paper used, there would be less need for imagination when studying the reproductions, and the catalog would have been completely worthy of the exhibit.

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HERBERT C. ZAFREN

THE SYNAGOGUE AND SOCIAL WELFARE — A
UNIQUE EXPERIMENT (1907-1953). By Sidney E.
Goldstein. *New York: Bloch Publishing Company.* 1955. xix,
376 pp. \$5.00

The nucleus of this book is an account of a unique experiment undertaken by the late Dr. Stephen S. Wise at the founding of the Free

Synagogue, in New York City. Like other congregations, the Free Synagogue had its services of worship and its religious school for the young. Like synagogues in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Chicago (44),* Brooklyn (45), and elsewhere, the Free Synagogue conducted a social center. But, unlike any other synagogue, the Free Synagogue maintained a department of social service. This department was headed, from the outset, by Sidney E. Goldstein, the author of the volume which we are now reviewing.

The social service activities described in the book comprised: provisions for child adoption (135); social work at Bellevue (102-3) and Lebanon Hospitals (105); a sheltered workshop for persons convalescing from tuberculosis (109, 112); a storeroom for discarded clothing which, carefully sorted and distributed, was gladly accepted by the necessitous (166); a clinic for mental hygiene (115, 120); a clinic for infant hygiene (105); arrangements for after-care of polio cases occurring in the epidemic of 1916 (166); a workshop for the unemployed during the depression (166); a loan fund for the unemployed; assistance, during the First World War and during the Second World War, for homes broken by war service (166-67); assistance to refugees from Hitler's Germany (167); emergency relief in situations not within the scope of existing relief agencies (165); marriage and family counseling (165); "a program for the care of boys and girls in destitute families and substandard neighborhoods" (137); and scholarships for young women who wished to enter the professions (142).

Our volume reports not only social service by the Free Synagogue but likewise social action (51, 54, 136, 188, 201); and likewise social education, through conferences on marriage and the family (146), film forums on mental hygiene (64-71), seminars on civil liberties, on drug addiction, on the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, and on the Declaration of Human Rights (63); and a carefully selected social science library (65). Another Free Synagogue venture was the practice by which the children of the Free Synagogue Religious School invited Negro, Chinese, Japanese, and Puerto Rican children to share in various enjoyments such as the Seder, the Free Synagogue children themselves visiting those outside groups in return (236).

At various points our author ranges beyond the Free Synagogue.

*The numbers in parentheses are references to the page numbers of the volume.

He recites how, in 1904, before the Free Synagogue started, he made a study of housing conditions on the East Side of New York (227). After recalling the influences which converted him to pacifism, he reminisces about his membership in, and eventual chairmanship of, the War Resisters' League (292-93). He dwells upon his friendship with Margaret Sanger and his identification with the movement seeking to annul the legal barriers connected with birth control (270). He gives an account of his affiliation with the Socialist Party and his support of Eugene V. Debs and of Norman Thomas (10, 244-45). He attended numerous welfare conferences (105, 148, 249, 282, 295) and accompanied numerous delegations (252, 256, 271, 295). He went once with a delegation to Washington where, before a committee of the House of Representatives, he urged not only a legalized minimum wage but also a legalized maximum income: \$25,000 a year (252).

He was among those who, convened in Dr. Wise's study, drew up the papers for impeaching Mayor James J. Walker (247). In a crowded Community Church our author presided at the inception of the City Affairs Committee (246). When, at Carnegie Hall, he delivered an address in which he asked the Catholic Church to withdraw its opposition to birth control, Carnegie Hall was thronged (272). Our author reprints in full the statement which he drafted and which was signed by a group of eminent clergymen, including Harry Emerson Fosdick, John Haynes Holmes, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, and Rabbi Milton Steinberg — a statement taking Cardinal Hayes to task for assailing as "prophets of decadence" those who sought to legalize the imparting of information about birth control (276). Our author presents in full his letter, addressed to Chairman Harold H. Velde, in which he defends against the slurs of the committee investigating subversive activities John Haynes Holmes, Harry F. Ward, and, above all, the deceased Stephen S. Wise and Judah L. Magnes (260).

Scattered throughout the book and occupying large areas of it are disquisitions on a broad variety of subjects. These include: civil liberties (253); academic freedom (207-8, 259); the evils of censorship (264); juvenile delinquency (141); the need for youth work like that of the New York Youth Board (137); somatic, psychological, ethical, and social factors in misconduct (168); a community program for adolescents (139); health movements (189); birth control (106-7); infant mortality (106-7); the causes of

mental illness (193); the need for mental hygiene clinics (116, 135, 193); the need for a tuberculosis program (110); the urgency of hospital social service (108); the role of the synagogue in promoting community health (187); a program for the aging (221); international relations (332, 368); the Kellogg Pact (294); the Geneva disarmament conference (297); the World Court (301); potentialities of the League of Nations and of the United Nations for maintaining peace (298); the American way of life (263); civic reform (243, 250); the role of government with regard to substandard housing (224); political corruption (249, 356); the black market in babies (135); shortcomings of the public schools (210, 213); social service in the public schools (211); plans for coping with unemployment (281-92) — these include the annual wage (286) today in the limelight; the extent of divorce (328); the need for marriage and family counseling (145); group relations (233, 333); recreation for the aged and other adults (213); motion pictures (267); the synagogue as a recreational center (222-23); the religionizing of social life (325-27, 374); and the social training of the rabbi (78-85). Recurrently our author exhorts that synagogues throughout the land adopt various of the welfare programs outlined (115, 133, 143, 163, 193, 197-98, 222, 227, 267, 281).

Passages are extensively copied from his two books previously published or, as we have already noticed, from papers previously delivered or printed. But the amplest quotations are those culled from the 1934 Proceedings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, from the report of its Commission on Social Justice which our author headed at the time. He repeats the passage which advocates the socialization of banking, the transportation and communication systems, and power plants, including those of coal, oil, water, and electricity (338). Socialization of housing, he reminds us, was added the following year. He extracts from that report the proposal not only for a minimum wage but also for a maximum income "six years before President Franklin D. Roosevelt advocated the same program" (339). He cites the Conference's plan for coping with unemployment (340); also its condemnation both of Communism and of Fascism (342). He apprises us that the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly of America also favored public ownership of the instruments of banking and credit, of the transportation and communication systems, as well as of power plants (339). Nor does he omit mentioning the action by which the Central Conference of

American Rabbis endorsed the relaxing of the legal impediments to birth control, and the Rabbinical Assembly's parallel resolution (279-80).

Commingled with these topics of social import, large portions of the book deal with subjects which we would class not as "social" but as "theological," such subjects as: the prophets of Israel (310); the ethics of Judaism (344, 356); the 613 commands and their codifications (351); theological developments in Judaism from earliest times (305-24); the history of Jewish creed and ritual (311); the role of creeds, ceremonials, codes, and communion in Judaism (180); the relation of psychiatry to religion (346); and the origin of the synagogue (21-30). Still other discourses handle such extrasocial themes as: optimism in old age (361-65); the moral sense (171-77); the religionizing of "personal life" (327); the functions of the synagogue (31); the history of the synagogue in New York City (42); the establishment of the Jewish Institute of Religion (74); rabbinic internships (85-92); Jewish Sunday Schools and education (200); and the "City of Justice" in the Sunday School of the Free Synagogue (71). The "City of Justice" was an arrangement modeled after the city government, the children filling the several offices and conducting certain phases of the school's affairs. There are also remarks on Neo-Platonism and Neo-Aristotelianism (350), on the ethical import of certain works of art and literature (375), and even observations of a kind which we would expect only from someone expert in the field of medicine (169).

The far-reaching autobiographical material embraces striking and humorous incidents. The opening chapter is devoted to a fascinating account of the author's childhood and youth, and his days at the Hebrew Union College. Later in life his undertakings brought him into contact with not a few celebrities, including Albert Einstein (293), Dr. Richard Cabot (189), Governor Herbert H. Lehman (147), Secretary Henry L. Stimson (296), Professor Ernest W. Burgess (148), Paul M. Warburg (102), Jacob H. Schiff (110), Father McGowan (250), James Myers (250), Norman Thomas (245), and John Dewey (256); Senators William E. Borah, Edward Costigan, and Robert M. La Follette, Jr.; labor leaders William Green, John L. Lewis, and Sidney Hillman (256); and other notables, some of whom are mentioned elsewhere in this review. Our author's advocacy of maximum income before the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives brought a violent

protest from a man in St. Louis, a prominent Jewish leader, influential in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In the course of their wrangle, the Jewish leader sent our author a newspaper clipping which publicized the opinion of a Baptist clergyman that ministers and churches should keep out of politics. Our author's reply was that "the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis take their gospel from the prophets of Israel and not from the Baptist minister of St. Louis" (252-53).

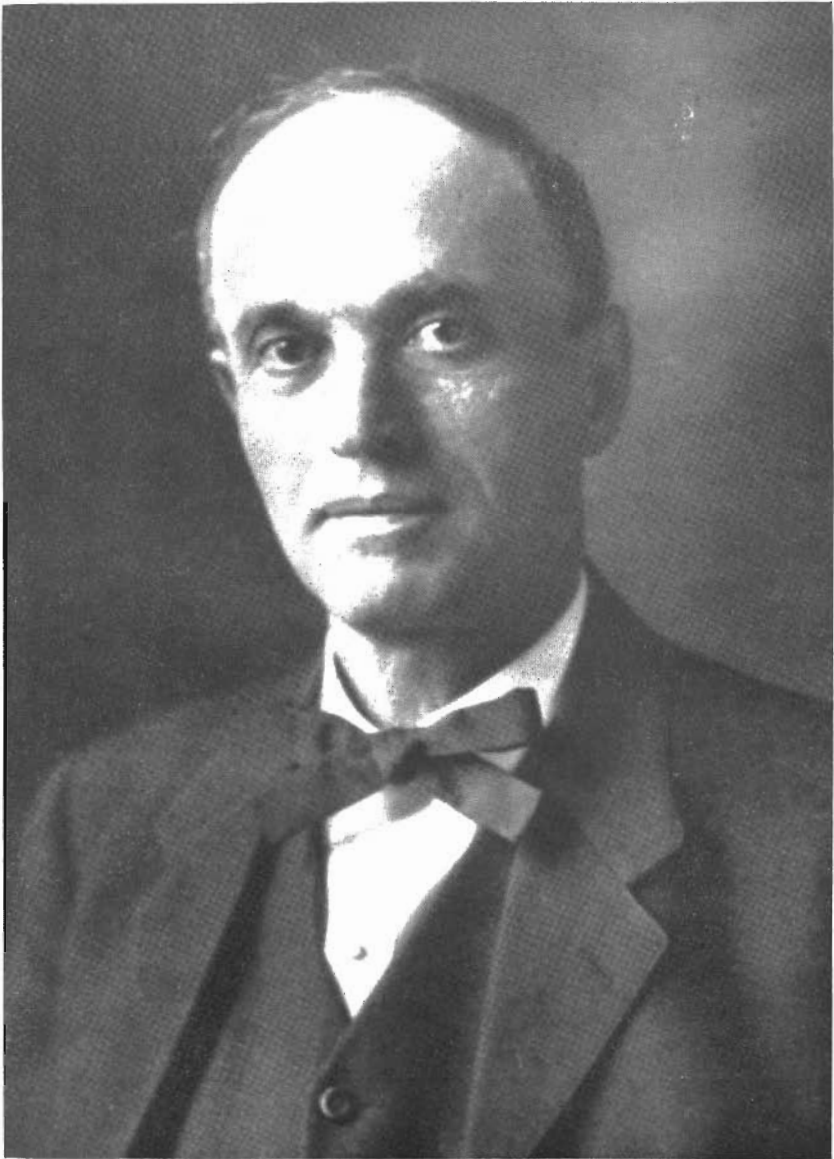
While our author notes, with disapproval, the alienation of Jewish social workers from the synagogue and takes issue with those Jewish social workers who oppose distinctively Jewish social service (52); while he deplors the fact that Jewish couples entering marriage "know not even the elements of Jewish tradition and Jewish teachings and Jewish ideals as they relate themselves to marriage and the family" (158); while he employs such conformistic expressions as "What men need most in this world crisis is a rebirth of faith in the social ideals of Israel" (376); and while he buttresses his socialism with references to the Bible and the Talmud (337, 341), he nevertheless declares that "the old theological doctrine that the universe is governed by a moral power is obsolete and untenable" (358). He vividly instances some dreadful happenings to refute the doctrine that God is good. He insists that religion should not serve as a sedative or an opiate (355), or as an anesthetic (357). "What do I ask of religion? — I ask the power to overcome the forces of evil and to establish the right" (360). Our author seems unaware that what is "right" to one person may be "evil" to another.

Our author professes: "I could not believe . . . that war would solve our problems I could not reconcile myself to war as a means of settling international disputes" (293). Yet, less than four pages further on, he uses the language not of the war resister but of the war advocate: "Even those who believe in resistance have come to the conclusion that we must act in self-defense and that we must also act to end aggression wherever and whenever aggression takes place" (297). It would be interesting to inquire who are the other war resisters that subscribe to this militaristic way of speaking. Most unpacifistically our author maintains that "Had we acted promptly in 1931 in Manchuria as the United Nations acted in Korea in 1951 we might have saved ourselves a second world war" (297).

While the book observes at one place: "It is a tragic fact that



JUDAH L. MAGNES
Distinguished American Religious Liberal



Rothschild Photo, Los Angeles

MOSES ALEXANDER
Governor of Idaho, 1915-19

war alone solved the problem of unemployment" (284), another passage holds that, until "material resources, machinery, and money . . . are socialized . . . and the title of ownership transferred to the people themselves, there can be no recovery from our present economic collapse" (341).

It is reported, on good authority, that our author recognized the need for a thoroughgoing revision and improvement of this work but that he pleaded lack of time. Considering that his death occurred two days before the book appeared, it is sadly probable that, by lack of time, he meant not dearth of leisure but the impending termination of his life.

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