

Reviews of Books

ADLER, SELIG, and THOMAS E. CONNOLLY. *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1960. xvi, 498 pp. \$6.00

This thorough and interesting study of a medium-sized Jewish urban community is the thirteenth publication of the Jacob R. Schiff Library of the American Jewish Publication Society. Hundreds of Jewish citizens of Buffalo assisted in gathering a mountain of sources, and no doubt the encyclopedic coverage is partly dictated by this local interest. The reader sometimes wonders whether any Jewish resident of Buffalo has been omitted. While sifting and organizing the data, however, the authors have performed a work of critical scholarship of more than local significance.

This collaboration of a Jewish historian and a non-Jewish student of literature has been quite fruitful, resulting in an urbane style and the impartial treatment of conflicting Jewish denominations, factions, and national groups. Only in its less sympathetic treatment of Jewish Marxist and agnostic groups does the work reveal a bias, which is really a commitment to the Jewish cultural and religious heritage. The title is somewhat misleading, since the book deals with neither Ararat nor suburbia. Moreover, this is not really the story of a "community." Until Adolf Hitler unified the Jews, the story of Buffalo Jewry was largely that of many rival and even antagonistic communities, of Beth El and Beth Zion, of Orthodox and Reform, of German and East European, of bourgeoisie and Arbeiter Ring, of the East Side ghetto and the new residential areas.

Truly have Jews been "people of the Book." The sheer volume of written records available in a medium-sized Jewish community (estimated at 30,000 in 1938) is the most impressive aspect of this study. Among the sources are the minute books of Jewish congregations and of welfare, labor, and Zionist organizations, many historical and genealogical sketches, scrapbooks, pamphlets, and local and Jewish newspapers and periodicals. The authors have used all these records of a highly literate people without being submerged by them. The narrative is richly colored with detail, but the reader never loses sight of major developments.

The only serious criticism is that the book treats inadequately the inter-

action between Jews and non-Jews in Buffalo. The index, for example, lists only seventeen references to Gentile-Jewish relationships, none of them past p. 286. Though it might disturb the bland surface of this success story, the reviewer would like to have more information on the business, intergroup, and social dealings of Jews and non-Jews, to know what areas of the New World paradise were off-limits. The main theme of the history of any American Jewish community is undoubtedly that of success and progress, but it is unhistorical to omit the darker, minor theme. A map of Buffalo would have made much easier the reading of many accounts of shifting neighborhoods. The footnotes, instead of being at the foot of the pages, are segregated at the back of the book. There are a few inevitable errors too picayune to list.

This volume makes a substantial contribution to scholarship. Its breadth of coverage of most aspects of local Jewish life, its objectivity in treating the cross-purposes of Buffalo Jewry, and its skillful blending of general history with details of local leaders and institutions make it a model not only of Jewish history but of urban social history.

Cincinnati, Ohio

LOUIS R. HARLAN

Dr. Louis R. Harlan is Associate Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati.

Genazim: Kovets L'toldot Ha-sifrut Ha-ivrit B'dorot Ha-achronim [an anthology of the history of Hebrew literature of recent times]. Tel Aviv: Association of Hebrew Authors in Israel — "Massada" Publishing, Ltd. 1961. 347 pp.

Edited by Getzel Kressel, *Genazim*, the first in a series of volumes to follow at unspecified intervals, is devoted to the publication of hitherto unpublished material which is significant for the study of the recent history of Hebrew literature.

This first volume is dedicated to the memory of Asher Barash (1889-1952), who conceived the idea of "Genazim," a bio-bibliographical institute whose aim is to perpetuate the memory of modern Hebrew authors and their work. The Genazim Institute has now been in existence for a period of ten years, and has assiduously endeavored to perform its task of gathering and collecting all literary material which would facilitate the understanding of the totality of Hebrew literature, including writings which are not in the Hebrew language — Yiddish in particular.

The scope of subsequent volumes of *Genazim* is to include sections dealing with memoirs and autobiographies, letters of authors, bibliographies, and studies. The present volume, however, limits itself to the first two types of writing.

In the first section of this book, 142 pages are devoted to memoirs and autobiographies. A total of seventeen selections is published here, some being classified as memoirs, others as autobiographies. The array of the literary personalities is quite impressive, beginning with Isaac Hirsch Weiss and his memoirs and closing with Judah Steinberg and his autobiography.

Of special interest in this section is a questionnaire (pp. 54-56) sent out by "Genazim" to Hebrew authors in the State of Israel and abroad. The questionnaire consists of thirty-two questions, the answers to which would give the Institute a complete picture of the author, his activities, aspirations, goals, and literary creativity and productivity. The replies to the questionnaire sent in by some of the Hebrew authors constitute the bulk of the material found in the first part of the book.

The second, but larger, section of the book (pp. 145-347) consists of twenty entries of exchanges of letters by Hebrew authors. The list of names is very notable, and the contents of the letters reveal much of the vicissitudes, experiences, aspirations, and struggles of the various Hebrew authors represented. An example *par excellence* is Joseph Haim Heftman's letter — dated March 29, 1926 — to Dr. Max Raisin, who was ordained by the Hebrew Union College in 1903. In this letter, Heftman pleads for financial support from America for the publication of the Warsaw Hebrew daily *Ha-Yom*.

The effort of editing this book is tremendous in view of the careful collation of material and the meticulous application of numerous explanatory footnotes. It truly is a work of scientific precision and accuracy.

Perhaps more than anything else, *Genazim* points to the avid desire on the part of contemporary Israelis to preserve for posterity everything that was once committed to writing. The volume has the documentary qualities and characteristics which properly belong to an archives.

Cincinnati, Ohio

ELIAS L. EPSTEIN

Dr. Elias L. Epstein, Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, is the editor of the *Hebrew Union College Annual*.

STEIN, LEONARD. *The Balfour Declaration*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1961. 681 pp. \$7.50

Leonard Stein's *The Balfour Declaration* is the story of how the British Government undertook to "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and . . . use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object." The author, a British barrister, civil servant, and veteran Zionist, has reconstructed, with both skill and scholarship, the events leading up to the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917. His is an excellent book.

Stein tells the tale in its entirety and highlights the intrigue and suspense which the principals could not help but sense at the time. He has made good use of the voluminous papers of Chaim Weizmann, Mark Sykes, Louis D. Brandeis, Charles Prestwich Scott, Nahum Sokolow, and Moses Gaster. He has searched with discrimination in the Zionist Archives and the Blanche Dugdale collection of Arthur Balfour's documents. He has chosen well in quoting from the diaries, memoranda, letters, editorials, and articles of the period. Only at times does Mr. Stein succumb to repetition and allow himself to be bogged down in quotations, but he could justly claim that these are valuable repetitions and salient quotations.

He sustains the reader's attention, especially in the chapters on "Zionist Moves in Berlin and Constantinople," "Weizmann's Meetings with Balfour and Lloyd George," "Sokolow in Paris and Rome," and "The Zionist Question Before the War Cabinet, September 1917."

This is high drama, and Stein makes the most of it, maintaining the narrative at an even pace with flashbacks that are neither tedious nor confusing. He keeps his men moving steadily in both thought and action.

In the opening ninety pages Stein describes the ambiguous status and uncertain strength of the World Zionist Movement in 1914, and outlines the commitments of the European powers in the Middle East. Mentioning the anti-Zionists in Great Britain, he tells about the objection lodged in 1909 by leading Anglo-Jewish personalities (including Leopold de Rothschild, Claude G. Montefiore, Robert Waley Cohen, and Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid) against the establishment of Zionist societies by Jewish undergraduates at English universities; and he quotes Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler's endorsement of their protest: "Since the destruction of the Temple and our dispersion, we no longer constitute a nation; we are a religious community."

Such opposition to political Zionism makes all the more significant Theodor Herzl's comment in 1897:

From the first moment I entered the Movement, my eyes were directed towards England, because I saw that by reason of the general situation of things there it was the Archimedean point where the lever could be applied. The still existing happy position of the English Jews, their high standard of culture, their proud adherence to the old race caused them to appear to me as the right men to realise the Zionistic idea.

Herzl expressed this hope again in his opening address to the Fourth Zionist Congress of 1900, when he explained why he had chosen London as the meeting place: "England, great and free, looking out over all the seas, will understand us and our endeavours."

As in so many prophetic utterances, Herzl was right. In the following fifteen chapters of Part II, "The Preliminaries, 1914-1916," Stein tells of the painstaking negotiations.

He excels in vignettes of the principals. He knew all of them personally and thus writes with sure hand and deft pen. The stalwarts of the Movement, ranging from Jews like Herbert Samuel, Chaim Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, and Aaron Aaronsohn to non-Jews like Mark Sykes, Arthur Balfour, Charles Prestwich Scott, and David Lloyd George, come alive. Their cooperation and collaboration are remarkable and often inspiring. For their admixture of idealism and realism he has only praise. Each of them wanted justice for the Jewish people and a stronger position for Great Britain in the Middle East.

There were giants on the earth in those days. Of Weizmann, Harold Nicolson once said: "I do not think that I have ever met a man quite as dignified as Dr. Weizmann. I sometimes wonder whether his fellow-Jews realise how deeply he impressed us Gentiles by his heroic, his Maccabean quality."

Stein agrees with Nicolson's estimate, and then gives his own appraisal:

If Weizmann was seen a little larger than life it was not because he struck heroic poses. He was far from being austere or otherworldly. In his good moods — for he had a mercurial temperament — he could be highly companionable, witty and entertaining. He enjoyed the pleasures of life and was well endowed with worldly wisdom. . . . It was impossible, in his presence, not to be conscious of his reserves of strength or to resist the enchantment of his magnetic eyes. Man of the world though he was or became, he preserved inviolate an inner sanctuary. It was the mystical element mingled with his realism which gave him his charismatic quality and was the hidden source of his power.

Stein tells well the oft-told story of Weizmann's meetings with Arthur Balfour in 1905 and 1914. He makes it abundantly clear that these, and

some 2,000 other interviews which Weizmann had with political figures, paved the way for the declaration.

Stein assigns to Herbert Samuel a key role in all the negotiations leading up to the Balfour Declaration. Sir Herbert's Zionist sympathies, so ardent and yet informed, were not known or expected by his colleagues, for a scion of distinguished Anglo-Jewish ancestry would normally — like Edwin Montagu and Claude G. Montefiore — have been anti-Zionist.

When Herbert Asquith, never pro-Zionist, became Prime Minister in 1915, he was amazed to find in Samuel a protagonist of Zionism. Asquith termed Samuel's historic document on the question, circulated among the members of the Cabinet and the Foreign Office, and among leading Britons, "a dithyrambic memorandum," and confided to his diary: "I confess I am not attracted by the proposed addition to our responsibilities, but it is a curious illustration of Dizzy's favorite maxim that 'race is everything' to find this almost lyrical outburst proceeding from the well-ordered and methodical brain of H. S."

Disraeli had forsaken the Jewish community in his adolescent years and never returned to it; thus Samuel was the first observant Jew to serve in a British Cabinet — his strategic importance cannot be over-estimated.

Of considerable value is Stein's examination of the notion that the Balfour Declaration was a "reward" which David Lloyd George reputedly bestowed upon Weizmann for his contribution to the Allied victory by the development of acetone as an indispensable ingredient in the development of TNT. Stein makes it clear that Lloyd George had both poetically and oratorically exaggerated when he said that "acetone converted me to Zionism" and that Weizmann's declination of honors from the Crown was "the fount and origin of the Balfour Declaration." Stein notes that Lloyd George's gratitude was undoubtedly one of many factors which made Weizmann stand high in his favor; yet Weizmann was really more powerful as a Zionist propagandist in the best sense of that word. Jan Christiaan Smuts always reminded his readers and listeners, "It was Weizmann who persuaded us."

Of great value, too, is the sympathetic picture which Stein gives of the anti-Zionists in Great Britain. He understands, though he neither approves of nor agrees with, their opposition to Zionism. Here is insight of a high order.

Similarly, he gives a perceptive account of the apprehension felt in Arab communities in and around Palestine, especially after the Turkish Revolution, when Arab nationalism became a conscious, powerful trend.

He observes realistically — unlike many Zionist historians — that Arab hostility to Zionism increased through the years and was foreseen by Ahad Ha'am in 1891 and 1912, and by Theodor Herzl at the turn of the century; several years after the Balfour Declaration both Herbert Samuel and Chaim Weizmann warned of the Arabs' intransigence and the stiffening of their resistance. Stein's verdict on the Sykes-Picot Agreement, often invoked in opposition to Zionism, is clear: "... If the question is whether the British Government had committed itself in 1915 to leaving Palestine under Arab control, the answer seems clearly to be that there was no such commitment."

Flaws in the book are few. The footnotes are ubiquitous and abundant, *too* much so; they border on the pedantic. Stein gives an inadequate treatment of American Zionism in the formulation of Anglo-American policy, and says little of the role played by Stephen S. Wise; but a separate book of another 700 pages would have to be written on America's part in the Balfour Declaration as well as on the twenty-eight years of Britain's Mandate until Israel was established.

To the fascinating, but now rather academic, question as to whether or not the Balfour Declaration (1) was ill-phrased and (2) really carried the intention of establishing a Jewish-controlled state, Stein devotes many pages. The text of the Declaration was revised a number of times, both by the British Government and by the Zionists (in Great Britain and the United States) as well. As an American, I find always engrossing the part played by such men as Louis D. Brandeis, Stephen S. Wise, Felix Frankfurter, and their friends, foremost among whom was Norman Hapgood, editor of *Harper's Weekly*. Many people exchanged views constantly and helped phrase and rephrase the countless drafts that came before the War Cabinet in London in the fateful year 1917. The results, both at that time and in later decades, were more than the opponents of Zionism expected and less than the proponents desired.

Many memoranda were exchanged about "A Jewish National Home" or "A National Home for the Jewish Race," finally resulting in the oft-debated words, "National Home for the Jewish People," which was an echo of the Basle program, "the creation of a home for the Jewish people."

The latter part of the book deals in limited yet revealing fashion with the steady efforts of the British Colonial Office through the next thirty years to repudiate any idea that a Jewish state was to be established. To this trend Stein could have devoted yet another 700 pages.

The restraint which Stein employs throughout the book is absent

in the closing pages, when he seems to take a dim view of American Jewry of more recent vintage:

With an enthusiasm as fervent as that with which they acclaimed the Balfour Declaration the American Jews were, eighteen months later, to express their gratitude to Great Britain on her acceptance of the Palestine Mandate. The strength of their emotional response to the Declaration was the measure of their indignant reaction when things started to go wrong in Palestine and of their almost hysterical denunciation of Great Britain as the Mandate drifted to its melancholy end.

Some valuable pages on the tepid enthusiasm of Woodrow Wilson, the grave reservations of his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, and the not-so-restrained anti-Zionism and subtle anti-Semitism of Edward House should be required reading for those gullible souls who contend that the three of them — Wilson, Lansing, and House — were unreservedly pro-Zionist.

Stein's major task is to help us keep all these matters in perspective, and he succeeds.

Stein has done a scholarly and, at times, brilliant job in describing how a few not so well chosen and often ambiguous words can change the face of the earth — in this case, the Middle East — and can alter the course of history, primarily the history of Jewry and Judaism.

Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

CARL HERMANN VOSS

Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, who is presently pastor of the New England Congregational Church in Saratoga Springs, New York, served as Chairman of the Executive Council of the American Christian Palestine Committee between 1946 and 1956.

CORRECTION

The April, 1962, issue of *American Jewish Archives* (pp. 4 and 7), mistakenly designated Max E. Berkowitz as the nephew of Rabbi Henry Berkowitz. Max E. Berkowitz should have been designated as the son of Henry Berkowitz.

Brief Notice

SMITH, JAMES WARD, and A. LELAND JAMISON, Edited by. *Religion in American Life*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. 1961. Vol. I (514 pp. \$8.50); Vol. II (427 pp. \$7.50); Vol. IV (Parts 1-2: xx, 541 pp., and Parts 3-5: xv, 674 pp. \$17.50)

Appearing as "Princeton Studies in American Civilization Number 5" and consisting of four* volumes bound in five books (Vol. IV has been published in two separately bound sections), *Religion in American Life* may justly claim the designation "monumental" in bulk as well as in scope. The work, its distinguished editors tell us, is concerned primarily with religion as "the tendency on the part of our culture to devote itself to ideal purposes which stem from the Judaeo-Christian tradition." The editors, Professor Smith, of Princeton University, and Professor Jamison, of Syracuse University, have succeeded in preparing an *opus* that will undoubtedly prove indispensable to students of the American religious scene. Vol. I, entitled "The Shaping of American Religion," includes — in addition to an introduction and an index — nine essays by H. Richard Niebuhr, Henry J. Browne, Oscar Handlin, A. Leland Jamison, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, Perry Miller, Stow Persons, James Ward Smith, and Daniel D. Williams. Vol. II, "Religious Perspectives in American Culture," features — again in addition to an introduction and an index — ten essays by Will Herberg, Wilber G. Katz, William Lee Miller, Dayton D. McKean, R. Morton Darrow, Willard Thorp, Carlos Baker, Richard P. Blackmur, Leonard Ellinwood, and Donald Drew Egbert. In Vol. IV, "A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America," Dr. Nelson R. Burr, of the Library of Congress, has painstakingly assembled a selective bibliography designed to afford the reader "a synoptic sense of the breadth and the depth of the problem of tracing religious influences in American life." Dr. Burr's contribution is enhanced by a forty-eight-page "Author Index." Of particular Jewish interest in the series are Oscar Handlin's "Judaism in the United States" in Vol. I, Will Herberg's "Religion and Education in America" and Wilber G. Katz's "Religion and Law in America," both in Vol. II, and Dr. Burr's bibliographical material on American Jewish religion and literature in Vol. IV.

* Not included in this notice is Vol. III, entitled "Religious Thought and Economic Society: The European Background," which consists of a historical study by Jacob Viner and is listed at \$6.00. The entire set is listed at \$32.50.