
Book Reviews

**Sarna, Jonathan D. *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah*.
New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1981. xi, 233 pp. \$29.50.**

For several years, Jonathan Sarna has been making his presence felt in the field of American Jewish history through informed and thoughtful essays and reviews in learned journals and in the wider forum offered by *Commentary* and other journals of opinion. *Jacksonian Jew*, his full-scale biography of Mordecai Manuel Noah, plainly marks the arrival of a gifted young scholar who will have much to say about the future of his field. Mr. Sarna's book not only encompasses and supersedes all previous works on Noah, a particularly provocative and revealing figure in the early history of American Jewry, but — more important, perhaps — it demonstrates by example the great merits of grounding Jewish history in the American world that defines its limits and its possibilities. If this work is any sign, the task that Jacob Rader Marcus and a few other distinguished scholars have pursued for a generation, that of transcending without denying antiquarian and parochial interests, can now be taken as a secure point of departure.

Thus Mr. Sarna's subtitle, *The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah*, is no rhetorical flourish but a serious statement of his purpose: to recapture and examine the experience of a proud, self-conscious Jew who entered fully and forcefully into the political and cultural life of early-nineteenth-century New York. Indeed, with some justification, Mr. Sarna presents Noah as a prototypical American Jew who must try somehow to reconcile the conflicting demands of his unique origins and destiny and his chosen land, with its generous opportunities, its strong temptations to ambition and avarice, and its ugly prejudice, open and disguised.

As a work of professional scholarship, *Jacksonian Jew* is most impressive. The notes and bibliography confirm what is already evident in the text: Mr. Sarna's heroic explorations in the widely scattered, often fragmentary manuscript sources for Noah's life and his thorough examination of the contemporary press revealing the views and reputation of an influential journalist and busy local party leader. Mr. Sarna has a sure command of the large, unruly scholarly literature bearing on Jacksonian politics, diplomacy, journalism, drama, religion, and, of course, on the institutions, customs, beliefs, and general affairs of the Jewish community in New York and, selectively, in America and Europe.

He uses evidence critically, gives due weight and credit to useful predecessors, yet does not hesitate to argue his own version of events and their significance. More often than not, he is convincing, either by the depth of his evidence or the force of his reasoning. I rather doubt, however, that he adds much strength to his generally sound and sensible interpretations by invoking in occasional learned asides the authority of such masters as Gail Sheehy and Daniel Levinson on male psychology, Juanita Williams and others on "tomboyism," Levi-Strauss and Robert Merton on structural analysis, David Fischer on growing old, and Leo Strauss on the art of writing and the science of reading esoteric texts (applied here to Noah's most vulgar journalism).

On balance — although a skeptic might quarrel with Mr. Sarna's assessment of the precise weight of anti-Jewish prejudice in Noah's several electoral defeats or of the quality of Noah's contributions to investigative reporting, given his inveterate partisanship and his voracious appetite for wide circulation — there is no doubt that *Jacksonian Jew* is an authentic portrait of this restless, spirited, tangy New Yorker, virtues, and warts and all. Even where I doubt Mr. Sarna's judgments, I often find the grounds for criticism in his own pages, fairly offered to the other-minded reader. That leaves unresolved only the final questions of Noah's stature and significance, questions that do not wait, of course, for the eloquent conclusion but rather permeate the book.

Mr. Sarna's Noah carries a heavy burden as a representative Jacksonian and American Jew, and — more equivocally — as a creator and pioneer in the endless task of working out the inherent tensions of a Jewish-American identity. In a word, Mr. Sarna takes Noah very seriously, and will have nothing to do with the clever, roguish, fickle Major: "that good natured but most unscrupulous politician," as his sometime patron and long-time *bête noire*, Martin Van Buren, recalled him. Even for a reviewer who has learned more than a little of what he knows about Noah from this book and so has been persuaded to read attentively, it remains difficult to determine whether or not Noah can bear the full burden. Was Noah's Ararat the scenario for a Billy Rose extravaganza, an unconscious farce featuring the latter-day Noah as the self-appointed "Judge of Israel" resplendent in his borrowed stage costume, or a lofty, looping sort of vision of a New Zion restored on a little island in the Niagara River, with space reserved for all the persecuted Jews on earth including the ten lost tribes of red Indians? Was Noah, in his major American role as quarrelsome party editor and politician and eternal job-hunter, almost a caricature — a rather charming one — of the new American breed of democratic opportunist and social climber, or was he a precursor of those American Jews who, out of the stresses in their dual character, "produced works of unparalleled vibrance and creativity" and formed, in spite of themselves, "a readily distinguishable intellectual community" (p. 160)? Simply, would we profit from reading Noah's voluminous columns and addresses, or the best of them, not as historical and biographical evidence, pungent relics from a lost world, but as

illuminating if erratic guides to the perplexed American (even modern) Jew?

Mr. Sarna gives us only cryptic and ambiguous clues to his own judgments, drawn perhaps in one direction by the biographer's natural commitment to the largest value of his subject, and in another by the highly intelligent and informed historical critic's cool appraisal of (as I take it) a limited, lively, eccentric sort of mind engaged chiefly in the common business of Noah's time and place and situation. Either way, or, given Noah's light-footedness, both ways, Mr. Sarna convinces us that Mordecai Manuel Noah, with no small measure of courage and audacity, proudly affirmed his Jewish name and embraced his Jewish responsibilities, not from the safe retreats of a parochial world but in the midst of American life.

Clear, vigorous, economical prose combined with sharp analysis and scholarly precision all help to earn for *Jacksonian Jew* an honorable place on the small shelf of first-class American Jewish history on the Jacksonian era. Jacksonian historiography will profit equally from Mr. Sarna's fresh perspective and thorough scholarship. Among other things, the considerable Jewish role in early New York party politics and the undercurrent of anti-Jewish feeling that surfaced during Noah's combative career can no longer be neglected. Only a handful of misprints and trivial slips have escaped editorial scrutiny: a missing footnote 5 in Chapter VI, a *Dairy* for a *Diary*, a proper "William" for a Southern "Willie," and once a *Richmond Union* for Thomas Ritchie's powerful *Enquirer*. I think that Mr. Sarna slightly misrepresents the issue in Noah's attack on the King family for refusing to return some Hamilton papers and I remain somewhat skeptical of the author's argument that Van Buren opposed Noah's first appointment to a patronage job by the Jackson administration and thereby provoked the editor's enduring enmity. On this last point, Mr. Sarna characteristically refers the reader to dissenting opinions, while documenting his own.

Mordecai Noah, I conclude, has finally received his due, perhaps a little more, and Jonathan Sarna will certainly be recognized as a scholar to be reckoned with now and for many years.

MARVIN MEYERS

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Kraut, Benny. *From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Evolution of Felix Adler.* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979. 285 pp. \$16.50.

"The first and most important step for such a congregation to take is to free its service from shocking lies, to remove from it the mention of things and wishes which we would not mention if it had to be done in an intelligible manner." Thus the advice given by Rabbi Samuel Adler (1809-1891) of Temple Emanu-el, New York, when consulted by the founders of the Chicago Sinai Congregation as to the path which a Reform congregation should follow. Less than twenty years later the American Jewish community was afflutter because the rabbi's son had been impelled by similar criteria to move away from Judaism altogether.

Felix Adler (1851-1933) had been sent to Germany in 1870 to study for the Reform rabbinate with a view to succeeding his father. He entered the Berlin Hochschule and sat at the feet of Abraham Geiger and Hermann Steinthal; while at the university he came under the influence of the great savants of German scholarship. Before he crossed the Atlantic religious doubts had begun to gnaw at him. Biblical criticism, natural science, and Kantian philosophy, to which he became exposed in Germany — scholarship was free of the theological leading strings by which it was still tied in the United States — accentuated his questioning.

Ethical monotheism, based on biblical revelation, emphasizing the moral life, and conferring upon Jews the mission to teach ethical monotheism to the world, was the essence of the Reform Judaism taught to Felix Adler by his father. Adler had now ceased to believe in a providential God; the Bible was a human document, limited by the circumstances of its appearance and not man's final inspiration to moral behavior; and significant as were prophetic ethics, the talk of their universalization could not be left to the Jewish community.

On his return from Germany in 1873, Felix Adler was invited to preach at Emanu-el, with a view to his being invited to join its ministry. The young man's address excited opposition for its advanced views and its incompatibility with accepted homiletical style and content. The reproaches he received confirmed his belief that he could not work within the framework of the synagogue.¹ After two years at Cornell (his radical position on religion was responsible for the shortness of his stay) he returned to New York and organized the Society for Ethical Culture, whose standpoint was the assertion of one ethical factor in all relations of life, apart from any theological or metaphysical foundations. His Sunday lectures attracted a large following, especially from among Reform Jews; he took a prominent part in philanthropic and social reform movements; in 1902 he became professor of political and social ethics at Columbia University; on his passing he was honored as a man whose life exemplified the purity of his ideals.

Dr. Kraut does not offer us a biography of Felix Adler, still less the story of the Ethical Culture movement; he focuses on the period in

which Adler's philosophical viewpoint took shape and led to his withdrawal from the world of Judaism. This Dr. Kraut does very well. There is evidence of careful research, involving to a large extent previously untouched material, followed up by patient analysis. The results are presented in a style that is eminently readable, thus making his book a pleasure as well as a profit to study. He does give us a chapter on "Adler and the Jewish World After 1880," but a little more on this period and on Adler's personality would have been welcome. What was the significance of his career at Columbia? Did he leave any reputation as a thinker? Did the course of history (in particular the First World War) modify his thinking?

The concern of the leaders of Temple Emanu-el that their candidate for the rabbinate made no reference to God in his trial sermon, and Adler's sense of the incompatibility of his outlook with that of the synagogue reminds us how different is the climate in which we move today. It is not easy to believe that in the New York of the Gilded Age the well-to-do Jews were profoundly moved by theological niceties, but the fact that they were concerned with theological respectability tells something. Today from no side would agnosticism be considered a bar to a career in the Reform rabbinate, and so negligible are the trappings of belief that a well-known teacher of Reform rabbis has suggested that a Reform Jew can only be defined by reference to affiliation to organizations which describe themselves as Reform.

Apart from changes in philosophy, this downgrading of theology may flow from the dominance of nationalist feeling among Jews in the present day. If ethnic identity forms the basis of Jewish life, the principles of the cult to which the individual Jew adheres become of secondary importance. In this connection the career of Mordecai Kaplan, to whom Jewish peoplehood was paramount, and the influence of the Reconstructionist ideology, may usefully be contrasted with that of Felix Adler and Ethical Culture. Adler's backing came from the Reform Jews of New York, but not many followed him out of the synagogue. The beliefs they professed, or disavowed, should have made them do so, but, however passive, they stayed. Was it a lurking sense of Jewish peoplehood that kept them? The life of the ghetto was not so far behind.

Did Adler have an influence on the Jewish community? First there was the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. This suggestion may seem strange, because the impulse to call the conference in Pittsburgh came from the arrival in New York of an eloquent exponent of Conservative Judaism. However, as contemporary statements marshaled by Dr. Kraut indicate, Adler's Sunday lectures were drawing crowds, while the Reform temples, including, presumably, Kaufmann Kohler's, were empty; the text of the Pittsburgh Platform, which was Kohler's creation, suggests less a fear of tradition than an obeisance to modernity; and the eighth plank, concerned with social justice, which was added at the suggestion of Emil Hirsch, may well have been a response to Adler's teaching.

A second channel of influence can be sought in what may be called

"Philanthropic Judaism." "Not by the Creed but by the Deed" was the motto which Adler coined for the Ethical Culture Society, and this fits comfortably with the American emphasis on a religion of good deeds expressed a century earlier by Thomas Paine when he said, "My country is the world, my religion to do good." Examining many of the philanthropic institutions founded and directed by the German Jews in America, one finds an attitude that the highest expression of Jewishness is charitable work, bestowed without distinction as to creed and unalloyed by deference to anything that emanates from the Jewish past. Changes in the Federations show how this attitude is abating. Apart from the leaders of these bodies who actually joined the Ethical Culture movement, this may have been the tribute to Felix Adler from laymen who were unwilling to follow him all the way.

SEFTON TEMKIN

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1. As Kraut makes clear, Gustave Gottheil, who earlier in the same year had been brought to New York to assist Samuel Adler, played a leading part in the opposition to his son. Felix Adler's withdrawal may have saved the congregation a great deal of embarrassment: it is not difficult to visualize the friction that would have arisen had Gustave Gottheil, who was twice Felix Adler's age, found the senior rabbi's son interposed ahead of himself, and it is no far-fetched conjecture to suggest that this may have stimulated Gottheil's opposition.

Rosenbaum, Fred. *Architects of Reform: Congregational and Community Leadership, Emanu-El of San Francisco, 1849–1980*. Berkeley, Calif.: Western Jewish History Center, 1980. xii, 241 pp., bibliographical note, index.

With the financial support of Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco, Fred Rosenbaum has written an admirable narrative of its history. The official sponsorship has not detracted from his critical assessment of rabbis, nor has he neglected the changing environment in which the temple matured. Rosenbaum reminds us that Reform Judaism is in many respects an institution of the urban West, with congregations on the Pacific Coast almost as old as those on the Atlantic, and with persistent ties to the denomination's central institutions, once centered entirely in Cincinnati. Unlike congregations in the East, however, Emanu-El and its founders grew up with their city from its reorganization by "Anglos" in 1848, and the magnificent Sutter Street Temple was perhaps the city's most splendid architectural gem of the late nineteenth century. Its congregants were elected to high office and were heavily represented in the city's elite "Blue Book" in the 1880's, a phenomenon unheard of in the East. Despite the eclipse of their commercial wealth by that of the railroad barons, families like the De Youngs, Fleishhackers, Zellerbachs, and Sterns contributed handsomely to the Bay Area's cultural and intellectual institutions.

While providing useful information on the careers of the temple's leading laymen, Rosenbaum pays greatest attention to the nine rabbis who have occupied the pulpit. In addition, the most original chapter is devoted to the beloved cantor Reuben Render, who for over fifty years brought innovative liturgy and religious music to the temple and to the city as a whole. With the same civic pride that led them to endow museums and contribute to universities, the laymen supported Render's commissioning of major figures like Ernest Bloch and Darius Milhaud to compose entire services as well as hymns. Their initial performances were reported enthusiastically by Bay Area music critics.

Perhaps the most important rabbis were Jacob Voorsanger (1852–1908), Irving F. Reichert (1895–1968), and Alvin I. Fine (b. 1916), each representing a very different variety of Reform commitment and presiding over the temple during a very different era. The chapters on Voorsanger's rabbinate — and those of his two predecessors — were difficult to prepare, because the minute books of the congregation and most other communal records were destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906. Nevertheless, Rosenbaum recaptures the robust atmosphere of nineteenth-century San Francisco and, in Voorsanger, the Reform intellectual struggling to introduce Jewish cultural fare to a congregation of sophisticated secularists. His predecessor, Elkan Cohn (1820–1889), had introduced Reform innovations like a religious school stressing history and Biblical Hebrew, inaugurated a confirmation program, and eliminated many "irrational" traditions from the liturgy. But Voorsanger

introduced a weekly paper, *Emanu-El*, which carried philosophical treatises, biblical scholarship, and fiction by leading Jewish authors. He also openly criticized the "irrational" customs of East European Jews, thousands of whom were arriving in the city toward the end of his rabbinate.

Irving Reichert, also an ideologue of Reform, served during the Depression and World War II, periods of labor unrest, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and national involvement in war. He combined a faith in the rationalist tradition of Liberal Judaism which Voorsanger had promoted, with a commitment to civil liberties that allowed him to defend Tom Mooney, Harry Bridges, and the Scottsboro Boys, and to condemn the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. His consistent conception of Judaism as a religion rather than a national culture also led him to oppose a Jewish state in Palestine and to help organize the American Council for Judaism. With a declining congregation and increased criticism of his anti-Zionist activities, Reichert was dismissed after seventeen years in 1947. His successor, Alvin Fine, was the first rabbi of *Emanu-El* to be of East European descent, though he, too, graduated from HUC. Presiding over the temple during an era of prosperity and demographic growth, he joined a vibrant Labor Zionist background to strong pastoral skills that attracted many "upwardly mobile" descendants of East Europeans to the congregation. By 1962, *Emanu-El* had the largest membership and heaviest religious school enrollment in its history, and a professional administrative staff. Fine also worked in the civil rights movement. The demands of his civic and pastoral duties, however, seriously impaired his health, and led him to resign in 1963. The current rabbi, Joseph Asher, was appointed in 1968 and joined a commitment to civil rights with an erudition which even more strongly promotes Jewish cultural activities.

Rosenbaum's excellent summaries of the strengths and limitations of the rabbis and his clear style will enable laymen to appreciate the demands of congregational leadership and the risks men took to meet intellectual, political, and social challenges, from rebuilding after the earthquake to resistance to McCarthyism. Scholars will also find an important outline of the response of a venerable institution to massive urban changes. Rosenbaum, however, has utilized the skills of the journalist rather than the scholar, and has not attempted to set the story of *Emanu-El* into the historiography of Reform Judaism or American social history. He reflects contemporary concerns for social equality — certainly a heritage of rational religion — but rarely sets the specific policies of rabbis into the ideological context of their generation. He criticizes Voorsanger, for example, for condemning the Chinese and the East European Jews, instead of explaining how that criticism was a logical extension of both nineteenth-century Liberal Judaism and American democratic ideology. Rosenbaum's discussion of Reichert is excellent, but again the rabbi's ideological consistency is not set into either a philosophical or historiographical context. Nor is the opposition of Rabbi

Louis Newman in the 1920's and Rabbi Asher in the 1970's to changing sexual mores and popular culture discussed in terms of rabbinic teachings. The views of Newman and Asher in these areas seem to be simply the quirks of personality, yet national leaders like Stephen Wise — of whom Newman was a disciple — felt the same way.

Occasionally, Rosenbaum resorts to intellectual anachronisms, as when he refers to late-nineteenth-century temple members as “middle class” (p. 21). Such a term has sociological significance only when set into an appropriate cultural context. Adjectives like “patriarchal,” “Victorian,” and “elite” might more appropriately be used for the men and women who helped build the city's commercial network, political infrastructure, and the lodge and club life upon which its civil order rested. Finally, one must wonder, what with there being so much emphasis on “ordinary people” in the writing of social history today, how the history of an institution can be shaped to reflect changes in the community for which it has been the alleged spokesman. Emanu-El was not always “elite.” It became so when its members rose to social eminence and wealth by the 1880's. It has apparently also assumed a diminished social role with the retreat of many wealthy Jews to the suburbs in the 1960's, the decline of family continuity among Jews, and the need of single people for professional counseling in the 1970's. To be of value to persons beyond the congregation itself, temple histories must integrate local detail with general theories to explain those changes that have affected the great body of Reform Jewry. Rosenbaum approaches this plane in his discussions of Cantor Render and especially in his lucid explanation of synagogue architecture. Regrettably, he does not integrate his chronicle with an assessment of Emanu-El's changing function with Bay Area, Western, or Reform Jewry. We are left with a careful narrative, but no vision of Reform Jewry's inner tensions or a synagogue's changing social roles.

WILLIAM TOLL

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Knee, Stuart E. *The Concept of Zionist Dissent in the American Mind 1917-1941*. New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1979. 286 pp. \$12.95.

In nine compact chapters Dr. Stuart E. Knee gives "the other side" of the Zionist saga on the American scene. Thousands upon thousands of pages in literally hundreds of books are devoted to the seemingly steady march of the Zionist idea to a foreordained victory, which moved "from strength to strength and glory to glory," an apparently irresistible tide towards a far-off Divine Event. But not so, Knee maintains. 'There were many factors and persons inimical to the Zionist movement.

Perceptively and meticulously he describes the anti-Zionism, non-Zionism, and economic Zionism which were "variations on the major theme of Jewish Nationalism" and proved to be powerful during the twenty-four years he surveys from Balfour Declaration days until Pearl Harbor. He has delved deep in archives and, with painstaking scholarship, documents his findings and guides future scholars along new paths. With ease and skill he moves from one important subject to another, preferring a topical approach to the chronological.

In his fine introduction Dr. Herbert Druks, professor of Judaic studies and history at Brooklyn College, calls the book "unique" because Knee "has carefully examined the anti-Zionist thinking of the State Department officials, missionaries, selected educators, socialists and communists, Arab Americans, advisors to such presidents as Woodrow Wilson and others," and because he uncovers not merely anti-Zionism but also "an ingrained racism." Druks notes that this "definitive study of Zionist dissent in America from 1917-1941" discloses "a resistance within the American Jewish community [which] held back the progress of Zionism in America" so that "not until after World War II would American Zionism be strong enough to give support to the re-creation of the Jewish State in Israel. That inability to unite, that weakness contributed to the destruction of European Jewry at the hands of Hitler from 1933 to 1945." American Jewry was "not united and strong enough to demand from their American Government that it help rescue the Jews of Europe, that it make good the Balfour Declaration promises which President Woodrow Wilson helped draft."

At the same time Dr. Druks draws a parallel to the present scene when "contemporary opponents of Zionism" are using the self-same anti-Zionist arguments, and we are thus enabled "to see our own time a bit more clearly."

In his opening chapter, "The Foundation of Zionist Criticism in America," Dr. Knee surveys the pre-1917 years and the slow, tortuous growth of the minuscule Zionist movement in America. He notes that Brandeis's leadership as chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs in 1914 and the Zionists' cooperation with the American Jewish Committee in helping feed the starving people of Palestine during World War One signaled the growth of interest in that country and the rise of Zionist support; but the committee, dispatched

by the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, is the subject of his second chapter, "The King-Crane Commission: The Articulation of Political Anti-Zionism," and this gives momentum to his narrative.

Knee shows how ill-chosen were the co-conveners appointed by Woodrow Wilson: Charles R. Crane, a plumbing fixtures manufacturer from the Mid-West, and Henry Churchill King, president of Oberlin College in Ohio. This important (but ultimately ineffectual) committee superficially appraised political trends in Syria (then including Lebanon) and Palestine during 1919, the first post-World War One year. The Commission's findings were both critical and negative, especially because its interviews were predominantly with anti-Zionists and Arab supporters, and had meretriciously slanted the conclusions.

Knee's writing is exciting, his research excellent, and his objectivity commendable; and he concludes chapter two by this judgment:

Far from being an "experiment in peacemaking," the King-Crane report was a pro-Christian document. Its findings were suppressed in America for three years because they were thought to be inimical to Allied objectives in the Near East. Had the United States government known that it had nothing to fear from France or Britain, the King-Crane Report probably would have been published in 1919. As it developed, the palpable tragedy of the King-Crane Commission was not its failure to cause an impact at Paris, but that the legendary aura surrounding its members and findings had no substance. Nevertheless, during the interwar period, the chimera of King and Crane continued to exercise its influence over those American interest groups which decried Zionism and its policies (p. 39).

"Jewish Anti-Zionism: The Converted Wing," the book's third chapter, has almost fifty engrossing pages on the bitter battles within the Jewish community on Zionism, focusing for the most part on Reform Judaism and documented in fascinating, accurate detail. The extensive footnotes, often five to a page, are as captivating as the text itself. Knee weaves his way carefully among the various factions of the Zionist movement and the vocal, bitterly opposed anti-Zionists. The adamant opposition of the Jewish anti-Zionists to Christian support of Zionism is graphically outlined.

The substance of chapter three centers on the transformation of Reform Judaism in America to a partial approval of the Balfour Declaration, later to the sanctioning of moves to support Palestine as a haven for refugees, and ultimately to recognition of Palestine as *the* Jewish homeland. The end of this tale he sums up thus:

By 1942, the old leadership was forced to retreat, simply acting defensively at times when it felt its preferred status was seriously threatened. For the time being, the old philosophy and its adherents were forced to yield to American Jews who realized the time demanded of them that they be both visible and vigorous (p. 87).

"Jewish Non-Zionism: The Committee Wing," the fourth chapter in the book, mirrors the struggles of mind and spirit within such foremost American Jews as Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall, Cyrus Adler, Felix Warburg, and Herbert Lehman, all of which resulted in prolonged parleys

in the late 1920's on behalf of a "Jewish Agency for Palestine" designed to contain both Zionists and non-Zionists as governing delegates. The intricate negotiations between the leaders of the American Jewish Committee and the various factions of Zionists are described in absorbing detail. The absence of the key men who had died in 1940-41 — Louis Brandeis, Zionist, Cyrus Adler and Sol Stroock, the non-Zionists — is linked with the alarming victories of Hitler in Europe and the imminence of America's entry into the war. A new spirit was abroad. After Pearl Harbor there were fewer "perverse or malicious critiques of Jewish Nationalism," for now the non-Zionists were not out to "defeat the idealism of the Balfour Declaration or speak against the proprieties of a Jewish life in Palestine" (p. 116).

But in chapter five, "House Divided: Brandeis Zionism versus Weizmann Zionism," Knee feels compelled to go back to 1914 and retrace almost three decades of important Zionist history, which he does without pedantry or tedium. The tale has been told in many other histories of Zionism but without the interplay of personalities as in this account, and without the fresh material that has emerged since the opening of the State Department vaults of diplomatic documents from those decades.

The story begins in the post-Balfour Declaration days and winds through the labyrinth of the between-the-wars upheaval, concluding twenty years later with the doleful news of the May 1939 British White Paper on Mandated Palestine, the outbreak of World War Two, the descent of Nazi cruelty to demonic depths, and the resurgence of American Zionism with a strength it had not previously known.

Another important element in the drama was the part played by the Left as described in the sixth chapter, "Socialists and Communists: The Radical Response to Zionism." Knee has done some extraordinary research for this narrative of the opposition of varied hues of Marxism to the Zionist solution; and through it all, as a standard bearer, walks the former Presbyterian minister and oft-offered Socialist candidate for the U.S. presidency, Norman M. Thomas, who was consistently anti-Zionist, but by 1939 favored "unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine."

Since Poale Zion was not in any way anti-Zionist, it naturally does not loom large in this chapter; but it is clear that opposition to it came from a score of factions within the socialist-communist spectrum, and thus Labor Zionism was damned as "a cloak for imperialism, a dagger at the heart of Arab liberty." Through the 1930's and 1940's Zionism had few friends among America's socialists and communists.

Most redoubtable, vocal, and articulate in the ranks of Zionist dissent over the decades have been the Christian missionaries from the United States whose unhappy experiences are related in the seventh chapter, "American Missionaries and Zionism." Foremost among the missionary groups are those centering around Beirut in the Lebanon, Aleppo in Syria, and Cairo, Egypt, and spreading out through the area under the aegis of the Near East College Association; but they had been joined

by many other groups in Palestine ranging from Mormons to Quakers, Pentecostals to Christian Scientists. Virtually all have been anti-Zionist.

Informative vignettes are drawn by Knee of John Huston Finley of the American Red Cross (and later of the *New York Times*) and Dr. James L. Barton of the Congregationalists' American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He describes their deep involvement, both in seeking to avoid a Jewish national home and to extend American influence from not only religious but also cultural and financial institutions in the area. King and Crane stroll again through these pages, as does Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (later to become a Nazi). The roles of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and of the YMCA (American in origin) are not at all attractive; and the chapter ends on a discordant note: American Christian interests, coupled with the U.S. State Department, had no intention of establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The penultimate chapter, "Arab Americans in Zionism," is no less melancholy as Knee tells how "Jewish settlement in Palestine between the two World Wars enervated the group consciousness of Arab Americans." Herein lies the great value of this chapter, for it outlines in detail seldom found elsewhere the organizations and persons who were dubious indeed about the ability of Palestine to accommodate an influx of Jewish immigrants in the following years. These pages reflect the confusion of mind which prevailed among the various Arab groups as to what really constituted Zionism, whether of a religious bent or of a political nature. Their allying themselves with the anti-Zionist Reform Jews, then with Wilson's chief advisor, Colonel Edward House, and finally with Protestant missionaries at the Versailles Peace Conference gave them some semblance of power; but they were unable to do more than harass the Zionist movement. Their own disunity and impotence shattered the force of their opposition.

Soon the names of Philip Hitti and Khalil Totah, of George Antonius and Habil Katibah became more and more familiar; but there were in all a mere handful of opponents. By the time the United States entered World War Two, the Arab-Americans were in disarray and lacked a cohesive organization. Their appeal against Zionism became "less effective," Knee avers; and this flaw "diminished their total impact on American foreign policy."

A succinct conclusion sums up these preceding chapters and points to the dramatic gathering of Zionist forces and their demand for a Jewish "State" at the very hour when world Jewry was facing its most ghastly horror in four millennia of Jewish history: the Holocaust.

This informative, carefully researched book is invaluable and deserves to be on the Middle East shelf of every library in America. It should be required reading on lists prescribed for courses on Israel, Zionism, Jewish-Christian relations, and Mid-East problems.

Occasionally the author stumbles as when he uses the word "infer" to mean "imply"; or when, as on page 194, he repeatedly confuses the

Carnegie Foundation with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; or when he gratuitously refers to Stephen S. Wise as “tactless” and “a firebrand.” Knee makes frequent reference to and deals at length with such controversial figures of dubious motives as Rabbi Elmer Berger of the American Council for Judaism, the ACJ’s President Lessing Rosenwald, its Chief Rabbi Morris Lazon, Rabbi Samuel Schulman of New York City, Jerusalem’s anti-Zionist American consuls of World War One, the Reverend Otis Glazebrook, and World War Two, George Wadsworth, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., Khalil Totah of the American Friends’ School in Ramallah, the Congregationalists’ James L. Barton, the longtime anti-Semite Charles R. Crane, the *New York Times*’s John Huston Finley, the bumbling, indecisive Secretary of State Cordell Hull; but there is never a pejorative adjective about any of them. He has words of criticism only for Stephen S. Wise: Wise’s “flamboyance,” “the volatile Stephen Wise,” “merciless verbal and printed bombardments,” “tact was never a vice [could Knee mean “virtue”?] of Rabbi Wise,” and so on. One wonders why he focuses solely on Wise in this fashion. Such lapses are unfortunate because for the most part Knee’s writing is restrained, factual, and nonjudgmental, often eloquent in its simplicity, and gripping with apt quotations from recently unearthed diplomatic documents.

The publisher must be faulted because of inexcusable neglect in not having the copy editors and proofreaders do their jobs. The author, too, must take some share of responsibility for inadequately corrected proofs.

On the whole, however, Dr. Stuart E. Knee has made an incalculable contribution to American scholarship and Zionist lore. I congratulate him.

CARL HERMANN VOSS

Carl Hermann Voss is ecumenical scholar-in-residence on behalf of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He is now working on a book entitled: *We Were Not Silent: American Christians For and Against Zionism. 1917-1977.*

Brief Notices

Angel, Marc D., Edited by. *Rabbi David de Sola Pool. Selections from Six Decades of Sermons, Addresses and Writings*. New York: Leon Amiel/Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1980. 207 pp.

In over sixty years of association with Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue founded in 1654 in New York, Rabbi David de Sola Pool, was the most highly regarded figure in the American Sephardic Jewish community. He was also an important figure in the affairs of the American Jewish community.

This volume features a selection of Rabbi Pool's sermons, addresses, and writings, edited for publication by the present rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel, Marc D. Angel.

Beton, Sol, Compiled, Edited and Illustrated by. *Sephardim and a History of Congregation Or VeShalom*. Atlanta, Georgia: Congregation Or VeShalom, 1981. vi, 256 pp. \$25.00.

"There is a pressing need," Sol Beton tells us in this unique volume, "for a concentrated renaissance of interest in the Sephardic heritage and tradition in order to assure its continuation among the generations to come."

This book is seen as a contribution to the beginning of such a renaissance. It is divided into two parts. One, entitled "Sephardim," contains over twenty essays on, among other topics, the history, literature, language, and folklore of the Sephardim. Of special interest for the Western Hemispheric experience are essays on the Sephardim in Mexico by David Amato, on seven generations of the Alexander family in America, on Jewish life in Cuba by Albert Barrocas, and on Sephardic Jewish roots in Colonial America by Philip Wendkos.

The second part of the volume highlights the history of Atlanta's Sephardic Congregation Or VeShalom from its founding in 1914 to the present.

Davis, Moshe, Edited by. *Zionism in Transition*. New York: The Herzl Press, 1980: xv, 377 pp.

The contents of this important volume stem from the proceedings of the Continuing Seminar on World Jewry and the State of Israel, established by Professor Ephraim Katzir, the fourth president of Israel, and now carried on by his successor, Yitzhak Navon.

The volume addresses itself to the most fundamental questions concerning the state of Zionist thought and action in their worldwide context. Major sections are devoted to ideological perspectives, Diaspora Zionism, Zionism and the State of Israel, and the reformulation of Zionist thought. Major American contributors to the book include, among others, Ben Halpern, Alfred Gottschalk, Mordecai Waxman, Michael Walzer, Emanuel Rackman, Charlotte Jacobson, Daniel J. Elazar, David Polish, and Isadore Twersky.

Feldman, Egal. *The Dreyfus Affair and the American Conscience, 1895-1906*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981. ix, 187 pp. \$17.95.

Professor Feldman's book is an attempt to evaluate the effects of the famous French Dreyfus affair on the American community and the American conscience. Essentially, Feldman demonstrates that any number of groups in the United States, ethnic, religious and professional, saw in the Dreyfus case some measure of their own relationship to

American society. Thus American lawyers decried French jurisprudence and gloried in the high standards of their own legal system; American anti-militarists and anti-imperialists found the dangers of militarism in democratic societies; American Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, too, found reasons in the Dreyfus events for both optimism and pessimism in their assessment of American society and the limits of its religious and ethnic toleration.

Goldstein, Israel. *Jewish Justice and Conciliation. History of the Jewish Conciliation Board of America, 1930-1968.* New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1981. xxiv, 252 pp. \$17.50.

The Jewish Conciliation Board of America, known as the "court without a gavel," was in existence in New York from 1919 until 1968. The author was president of the Jewish Conciliation Board for nearly four decades. The Board during its existence heard thousands of cases in its function as a free and informal court of arbitration and conciliation. Yiddish was permitted in the courtroom and the decisions handed down by the court were mediated in the spirit of Jewish law. The Board was established as the continuation of a long history of such juridical autonomies granted to Jews for over two thousand years of Diaspora life. In this country, the court clearly served as an alternative to a legal system already overcrowded with criminal and civil cases. It also saved its clients the cost of expensive legal fees. It further allowed observant Jews to accept decisions based on the legal tenets which governed their religious lives. Its successes were recognized by eminent American jurists as a great experiment in the search for truth and the application of justice.

Grinstein, Hyman B. *A Short History of the Jews in the United States.* London and New York: The Soncino Press, 1980. 208 pp. \$20.00.

This volume, by the author of *The Rise of the Jewish Community in New York*, now takes its place among other recent one-volume histories of American Jewry, including those by Henry Feingold and Stanley Feldstein. It contains no source references, making the volume difficult to judge with regard to the number and types of sources that Professor Grinstein consulted in his research. There are, however, over one hundred and fifty illustrations and photographs and these lend a positive quality to the book. As with any work which attempts to be a history of three centuries of American Jewish life in under two hundred pages, the reader is left wishing for more than three or four pages on topics which obviously demand many more pages to do them justice. It is becoming apparent that perhaps the only manner in which to adequately write the history of Jews in this country is through the multi-volume approach — a task of great scholarship which awaits some ambitious American Jewish historian of the future.

Heimovics, Rachel Baron. *The Chicago Jewish Source Book.* Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1981. 336 pp. \$6.95 (Pb.).

The Jewish community of Chicago now has a very full, very informative guide to its institutional make-up. Rachel Heimovics has listed over two hundred subject categories, over three hundred organizations, and many other facets of contemporary Jewish Chicago. Most listings are accompanied by a descriptive statement. It is hoped that the publication of this volume will also serve as an impetus to the very active Chicago Jewish Historical Society in creating interest for a modern, scientific history of this important American Jewish community.

Landau, Herman. *Adath Louisville. The Story of a Jewish Community.* Louisville, Kentucky: Herman Landau and Associates, 1981. iv, 290 pp. \$20.00.

We are grateful to Herman Landau for his time and effort in "digging out" numerous facts and figures in his workmanlike history of Louisville, Kentucky, Jewry. He has discovered information on and detailed events about a wide-ranging group of personalities and institutions (both religious and philanthropic) that have been part of over two hundred years of Louisville Jewish life.

Yet it is also fair to say that most histories about Jewish communities in the United States have been lacking in many areas of scholarship. Beyond the few professionals such as Lloyd Gartner, Marc Raphael, Steven Hertzberg, and William Toll, most community historians have lacked the essential skills necessary to write urban history. This state of affairs is indeed changing — albeit slowly. Modern American Jewish historians are aware that a community history is more than a description of people, places and events. They realize that these pieces of information must be integrated into a complex set of political, social, economic and religious circumstances which only then can answer the types of questions these new urban historians are asking about the environment they study.

Rothchild, Sylvia. Edited by. *Voices from the Holocaust*. New York: New American Library, 1981. vii, 456 pp. \$14.95.

In his moving Foreword to the volume, Elie Wiesel asks us to listen to the voices in this book. "They are the embodiment," he writes, "of a powerful and anguished call to life, to faith, to salvation."

As early as 1946 those precious few hundred thousand who survived the Holocaust that destroyed six million of their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters had a voice. They called it the voice of the *She'erith Hapletah* (the Saved Remnant) and it was a voice filled with the expectations of a people who had "seen eternity" in the death camps, and who felt compelled to change the course of human and Jewish destiny.

But the voice met the disbelief of "the world" as Elie Wiesel euphemistically calls those who would not listen or who did not care. And the voice became still and the message was not delivered.

For nearly two decades "the world" has heard Wiesel's voice struggling against the overwhelming forces of apathy. The hundreds of voices in this volume, not as eloquent as Wiesel but witnesses to the same events, speak out thirty years after their first attempts to be heard. They are the voices of the late 1970's, robbed of the idealism which marked them decades earlier.

What emerges from this volume is a tale of triumph and sorrow, always tempered by an inability on the part of the survivors to forget or comprehend the tragedy that shaped the remainder of their years.

Rothman, Frances Bransten. *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street*. Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1979. 83 pp. \$10.75 (Prepaid).

"Mother and Aunt Alice lived in a tranquil, protected segment of time," writes Frances Bransten Rothman of the two Haas sisters, her mother Florine and Alice. The sisters "never knew the rigors of immigration, never felt the flames of extermination, and were never lashed by hate, vituperation, or intolerance." Their world was, indeed, in Stefan Zweig's words, "the world of yesterday," when certain elements of the American Jewish community could live as "non-Jewish Jews," in one sense by identifying with the universality of Jewish ethics, and in the other by putting those ethics into practice through organized Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropy. Florine and Alice Haas could celebrate Christmas and Easter rather than Chanukah and Pesach "because these were the holidays of the culture they lived in." At the same time they sent their children to Temple Emanu-El's Sunday School and "never missed High Holy Day services . . . and attended memorial services at designated times."

That world is no more, destroyed by tragedies of Jewish life in the twentieth century and replaced by the redemptive spirit of Israel. Yet it is a world that continues to be a source of study and debate among American Jewish historians. One can fault the generation of that world for its illusions and for its overwhelming belief in the power of reason and the ethical imperative. Hindsight is the great ally of this criticism and improperly so. Yet we may also envy that generation, for it did not have to exist, as we do today, with the terrible knowledge of the Holocaust, and the destructive forces unleashed in its aftermath.