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Review Essay  
*The Outsider as Outsider?*  
*German Intellectual Exiles in America*  
*After 1930*

Suzanne Shipley Toliver

Jackman, Jarrell C., and Carla M. Borden, eds. *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983. 384 pp.

Pfanner, Helmut F. *Exile in New York: German and Austrian Writers after 1933*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983. 252 pp.

Heilbut, Anthony. *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present*. New York: Viking Press, 1983. 480 pp.

Five decades separate modern America from the events which drove thousands of German-speaking, mostly Jewish, refugees to seek its shelter. The topic of their emigration from Nazi Germany has become both a timely and a significant subject of scholarly inquiry. The three volumes under review represent important contributions to that inquiry.

In 1980, inspired by the one-hundredth birthday of Albert Einstein, the Smithsonian Institution convened two colloquia to review the results of the creative migration from Hitler's Germany to the Americas. *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930-1945*, compiled from selected colloquia papers, documents the contributions made by exiles in diverse disciplines and in a wide variety of geographical locations. Unlike previous efforts of German *Exilforschung*, the study offers a global, universally accessible sampling of ideas on the nature of exile. As such, *The Muses Flee Hitler* complements and expands upon Laura Fermi's *Illustrious Immigrants* (1968, rev. ed. 1971) and *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1933-1960* (1969), edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn.

Initial emphasis is placed on the origins of Nazism, the rise of anti-Semitism, and the persecution of Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals in Hitler's Germany. The uprooting and subsequent resettlement of European emigres appears even more dramatic an historical phenomenon when viewed in the context of how and what was destroyed: entire intellectual and creative networks were disassembled and rendered forever unproductive by political fanaticism. The Federal Republic of Germany is today fully aware of this void in its intellectual life.

The first section "Background and Migration," contains Alan Beyerchen's evaluation of Hitler's purge of his brightest intellectual luminaries as "a demand for cultural homogeneity so strong that, in order to obtain it, the population was willing to forfeit creativity and excellence, even to pay the price of the intellectual decapitation of Germany" (p. 41). Yet, as Herbert A. Strauss's review of Nazi policy toward the Jews reveals, reality in Hitler's Germany remained open to interpretation—intended victims of fascist persecution had no uniform code of treatment upon which to base their decisions to stay or to go. Even for those aware of the implications of their being outcasts, emigration did not guarantee actual asylum. America, like many of the nations considered in this volume, was ill prepared to diminish their desperation. Roger Daniels's review of American refugee policy concludes that our country's history offers "a sorry chronicle of events" in response to such urgent need. Cynthia Jaffee McCabe's presentation of Varian Fry's efforts for the Emergency Rescue Committee epitomizes the success that one attempt to free artists, scholars, musicians, and writers could achieve: by 1941 Fry had helped over one thousand refugees caught by transit restrictions in France to flee to the United States.

In "The Muses in America," the country's quickening response to the increasing dimensions of the Holocaust is traced in the reception of the muses at the workplace. Physicists, chemists, mathematicians, as well as writers, musicians and architects are presented in the process of this adaptation by colleagues in their respective fields—from H. Stuart Hughes's "Social Theory in a New Context" to Alfred Kazin's "European Writers in Exile" and Nathan Reingold's "Refugee Mathematicians in the United States." Thus a valuable variety of models emerge from which to survey the contributions made by those "muses" whose

flight from Hitler did not sever but rather made more resilient occupational ties.

The final papers in the volume address the topic of exile in various centers of the Americas, in Canada, Argentina, and the circum-Caribbean (Great Britain is also included). With one exception, Judith Laikin Elkin's "The Reception of the Muses in the Circum-Caribbean," the activity described in the centers is neither interpreted nor placed in a context for evaluation. While the brief nod given emigre existence in Shanghai is welcome, little new material is presented. As Elkin's example indicates, enough information has been collected on the centers mentioned to move on to a measurement of host country receptivity to their immigrant populations. Without integration and analysis of the facts, neither the benefit to the emigrant nor to the host culture can be assessed. Elkin's conclusion that "nowhere in the circum-Caribbean did a muse of international stature emerge [and that] these republics spurned the opportunity to import and naturalize the creative talent Nazism cast loose in the world" (p. 301) highlights the efforts described in the preceding papers. From the panoply of individual struggles emerges the profile of the muse in America, a creative force not spurned—perhaps accepted after unheroic delay, yet allowed to find nourishment from a receptive, even supportive foreign soil.

"Few Americans understood the extent of the social and personal hardships experienced by the European intellectuals living in their midst after 1933" (p. 17), a past predicament remedied by reading Helmut Pfanner's refreshing study of exile existence in New York. *Exile in New York* draws upon relatively unfamiliar sources (in place of the ubiquitous quotations from Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, both of whom qualify for inclusion in this volume, the author offers anecdotes from Alfred Gong and Martin Gumpert), and Pfanner communicates well the cultural and psychological displacement typical of exile. He focuses attention on the geographical environs of New York City, and, although he does not emphasize a sense of community among the writers he describes, this approach offers valuable examples for future considerations of similar centers, such as Mexico City, Los Angeles, Paris, or London.

A wealth of material eminently suitable for a seminar on the exile experience is included in Pfanner's study; the major physical and psy-

chological hardships of exile are illustrated by literary and autobiographical texts. Alongside the difficulties of exile—the economic insecurity, linguistic humiliation, social displacement, the bewilderment and despair—stand the triumphs. Convincingly Pfanner expresses the sense of commitment felt by these exiled authors, their determination to fulfill a self-appointed obligation to a culture betrayed, to a history misguided. Although Pfanner's approach to his topic is more popular than scholarly, a biobibliographical appendix of authors relevant to the study indicates an effort to contribute to serious exile scholarship. Yet the effort does not entirely succeed. Although almost one-fifth of the entries in the appendix, for instance, include women authors, only two works by women receive noticeable attention in this volume, Adrienne Thomas's *Ein Fenster am East River (A Window Overlooking the East River)* and Bella Fromm's *Die Engel weinen (The Angels Are Weeping)*. Just as disproportionately does Pfanner discuss the role of women in exile, for his comments are limited to the wives of exile authors, rather than to women authors in exile. Although he praises exile wives' willingness to work in unskilled positions to support husbands and families, he concludes, "low-paying jobs were more acceptable to exile wives because, unlike their husbands, they ordinarily had not held important positions in their native countries and were not too proud to do physical labor" (pp. 80–81).

Because subjective influences and emotional issues are intrinsic to the study of the exile environment, Pfanner cannot, of course, be limited to a purely objective approach to his topic. Less of an emphasis upon the emigres' gratitude toward America might have provided a more realistic context for the authors he quotes. By dwelling upon the humanitarian efforts of Americans, Pfanner loses sight of the real relationship between the exile authors and their hosts, one surely of give *and* take for all concerned. "Thankfulness toward the country that had sheltered them best describes the essential reaction of the German and Austrian refugees who had fled the Third Reich and settled in New York" (p. 172) is just one such assumption among many to be questioned in this regard.

Especially intrusive is Pfanner's lack of objectivity in treating the works of Marxist exile authors in New York. He assures readers that Hans Marchwitza "betrays the typical Communist prejudice against the United States," that Bruno Frei's assessment of America was

marked by "political biases reflected in every sentence he wrote about the United States," and that Alfred Kantorowicz could criticize his host country so unjustly because "the Communist exile writers viewed the new sights through eyes conditioned by their ideology" (pp. 39–40). Even in the index, where most authors' names are followed only by titles of works with their page of mention, beside Marchwitz's name are the labels "Communist prejudice," "criticism of U.S.," and "self-pity" (p. 250).

In spite of shortcomings, Pfanner's *Exile in New York* provides a long-awaited shift of attention on the part of exile scholarship. Pfanner approaches the personal with real precision, artfully integrating the biographical and the literary. Obvious are the rigors of retrieving a creative identity in the initial vacuum of exile. But beside the anguish of displacement emerges a potential for unique perception, the startling result of a merging of two cultures, the meeting of a person with a place of protection. One completes this book with an unanticipated gladness for the gifts America and Americans bestowed upon those authors in flight from the nightmare of Nazism.

Rarely does a book about refugees receive the attention afforded Anthony Heilbut's *Exiled in Paradise*. The author aims this book "to be a social and cultural history of the German-speaking emigres in America" (p. x), which in some ways it is. In most instances, however, the work instead answers the question "How did the German-speaking emigres raise the level of cultural sophistication in America?" which is quite a different matter than documenting a cultural history. The first of the book's three sections, "Europe to America," promises valuable insights, beginning with the Berlin cafe culture the emigres were to desert: "They would all leave Germany, but when they did, the best of them took with them the spirit nourished in those cafes—the social concerns, the cultivated irony, the good sense" (p. 21). Heilbut recognizes a preparation for flight to America in intellectual life before Hitler: "looking for new models, the artists turned to America, the homeland of novelties. America had already entered the mythology of German dreams through the visionary poems of Walt Whitman and the Wild West action tales of the German novelist Karl May" (p. 17). In subsequent chapters, "In Transit," "Becoming American," "The Academic Welcome," and "Left and Right," Heilbut traces the phases of the initiation process common to many emigres—from visa complica-

tions through the job search and adjustment to new political concerns. ["Emigres would always appear politically eccentric to Americans . . . by virtue of both their assumption that welfare was a citizen's right and their intense concern with public events" (p. 69).]

Not one to avoid issues of a controversial nature, Heilbut moves from political to social or religious concerns easily, noting, for example, that "emigration forced the male refugee to reconsider his wife's talents," just as "becoming American was a difficult and humiliating experience for the emigre father" (pp. 69-70), who could easily feel overtaken by his family's more rapid cultural assimilation. Heilbut is especially forthright in his evaluation of immigration procedures in America, stating that "the obstacles to Jewish emigration set up by officers of the U.S. foreign service constituted a scandal that has tarnished this country's history" (p. 39). He argues that this country's resistance to Jewish refugees could have been combated by American Jews, who, instead, "were less than cordial in their welcome" (p. 45). Upper-class American Jews, according to Heilbut, found refugees "an embarrassing hindrance to assimilation, while the lower-class Jews resented them for being a source of competition" (p. 44). Finally, Heilbut describes the source of the Marxist orientation among many of the more politically active emigres, explaining that "up to August 1939, Marxist organizations were the most aggressively anti-Fascist group" (p. 103).

In the second section of *Exiled in Paradise*, Heilbut examines the influence of such disparate figures as Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, and Theodor W. Adorno. Taking Adorno as middle ground, one for whom the word "homeland" meant "a state of having escaped," Heilbut essentially presents a sociology of the failed encounter. In emphasizing the viewpoint of one whose "disdain for American culture bordered on the pathological" (p. 160), Heilbut loses sight of the peripherality of emigrant existence, placing undue emphasis on the impact of these intellectuals, ignoring the fact that American culture often proved elusive to emigre interpretation. From the introductory comment that "everything about the German-speaking refugees from Hitler who settled here between 1933 and 1941 was special, and much of it was anomalous" (p. vii), the author claims that "once the refugees had established themselves, it seemed as though America couldn't make a step, public or private, without their guidance" (p. 196).

"Thanks largely to emigre academics," Heilbut proclaims, "Americans became concerned with the sheer act of looking." "When Americans scurried to work or returned home, they were surrounded by emigre design" (pp. 142-143). Heilbut suggests that the theater director Erwin Piscator's "aesthetic vision honed with the aid of Gropius proved to be a more durable source of inspiration in America than politics," and that "the mere existence of a Piscator theater in New York must have contributed to a Berlinization of sensibility" (p. 227). The son of emigres from Berlin, Heilbut often demonstrates such lack of perspective in placing the accomplishments of emigres in the proper context.

Part III, "The Return of the Enemy Aliens," continues the concentration on cultural criticism posited by emigres in America. A recently published study, Lewis A. Coser's *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences* (Yale University Press, 1984), manages to present the same figures in a totally different manner. Its author admits that "in order for cultural materials to be transmitted successfully, there must exist an audience that is at least potentially receptive to new messages" (p. xii), something Heilbut has overlooked or suppressed in his study. In the final chapter, "Heroes of the 1960s," the author casts his emigres in a heroic vision, as if to combat the "final though not unfamiliar irony of the emigres' contribution to American culture that their positions should be recast by others in a tone and idiom that vulgarized them" (p. 439). Heilbut praises their involvement in the controversies over McCarthyism, German reconstruction, the atomic bomb and the postwar arms race, American anti-Semitism, and the Vietnam War. He concludes, "the emigres had arrived as enemy aliens, and often went out the same way. . . . to find oneself turned once again into an enemy alien for being an intellectual was to discover that one remained an outsider; there appeared to be no home for these cosmopolitans" (p. 476). This is a strong statement against America's reception of the muses fleeing Hitler—one that provokes consideration, but does not convince.

—Suzanne Shipley Toliver

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## Book Reviews

Yelin, Shulamis. *Shulamis: Stories from a Montreal Childhood*. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1983. 160 pp.

Whatever the Jewish experience in North America has been, its reflection in the work of Canadian writers helps make it more concrete and more intelligible. From the small Jewish community north of the border have emerged some remarkable writers—A. M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler. Saul Bellow comes from that community, as does Shulamis Yelin. Generalizations are inevitably risky, but these Jews seem on the whole less “Anglo-Saxonized,” less anxious about questions of identity, closer in psychology to their East European immigrant beginnings, than their brethren in the United States. Theirs is still a relatively unmediated, even tribal emotionality, and from a south-of-the-border perspective the Canadians may appear less prone to striving for sophisticated self-definition, less bent on eschewing the nostalgic and the sentimental, less daunted by “the lies my father told me.”

Some sense of what it might be proper to call a frontier experience was evident in Shulamis Yelin’s collection of poems, *Seeded in Sinai*; such a sense achieves centrality in this book. Of course in any work which is not alien to the genre of childhood reminiscence, an elemental quality is natural enough, and here in these “stories from a Montreal childhood” that quality is given a Yiddish accent and a family context. We learn of red ribbons tied on a cradle to ward off the evil eye; we are introduced to the “break with parental ties . . . the baptism of anglicization” imposed by the Protestant school authorities in the form of personal names reflective of Canadian English culture superseding “Jewish names given at birth”; we listen to Papa Borodensky: “Here is Canada, not Russia. Here a person has to know everything”—not excluding the New Testament portion of the King James Bible.

It is all told with a gentle “sense of bereavement,” an unashamed, unembarrassed evocation of a lost era, and with the charm of a poet’s

reverie. The *Leidensgeschichte* ("history of suffering") so much a feature of European memory is very little in evidence here, but tensions are not absent.

Mrs. Yelin recalls a Christmas tree at a local candy store:

I was not much disturbed by the Christmas tree at Malo's. It was beautiful and magical, but somewhere in my head there was a fence with a sign on it that read, "Malo's Candy Store corner Cadieux and Prince Arthur is good for candy and scribblers and things, but that's all."

Some pages further on, speaking of her first visit years later to Scotland, she remembers how the songs of the country, familiar to her from her Montreal schooldays, reduced her to tears:

a well of long-repressed tears, . . . tears that had congealed in those classrooms of my childhood where the teachers spoke of a Mother Country which was not mine and of which my parents knew nothing. My parents were immigrants, and grateful. But Mother Country? Was *Matyushka Russya* their Mother Country? And which was mine? Tears in Edinburgh. I wept for the Jewish children whose parents had given them no positive sense of themselves as Jews, and for Jews who had beguiled themselves into believing they were Germans, Poles, or Frenchmen, only to become statistics in our own ancient history. I wept the unwept tears of the outsider who hungers to belong.

*Shulamis*, which contains a number of photographs and also drawings by Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, was published with the assistance of the Canada Council. Readers will thank the publisher and the Council for the pleasure of Mrs. Yelin's "indelible tale."

—Stanley F. Chyet

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Kalechofsky, Robert, and Kalechofsky, Roberta, Edited by. *Jewish Writing Down Under*. Marblehead, Mass.: Micah Publications, 1984. iv, 292 pp. \$10.

*Jewish Writing Down Under*, edited by Robert and Roberta Kalechofsky, helps us to explore two of the most isolated and intriguing Jewish communities in the world, Australia and New Zealand. Australian Jewry began haphazardly in 1788 with the arrival of a shipload of English prisoners, among them a handful of Jewish convicts. Conditions in the young penal colony were difficult at best, and in the scramble for food and shelter, religion received a low priority. This was enhanced by the dearth of Jewish women, making intermarriage an unavoidable reality. The situation improved markedly only in the 1850's, when the smell of gold lured fortune-hungry Jews to the Antipodes. Concurrently, the New Zealand Jewish community emerged with the immigration of English gentry to the island. Although the social origins of the two countries' Jewish communities varied, their common problems of isolation and assimilation threatened and continue to threaten survival. In spite of this the Australian and New Zealand Jewish communities have flourished and have achieved a degree of acceptance unparalleled in the modern world. Australasian (Australia and New Zealand) Jews have held positions as heads of the state, the judiciary, and the armed forces.

In the Kalechofskys' anthology, we are treated to the work of eighteen Australasian writers and poets highlighting Jewish life Down Under. Naturally some subjects are more interesting than others, and, as with any anthology, the pieces vary in quality. The book is loosely organized thematically, beginning with historical material, some of which is tedious. Despite this slow start, the book picks up with Serge Liberman's well-written account of seventy years of Yiddish theater in Melbourne, followed by Herz Bergner's poignant tale "The Actor." In the latter, a former star of the Yiddish-Polish stage finds his performances less and less well received in his new home. He struggles to find

the right piece to perform to communicate to these secularized Jews:

This time the programme was a risky one. He had made a selection of the finest and most characteristic examples of Yiddish literature and he did not know how an audience living in such a non-Jewish world would receive them. He did not know where he would be able to continue making a living as an actor, or whether he would have to accept the shrill, humiliating advice of his wife, a one-time Yiddish actress, and take up a business or trade. (p. 63)

The story ends with the hero's son complimenting his father on his outstanding performance, but tenderly apologizing that "the people were a bit tired" (p. 70). Yet, as the next story, "Two Years in Exile," echoes repeatedly, "The wound festers where others have healed" (p. 84). Here the pull of the secular culture wins out: "Ancestry and progeny have parted. The son has abandoned his past" (p. 84).

The freshest part of the anthology is entitled "Faces You Can't Find Again." Here we are introduced to such "dinky-di" (genuinely Australian) Aussie characters as Tim Tapple, one of several "Garden Island People" among whom noted Australian anthologist and author Nancy Keesing was "marooned" during the Second World War, or Isaac Shur and his artistic life-style in Tangiers, or the Tyler "clan" that Eileen "The Eel" Scott discovers in "The House on Lafayette Street."

Seven poets are featured in the poetry section, which varies in quality. The insightful poems of Charles Brasch paint gorgeous landscapes of New Zealand and deal profoundly with problems of theology. On the other hand, the editors have included an out-of-place syrupy ode to Halley's Comet. This latter poem raises the problem of what constitutes *Jewish* literature. Is it merely a Jew's authorship or something more? Does a poem about a comet or a bus traveler in Denver belong in an anthology of Jewish writing *Down Under*?

In the final section, entitled "Memories and Redemption," Jewish content abounds; unfortunately it revolves almost exclusively around the Holocaust and its effects. How do the generations cope with the aftermath of the Holocaust? Succeeding poetry and prose present various responses: a lashing out at everyone, as in the poem "How Come the Truckloads?"; a rejection of familial and communal mores through intermarriage, as portrayed in "Drifting"; or an exploration of Israel, as described in "All the Storms and Sun-sets." Each of these pieces sensitively and unashamedly challenges the reader to come to

terms with this key tragedy which, ironically, because of the attendant waves of refugee and survivor immigration, is responsible for the efflorescence of Jewish life today in Australasia.

Yet these very immigrants faced prejudice in their newly chosen home. In "Hostages," the same ugly prejudice that forced an elderly piano teacher to flee the Nazi menace appears in a tormenting little girl. Although her mother compassionately arranges to hire the new citizen, the child resents the decision by crying out, "Spare your sympathy for the poor reffos!" (p. 239). In the end, the child mourns the defeat of her innocent victim and their "shared fate."

This final section admirably probes into the psyche of the Australasian Jew as survivor. One wishes that the anthology could take the next step and illuminate the concerns and aspirations of the Australasian Jew today, but perhaps that chapter is not yet written.

Despite the annoying different typefaces which give the book a distinctly amateurish appearance, *Jewish Writing Down Under* gives us unique historical, literary, and sociological perspectives on two of the most isolated, yet fascinating Jewish communities in existence today.

—Eliot J. Baskin

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Krause, Corinne Azen. *Isaac W. Frank: Industrialist and Civic Leader, 1855-1930*. Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1984. vi, 201 pp.

This splendid study carefully chronicles the multifaceted career of a prominent Pittsburgh Jewish industrial leader. Consisting of five topically arranged chapters, this fascinating biography concentrates on three realms of Frank's life: his industrial achievements, his civic leadership, and his commitment to Pittsburgh Jewry and his family. The book is based on extensive primary sources from family papers and from business records. Its chapters are extremely well organized and vividly portray the life of Frank within the context of his beloved Pittsburgh.

Two major chapters focus on the family, boyhood, and early engineering career of Frank. The book contains interesting and detailed accounts concerning the settlement and business activities of the Frank family in the Pittsburgh vicinity. Krause well recounts how William Frank (the father of Isaac) came to America, peddled dry goods throughout western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, and in 1843 married Pauline Wormser. Four years later, the Franks settled in Pittsburgh. There are fine sections regarding William's success in the glass industry and his role in the newly established Rodef Shalom Congregation. Considerable attention, too, is devoted to the rearing and schooling of Isaac—the fifth of the Frank children. Isaac Frank, who was born in 1855, graduated from Newell Institute, briefly attended Western University of Pennsylvania, and received his civil engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1876. The author persuasively describes the activities and behavior of the enterprising Frank: his work experiences with the Keystone Bridge Company and the J. L. Lewis Company, the meticulous mechanical drawings in his leather notebook, his marriage to Tinnie Klee in June of 1883, his investments and loans found in his detailed business ledger, and his qualities of astuteness and decisiveness in the creation of the Frank-Kneeland Machine Company.

There are perceptive chapters relating to Frank's industrial and civic accomplishments. Motivated by the slogan "It Can Be Done," Frank did many worthy things for Pittsburgh. The author demonstrates that the belief in merger for profit was at the core of Frank's business strategy. He succeeded in consolidating four companies in 1901 into United Engineering and Foundry Company. With Frank as its president until 1919, United became a leader in the production of rolling mills, heavy castings, and forging presses. Moreover, Frank offered health insurance and profit incentive programs to United's employees and took a vehement stand against producing "machinery for destruction" after the start of World War I. Subsequently Frank played a central role in the creation of the Weirton Steel Company. He provided Weir with assistance in finding investors for the company, helped to determine the site of the mill in Hancock County, and offered suggestions as to how the new steel town should be laid out. The author, as well, presents an illuminating account of Frank's contributions to Pittsburgh. He was active in the Red Cross and in the Pittsburgh Association for the Improvement of the Poor. More importantly, Frank assumed a major part in raising funds for the building of the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh.

There is extensive treatment of Frank's involvement in Pittsburgh Jewry. He indeed was endowed with the spirit of philanthropy. He served for approximately thirty years as a director of the Gusky Hebrew Home and Orphanage. For almost twenty years, he was vice-president of both the Montefiore Hospital and the Irene Kaufmann Settlement. Frank served on the board of directors of the Young Men and Women's Hebrew Association. In 1912, he helped to organize the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in Pittsburgh. The dedicated and energetic Frank actively participated in the affairs of Congregation Rodef Shalom, serving as a trustee from 1902 until 1930 and on many of its major committees.

This biography is impressive and masterfully done. The book is lucidly written, and its themes are cogently explained. The biography is skillfully researched and reveals the author's complete mastery of her subject. Moreover, Krause suggests much about Jews of German extraction in the Pittsburgh setting. The book contains an extensive bibliography and index, but regretfully lacks footnotes. Nevertheless, this substantive work is a significant contribution to the history of

American business and Jewry.

—R. William Weisberger

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## Brief Notices

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Berger, Alan L. *Crisis and Covenant: The Holocaust in American Jewish Fiction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985. vii, 226 pp.

Despite the obscurity of the saying "There's no business like *Shoah* business," there is no doubt, as Alan Berger states in this important work, that an increasing number of novels and short stories in this country are being written about the consequences and implications of the Holocaust for contemporary Judaism.

Berger therefore feels, and writes in a somewhat extraordinary sentence, that "what American Jewish novelists write and say and think about the Holocaust will . . . have a greater impact on American Judaism than that of any other group of American Jews in determining Jewish attitudes not only toward the catastrophe but toward the Jewish past as well as towards the future." A chorus of no's will undoubtedly emerge challenging this presumption, led by historians, theologians, and survivors. Indeed, the brilliant novelist Cynthia Ozick has already warned her profession that "the task . . . is to retrieve the Holocaust freight car by freight car, town by town, road by road, document by document. The task is to save it from becoming literature." And, she might have added, saving it from the realm of literary imagination.

Yet Berger deserves high marks for his assertiveness, and indeed, bravery. But this is not what makes his book the important contribution that it is. Instead it is Berger's contention that only by exploring post-Holocaust literary responses to covenantal Judaism can we best understand, indeed create, what Alvin Rosenfeld has described as a "phenomenology of reading Holocaust literature . . . a series of maps that will guide us on our way as we . . . try to comprehend the writings of . . . those who were never there but know more than the outlines of the place."

Some of those writers who know more than the outlines and are analyzed by Berger include Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, I. B. Singer, Arthur Cohen, Elie Wiesel, and Cynthia Ozick.

How the Holocaust has affected this most normative element in Judaism—the inseparability of history and theology as reflected in the covenantal affirmation between man and God—is indeed a genuine and important way to try and assess the role of the Holocaust in our lives as Jews yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Goldstein, Israel. *My World as a Jew*. Cranbury, N.J.: Cornwall Books, 1984.

These are the memoirs of a veritable giant in the history of American Jewry. Rabbi Israel Goldstein (1896-1986) was a founder, a builder, and a sustainer. His half-century of involvement in American Jewish communal, educational, Zionist, philanthropic, religious, and interfaith endeavors had no match.

This is an important book. It is autobiography and history, narrative and analysis. We bemoan the fact that "American Jewry has no more giants," such as Stephen S. Wise, Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, Abba Hillel Silver, or Eliezer Silver. But we are wrong. Israel Goldstein was such a hero, and we are grateful that this memoir will allow us to understand just how important was his role in the modern history of American Jewry and the State of Israel.

Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930's*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984. xxii, 420 pp.

If women were perceived as the "fairer sex," how was this perception translated into the institutions they inhabited and the physical environment in which those institutions were placed? This is the brilliantly stated problem which Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz seeks to understand in a most important volume that enriches both the social history of America and the history of its higher education.

The focus of this question is the highly elitist Seven Sisters colleges, and Horowitz demonstrates that the perceived role of women in American society was reflected in the architectural design of the various colleges.

Horowitz describes the policy toward Jewish students at Barnard and Sarah Lawrence. Barnard, whose founding was due in large part to a Sephardic Jewish woman, Annie Nathan Meyer, never had a formalized quota system, but distinguished between "aristocratic" German (and presumably Sephardic) women and "aggressive" Eastern European types. Sarah Lawrence at its founding, on the other hand, was interested in "barring students of foreign parents and Jews."

Kurtz, Seymour. *Jewish America*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985. 250 pp.

There can never be enough picture albums devoted to the American Jewish experience. Fortunately, America's large publishing houses share this opinion. That is why outstanding pictorial histories by Kenneth Libo, Allon Schoener, and Harriet Rochlin, among others, have graced our coffee tables and our reading habits over the past several years.

Seymour Kurtz's beautifully printed volume is a welcome addition to the genre. But beyond many excellent photographs, Kurtz has given us a very competent narrative which is worth reading. This is not a scholarly history, but it has taste and touches upon much of what is important to the American Jewish experience.

Lipstadt, Deborah E. *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*. New York and London: The Free Press, 1986. xi, 370 pp.

For years, survivors of the Holocaust have claimed that they were let down by a world that did not care. "Where were the Americans, the British?" they ask, insisting that their martyred brothers and sisters could have been saved from the gas chambers and the ovens. We have often dismissed these attitudes as symptoms of genuine grief, a grief which could easily cloud illusion from reality.

Now Deborah E. Lipstadt, in her powerful book, *Beyond Belief*, has challenged our assumptions about the questions asked by the survivors. They were not, she claims, illusionary nor unrealistic. "During the 1930's and 1940's, America could have saved thousands and maybe even hundreds of thousands of Jews but did not do so . . . This is a terrible indictment."

Indeed it is. Lipstadt's is perhaps the final nail in the coffin of the argument which states that we as Americans—either individuals or government—could have done little to prevent the destruction of six million Jewish lives. Recent books by David Wyman, Robert Ross, and Haim Genizi have provided similar indictments, but never as blunt, as direct, as Lipstadt's. Her focus is on the American press. What she finds is that our American journalistic community "rarely handled the persecution of the Jews . . . as an inherent expression of Nazism. . . .

This was to have important consequences for the interpretation and comprehension of the news of the persecution of European Jewry."

Thus, what we did know about anti-Jewish outrages from 1933 to 1945 did not merge with

our knowledge of and focus on the Nazi menace. It was removed and relegated to page 18 of the *Chicago Tribune* or the *New York Times*. If Poland was described in 1942 as “one vast center for murdering Jews,” how important or believable was it when the news item was placed next to a wedding announcement a dozen and a half pages from the front-page headlines? And if President Roosevelt, who knew the value of public opinion very well, saw the news item on page 16 or 18 or 20, what importance did he give to it when he knew that Mr. and Mrs. America would have little or no opinion about it?

Are we or our journalists any different today? There has always been a “saving remnant” in the world of news coverage, as there was during the Holocaust, as there is today. They, as Lipstadt describes them, symbolize the difference between “action and inaction, passion and equanimity.” They provide the hope that follows despair.

Marrus, Michael R. *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. xxii, 414 pp.

We are a nation of immigrants. Jews in this country have always prided themselves on being a part of that image. What Michael R. Marrus’ new and outstanding book makes clear, perhaps for the first time, is how much our immigrant status has really played second fiddle to our role as refugees (an entirely different phenomenon) and how that role has been part and parcel of developments within international politics since the latter part of the nineteenth century.

More importantly, Professor Marrus demonstrates that the American attitude of apathy and amorality toward the plight of European Jewry under the Nazis was and is really a gruesome but less than full image of a much larger picture of international nonconcern with the plight of homeless refugees, and one which encompasses many different peoples and religious groups.

Rischin, Moses, Edited and with an introduction by. *Grandma Never Lived in America: The New Journalism of Abraham Cahan*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. xlv, 538 pp.

When the Yiddish-language *Forward* announced that it would become a weekly after years as a daily newspaper, many predicted the imminent passing of the “world’s greatest immigrant, socialist and Jewish newspaper.” Indeed, with this announcement, a flood of nostalgia arose for the “good old days” of immigrant Jewish life. A picture was recreated of Yiddish-speaking throngs in the Lower East Side of New York, fighting to give the Jewish worker a fairer share of the American Dream.

Such an image tended to blot out the reality that under the *Forward*’s long-time editor, Abraham Cahan, the essential purpose of the paper was not to prolong the pure, unadulterated *Yiddishkeit* of East European Jewish life, but to eliminate it and ultimately its most obvious and available representative, the Yiddish language itself.

Abraham Cahan (1860–1951) was the product of his times. He boasted of being an “important American novelist” and “the best foreign language editor in the U.S.” And why not? His boastfulness mirrored the years when America was “emerging as a world power” and New York was its “epicenter.” Cahan had room to boast. He is credited with many firsts—the first socialist speaker to deliver a speech in Yiddish, the author of a novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, which has been called “the most remarkable contribution of an immigrant to the American novel,” among others.

Moses Rischin's wonderful introduction to this volume places Cahan in an entirely new setting—much different than the one which has the *Forward* as its essential focus. Cahan is here described as the prototype of the “New Journalism” of the 1960's, as symbolized by literary luminaries such as Tom Wolfe and Norman Mailer. Cahan's journalistic style was a genre which, as Rischin sees it, “aimed to penetrate beneath surfaces, and to elaborate and extend reader sensibilities and perceptions.” This style was in sharp opposition to the dominant expression of the time, the “yellow journalism” of the Hearst and Pulitzer presses, which tended to “titillate and inflame” its American readership.

Cahan attempted to bridge the great gulf between the new immigrants and older Americans, between the Old World and the New, in the name of a “complex and deeply felt American world civilization.”

Cahan understood, was a part of, the multiethnic New York and America that was already an established fact for half a century but which, until Cahan, had produced no real interpreter for the American public. Cahan's interpretation saw America caught in a new spirit of hyphenated Americanism, best celebrated through the common man and socialism. But to achieve this new ideal, both the immigrant and the native American had to change, to give up some things that no longer had a place. If it was the Yiddish language which blinded American Jews to their new America, then it would have to be sacrificed; if it was an exaggerated nationalism and Yankee Spirit which kept the native from participating fully in the new America, then those two traits had to disappear.

Most of Cahan's writings on these subjects were to be found in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* between the years 1897 and 1903 plus assorted Sunday Supplements. They are reprinted in this volume along with eight original Cahan short stories—including the unforgettable “The Apostate of Chego-Chegg”—and five translations of Russian stories by Anton Chekov and others.

Moses Rischin is particularly well qualified to edit and introduce this volume. His classic work, *The Promised City: New York Jews, 1870–1914*, gives him an understanding, similar to Cahan's, about a great people and a great city. It is not unfair to state that Professor Rischin's forthcoming full-length biography of Cahan promises something rare for the modern historian, the creation of a second classic work.

Robinson, Ira, Edited by. *Selected Letters of Cyrus Adler*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985. Vol. 1, 403 pp. Vol. 2, 398 pp.

Why is it that when the names of the so-called giants of modern American Jewish history are recited, it is not always a given that the name of Cyrus Adler (1863–1940) will be included? One reason may be that no full-scale biography exists, but still the sheer energy and level of achievement attributed to him certainly demand that he receive such a “giant” status. Adler was, after all, at one time or another the assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the president of Dropsie College and the Jewish Theological Seminary, as well as the Philadelphia Jewish Community, among other high-level positions of leadership in American Jewish life.

Professor Ira Robinson's selection of nearly six hundred letters written by Adler begins to tell us more than we have ever known about Adler the achiever and participant in American Jewish life. Strengthened by Professor Naomi W. Cohen's intelligent introduction, these volumes of letters will serve as an excellent “starter” on the road to the much fuller fare of an in-depth biography of Cyrus Adler the man and the “giant.”

Silberman, Charles E. *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today*. New York: Summit Books, 1985. 458 pp.

How many Jewish jokes of another era has one heard that contain within them the punch line "after all, we are in *Golos* [exile]"? The essential message of Charles E. Silberman's extraordinary book is that we are no longer in *Golos* either as American Jews or as American Judaism.

Nearly half a century ago, the great Jewish historian Salo Baron decried the Jewish fascination with lachrymosity, with suffering. The events of the Holocaust did nothing to allay the fears of many Jews, especially in Israel. But since 1945, the American Jewish community has seen itself become a full-fledged part of American society. There are so few social, economic, or political barriers left that most Jews do not even know what they might be.

It is ironic that Silberman's previous books have dealt with crises in race relations, crime, and education. But the trilogy does not expand here. Instead, we are treated to a sophisticated and beautifully written analysis of why we are in a Jewish "Golden Age" in America, supported by sociological and demographic evidence from the works of Professors Steven M. Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider, among others. That analysis tells us that American Jews are here to stay and that their religious customs, beliefs, and institutions will be right behind them.

Should American Jews greet the dawn with unbridled enthusiasm, secure of their grandchildren's place in the American dream? If we consider that question from the point of external acceptance and internal achievements—yes.

But if we consider the question from the point of view of the Jewish community in relation to itself, the answer assumes a much greater complexity, and a hint of pessimism may be detected on the horizon. The truth is that while we are secure as *American* Jews, we are not all so secure as Jews. This is embodied in what Rabbi Reuven Bulka has called "the coming cataclysm," when a schism within the Jewish people over questions of personal status (patrilineal descent, religious conversion, and divorce) will force more traditional Jews to deny the Jewishness of hundreds of thousands of less traditional Jews.

Abba Eban once joked that "the Jews are a people that can't take 'yes' for an answer." Perhaps that is why Jews will always find a way of waking up with a slight sense of unease even if they have read *A Certain People* just before the long night of sleep.

Weinberg, Werner. *Self-Portrait of a Holocaust Survivor*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 1985. xi, 196 pp.

In his introduction to this volume, Professor Alfred Gottschalk has written, "I know of no other memoir of the Holocaust which has searched so deeply for meaning, [and] which has subjected the author to such self-scrutiny."

This is an indication of the kind of response which this sensitively written set of memoirs evokes from those who are fortunate enough to read it.

Werner Weinberg is, as he defines himself, "a survivor of the first degree," one who survived the agonies of Bergen Belsen and whose tragedy stretched from the first days of the Nazi takeover to the end of World War II. Like many survivors, his ability to speak and write publicly about the event came after many years of self-imposed silence, motivated in part by the refusal of the world to believe what had happened and its inability to comprehend the consequences brought about by this "tremendum," as Arthur Cohen has described the Holocaust.

Few survivors have exposed their own post-1945 thoughts, feelings, and questions as fully and as publicly as has Werner Weinberg. He questions the very roots of his religious beliefs as a Jew, the very nature of the so-called German-Jewish symbiosis, and the very nature of survival, both during and after the Holocaust. The answers must be read.

But Werner Weinberg's greatest contribution may lie beyond his literary achievement. It may lie in his willingness to confront the sons and daughters of the murderers, the new generation of Germans, "trying to help them overcome the burden of their past, even if he cannot, by the virtue of its enormity, overcome his own."