## **Book Reviews**

Brinner, William M., and Rischin, Moses, Edited by. Like All the Nations: The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. 241 pp.

This collection of fourteen articles is the product of an international symposium held at the University of California-Berkeley in 1982 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum. Among the participants were some of the foremost American and Israeli scholars of modern Jewish history: Marc Lee Raphael, Arthur Goren, Evyatar Friesel, and Melvin Urofsky on Magnes's "American period," and David Biale, Paul Mendes-Flohr, Arnold J. Band, and Bernard Wasserstein on the "Palestinian" segment of his life.

It is in the Jewish tradition to remember only the virtues of the dead. However, it is to be questioned whether charity alone is a substitute for good scholarship. Sadly, too many of the papers here are superficial, uncritical eulogies to Magnes that fail to break new ground. Professor Rischin sets the tone in his introduction: "No one had labored more ardently and more selflessly in the cause of peace in the Middle East" than Magnes (p. 1); and, writing in the aftermath of the 1982 Lebanon War, Rischin exceeds his literary license by seeing the Israeli critics of that war as "latter-day surrogates" for Magnes (p. 2).

Professor Bernard Wasserstein, perhaps sensing that he is in a minority, opens his penetratingly eloquent paper with the suggestion that Magnes himself would have been the last person to have favored an uncritical celebration of his life and legacy" (p. 187).

Arthur Goren, editor of Magnes's papers, entitled, appropriately, Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes (Harvard, 1982), reviews Magnes's several careers. Magnes held three different pulpits between 1904 and 1912, leaving each in stormy controversy. Over the next ten years he served in a score of communal capacities,

most notably as elected chairman of the Jewish communal experiment in New York, the Kehillah. Founder of the Jewish Defence Association in 1917, Magnes went on to preach radical pacifism, defend Soviet Russia, and attack the Balfour Declaration as an imperialist ploy.

Professor Friesel has assessed Magnes's New York years as the most creative and successful in his life. However, the war brought to the surface fissures within the Jewish community that shattered Magnes's efforts to construct a unified and new American Judaism. In a short but incisive paper, Professor Band refers to Magnes's "brilliant failures in New York" (p. 155).

Magnes's vision of a new American Judaism, and later, his attempts to secure an Arab-Zionist rapprochement in Palestine, were based on his own experience of cultural pluralism, first in California and later in New York. Professor Goren has suggested a key to the apparently wild fluctuations in Magnes's career—that he remained a rabbi in the tradition of American Reform Judaism: "merging the two roles of preacher and social activist he mirrored the Social Gospel in American Protestantism" (p. 59).

Of special interest are the papers by David Biale and Paul Mendes Flohr on Magnes's tenure at the Hebrew University. In 1922, Magnes joined those select few American Zionists who actually emigrated to Palestine. Yet, paradoxically, as Professor Friesel points out, Magnes never subscribed to any of the major Zionist goals, whether in the Diaspora or in Palestine: "Zionism was only the means to an end, never an end in itself" (p. 79).

He was appointed first chancellor and later president of the university. Professor Biale describes the clash between Magnes and Weizmann (and Albert Einstein), "men of great achievements, and, sad to say, even greater egos" (p. 133). Their feud was a reflection of the wider struggle then proceeding between those in the World Zionist movement who wanted to control Yishuv affairs from the Diaspora and the Yishuv's leaders in Palestine, who wanted to control their own destiny.

Weizmann disparaged Magnes's academic credentials, and feared that the latter might turn the university's Institute for Jewish Studies into a theological seminary. In turn, Magnes feared that Weizmann would politicize the university by subjecting it to the control of the Zionist Executive. In Biale's opinion, Magnes was naive to expect that

the major Jewish academic enterprise in mandatory Palestine could remain aloof from Zionist nationalist aspirations and dreams.

Magnes himself was "kicked upstairs" to the honorary presidency of the university, though his efforts did help to keep it independent of the political functionaries.

It is a testimony to Magnes that he is now best known for his support of the Brit Shalom (Covenant of Peace) movement in the latter 1920s, and his leadership of the binationalist Ihud (Unity), which he helped set up in 1942, with a small group of university academics—Hugo Bergman, Gershom Scholem, Ernst Simon, Martin Buber. The story has already been told in its essentials by Susan Lee Hattis, *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times* (Tel Aviv: Shikmona, 1970), and Magnes's own role has been filled out more recently by Professor Goren.

Professor Biale summarizes incisively: "the *Ihud's* call for binationalism in the 1940s, in the wake of the Holocaust and the Arab riots of the 1930s, was an idealistic exercise in futility if not naiveté" (p. 136).

Professor Wasserstein's cutting assessment is that the Magnes group was "a small band of intellectuals on the political fringe of Zionism, a group which had negligible support among the *Yishuv* and one whose binationalist objectives were trampled into the dust by the onward rush of competing nationalist forces" (p. 187).

The Zionist leadership in Palestine might have tolerated Magnes had he restricted himself to intellectual debate; but he took unauthorized political initiatives which the Yishuv's leadership regarded as harmful. Magnes simply misread the local political culture. Repeatedly, he discovered that "the supposed basis for agreement was a *fata morgana* that evaporated whenever approached" (p. 189).

Toward the end of his life, having failed in Palestine to secure agreement by consent, Magnes solicited American support to impose a solution—"precisely what [he] had been arguing against on moral grounds" (p. 195).

Professor Wasserstein derives one saving grace from Magnes's pathetic political failures—that he founded "the tradition of vigorous intellectual dissent which is such a crucial ingredient of Israeli political culture" (p. 197).

This is an uneven collection of essays, which could have benefited

from closer editing. There is much repetition of straight biographical detail, and the two papers presuming to compare Magnes with Henrietta Szold and Golda Meir tell us something about their authors (Joan Dash and Marie Syrkin, respectively) as hagiographers, but precious little about Magnes.

-Michael J. Cohen

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Greenberg, Simon, Edited by. *The Ordination of Women as Rabbis: Studies and Responsa*. Moreshet XIV. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1988. 223 pp.

The opening of the 1984–1985 academic year at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) brought with it women enrolled in the rabbinical school. This marked a new stage in the decade-long dilemma involving the role of women within the Conservative movement. Underlying these deliberations were questions concerning the role of halakhah, tradition, ethical and social concerns, as well as the role of the modern rabbi, the nature of the sources, the identity of Conservative Judaism, and who has the authority to make decisions.

This volume contains eleven articles detailing the debate at the Seminary. It includes an introduction by Gerson Cohen, the report of the Commission for the Study of the Ordination of Women as Rabbis by Gordon Tucker, and eight faculty papers—one of which is an English summary of a Hebrew paper which is also included. Several papers reflect a halakhic stance, while others approach the question from the historical and sociological aspects.

The papers are presented in alphabetical order and stand, for the most part, independent of each other. And that may capture the vexing nature of the whole issue. For unlike many controversies, no compromise solution is possible here. In searching for an answer—be it by halakhah or by ethical, social, cultural, and historical concerns—each posek (decisor) determines the weight of the various factors. Arguments are not impervious to time and place. Most important of all, Conservative Judaism has always considered its hallmark to be its recognition of the flexibility and fluidity of the halakhah.

Regarding the legitimacy of women rabbis, this concept is put to a full test. As Robert Gordis asserts in his paper, "The truth is that Halakhah neither sanctions nor forbids the ordination of women—it never contemplated the possibility" (p. 571). As a result, all the argumentation flows from the author's understanding of process. Because the role of women during the rabbinic and medieval periods in which the halakhah was formulated was limited to their relationships to husbands and homes, the texts which speak explicitly about women gen-

erally reflect the oft-stated idea that they are "feeble-minded" and lump them with minors, imbeciles, and others disenfranchised and barred from functioning in public. For those who argue from a halakhah limited by previous tradition, it is clear that even a woman who takes upon herself all of the religious obligations incumbent on men can never be the agent who enables a man to fulfill his obligation. Several papers take this stance.

Others approach the halakhah from the creativity inherent within it, a halakhah never monolithic, but developing in response to the ethical and social concerns of the time. Where women are specifically mentioned, halakahah enhances their position vis-à-vis the world in general. This argument sees an imperative to make sure that contemporary halakhah reflects modern ethical values.

The position ultimately endorsed is that of Joel Roth, who argues that a woman may perform mitzvot from which she is exempt and that such a self-imposed obligation can attain the same legal status as the obligation of men, which is "other-imposed." Thus, women who make themselves obligated may enter the rabbinical school and become rabbis.

I had the privilege of being at JTS during the first year in which women were enrolled in the rabbinical school. What was as clear from their actions as from these papers is that this question was always treated with the utmost respect for halakhah. Even those who wanted women to be admitted to the rabbinical school were willing to have this happen only if the halakhah could sustain such a decision. While both sides differed in their understanding of the elasticity and bounds of halakhah, its integrity remained and remains a sine qua non.

We live in an era unforeseen and unmatched in previous times. Such times call for unparalleled responses. After the fall of Jerusalem, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai sounded the shofar in Yavneh on a Rosh Hashanah which occurred on Shabbat. When confronted by the B'nai Betera, he responded that after the fact, an issue no longer warrants discussion (Rosh Hashanah 29b). Not making a decision about the ordination of women would have, in itself, been a decision. Now again the shofar has been sounded. As long as halakhah keeps pace with life, it can remain a vital force in the lives of those who treasure it.

-Judith A. Bluestein

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Niers, Gert. Frauen schreiben im Exil. New York: Peter Lang, 1988. 209 pp.

Gert Niers's Frauen schreiben im Exil makes an important contribution to both women's studies and exile literature, largely because Margarete Kollisch, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, and Vera Lachmann, the three women whose poetic legacy he examines, are virtually unknown beyond the New York City area where they made their homes after leaving Germany and Austria as diaspora and Holocaust victims. Exposure to their work even then is confined to an audience and readership within the parameters of the intellectual, German-speaking community of New York.

Though the circumstances under which they left were different, all three experienced loss and deprivation. Niers investigates the response of each to her loss and shows how their poetry shares in a common literary tradition (the influence, for example, of Rilke on Blumenthal-Weiss, of George on Lachmann) but also transcends that tradition with a poetic language that is unique to the dynamics of suffering and survival. A major strength of this book lies in the investigation of the latter, a sadly neglected area in Holocaust and exile research. In analyzing their poetic diction he makes an important distinction between the pain of loss as experienced by Blumenthal-Weiss and Lachmann and the pain of separation, as experienced by Kollisch. An appendage of fifteen representative poems from the oeuvre of each of the women provides the reader with material which is not generally accessible, at least not in the United States. We are left in little doubt at the end of Niers's book that all three deserve greater recognition as poets.

This book is a published dissertation and as such manifests a predictably sensible organization, but the lack of structural elegance is more than compensated for by carefully documented scholarship. Niers is clearly in command of his subject and investigates with the vigor of a pioneer. Considering that this is the first analysis of the poetry of German-Jewish women in U.S. exile, his energy is all the more appropriate. In fact, he could have stressed the vanguard aspect of his book more; none of these women was even mentioned in the Germanistik publication Exile: The Writer's Experience (1982) which

includes a chapter on the lyric. Nor was there any reference to their existence in Anthony Heilbut's *Exiled in Paradise* (1983), an encyclopedic cultural study which focuses exclusively on exiled artists and writers in the United States. A book on this subject is, therefore, long overdue, and its publication should spawn further research and, one would hope, translations into English of their poetry.

Though personally acquainted with all three women, Niers resists any intrusion of the gratuitously anecdotal and manages to sustain a scholarly style of writing which is in keeping with the seriousness and dignity of his subject. He deals with the life and work of the women separately and has organized his material thematically around the common issues of their identity as women, their Jewishness, and the implications of the Holocaust on their destiny. His insistence that these are interwoven and interdependent is a further strength of the book. Niers continually inserts references that link the three women, yet manages to portray and respect the individuality of each. The effect is twofold: it sustains our interest and underscores the historical and political reality behind their exile. A brief conclusion summarizes the relative strengths of their lyrical output and attempts to position them in the larger framework of their contribution to literature.

Margarete Kollisch, his first subject, was born in Austria in 1893 and emigrated with her family to the United States in 1939; she died in Manhattan in 1979. Her lyrical output is contained in three volumes, all published in Vienna: Wege und Einkehr. Ausgewählte Gedichte (1960), Unverlorene Zeit. Ausgewählte Gedichte und Betrachtungen (1971), and Rückblendung. Gedichte und Prosa (1981). Niers points out that her poems had been published in anthologies before her emigration and that her apparent late blooming in the United States was the direct result of having to forgo literary activities to earn a living and adjust to a new country. He identifies the central theme of her work as the recapturing of childhood memories and ascribes this to a deliberate act of resistance against loss, a perception, one might add, that is generally held about poetry written in exile.

Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss was born in Berlin in 1899 and was by training and profession an orthopedic specialist. She wrote poetry from an early age, an interest that was to lead to the publication of her first volume of verse, *Gesicht und Maske*, in 1929 and to a correspondence with Rilke which was published in *Briefe aus Muzot* in 1935. Unlike

Kollisch and Lachmann, Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss was subjected to the horror of the concentration camp and lost both her son and her husband to Mauthausen and Auschwitz. Survivors of Theresienstadt, Blumenthal-Weiss and her surviving daughter emigrated to the United States in 1947. Three volumes of her verse were published in the Federal Republic: Schlüsselwunder in 1954, Mahnmal in 1960, and Ohnesarq in 1984. She died in 1987 in Connecticut after many active years as a highly respected scholar and poet in the German intellectual community of New York City.

The youngest of the three, Vera Lachmann, was born in Berlin in 1904 and died in Manhattan in 1985. A scholar of the classics and of philology, Lachmann was briefly if peripherally acquainted with the George group, an involvement that was rudely shattered by the events of the post-1933 period which led to her emigration in 1939 to the United States. Niers provides the interesting biographical detail: for example, that Lachmann was involved in helping Nelly Sachs escape from Nazi Germany to Sweden. Though residing in New York (she taught at Brooklyn College from 1949 to 1974), Lachmann spent her summers directing a summer camp for the arts in North Carolina, which accounts for the intensity of her relationship to nature. (One is reminded of Paul Zech's poetry and the comfort he received in his South American exile from a cosmic relationship.) Lachmann's poetic legacy is contained in three volumes all published in Holland: Golden tanzt das Licht im Glass (1969), Namen werden Inseln (1975), and Halmdiamanten (1982). Lachmann's lyrical output, he argues, was shaped as much by her classical background as by her Jewishness. The Holocaust is not overtly a theme in her work, as it is in Blumenthal-Weiss's, but Niers is careful to point out that the emotional landscapes of Lachmann's verse reflect that she was traumatized by it.

A recurring feature of Niers's critical prose is to define his subject by what it is not. Thus, Lachmann's nature poetry is perceived as not ecologically motivated, and in general the poetry of all three is described as not being technically innovative. Yet, he insists, it is not for the most part the work of epigones. He is particularly tentative when attempting to relate their work to feminism, and his reference to the fact they do not belong in *ecriture féminine* is unnecessary and distracting, especially since he has defined their identity so persuasively. One senses, however, that this defensive attitude springs from a

deep sensitivity toward his subject and is a minor flaw associated with pioneer study.

When asked in an interview if she perceived herself as a witness to a past with which she had not come to terms, Blumenthal-Weiss replied: "Whenever I write a poem and want to write about the sun, the night keeps coming through" (Ohnesarq, p. 76). Niers's book gives us a deeper understanding of the dark sayings of three women who somehow were also able to tell of the sun.

-Ruth Schwertfeger

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Panitz, Esther L.—Simon Wolf: Private Conscience and Public Image. Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1987. 225 pp.

Esther Panitz acknowledges in the very first sentence of her introduction that Simon Wolf is only a "footnote" in American history. Yet Panitz has written what she declares is a "selective" biography. As she explains it, "only the more notable of his experiences deserve public attention." This biography is not only selective—it is brief, only 158 pages of text, including the introduction. Furthermore, it relies heavily on Wolf's own writings and on previous publications by the author, some written in collaboration with her husband, Rabbi David H. Panitz.

Simon Wolf has been forgotten because he belongs to a relatively insignificant era in the history of the American Jewish community. At one time, the period before the massive immigration from Czarist Russia, he may have been, as Panitz puts it, the "spokesman for the Jewish community in this country." In the twentieth century, however, the Jewish community needed more than *one* spokesman. A younger generation of leaders, including those who formed the American Jewish Committee in 1906, learned to live with Wolf's "lone wolf" tactics until his death in 1923.

Born in 1836 in Bavaria, Wolf settled in the United States near Cleveland in 1848. He "read law" and in 1862 moved to Washington, D.C., where he established a reputation by representing the interests of Jewish refugees from the Confederacy. In the presidential election of 1868, Wolf guaranteed his future in the Republican Party when he propounded a meliorating interpretation of the infamous order by General Ulysses S. Grant which had expelled Jews from the areas under his command in December 1862.

Grant won the election and rewarded Wolf's support, appointing him recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia in 1869. Panitz recognizes that Wolf was a "glorified notary public" but describes at length the process by which he used the position to build his own constituency among the small number of Jews in the United States.

Always maneuvering to advance his own standing, Wolf, a member of the Washington Hebrew Congregation and B'nai B'rith, represented both institutions on the Board of Delegates of American Israelites beginning in 1870. Under the influence of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, Wolf then orchestrated the merger of the Board with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in the late 1870s. Over the next quarter of a century, federal officials dealt with Wolf as the representative of the two most important national Jewish organizations—the Board and B'nai B'rith.

Panitz emphasizes Wolf's special relationship with several presidents. In the case of Grant, for instance, Panitz claims—using Wolf as the source—that "with the exception of his own family, and cabinet members, Grant saw Wolf more frequently than any other individual." If so, that was in the 1870s. Beginning in the following decade, Jews in the United States faced a serious challenge—how to respond to the deteriorating situation confronting their brethren in Czarist Russia. Though a private citizen after serving briefly as a District of Columbia municipal court judge and as consul-general in Egypt in the late 1870s and early 1880s, Wolf remained influential into the twentieth century—as an example, Panitz details his "lifelong friendship" with President William Howard Taft. But it seems apparent that he had become an elder statesman to be used as necessary by both the federal government and the new generation of Jewish leaders.

It is not surprising that the brilliant attorney Louis Marshall, twenty years younger than Wolf, criticized Wolf for "palavering with the high and the mighty." Panitz emphasizes that Wolf's style involved "calculated positioning that was characteristic of an earlier era." Wolf was, according to Panitz, "always relying on the good faith of the bureaucrat he had to placate."

Ironically, this biography is best when dealing with the latter part of Wolf's career. Wolf—and the leaders of the American Jewish Committee—waged a courageous struggle against a movement which had momentum on its side: the demand to place a variety of restrictions on immigration to the United States and to deport any arriving immigrants who did not meet the established restrictions. Panitz claims that Wolf personally saved more than 100,000 Jewish immigrants from deportation. If that figure is reasonably accurate, Wolf deserves recognition for his efforts.

Wolf never abandoned his style—Panitz describes it as "optimistic posturing" beginning in the mid-1890s. Thus, Wolf found himself in

the midst of a bitter dispute with the American Jewish Committee during President Taft's one term in the White House. Wolf and the leaders of the AJC had a common goal—to help their fellow Jews, either by persuading Czarist Russia to change its ways or by making it possible for millions of Russian Jews to come to the United States. Wolf's tactics differed dramatically from those of the AJC, however.

Panitz is sympathetic to Wolf. As she puts it, Wolf was "caught between" President Taft and the American Jewish Committee and "walked a tightrope" as he defended Taft's opposition to the demand by the AJC that the United States abrogate the trade treaty with Czarist Russia, which dated back to 1832. But leaders of the AJC accused Wolf of playing a "double game." A mutual "distrust" resulted—at best, Wolf and the AJC tolerated each other.

Unfortunately, there are many errors (perhaps some are typographical) and technical problems in this biography. Perhaps the most glaring problem is what can only be described as an erratic pattern of footnoting. The most extreme example involves a comparison of page 42 (no footnotes) and page 49 (12 footnotes, including five in one paragraph). Nevertheless, this biography should stimulate new interest in a man who, according to the author, served as "dispenser of presidential attitudes" to the Jewish community of the United States for at least half a century.

—Allan Spetter

Allan Spetter teaches American diplomatic history at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. He is co-author of *The Presidency of Benjamin Harrison* (1987) and is currently working on a study of the reaction of the United States to the plight of the Jews of Czarist Russia, 1881–1917.

Trahtemberg Siederer, Leon. La Inmigracion Judia al Peru, 1848–1948 [Jewish immigration to Peru]. Lima: Asociacion Judia de Beneficencia y Culto de 1870, 1987. 322 pp.

Although there has been a blossoming of Latin American Jewish studies during the last decade, much of the new historical work has focused on regions of inquiry that have traditionally received the lion's share of attention. Examinations of Jews in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico continue to dominate the literature. Along with Uruguay, these have been the main centers of Jewish settlement in Latin America in the twentieth century, and so contain the best documentation. This is not an insignificant consideration for a historian attempting to unravel the development of communities which often tried to remain invisible to their hosts so as to preserve a measure of security. Yet this mining of the richest deposits tends to skew the wider historiography of the Latin American diaspora. Moving beyond the basic outlines of events and demographics, the most recent studies have sought to construct theories about the politics of assimilation, the formation of Jewish identities in hostile environments, and the economics of refugee communities.<sup>2</sup> But the danger now exists that such theories, weighted with data from the few countries cited above, may not be viable for the region as a whole.

In light of this imbalance, Leon Trahtemberg's study of Jewish immigration to Peru is both a useful contribution to our limited knowledge of marginal Jewish communities and a great disappointment in its presentation of that history. Mr. Trahtemberg has limited the subject of his inquiry to the German-speaking Jewish community of Lima and has fashioned an institutional history revolving around the activities of the Sociedad de Beneficencia Israelita, whose successor organization published this book. The original society was founded in 1870 by the twenty Jewish families then living in Lima to provide mutual aid for medical care, establish a Jewish cemetery (which Mr. Trahtemberg claims was the first in Latin America), provide education, record marriages and deaths, and help the indigent members of the Germanspeaking Jewish community (pp. 50–57). It therefore provides some indication of the economic, ecological, and political obstacles which

Iews faced in creating a new existence for themselves in a place far removed from their European home. Unfortunately, Mr. Trahtemberg has elected to forgo any systematic analysis of the social processes which transformed this community over time or of the evolving relationship between Iews and Peruvians. Instead he has given us what amounts to an embellished documentary history frozen in the 1870s and again in the 1930s, which lacks a central argument or organizing principle. A large part of the book is given over to reprinting the statutes, minutes of meetings, correspondence, and lists of officers of the Sociedad as it grew first into a cultural organization and then metamorphosed into a protective society with the refugee influx of World War II. The result is a somewhat dry homage to the founders and leaders of the Sociedad by a son of the community. Mr. Trahtemberg has given us fragments of "official" Jewish life gleaned largely from Israeli archives, without an accompanying explanation of the major events and processes that shaped the community's existence. In particular, he fails to account for the near disappearance of German Jews from Lima by the 1920s, probably because his primary source became moribund at this time. The author refers to his book as "a jigsaw puzzle" with missing pieces (p. 5), yet it is clear that between the lines of these documents lies a rich history of conflicts over cultural assimilation, political power, and national identity. These themes are dealt with in a more engaging and ultimately more enlightening fashion by the Peruvian Jewish writer Isaac Goldemberg in his novels Play by Play and The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner.

The data that Mr. Trahtemberg presents create their own interesting questions, some of which have comparative dimensions. For example, he makes a case that anti-Semitism led to severe restrictions on Jewish immigration in the late 1930s and even during World War II. He also chronicles the failure of the government to permit various agricultural colonization schemes to come to fruition or to allow Jewish orphans into the country to be adopted by members of the resident community. Yet in spite of this officially hostile atmosphere, Jews chose to remain in Peru after the war, and the size of the community has actually doubled. This is in stark contrast to neighboring Ecuador, which was far more open to Jewish immigration until 1939. Here, the size of the community declined by over half, with many of its members departing for the United States and Israel following World War II, and many of

its offspring settling in North America after attending college there.<sup>3</sup> How can we account for this unexpected development within the Latin American context?

Trahtemberg also claims that there was significant cooperation between the German Jews and the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities regarding the maintenance of the cemetery, the rescue of refugees denied entrance at the port of Callao and forced back onto Japanese ships, and the establishment of a Zionist organization (pp. 127 and 229). This linkage goes against prevailing theory for Latin American communities<sup>4</sup> and poses the question of what was distinctive about the Peruvian experience that produced this exception.

The answers to these questions require a different methodological approach that would uncover the competing cultural perspectives and political consciousness of both the leaders and the ordinary members of these communities, and that would also outline the changing political economy of the host country. Such a social history would require interviews with older Peruvian Jews of all backgrounds as well as the government clerks and politicians hostile to immigration. Mr. Trahtemberg makes a start in this direction with his final chapter, which contains brief portraits of twelve individual community members based on data collected by his secondary school students. These brief life histories animate the study and suggest the depth of experience that underlies the institutional history: a young Zionist sent to Lima by a German manufacturer of railroad equipment who finds himself stranded in 1936 when his company fires him for being a Jew; a lawyer who secretly fled Germany in 1940 by way of Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Japan before reaching Peru, while his wife and children went to England.

A social history of Peru's Jews would also benefit from a thorough examination of the Peruvian press from the 1920s to the 1940s which would uncover popular attitudes toward immigrants and Jews in particular. With the exception of a protest letter in 1937 from Peruvian hat sellers complaining of competition from Jews, Mr. Trahtemberg shows a distressing disregard for the attitudes of working- and middle-class Peruvians, yet these are crucial to any discussion of immigrant economic opportunity and community security. A more systematic review of the Peruvian press should indicate the popular pressures which Jews had to struggle against in creating a new home on the

fringe of the diaspora.

-Anton Rosenthal

## Notes

- 1. See, for example, American Jewish Archives 34, no. 2 (November 1982), a special issue devoted to "New Perspectives on Latin American Jewry."
- 2. Attempts to construct theories of explanation which go beyond single-country narrative histories are contained in several essays in Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx, eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987). A global examination of Jewish refugees and assimilation can be found in Jarrell C. Jackman and Carla M. Borden, eds., *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983).
- 3. The Jewish population of Ecuador numbered between 3,000 and 5,000 at its high point during World War II; today it consists of about 800–1,500, some of whom are Israelis on temporary assignment. By contrast, there were about 2,600 Jews in Peru in 1941 when immigration was all but closed, while by 1980 the population had reached 5,300. For estimates see Judith L. Elkin, *The Jews of the Latin American Republics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 193–194; J. X. Cohen, *Jewish Life in South America* (New York: Bloch, 1941), p. 151. I have also benefited from interviews with current and former members of the Ecuadorean refugee community.
- 4. Gilbert Merkx, "Jewish Studies as a Subject of Latin American Studies," p. 7, in Elkin and Merkx, Jewish Presence in Latin America.

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Jeansonne, Glen. Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. xiii, 283 pp.

This is a book that has long been needed. Students of the political and religious right recognize that the enigmatic Gerald L. K. Smith was a formidable individual. His name constantly surfaces in discussions of the American right, and even the very phrase "The Cross and the Flag" is inseparably linked with him. (Once I used this as the title for a book of essays on evangelical Christianity and sociopolitical questions, and people assumed incorrectly that it had to do with Smith.) Although such writers as David Bennett, Wayne Cole, Ralph Lord Roy, Arnold Forster, and George Thayer provided useful information on Smith, it was historian Leo Ribuffo, in his landmark study *The Old Christian Right* (1983), who really opened our eyes to his significance. Now, Professor Jeansonne of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has given us the definitive treatment of the preacher-cum-political agitator.

This book is a tour de force—meticulously researched, carefully written, and brimming with insights into the arcane world of bigotry and hatred. The author has left no stone unturned in his fifteen-year endeavor to get inside the complex mind of Gerald Smith. He conducted interviews with Smith and associates, examined his papers at the University of Michigan, plowed through mountains of pamphlets and newspapers, and even secured his FBI file through the Freedom of Information Act.

Born in 1898 into humble circumstances in Wisconsin, the young Smith acquired a strong Christian faith, a feel for poverty, and some distinctively populist views. An ambitious and energetic youth, he worked his way through Valparaiso University and entered the ministry of the Disciples of Christ. In a seven-year pastorate at the University Place Christian Church in Indianapolis, he built a dying congregation into a substantial entity. Then he relocated in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he became a social activist and gained the ear of Huey Long. Smith soon left the pulpit to join Long's staff, and he hoped to become the Kingfish's successor after his assassination in 1935, but rivals blocked this. His ensuing political odyssey placed him in touch

with various depression-era personalities like Francis Townsend and Father Charles Coughlin and led him into the chimerical Union Party campaign in 1936. Then he founded a anti-communist, anti-New Deal organization called the Committee of One Million and relocated in Detroit, where, as a bitter opponent of unions, he gained the ear of Henry Ford. During this time Smith picked up anti-Semitism, a theme which increasingly suffused his oratory. A staunch isolationist, his outspoken opposition to intervention in the European war did much to heighten his visibility.

In 1942, the same year he founded *The Cross and the Flag*, Smith made an unsuccessful bid for a U.S. Senate seat in the Michigan Republican primary. After this, he abandoned any further attempts to gain power within the two-party system and henceforth functioned as a crusader, not a pragmatic politician. Jeansonne sees this as the major turning point in his career. The frustrated preacher-politician operated on the fringes of the political far right. He chose to stand on principle, defying his critics, and he scorned popularity. He established temporary alliances with isolationists and right-wing politicians, dabbled in third-party ventures, and used the Christian Nationalist Crusade (founded 1947) as his primary base of operations.

Smith moved to St. Louis, then to Tulsa, and finally to Los Angeles, but his strident anti-Jewishness made him more and more a marginal figure. Although he never took another pulpit and seldom even attended worship, he still maintained an evangelical faith of sorts. In fact, during his last years Smith focused his attention on the "Sacred Projects" in Eureka Springs, Arkansas—the monumental *Christ of the Ozarks* statue, together with the Passion Play, the Christ Only Art Gallery, and the New Holy Land. Possibly this may have been a subliminal effort to atone for three decades of bigotry. On his death in 1976 Smith's organization and magazine were terminated, and the Eureka Springs projects remain his only abiding legacy.

Jeansonne devotes considerable space to analyzing Smith's oratorical style, fund-raising techniques, organizational endeavors, and political beliefs. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of the book is the assessment of his personality. Smith's obstinate bigotry was the result of a stern upbringing that instilled in him a respect for authority, a belief in absolutes, and a repressed hatred that would eventually emerge as violent anti-Semitism. In the home he also acquired specific

prejudices as well as a propensity to think in rigidly categorical terms. His evangelical Protestantism encouraged him to view human society as a basic struggle between good and evil, and he readily conceded that the Jewish religion, which rejected Jesus as the Messiah, represented the forces of the Devil. For him, Christianity was the only basis for brotherhood, and those of different beliefs were automatically excluded. He found it perfectly natural to accuse Jews of vile conspiracies to silence him, and he rationalized his hatred by holding them responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. In his warped mind, Jews were not God's chosen people but a throng of demon-possessed agents of the Antichrist. He claimed that he was not anti-Semitic, since he did not hate Iews as individuals, but that he had good reasons for hating them collectively. In his opinion, they promoted evil ideologies and all kinds of vices, and thus he had been "called" by God to oppose these enemies of Christ. The reality was that he projected his own personal failings on the Jews—the drive for power and wealth, clannishness, social assertiveness, religious fanaticism—and saw in them the flaws of his own character.

He lived in a world of plots, confidential communications, spies, evil geniuses, and assassins. Conspiracies were everywhere, all directed by a cunning, deceptive hidden hand. Jews were at the root of every evil—the French Revolution, communism, socialism, liberal Christianity, modern art, fascism, Zionism, the civil rights movement, and so forth. He believed every lie, rumor, accusation, and canard against lews that came his way. The perplexing, threatening nature of these fantasies required his complete attention and stimulated his crusading spirit. He could not afford to waste time because every minute he rested, the conspirators were at work. Hence, his life was one of frenetic, unceasing activity. Moreover, his appeals resonated with certain types of frustrated, embittered, impotent individuals—especially religious fundamentalists, nativists, racists, and people who feared that America was losing its status as the premier world power. Since he had the convictions of a fanatic and his followers needed leadership and purpose, a symbiotic relationship developed between them.

Jeansonne concludes that Smith was neither a cynic nor a hypocrite, but rather a twisted idealist who deliberately chose unpopularity. He predicted that he would die a misunderstood man, and his slavish devotion to anti-Semitism ensured that this would come true. Yet he was not just an isolated bigot but an extreme personification of attitudes shared by many Americans. Gerald L. K. Smith was a remarkably complex man, sincere but bigoted, talented and industrious, but fatally flawed. Fortunately for posterity, he will not be remembered as a man of God but as an egotistical bigot. I hope we will never see the likes of him again, but I fear that is wishful thinking.

-Richard V. Pierard

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## **Brief Notices**

Cohen, David Steven, Edited by. America, the Dream of My Life: Selections from the Federal Writers' Project's New Jersey Ethnic Survey. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990. xvi, 295 pp.

If the depression of the 1930s and early 1940s was a low-point in the economic history of twentieth-century America, it was a high-point for the collection of resources documenting the American Jewish experience. Projects funded by the federal government and comprised of fieldworkers hired literally from the unemployment rolls produced wonderful surveys of the landsmanschaftn of New York, synagogues across America, and in the case of this volume, approximately one hundred oral interviews with immigrants who settled in New Jersey cities. Those interviewed were Irish, Dutch, Polish, Italian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Russian and Jewish. There are some interesting samples of the larger interviews done with Jewish immigrants to New Jersey, and they reflect the Jewish immigrant experience in America and especially in the New Jersey cities of Paterson and Newark.

Danzger, M. Herbert. Returning to Tradition: The Contemporary Revival of Orthodox Judaism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. 374 pp.

In the past decade, Orthodox Judaism has become a vital force in America Jewish life. Whether it is the visibility of traditional dress, the donning of the *kippah* by young Jewish men (and women), the aggressiveness of the Lubavitcher hasidim, or the exploits of the *haredim* in Israel, no one can believe, as many once did, that Orthodox Judaism is a dying phenomenon in American Jewish life. M. Herbert Danzger's book attempts to understand and explain the phenomenon of this Orthodox revival from the viewpoint of a sociologist who is a participant-observer in the subject which he studies.

Dawson, Nelson L., Edited by. *Brandeis and America*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989. 163 pp.

Books about Louis D. Brandeis, a towering figure in American Jewish history, appear regularly and often with a distinctive approach to the nature and contribution of Brandeis to America and American Jewry. Brandeis and America allows six Brandeis scholars, among them Allon Gal, Melvin I. Urofsky, and Philippa Strum, the opportunity to examine Brandeis as American Progressive; as American Zionist; as New Deal adviser; and as a shaper of American constitutional law.

Ginzberg, Eli. My Brother's Keeper. New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Publishers, 1989. 186 pp.

Sons with legendary fathers often have the unenviable task of "trying to fill Dad's shoes." In Eli Ginzberg's case that might have been too great a challenge—for Eli is the son of the legendary Louis Ginzberg, one of the greatest Judaic scholars of the twentieth century. Eli Ginzberg has not tried to replicate his father's Judaic scholarship, but has become one of the most respected practitioners of applied economics in America. My Brother's Keeper is in part autobiographical, in part an effort to examine the major transformation in American Jewish

life during this century. Eli Ginzberg writes with great warmth and insight. His book should be read.

Guzik, Estelle M., Edited by. Genealogical Resources in the New York Metropolitan Area. New York: Jewish Genealogical Society, 1989. xii, 404 pp.

This is a marvelous source for Jewish and non-Jewish genealogists. One is not surprised, given the fact that this volume is published by the Jewish Genealogical Society of New York, whose distinguished presidents have included Malcolm Stern and Steven W. Siegel. The volume contains almost anything of importance which might be necessary to facilitate genealogical research in the New York metropolitan area. The entries are informative, even more than most researchers could ever wish to know. The book contains copies of research request forms, a bibliography of Eastern European Yizkor books with call numbers, a list of foreign telephone directories in the New York Public Library Annex, and much more. In short, this book is a gem and a model for similar volumes for other parts of America.

Harap, Louis, Edited by. *Jewish Currents Reader*, 1976-1986. New York: Jewish Currents, 1987. 344 pp.

The enemies of the Jewish people love to talk about a monolithic "international Jewry" that seems to breath as one, act as one, and should suffer as one. Jewish Currents magazine has for over four decades sought to prove that the voice of Jewry is anything but a monolith. In this fourth decennial Reader, the magazine presents a decade of the best of the secular, "progressive" Jewish voice on issues such as Israel, Soviet Jewry, the Holocaust, and the gay Jewish community.

Lipsitz, Edmond Y., Edited by. Canadian Jewry Today: Who's Who in Canadian Jewry. Downsview, Ontario: J.E.S.L. Educational Products, 198 pp.

American Jews often cast an admiring glance at their northern neighbors. Canadian Jews (especially in Montreal) seem a generation closer to the kind of Yiddishkeit that is only a fleeting memory for the Jews in the United States. And because the Canadian identity is based on a true Mosaic concept of cultural retention, it is easier to be a Jew in Canada and not feel the tension that is at the bottom of American Jewish identity.

That is the surface picture. Beneath the gleaming exterior is something far less bright—an anti-Semitism in Quebec which has no equivalent in American history—an anti-Jewish attitude by the Canadian government during the years of the Holocaust which equals if not exceeds that of our own State Department.

Canadian Jewry Today is a useful introduction to the Jews of Canada, and the profiles of its leading citizens in the second part of the book allow one to get a feel for who is what in the community. An historical overview written by people like Troper and Abella and by David Rome would have presented more of a balance to the cheery "mosaic" concept, and essays by the likes of Reuven Bulka (mentioned as a possible chief rabbi of Great Britain) and Gunther Plaut might have helped us to understand better the role and nature of Judaism in Canadian Jewish life.

Nadell, Pamela S. Conservative Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Source-book. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. xvi, 409 pp.

In 1983 American Jewish Archives marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the first ordination of American-trained rabbis by devoting a special issue to the American rabbinate.

It was hoped that this pioneering effort would pave the way for the publication of similar volumes devoted to the various movements within American Judaism.

Pamela S. Nadell's book on Conservative Judaism in America has more than fulfilled this hope. In several skilled essays on the history of the Conservative movement and its various institutions as well as in biographical sketches of well over a hundred of the movement's key rabbinic and lay leaders, Nadell has created an important evaluation of the American Jewish intellectual heirs to the Historical School of Judaism. Nadell had also included the Reconstructionist Jewish movement, founded by Conservative rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, within the framework of her study of Conservatism. That may satisfy forces within Conservative Judaism, but will most likely be rejected by those Reconstructionists seeking to maintain a separate identity as the fourth movement within American Judaism.

Rafael, Ruth Kelson. The Western Jewish History Center: Guide to Archival and Oral History Collections. Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1987. xviii, 207 pp.

For over two decades, the Western Jewish History Center has been the home of the largest and most important collections of archival and oral history records of the western United States. The driving force behind the institution has been its archivist, Ruth Kelson Rafael. She is also the author of this guide, and the volume reflects the thoroughness and professionalism which have come to characterize all of Ruth Rafael's activities on behalf of the Center. The nearly four hundred items listed in this catalogue reflect the growth, development, and very healthy state of Jewish life in the west. From Judah Magnes to northern California Jews from Harbin, Manchuria, to the Petaluma, California, Jewish community, the Western Jewish History Center offers researchers as wealth of historical documentation.

Singerman, Robert, Compiled by. Judaica Americana: A Bibliography of Publications to 1900. 2 vols. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990, xxxiv, 1335 pp.

Each time Robert Singerman, America's foremost Jewish bibliographer, has brought out a new volume, one did not think that it could be any better that the last. Happily, Singerman has rejected this mode of thought. Every volume that he has brought out—and they range from books on Jews in Spain and Portugal, Jewish and Hebrew onomastics, anti-Semitic propaganda, and Jewish serials of the world—has indeed been better than the one before it. *Judaica Americana* is certainly no exception to this rule. His bibliography is almost ten times larger and adds fifty years to that other existing "classic," A. S. W. Rosenbach's *An American Jewish Bibliography* (1926). Singerman has listed nearly 6,500 entries—a phenomenal number—and added an excellent index to help the researcher.

Scholars of early American Jewish history would always "reach for my Rosenbach" to find important items. "Reaching for my Singerman" will henceforth be the scholarly cry.