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# MENORAH

## REVIEW



NUMBER 29 • CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY • FALL 1993

### For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

#### Louis D. Brandeis and the Empowering of American Jewry

Part 1 of 2  
by Melvin I. Urofsky

*The following article is excerpted from the lecture presented by Dr. Melvin I. Urofsky for the Selma and Jacob Brown Annual Lecture. The annual lecture is sponsored by the Center for Judaic Studies of Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Urofsky is professor of history at VCU. The second part of this essay will be published in the Winter 1994 issue of Menorah Review.*

We live, we are told repeatedly, in a cynical world, one with no heroes. Our politicians are puny men and women when compared to their predecessors; our business leaders are concerned with making a buck any way they can rather than building factories and jobs that make people's lives better; our lawyers, of whom we have more than any other nation on earth, instead of upholding the dignity and majesty of law often seem hellbent on distorting or breaking it; our religious leaders are epitomized not by saintliness or piety but by hucksterism.

For historians, such laments evoke a mixed reaction. On the one hand, we have heard all this repeatedly; it is the cry of every second generation of pioneers, such as the children of the Puritans who chastised themselves for not measuring up to their parents in the Zion in the wilderness they called Massachusetts. Yet, as citizens of this time and place we also share a sadness that giants no longer walk the earth.

For those of us concerned with the contemporary Jewish scene, one indeed wonders what happened to Jewish leadership. Our parents and grandparents had Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, Stephen Wise and Abba Hillel Silver. Even if we look toward Israel, which for a generation nourished us with visions of grandeur, the era of Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir is gone, their places taken by men and women of far narrower vision.

I once read a dedication in a book that said, "You only need one hero, if you can find the right one." Louis Dembitz Brandeis

has been my hero, and I have spent a good part of my professional life studying his career. I have not tried to emulate his life; but a hero can instruct and enrich a person's career in many ways.

Tonight I would like to share with you some impressions of Brandeis. One could spend whole lectures talking about Brandeis the reformer—the man who invented the citizen lobby, or Brandeis the lawyer—the Ralph Nader of his day who created the notion of a people's lawyer, or Brandeis the jurist—who devised our modern rationale for freedom of expression and privacy. For this occasion, however, it is fitting we talk about Brandeis and American Judaism, on which he left an indelible mark.

\* \* \* \* \*

To understand the impression Brandeis made, one has to stop for a moment and look at the world of American Jewry in the first decade of this century. There have, of course, been Jews in America from the time of the European discovery. At least one Jew sailed with Columbus, and in 1654 the ship, *Saint Charles*, sailed into New Amsterdam harbor carrying 23 Jews fleeing Portuguese persecution in Brazil. During the next two centuries, we can find a small but prosperous Sephardic community on the Atlantic seaboard, including one here in Richmond, Va.

In the mid-19th century the Sephardim were overwhelmed by a wave of German-Jewish immigration; between 1840 and 1880 nearly 200,000 came, and their success story is unparalleled in American history. But for all their achievements, this community, which Stephen Birmingham has depicted so marvelously in *Our Crowd*, always doubted

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its place. They were positive that anti-semitism lurked just beneath the surface so they made sure that nothing they did aroused that monster, that nothing they said would call their Americanism into question. They were no longer Jews but "Americans of the Hebraic persuasion."

But then, starting in 1880, came the great wave of Jewish migration fleeing persecution in Russia and it seemed, at least to the German-American Jews, that these newcomers would never be assimilated into American life. They spoke this strange tongue, they dressed differently, they followed strange practices, they were—so Jewish! The *yahudim*, the uptown German Jews, were horrified by the *yidden*, the downtown Russians, and feared that this tidal wave of Jewishness would trigger the very anti-semitism they had done so much to avoid.

Perhaps worst of all, the newcomers believed in that fool's chimera, Zionism, the movement to re-establish a Jewish state in its ancient homeland, Palestine. Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff sternly lectured the newcomers that Zionism represented dual loyalty and the United States tolerated only one loyalty. If they truly wished to become Amerikaners they must abandon Zionism; as Rabbi Gustav Posnanski had proudly pro-

claimed at the dedication of the first Reform temple in America: "This country is our Palestine, this city our Jerusalem, this House of God our Temple."

The question, as the newcomers clearly understood, was not whether one could be a Zionist and an American, but whether one could be a Jew and an American. Could one be different in this land of freedom, or would there be only a different kind of conformity imposed on American Jews in the name of patriotism. For Zionism, as they knew, was more than a drive to establish some Jewish settlements in then-barren Palestine; it embodied an ages-old religious yearning that saw the recreation of a Jewish commonwealth in its ancient land as the end of a spiritual exile. Jews had chanted "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!" for 19 centuries in persecution and exile. Was the abandonment of memory the price paid for freedom? It is this confusion, this tension between Americanism and Judaism/Zionism, that is the milieu in which Louis Brandeis made his contributions to American Jewish life.

Brandeis, it should be noted, was born a Jew but not raised as one. His mother was adverse to religious enthusiasm of any sort and raised her children to cherish the ethical teachings of all religions and the rituals of none. Louis came to share his mother's distaste for formal religion, even while internalizing her demand that he live his life by the highest ideals. He later said, "My early training was not Jewish in the religious sense, nor was it Christian. While naturally interested in their race, my people were not so narrow as to allow their religious belief to overshadow their interest in the broader aspects of humanity." Brandeis' only exposure to traditional Judaism came at the home of his beloved uncle, Louis Dembitz.

For the first half-century of his life, then, Brandeis had practically nothing to do with organized Jewish life. He had business associations with Boston's bourgeois Jewish community but did not belong to a synagogue, he gave only occasionally to Jewish charities and did not live near other Jews. His brother and one sister intermarried, as did one of his daughters, and this did not seem to bother him at all; in fact, he considered his son-in-law, the son of the great Christian Gospel leader Walter Rauschenbusch, as a "rare find." There is some evidence that his wife may have, at one time, joined the Unitarian Church. The Brandeis family celebrated Christmas but not the Jewish holidays, did not keep the Sabbath or observe *kashruth*; well after he had become a Zionist leader, he still took great pleasure in the hams his brother, Alfred, periodically shipped from Louisville, Ky. So far was he from Jewish life that when his name was proposed for membership in the newly-established American Jewish Committee in 1907, he was rejected because "he has not identified himself with Jewish affairs and is

rather inclined to side with the Ethical Culturists." This is hardly surprising since the founder of the Ethical Culture movement, Felix Adler, was his brother-in-law.

Yet this is the very same man who, within months after his sudden emergence as a leader of American Zionism, was being hailed by American Jews as an Elijah, another Moses, a prophet, a messiah and "the greatest Jew in the world since Jesus Christ." For the rest of his life admirers, both Jewish and Christian, turned to the scriptures to find words adequate to describe him. During the New Deal, Franklin Roosevelt called Brandeis "Isaiah" and the name seemed to fit the tall, ascetic justice with the mane of white flowing hair.

What is going on here? The parable that immediately leaps to mind is that of the prodigal son but the parallel does not work. Brandeis never abandoned Judaism because he had never really belonged to it; nor did he, chastened by his fling, return to Judaism in the sense of practicing its rituals. In fact, the entire notion of the austere Puritanical Brandeis having a "fling" is an oxymoron.

Why is it that even today we recall Brandeis as a "great Jew" but hardly remember the other Jewish leaders of his generation, men who were Jewishly observant, active in Jewish and secular affairs, successful lawyers and bankers and business magnates who have faded into obscurity? Why is it that of all the great Jewish leaders, only Brandeis has a major university named after him? The easy answer is that he was the first Jewish Supreme Court justice and, not only that, he was a great justice. That certainly plays a role but I would like to suggest that the veneration of two generations of American Jews resulted from Brandeis' specific contributions to American Judaism. He transformed the moribund Zionist movement into a powerful actor not only on the American political scene but on the world stage as well, and in doing so he altered some of the basic assumptions of Jewish life in this country. To use the modern phrase, Louis Brandeis "empowered" American Jewry.

\* \* \* \* \*

What personal characteristics made Louis Brandeis a leader of American Jewry? He was no Chaim Weizmann, whom Jews loved because, cultured and cosmopolitan world figure that he was, he still embodied all the traits of the east European shtetl. Nor was Brandeis a Jacob Schiff whom even his enemies within the Jewish community nonetheless respected and admired for his strict adherence to tradition and ritual. Brandeis, as I have noted, was not observant and he had little in common with the masses of east European Jews whom he molded into a powerful American Zionist movement.

They recognized in Brandeis a Jew, not just because he was born to a Jewish mother, but because, despite his total non-observance of ritual, no American Jew at that

time, and indeed few Americans of any creed, could claim a greater adherence to the ethical teachings of the prophets than he.

As a lawyer, he pioneered in *pro bono* public service. At first, he accepted fees for this type of work and then gave the money to charities. Then he refused to accept fees for his public work, explaining:

Some men buy diamonds and rare works of art, others delight in automobiles and yachts. My luxury is to invest my surplus effort . . . [in] taking up a problem and solving, or helping to solve, it for the people without receiving any compensation. Your yachtsman or your automobilist would lose much of his enjoyment if he were obliged to do for pay what he is doing for the love of the thing itself. So I should lose much of my satisfaction if I were paid in connection with public services of this kind. I have only one life, and it is short enough. Why waste it on things I don't want most? I don't want money or property most. I want to be free.

In some complex cases, where he used the services of his own law firm, he paid the firm money out of his own pocket. In one instance he paid more than \$10,000, a huge sum in those days, because he did not believe it right that his law partners and associates should bear the costs of his public service.

To a struggling young Jewish law student, Brandeis gave the following advice: "Be scrupulously honest; live simply and worthily; work hard; have patience and persistence; and don't measure success by the number of dollars collected. Waste neither time nor money."

Brandeis did neither. He kept his law office cold so clients would not stay longer than necessary. He lived simply, so simply that Judge Julius Mack used to comment that when dining at the Brandeises, one had to eat twice—once there and then a real meal afterward. He refused to be a "hired gun" in his law practice, and would-be clients first had to convince him of the rightness of their claims before he would take their cases.

When Brandeis spoke about Judaism, he never mentioned ritual or theological matters, only ethics, and that played a major role in his march back to involvement with the Jewish community. In 1910 New York garment workers went out on strike and one of his clients, A. Lincoln Filene of the Boston department store, asked Brandeis to help mediate the dispute. Up to this time the only Jews Brandeis had known had been the German petit-bourgeois of Boston; now for the first time he came into contact with the masses of eastern European Jewry. Their idealism fired his imagination. Compared to the paternalistic labor relations that characterized the New England mills, the New York garment industry was a living model of democracy. Workers and bosses shouted at

one another in Yiddish and, on one occasion, he heard a shop operator denounce his employer with a quotation from Isaiah:

It is you who have devoured the vine yard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

What do you mean by crushing My people, by grinding the face of the poor? says the Lord God of hosts.

This, and not the rigid pietism of the priests, was a Judaism to which he could relate. These men and women, who spouted the prophets and fought for social justice, were Jews with whom he could identify. And they could relate to him because, by then, Brandeis had become "the people's attorney." He had fought for minimum wages and maximum hours in labor, he had championed the rights of working people, he had battled against corruption in industry and government, and he had been the father of the savings bank life insurance plan, which freed poor people from the extortions of the large insurance companies. The Jewish garment workers, with whom Brandeis sat and drank beer late into the night so he could get to know them better, did not care about Brandeis' lack of ritual observance. To them he was a Jew, and a *mensch*, a person who understood what the Lord requires of thee—to do justly and to show compassion. Brandeis won their trust and, while the innovative Protocol that he devised to end the strike did not prove workable in the long run, he had shown himself to be on their side, and when he took over as head of American Zionism, they flocked to his banner.

Brandeis joined Zionism initially because he learned his beloved uncle, Lewis Dembitz, had been an early supporter of the movement. Then, as he studied about it, he came to draw what would prove a critical connection; in Zionism he saw the ideals of Jeffersonian America, an America that had been perverted by big business and corruption. In Palestine the *chalutzim*, the pioneers, would be able to create the type of idealistic society for which Progressive reformers were then striving. They could do that because Palestine was small and manageable, but also because Jews, he believed, shared the same values as Americans. The *chalutzim*, he said in many speeches, were the Pilgrim fathers of the 20th century.

When Brandeis accepted the leadership of the American Zionist movement in August 1914, he explained what had drawn him to the movement:

I find Jews possessed of those very qualities which we of the 20th century seek to develop in our struggle for justice and democracy—a deep moral feeling which makes them capable of noble acts; a deep sense of the brotherhood of man; and a high intelligence, the fruit of 3,000 years of civilization.

## Christian Anti-Semitism, Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust Part 1 of 2

*Lessons and Legacies*  
edited by Peter Hayes  
Evanston, IL: Northwestern  
University Press

A Review Essay  
by Robert Michael

No one knows exactly why the Holocaust occurred. Historians, especially, are aware of the inadequacy of historical explanation. And yet, just as we struggle to explain the decline and fall of Rome and the causes of the First Crusade massacres of Jews so we try to understand why the Holocaust happened.

Although Christianity's precise influence on the Holocaust is impossible to determine and the Christian Churches did not perpetrate the Final Solution, I believe, as an historian, that Christian anti-semitism is the *fons et origo* of Nazi anti-semitism, which, in turn, is the fundamental ideological basis of the perpetration of the Holocaust. Impossible! Perhaps. The churches' moral principles were so antithetical to the genocidal morality of Nazi Germany that *prima facie* there seems to be no connection between Christian precepts and the Final Solution. Indeed, the Nazis explicitly attacked and ridiculed authentic Christian ideals.

In his introduction to *Lesson and Legacies*, Peter Hayes has pointed out that central questions in examining the Holocaust are: "How could people permit such things?" and "Why did so few brave souls try to intercede?" The facts are that during the Holocaust a large minority of people born as Christians, coming from a Christian environment, and absorbing Christian culture attempted to murder all the Jews of Europe. Most other Christians either actively collaborated in this murderous endeavor or tacitly permitted it to happen. A small minority of Christians helped the Jews, some of these Christians behaving with great courage even to the extent of risking their lives. In theological terms, only this latter group can be termed authentic Christians because they acted on Jesus' moral teachings.

Factors other than ideology—political, economic, psycho-social—impacted the Nazi Holocaust. But the anti-Jewish aspects of Christian thought and theology, the Christian mindset and attitudes, and the precedents provided by the history of the Church's relationship to Jews significantly conditioned, and maybe determined, the creation, establishment and prosecution of the Holocaust. The churches and their theologians

had formulated compelling religious, social and moral *idees forces* that provided a conceptual framework for the National-Socialist conception of the Jew as less than human or inhuman, long before the Third Reich Christians called Jews traitors, murderers, plague, pollution, filth, devils and insects.

### *Christianity and the Third Reich*

Without denying the Third Reich's horrendous level of coercive terror, its promise of great economic gain and its secular ideological attractions that led many decent people to collaborate with the regime, there could have been no National-Socialist Third Reich without a preexisting popular consensus on many issues. Even the Gestapo would have been ineffective if the general public had not widely collaborated with government officials.

The predominant influence in 20th-century Germany continued to be Christianity. Even under Hitler, Germany was a nation of Christians who took their religion very seriously. In 1939, only 1.5 percent of Germans considered themselves unbelievers. Ninety-four percent of the population still belonged to the Protestant or Catholic churches. Of those belonging to churches, 40 percent were Catholic, 54 percent Protestant. As in all the Western nations, virtually all Germans identified themselves with some Christian faith or group. The majority of Germans, whether they were formally affiliated with a church or accepted the official doctrine of the faith, were products of Christian culture, family and training. In nearly every home crosses hung on the walls; children were baptized, instructed, confirmed and married within the church; grandparents and parents were buried in church cemeteries; and Christmas and Easter were celebrated. Even though he apparently planned ultimately to eliminate Christian institutions, Hitler nevertheless spoke publicly in favor of the churches to satisfy his audiences. In February 1933, Hitler told an audience in Stuttgart that the National-Socialist government was "to fill our whole culture once more with a Christian spirit..." And to the Reichstag in March he stated that "the two Christian Confessions [are] the weightiest factors for the maintenance of our nationality. . . . [T]he struggle against materialistic views and for a real national community is just as much in the interest of the German nation as in that of the welfare of our Christian faith."

Church opposition to Hitler had much more potential for standing up to the regime than any other. In fact, it is likely that the Hitler regime curtailed its ruthless confrontation with the churches precisely because the regime needed the sanction of all "decent," i.e., church-going, Germans. This support sustained the morale of the German Armed Forces. The acquiescence of the churches was, therefore, absolutely vital to enable the Reich to follow its policies.

Not only did the German government receive the support of the Protestant Churches, the vast majority of Lutherans enthusiastically endorsed the Nazi regime itself. Lutherans did not automatically have to sanction the anti-human policies of the Third Reich. In Denmark, almost the whole nation opposed the Nazis and saved nearly the entire Danish Jewish population. The motto of the 19th-century Lutheran humanist, Nikolai Grundtvig, was Denmark's watchword: "First a human being, then a Christian: this alone is life's order." The Danish Jews were accepted in Sweden.

Especially during the first years of the regime, Protestant beliefs were not seen as inconsistent with Nazi ideology. Two weeks after the Reich law of 14 July 1933 had ordered ecclesiastical elections, the pro-Nazi "German-Christians" won two-thirds of the seats. Although many Germans may have feared Hitler, he attracted the support of many others who admired his use of force against Germany's "enemies" outside and inside the nation. This election tells us about German attitudes toward Hitler than the Reichstag elections in March, when the Nazis had not achieved a majority. Even in the March election many who voted for other parties still sympathized with many of the Nazis' policies and attitudes, including those against Jews.

Even under the Third Reich, Germany was predominantly a Christian nation. When the outstanding leader of the Protestant resistance to the Hitlerian regime, Pastor Martin Niemoeller, was incarcerated by the Nazis and sent to Moabit prison, he was allowed to attend a number of Protestant church services. During the Christmas holidays, the prison hall was filled with Christmas trees. At the concentration camp in Westerbork, Holland, even the SS guards celebrated the birth of Jesus with a Christmas party. From a surrounded Stalingrad, about to surrender in December 1942, the soldiers broadcast back to Germany their rendition of Christian carols.

Like others who identified themselves with Christianity and participated in the Final Solution, many Nazi officials ironically proclaimed themselves as "good Christians," some having served as ministers, church officials and theology students. The Catholic Church sometimes opposed Nazi race policies, which clearly violated a basic article of Catholic faith, namely, the efficacy of baptism. But Churchmen did not consistently oppose the regime because of their fear of the government and their age-old antipathy of Jews. Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, Heydrich, Streicher, Eichmann, Kaltenbrunner, Globocnik, Hoess and Stangl were all born and raised as Catholics. In his diary at age 19, Himmler had written, "Come what may, I shall always love God, pray to Him, and adhere to the Catholic Church and defend it, even if I should be expelled from it." He did

not formally leave the church until 1936. Hitler did not stop participating in Communion until the 1930s. On 1 July 1933, the government officially proclaimed that "Reich Chancellor Hitler still belongs to the Catholic Church and has no intention of leaving it." Hitler even continued paying his religious taxes until the end. Even though these baptized Catholics became anti-clerical apostates, they nevertheless were conditioned by Christian anti-semitism. The contemptuous teachings concerning the Jews seem to be the one aspect of their "religious training" to which they adhered. Obviously, these men no longer kept Jesus as their Savior. Nevertheless in the 19th and 20th centuries, many Germans, including Hitler, admired Jesus of Nazareth whom they regarded as a great Aryan figure, perhaps even supernaturally so. And the fact that Christians traditionally blamed Jews for murdering him fit neatly into their anti-Jewish world view.

#### Christian Precedent—Nazi Anti-Semitism

Many authors contrast the Third Reich's policies with those of earlier Christian governments but do not note the similarities. These authors contrast Nazi mass murder based on racial principles with Christian policies based on the salvific power of baptism. They believe that theological anti-semitism expressed by Hitler and other Nazis was "only propaganda," but they do not consider Christian racism and Christian mass murders before the Holocaust.

The National-Socialists and their collaborators used the Roman Catholic Church's attitudes and treatment of Jews as models for their own behavior. The church had made the Jews stateless beings without authentic rights long before the Nazi Nuremberg Laws of 1935. Sixteen centuries before, the church had established administrative and legal procedures based on theological myths concerning the nature of Jews, Jewishness and Judaism. In the Christianized Roman law that was embodied in the Theodosian and Justinian Codes, and throughout the Middle Ages in secular and canon law, dozens of anti-Jewish legal and/or administrative procedures were put into effect, which the Nazi regime later unerringly imitated. The Nazis always had before them the example of dozens of church laws hostile to the Jews and hundreds more religiously inspired secular regulations that discriminated against Jews. For example, the Catholic civil servant, Hans Globke, who before 1933 had sought to restrict Jews' names to obviously Jewish ones, had worked for Hitler in codifying the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 and found specific historical precedent for making Jews wear the yellow star in the canons of the Catholic Church's Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.

Christian Europe already had long-established policies for dealing severely with Jews. What remained was for a ferociously

anti-semitic and charismatic man of action, under the cover of world war, to effect the solution to the Jewish problem that had been lurking in the wings for centuries. Beginning with the Middle Ages and continuing through the 20th century, the forced exile of Jews was an established pattern in Europe, the only difference being that local anti-Jewish expulsions became generalized once most of Europe was conquered by the Third Reich, or allied to it. Part of Europe had been Jew-free; with the war, Hitler and his allies would attempt to make all of Europe *Judenrein*. This program went beyond, but not very far, the policies that had already caused Jews to suffer enormously.

In fact, crucial to the Nazi's political definitions of what is a Jew was "the matter of religion." Thus the anti-Jewish discriminatory decree of 11 April 1933 defined a Jew as someone with one grandparent or parent of the Jewish religion. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 also used the religion of the grandparents as the basic criterion of Jewishness. The National-Socialists could not, after all, accurately differentiate Jews from Aryans in the biological sense. Moreover, under these laws even half and quarter Jews were considered Jewish if they were Jewish by faith or religious-community membership. During this period, governments such as France, Hungary, Poland and Rumania also issued theologically based anti-Jewish legislation.

In addition, most Nazi "racist" charges against Jews were unerringly paralleled in earlier Christian defamations. Without Christian archetypes, there was no sure reason why the Nazis would have placed the Jews at the center of their ideological war. Associating Jews with the immoral use of money and betrayal was mentioned as early as Jerome, who claimed the Jews were all Judases selling out for money. This idea was carried through the Middle Ages by Catholic theologians like Thomas of Chobham (d.1327), who saw something evil in "the money [the princes] have received from the Jews." The very money that Jews touched was corrupted, according to Nazi ideology. At the 1958 *Einsatzkommando* trials at Ulm, the Protestant chaplain of the unit explained why he had been a silent witness to atrocities against Jews: "These acts were the fulfillment of the self-condemnation which the Jews had brought upon themselves before the tribunal of Pontius Pilate."

Both Christian triumphalism and National-Socialism considered Jews as not being fully human, indeed as inhuman or demonic. When racism was added to this evil brew, the result was a "double dehumanization," as Frederick Schweitzer has referred to it. The notion that Jews were useless was rife in German society, having been expressed by such diverse thinkers as Kant and Wagner. In the 4th century, John Chrysostom had argued in almost identical terms



that the Jews "are fit for killing. While they were making themselves useless for work, they grew fit for slaughter." A Nazi murderer explained that "the Jews were killed because they were Jews, and because the so-called Fuhrer Order demanded it. . . . [T]he Jews were a useless, bad people and they must therefore be annihilated."

For centuries, churches had regarded the Jews as their hated rivals for men's soul's; the Nazis felt the same. In addition to needing the Jews as scapegoats to account for historical realities that violated their world views, both the churches and the National-Socialists considered victory over "the Jew" as a form of metaphysical power over evil and political power over life. Traditional anti-Jewish defamations, still alive in the European imagination, provided a coherent explanation in a world that seemed to be coming apart. The chaos of the modern period, with its new social movements, revolutions, wars and economic dislocations could be explained as the result of Jewish machinations. The European masses and traditional institutions, as well as the National-Socialists, were provided with a weak and readily available victim to sacrifice on the altar of their continued authority and security.

As a result, the Nazis consciously assaulted the sanctums of Judaism and tried to destroy the Jewish spirit. This explains the special Nazi assault on Jewish religious values and symbols—circumcision, prayer books, Talmud, Torah Scrolls, synagogue buildings and Jewish beards.

In sharp contrast to this assault on Jewishness, the Nazi regime was conscious of the fact that they ran a "Christian" government. Even though the Nazi regime caused the death of hundreds of Christian pastors, priests and nuns, and millions of Slavic Christians, for example, seldom did they desecrate their churches and the sacraments. Although Himmler did not want clergymen in the SS, they would be asked to leave "in the most tactful and honorable fashion possible." No matter how hard the leadership tried, de-Christianization never worked in the SS. During World War II, even Protestant and Catholic members of the Waffen-SS could receive their churches' sacraments. Moreover, at the site of the most active concentration camp in Austria, Mauthausen, while murdering tens of thousands the Nazis took the time and care to preserve a medieval fresco portraying "Christ as judge of the world, the lamb of God—a unique work of art." The Reich provided "for the drying of the already strongly endangered painting, and did so in the middle of war-time."

*Robert Michael is a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth. The second part of his essay will appear in the Winter 1994 issue of Menorah Review.*

## The Enigma of Mass Death

*Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and Consequences of Interpretation*  
by James E. Young

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

*Echoes From the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections on a Dark Time*

by Alan Rosenberg and

Gerald E. Myers (eds.)

Philadelphia: Temple University Press

*Final Solutions: Biology, Prejudice and Genocide*

by Richard M. Lerner

University Park, PA.: The Pennsylvania State University Press

*A Review Essay*  
by Herbert Hirsch

The enigma of mass death has become one of the enduring riddles of the 20th century. So compelling and important have questions concerning how to understand and ultimately prevent mass death become that scholars have created a new, interdisciplinary field of study to face, more forthrightly, the horrible realities involved in studying mass death. While the riddle remains unsolved, scholars of many different disciplines have turned their attention to the subject. These three books are examples of three different approaches. The first, James Young's *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, is an attempt by a literary scholar to examine "how historical memory, understanding and meaning are constructed in Holocaust narrative" (p. vii). This is a study of memory as text, of how memory is created and how texts are to be interpreted.

The second book, edited by Rosenberg and Myers, *Echoes From the Holocaust*, examines the philosophical implications of the Holocaust. It is a comprehensive attempt to explicate a series of important questions concerning morality from the perspective of philosophy.

The third book, Richard Lerner's *Final Solutions*, is a more general attempt to explain how theories of human development might contribute to the commission of genocide. Each is interesting in its own right, and each provides insightful snatches of interpretation, but the three together clearly demonstrate the reasons the enigma of mass death is so difficult to unravel.

Perhaps the hottest and most controver-

sial paradigm to hit the universities has been the ideas of the "deconstructionists." Focusing on texts and the interpretation of texts, they have taken over a number of highly regarded English departments and have sparked a tremendous amount of controversy in many universities. James Young is part of the tradition of this new approach to the study of language and literature, which focuses on texts as well as the interpretation and creation of meaning. His basic argument is that the history of any event can only be "known" from the way it is passed down to the present in the many different types of texts. As he notes: "What is remembered of the Holocaust depends on how it is remembered, and how events are remembered depends in turn on the texts now giving them form" (p. 1). This is a study of the formation of historical memory. Young examines Holocaust diaries, memoirs, fiction, poetry, Holocaust museums and memorials, drama, and video testimony. These are all important because they influence how the Holocaust is remembered today, and today's memory influences how individuals, groups and nation states act toward actual and potential genocides.

For example, Young points out how naming an historical event, such as the Holocaust, may influence how it is perceived, which may, in turn, influence policy. In Russia, the Second World War is called "The Patriotic War;" in Germany, "Hitler-Time;" and in the United States, "World War II" (p. 87). As Young points out, the differences among the names may help explain the "great gulfs between different nations and people, reflecting disparate experiences of the period as well as the different shapes respective national mythologies and ideologies necessarily confer on events" (p. 88). In this fashion, Young illustrates the tremendous impact language has on perception and behavior concluding that "every language's name thus molds event in the image of its culture's particular understanding of events. Naming these events is thus inevitably to conceive of them, to constrain as well as to create conditions for acting on events" (p. 88). This not only affects perception but also influences the actions of nation states in the international political system. Hence, as Jews drew on their past experience to interpret German actions, Israel now draws on the past experience of the Holocaust to interpret its present situation and may be drawing parallels that do not always lead to realistic or constructive policy.

Historical precedents, while important, may not always be translated as analogies or used as warnings for contemporary situations. Each period and set of events must be forthrightly analyzed against the background of the precedents, and the precedents should not be used as a yoke to constrain possible innovative policy options. The study of memory as text, consequently, leads to mem-

ory as history, which translates, in many situations, to memory as politics.

While Young is clearly aware of these implications, they play a less central role in his analysis, which often is clouded with the most obscure forms of academic jargon. The problem with this type of presentation is that it is obscurantist and difficult for the general reader. While there are insights in this presentation, they are not readily accessible and the reader must wade through a great deal of discussion of "tropes" and "mythoi[s]" before finding the meat of the analysis, which ultimately derives significant conclusions. As Young notes, it is important to analyze the mechanisms of memory because "by recognizing the past in the present, its force over our perceptions and our understanding of the present, we sanction the ways it makes sense of our world and leads us to our actions, rather than submit to it altogether" (p. 192).

The second book reviewed for this essay, *Echoes From the Holocaust*, is very concerned with our responses to the past and with how we view the present. In particular, they are unhappy with philosophers who have as they note, "with few exceptions" had little to "say about the Holocaust" (p. 91). In fact, if there is a theme to the divergent selections in this compilation of articles, it deals with how memory may result in the development of an ethic or morality of life enhancement as opposed to destruction. As a result, memory and its connection to morality is a central concern of the authors.

The book is divided into four parts: "The Historical Impact," "Assault on Morality," "Echoes From the Death Camps" and "Challenges to the Understanding." Most selections are interesting and important contributions to the literature. Of the 22 different selections, only six were problematic. It is, of course, difficult to review a series of 22 separate articles. As I noted, running through virtually all of the contributions are questions about morality: What is it? Are there different moralities? How can moral responses prevent future holocausts?

Perhaps the most interesting selection centers directly on these questions. Chapter 2, "Holocaust: Moral Indifference as the Form of Modern Evil," by Rainer C. Baum, is a fascinating inquiry into the presence or absence of moral courage. Baum points out that a "propensity toward moral indifference is deeply woven into the social fabric of modern life, particularly in the sphere of work. There the modern division of labor generates moral indifference in at least two separate ways. One of these concerns the extremely segmentalized nature of authority" (p. 57). He goes on to point out that discussions of morality are hardly popular in contemporary society noting that "moral failure, which one was called sin, is scarcely a popular idea" (p. 57). What Baum means is very similar to Milgram's analysis in

*Obedience to Authority*. Both argue that conformity is rewarded and obeying orders is the way to get along and get ahead. These become predominant prescriptions of contemporary society, which does not value individuals for any intrinsic humanity but only for their work-related contributions—their performance standards, their adherence to rules, their punctuality, their reliability—and not for, as Baum notes, age, color or creed, sex, or any other human characteristic. Authority is legitimacy granted to certain roles to enforce these standards and, consequently, authority is depersonalized.

***Lerner's point is . . . that humans have the potential to develop into destroyers or savers of life and it is our duty to avoid theories based on false assumptions that may lead to policies of human destruction.***

Authority is an "it" "in the name of which we make ourselves and each other toe the line" (p. 59). All people—workers and bosses—become impersonal agents and, as Baum notes, "agencyhood turns us all, self and other alike, into some kind of statistics and, as someone said, statistics are people with their tears wiped off" (p. 60). Unlike many analysts, Baum derives three steps that might propel human beings on the journey toward the development of moral courage (p. 84).

First, people should try to develop methods to help each other find ways of public mourning so that we can hope to eventually learn the nature of our loss. This is an interesting suggestion since it would be very important to determine what or who is being mourned. In this sense, it is a tricky political question as may be seen from the arguments surrounding commemorations of different genocides. That is, precisely what groups are to be included in the mourning?

Second, memory should be used to realize "just how deeply we have woven the opportunities for amoral conduct into the social fabric of modern life, how easy we have made it for ourselves to adopt the role of the passive bystander." This is crucial to the re-development of an ethic or morality of life but faces extreme difficulty. As others have pointed out, indifference is comfortable. Why be concerned with the troubles of others when one is able to lead a relatively secure compartmentalized existence? After all, it is not my fight and why should I concern myself with "these people"? In short, as Baum notes, moral indifference is probably the dominant ethic of contemporary life.

Third, people should acknowledge this ambivalence "in wanting to learn and come to understand. For here, as nowhere else in confronting the past, the need to comprehend stands irreconcilable tension with the

need and, indeed, the duty to condemn."

Overall, then, this is a book concerned with morality and development of what used to be called conscience. Several authors juxtapose conscience with conscientiousness, pointing out that conscientiousness is a commitment to ideals or authority without morality. One may be very conscientious in the application of immoral rules or immoral laws. If we are to learn not to repeat the mistakes of the past, we have to remember the fires of the extermination camps and, as Baum notes, we must stand "there in hell, as best we can in our imagination, with [the] mind trained on the victimizer and heart and mind on the victim, seeing his [or her] pain yet deepening it so that some of it can be shared across time and space. . . . [to] nourish us in our effort to change" (p. 84).

The last book reviewed, Richard M. Lerner's *Final Solutions*, examines theories of human development and points out that there is nothing objective or neutral about so-called scientific theories. Lerner's primary focus is on the nature-nurture debate—on whether factors such as intelligence or aggressive behavior are biologically determined or learned. He points out that theories of biological determinism have been among the major justifications used to stigmatize certain groups of people—in particular Jews, Blacks and women—and emphasizes that neither biological nor environmental determinism are adequate explanations of human behavior. After explicating some of the major theories and noting the abuses of them, Lerner concludes with a proposal for a perspective he calls developmental contextualism. This is, in short, the view that "neither biology nor the environment alone is sufficient to account for human behavior and development; instead, behavior and development derive from a complex, dynamic interrelationship between, or fusion of, nature and nurture" (p. xvii).

Lerner is very articulate in his defense of this position and very eloquent in his attack on and, to my thinking, discrediting of the contemporary approach of sociobiology. He points out clearly and without hesitation how similar theories of biological determinism have led to genocide and tars sociobiology with the same brush.

Finally, Lerner, like the first two authors, is ultimately interested in social policy. Theories of biological determinism, he believes, have resulted in dehumanizing and destructive policies. The alternative to developmental contextualism, according to Lerner, is more complex and views human beings as plastic—as able to develop either positive or negative behaviors. Ultimately, beliefs about the basis of human development have an impact on laws and policies that determine how individuals behave. Based on different assumptions about the nature of human beings, they lead to different conclusions concerning what to do about

them. Biological determinist perspectives assume that humans are bad and that they must be controlled; that certain types of people should do the controlling; and that the mechanisms they use, however destructive, are justified. Theories of environmental determinism are based on the opposite assumption, that people are basically good and that they are corrupted by "bad" institutions. Lerner's point is that people are neither; that humans have the potential to develop into destroyers or savers of life and it is our duty to avoid theories based on false assumptions that may lead to policies of human destruction.

In conclusion, these three books share a common paramount concern with the enigma of mass death. They are all interested in how memory may lead to the development of a morality that might, in the long run, motivate people to prevent the repetition of the seemingly uninterpreted list of genocides that have plagued humanity for countless generations.

*Herbert Hirsch is professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University.*

## **The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith: Critical Investigation and Confession in the Classroom**

*A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*  
by John B. Meier

Volume One: "The Roots of the Problem and the Person"  
The Anchor Bible Reference Library

Edited by David Noel Freedman  
New York: Doubleday

*A Review Essay*  
by Frank E. Eakin Jr.

*A Marginal Jew*, written by John B. Meier—a Catholic priest, an established scholar and professor of New Testament at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.—is truly a delight to read. It is, moreover, a happy circumstance to discover a major work of this type so articulately written and carefully researched, yet so honestly expressed. At one point, Meier succinctly states: "This simply reminds us that Jesus was a marginal Jew leading a marginal movement in a marginal province of a vast Roman Empire" (p. 56).

Meier focuses his dual audience (pp. 12-13). The text (251 pages) is geared toward the master's level student or well-

read undergraduate "as well as to the general educated reader. . . ." The voluminous notes (173 pages), however, are oriented toward doctoral students and scholars. Whereas his intent was not to resolve Christological issues, he expresses the hope that his work contributes to the efforts of those seeking to resolve those theological issues (p. 14).

However, Meier's objective is to recover, as much as possible, the historical Jesus as best as he can be reconstructed, using the tools of historical research. Like the archaeologist who recognizes that recoveries ostensibly unrelated to the primary concern may shed light on the issue of investigation, Meier's research extends broadly through both Biblical and extra-Biblical sources.

To emphasize what he proposes to do, Meier likens his task to locking four representative Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and agnostic scholars in the Harvard Divinity School library with the injunction that they would not be released until they reached a "consensus document on who Jesus of Nazareth was and what he intended in his own time and place" (p. 1). This portrait must be free of confessional bias and mutually acceptable to the four participants.

The current volume is the first of a proposed two volume work and investigates the "roots of the problem [chapters 1-7] and the person [chapters 8-11]." Volume Two will begin with the public ministry and continue through the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. In keeping with his focus on historical research, Meier will not deal with the resurrection in Volume Two "because the restrictive definition of the historical Jesus I will be using does not allow us to proceed into matters that can be affirmed only by faith" (p. 13). That an entire volume is dedicated to the pre-ministry period attests to the thoroughness of Meier's research and to his solid grounding in the subject matter. His recapitulation of the chronology of Jesus of Nazareth, as found on page 407, evidences his adamant adherence to his stated objectives.

Throughout the book, the writing style is lucid and often humorous. Several examples of his quips illustrate. "This simply proved that learned fantasy knows no limits" (p. 94). In referring to the 4th Gospel: "Each case must be judged on its own merit; the 'tyranny of the Synoptic Jesus' should be assigned to the dustbin of the post-Bultmannians" (p. 45). "It is a case of the wish being father to the thought, but the wish is a pipe dream" (p. 140).

Certainly the author receives high marks for clarity of purpose, thoroughness of research, insight as regards structural format and helpfulness of writing style. We can only eagerly await the appearance of Volume Two.

Meier's focus on the search for the historical Jesus, apart from confessional bias, raises the corollary of the nature of departments of religion (or religious studies). Giv-

en the way religion departments emerged, whether in the private sector or as adjunctive offerings in the public sector, it was inevitable that confusion exists for students and faculty, both those teaching and those outside religious studies, where it concerns religion as an academic discipline. To what extent was religious studies an extension of the church? To what degree was religion a discipline within the humanities and subject to the same critical literary and historical judgments accorded like phenomena in similar disciplines? Indeed, this latter question finds its rootage earlier in the Enlightenment as regards the appropriate vehicles of investigation for the Biblical text.

During the 1960s and 1970s, religious studies blossomed and matured, taking its place within the academy as a respected and vigorous discipline. Nonetheless, some of the earlier questions remain; specifically, the appropriateness of an instructor's confessional concerns impinging on the academic classroom. This is a natural concern because the instructor might be passionately confessional with regard to private life. The question: To what degree is it appropriate for that passion to spill into the classroom?

It is clear that this dichotomy should not be the same kind of issue in the seminary or theological classroom nor, for that matter, in the publicly advertised parochial college or university classroom, although it would be difficult to find a more rigorously pursued historical search than that of Meier's. In these settings, however, the student logically expects a confessional bias; indeed, maybe the choice of institution is partially conditioned on that expectation.

However, in the private or non-sectarian classroom, an overtly confessional orientation imposes a perspective on the student that the student did not request in matriculation. By analogy, a student in political science should not be harassed by views apparently intended to change the student's political orientation.

An instructor needs a clear sense of personal perspective, and there is no harm in sharing that perspective when requested by a student. Indeed, the positive ramifications of sharing one's personal struggle with an inquiring student can be manifold. But the instructor's personal affirmation should not color the way religion is taught. In an introduction to a religion course taught from an historical or phenomenological perspective, it should make little difference what the personal confessional orientation of the instructor might be. The issue of objectivity should supersede personal views.

One might argue that an instructor espousing a faith affirmation can better orient the student to that structure. A rejoinder might be that the absence of objectivity precludes that individual's dealing as openly and honestly with the problems associated with the faith structure. More important



than an instructor's personal affirmation, however, is the fact that a student who does make a particular faith affirmation should recognize that faith structure when discussed within the academic classroom, regardless of the instructor's personal posture. Can it be argued that the instructor with sufficient confessional bias to suggest it is necessary to inject the same into the classroom be able as a Christian, for example, to present materials with that necessary dialectic of detachment and empathy so that the student who is Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or whatever is able to recognize his or her faith structure in the instructor's presentation?

Pamela Vermes wrote a helpful book about Martin Buber (*Buber*, New York: Grove Press, 1988). In the chapter appropriately entitled "I and Thou," she discussed our inability to deal with the lively encounter with the revelation of God, that instead we tend characteristically to move revelation toward "knowledge pronounced and promulgated . . . a code of behavior laid down. . . ." (p. 57). Why do we do this? She suggests the following:

The answer is that man longs to have God continuously in time and space, and this longing is not satisfied by perfect relation. Not content with the alternate latency and actuality of the human ability to say you, he therefore

makes God into an object of faith. He prefers the duration of an it believed in, and the security it offers because of his behalf, to the insecurity of relation with You (p. 57).

This objectification of the You to an it addresses our concern regarding confession-alism in the classroom. It is difficult, if not impossible, to deal with the student as a thou if we excessively carry the baggage of confession-alism into the classroom. What should be an authentic encounter often becomes lost behind the concern to share one's confession or to engage the other, the student, in one's confessional orbit, thereby having the

### BALANCING

Toward what should we aim our efforts  
and to what purpose direct our intentions  
if the ultimate reward is dust and the only  
road to self-fulfillment leads to burnout?  
So take away the target  
let weed grow over the road and let all  
numbers be zero and all nouns run free:  
Let balancing be.

—Carol Adler

"According to the effort is the reward."

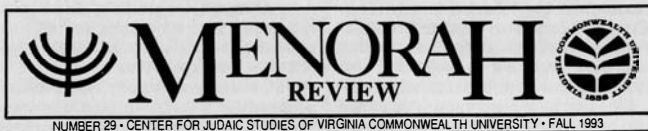
—Talmud

student become an it in that experience.

What Meier provides us is a vigorous historical evaluation of sources and data to establish what can be known of the historical Jesus when the centuries of residual are sloughed off. This issue he approaches without concern for personal affirmation about the mission and message of Jesus. In the academic classroom, our students should be able to expect the same of us as we seek authentic dialogue encounter with the thou that confronts us. A residual of that authentic I-thou encounter might be the glimpsing of the garment of the Ultimate Thou but that result can never be the objective. In setting that objective, we have precluded any possibility for an authentic I-thou relationship with the student.

Therefore, from a Buberian perspective, confession-ism may prevent the very objective the confession-ist seeks. An open search for truth in which student and professor jointly seek the truth, wherever that quest may lead, can offer the opportunity for that type of Buberian relationship that, hopefully, is the real goal of the confession-ist. Paradoxically, we gain what we seek as we jettison confession-ism from the classroom.

Frank E. Eakin Jr. is Weinstein-Rosenthal Professor of Jewish and Christian studies at the University of Richmond.



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# BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to Menorah Review

Fall 1993

**Editor's Note:** Inclusion of a book in "Briefings" does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue of Menorah Review.

**Atlas of Modern Jewish History.** By Avatar Phrasal. New York: Oxford University Press. The *Atlas* provides detailed coverage of Jewish history, geographic distribution, demography and intellectual developments from the 17th century to the 1980s. It describes the development of the Jewish people in modern times, and the adaptation of the Jews to the ever-changing circumstances of our era. The *Atlas* is a unique reference book containing 500 maps, charts, graphs and illustrations depicting the major geographical centers of the Jews and their development, the demographic changes of the Jewish people, the directions of Jewish migrations, economic characteristics of the Jews, their religious and ideological movements, cultural institutions as well as the evolution of modern anti-semitism.

**The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945.** By Leni Yahil. The volume offers a sweeping look at the Final Solution, covering not only Nazi policies but also how Jews as well as foreign governments perceived and responded to the unfolding nightmare. The author destroys persistent myths about the Holocaust: that Hitler had no plan for exterminating the Jews and that the Jews themselves went peacefully to the slaughter. Though Yahil finds that Nazi policies were often inconsistent, she conclusively demonstrates that Hitler was always working toward a final reckoning with world Jewry, envisioning his war as a war against the Jews. This is a monumental work of history, unsurpassed in scope and insightful detail. The author brings together the countless diverse strands of this epic event in a single, gripping account.

**This I Believe: Documents of American Jewish Life.** By Jacob Rader Marcus. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc. In this volume, the dean of American Jewish history explores the subtle, personal side of the history of American Jews. He carefully and critically analyzes 91 documents of ethics and ideals — letters, ethical wills, bar mitzvah speeches and the spirited declarations of notables — that penetrate the souls of their authors. What are the goals and dreams of average American Jews, immigrant and native, as reflected in their writings? What did they have to say to their dear ones when they poured out their personal thoughts and concerns? What have been the ultimate mainstays of hope and desire in the hearts of American Jewish parents? These are the vital questions the author chronicles and answers in this book.

**Conflicting Visions: Spiritual Possibilities of Modern Israel.** By David Hartman. New York: Schocken Books. In this volume, Hartman tackles some of the most vexing issues facing Judaism today: Is there common ground for a shared spiritual language between Orthodox, liberal and secular Jews? What is the essential core of Jewish belief? How are we to understand the new militancy of the ultra-Orthodox? Can a tradition that values its particularity offer us guidelines for living with religion—and national—diversity? A cogent case is made for a fresh theological perspective, one grounded in classic Jewish sources but, at the same time, responsive to the concepts of modernity, tolerance and religious pluralism. He reaches into the wellsprings of Jewish thought, both ancient and modern, for insights into building a just and authentic society.

**Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism.** By Emmanuel Levinas, translated by Sean Hand. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. The last of Levinas' major works available in English, this volume is an important collection of his writings on religion. It contributes to a growing debate about the significance of religion — particularly Judaism and Jewish spirituality — in European philosophy. Topics include ethics, esthetics, politics, messianism, Judaism and women, and Jewish-Christian relations as well as the work of Spinoza, Hegel, Heidegger, Rosenzweig, Simone Weil and Jules Isaac. Levinas' chapters on Zionism and Jewish "universalism" are of particular relevance to the current Middle East debate.

**Seed of Sarah: Memoirs of a Survivor.** By Judith Magyar Isaacson. Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press. This absorbing tale moves deftly from the author's idyllic childhood in Hungary through her terrifying coming-of-age as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps and her subsequent marriage to an American intelligence officer. The beautifully simple, straightforward prose adds power to what is essentially a testament to the triumph of the human spirit. Faced with dehumanizing ordeals in Auschwitz, the author and other women prisoners found humor and make-believe to relieve the horrors of their imprisonment as well as help them cling to the hope that they could survive and once again be free.

**The Responsa Anthology.** By Avraham Yaakov Finkel. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc. In this book, Finkel has translated more than 250 decisions from the responsa literature of three periods: the Geonim (589-1038), the Rishonim (1038-1492) and the Early and Later Acharonim (1492-1648 and 1649 to the present). They represent the thinking of many noted authorities. Each query and its responsum is preceded by a biographical sketch of the scholar. Finkel focuses on the essence of the "teshuvot," sparking the reader's appreciation of the Torah's wisdom and encouraging a deeper interest in studying the commentaries of the great rabbis. Finkel's presentation offers a fascinating glimpse into Jewish history.

**Lvov Ghetto Diary.** By David Kahane. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press. This memoir bears witness to the systematic destruction of some 135,000 Jews in the Ukrainian city of Lvov during the Holocaust. The author escaped death because he was hidden by the Ukrainian archbishop of the Uniate Catholic Church. Kahane tells his story with sensitivity and raises many important moral questions. He documents the unforgivable behavior of the Nazis and of many Ukrainians as well as the humane efforts of some Ukrainians, particularly those in the church, to save the Jews.

**From the Old Marketplace: A Memoir of Laughter, Survival and Coming of Age in Eastern Europe.** By Joseph Buloff. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. A young Jewish boy . . . the old, much-fought-over city of Vilnius . . . the rumblings and, then, the reality of World War I combine in this book to create a striking historical document of the transmogrifying period during which Europe and the western world were changed forever. In the streets  
*continued, next page*

and alleys of Vilnius, Joseph Buloff came of age, learning the arts of shape-altering, necessary for survival during successive occupations of Cossacks, Germans, Bolsheviks and Poles. It is this fascinating, vanished milieu that the author brings to life in this volume.

***The Jewish Bible After the Holocaust: A Re-Reading.* By Emil L. Fackenheim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.** Jews of today, having suffered the Holocaust and experienced the rise of the State of Israel, must find new ways to make meaningful contact with the Bible. Fackenheim provides a modern interpretation of the Bible for the Jew of today and presents new possibilities for a shared Jewish-Christian reading. His book will be of considerable importance to students of Jewish thought and to anyone interested in issues of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

***The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov: Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish History.* By Sophie Dubnov-Erich, edited by Jeffrey Shandler. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.** This is a memoir and biography by an extraordinary woman about her father, a pioneer in the field of Jewish history as well as a leading political activist among East European Jews during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This book chronicles Dubnov's personal, professional and ideological development during a period of social upheaval for the Jews of the Russian Empire, extending from the end of the Haskalah through the rise of Jewish nationalism, the Russian revolution and World War I, up to the first years of World War II.

***The I.L. Peretz Reader.* Edited by Ruth R. Wisse. New York: Schocken Books.** This reader presents selections of Peretz' best work. Peretz is best known for his short stories, many of which are based on folk tales and hasidic motifs. Also included, for the first time unabridged in English, are a travelogue reporting on the lives of Jews in the small towns of Poland and his autobiography. Many of the events in these two revealing non-fictional works recur as themes in his stunning works of fiction. This is the second volume in Schocken's "Library of Yiddish Classics" series, the first was Teyve, The Dairyman, and the Railroad Stories by Sholem Aleichem.

***Medicine and Jewish Law.* Edited by Fred Rosner. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.** We live in an age of rapid technological advancement. This is most evident in the field of medicine. In Jewish tradition, a variety of issues must be viewed from the perspective of how Halachah relates to and affects medical questions.

In this book, seven Torah and medical authorities address a broad spectrum of halachic-medical dilemmas. All of the essays were presented by the authors during the First International Physicians' Conference on Medicine and Halachah. By gathering them into one volume, the editor has created an impressive and comprehensive resource.

***Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History.* By Joseph Telushkin. New York: William Morrow & Co.** This remarkable source book condenses 3,500 years of Jewish history and culture into accessible information bits. Its 346 entries are arranged chronologically by subject, enabling readers to peruse whole sections (i.e., Jewish ethics or the Bible) with ease. Encyclopedic in scope but anecdotal and lively in style, it covers every aspect of Judaism. While it is a reference book, it is also designed to be read straight through, distilling a vast body of scholarship into a warm, readable review.

***Arguments for the Sake of Heaven: Emerging Trends in Traditional Judaism.* By Jonathan Sacks. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc.** The author explores the contemporary issues influencing Judaism and the controversies affecting its destiny. In recent years, a number of tensions have threatened to create rifts in the Jewish world. How have these conflicts arisen? What events and

influences have caused Jewish identity to be interpreted in so many different ways? How will these diverse visions affect Judaism in the coming decades? The author explores these issues by tracing the historical background of modern Jewish identities and by examining today's major Jewish communities.

***Inside Looking Out: The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, 1868-1924.* By Gary Edward Polster. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press.** Most of the boys and girls in the Asylum were immigrants from Eastern Europe (1868-1918). Polster's study examines the efforts of the most acculturated German Jews of Cleveland to "Americanize" and make good workers of the newcomers as well as teach a Judaism quite removed from the Yiddish culture and religious orthodoxy of Eastern Europe. The idea of assimilation was necessarily paternalistic but many of the German Jews believed that by becoming more "American" and less obviously "Jewish," they would deflect the always present nativism and antisemitism. The author has listened well to the aging men and women who once were the children "inside looking out."

***In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation.* By Aaron Hass. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.** What are the effects of growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust? Drawing on interviews and survey materials, Hass provides a moving account of the experiences of survivors' children. These men and women, most in their 30s and 40s, describe relationships with their parents and offer perceptions of the Holocaust's impact on their families. Hass looks in particular at how the survivors' responses to brutality and deprivation affected their functioning as wives, husbands and parents. He shows that the range of responses is vast. He reconstructs the psychological dynamics between the generations and clarifies the relationship between the postwar adjustment of survivors as well as the personality characteristics and attitudes of their children.

***What Is the Purpose of Creation? A Jewish Anthology.* Edited by Michael J. Alter. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc.** Philosophers have tried for centuries to understand the reason for human existence and the meaning of life. In this anthology, Alter gathered a wealth of material addressing this question. The first part presents the classical sources that address this fundamental question: Why did God create the universe and mankind? The second section provides excerpts from the writings of more than 50 of the greatest Jewish thinkers in history. This book makes the wisdom of Jewish teaching available to those grappling with the ultimate questions of life.

***After Tragedy and Triumph: Modern Jewish Thought and the American Experience.* By Michael Berenbaum. New York: Cambridge University Press.** The author explores the identity of the first generation of Jews to mature after the Holocaust and the triumph of the state of Israel. He looks at controversial and unsettling questions of Jewish existence such as how to represent non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust in public commemorations, how to teach the Holocaust to our children and how American Jews deal with the conflicting feelings of nationalism for both America and Israel? Berenbaum holds out the hope of liberation for Judaism, maintaining that 5,000 years of history, with its chapter of Holocaust and empowerment, provide a unique foundation on which to build a future.

***What Did They Think of the Jews? Collected and edited by Allan Gould. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc.*** Throughout history, Jewish people and their religious traditions have been viewed in different ways by their contemporaries. Reactions from their non-Jewish neighbors expose a broad spectrum of emotions: honest respect, genuine acceptance, begrudging tolerance, subtle dislike and vicious hatred. Gould gathered more than 200 documents, written by well-known men and women from ancient times through today, that reflect the writers' personal views of Jewish people and their societies' general attitudes and beliefs.