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# MENORAH



REVIEW • THE JUDAIC STUDIES PROGRAM OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY • NUMBER 7 • SPRING 1986

## INCOMPLETE REDEMPTION

*The Redemption of the Unwanted  
from the Liberation of the Death  
Camps to the Founding of Israel*  
By Abram I. Sachar  
St. Martin's/Marek

A Review essay by Herbert Hirsch

In 1945, when the concentration, labor, and extermination camps were "liberated," many believed that this darkest chapter in anti-Semitism and mass murder would be the final episode in Jewish suffering and dehumanization. It was not, however. The liberation of the camps simply shifted in focus and location as Jews continued to be threatened and victimized. Different was that they were also to fight back with the ultimate power of a newly established nation state behind them. Abram L. Sachar's important and informative book fills a large historical hole in detailing the events from the liberation of the camps to the founding of Israel. Sachar, founding president of Brandeis University, illuminates this period and demonstrates that the Holocaust was part of a continuing saga.

When the allies finally liberated the camps, there were only 400,000 Jews left alive in Western Europe. They had lived through one of the worst episodes of human brutality. Some had survived the camps, some were in hiding, most were physically and psychologically ill. As Sachar eloquently points out,

What those who survived did not know when "liberation" came in 1945 was that their ordeal was by no means over. They were now to face renewed rejection, and it was to come

from the governments and the peoples of the Allied world (p. xviii).

The Jews had no place to go. They could not return to Germany or Austria for it was there that the Final Solution was spawned and hatred remained. Eastern Europe had collaborated with the Nazis, and some hated the liberating Russians more than the Germans. The Western European countries would not take the Jews, and Canada had the "most restrictive immigration laws of any western nation." The United States refused to liberalize immigration regulations:

... labor federations, national patriotic societies, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, businessmen and industrialists, all were adamant that the United States should not be "flooded by cheap labor" nor endangered by the infiltration of Communists pretending to be refugees (p. xx).

These were cruel blows to people who had survived the camps largely by holding onto dreams of freedom after liberation.

The story of the camps is by now fairly well known. The Nazis created two categories of camps. One type, concentration camps, were places to concentrate "undesirables" while arrangements were made for their final disposition (p. 2). These included Buchenwald, Dachau, Bergen Belsen, Mauthausen, Thieresenstadt, and many others. When the victims were deemed no longer productive, they were transferred to the second type of camp, created for a single purpose—extermination. The major extermination camps were located in Poland; their names have been, as Sachar writes, "etched in infamy": Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, Maidanek, and Sobibor. At the end of war, other people counted their

losses, but "the Jews could only count their survivors."

Sachar takes the reader on a camp-by-camp tour of what the liberators found. Again, this information is entering public consciousness at an increasing rate. It is quite well known, or should be, that scenes of horrible carnage greeted the soldiers who first entered the camps. It is also estimated that 5,820,960 Jews died. But other aspects of the Jewish experience are shrouded in myth and misinformation. For example, the notion that the Jews were passive acceptors of their fate does not admit the fact that resistance did occur. As Sachar correctly points out, "The wonder was . . . not that there had been so little resistance, but that there had been so much" (p. 47).

The first strategy of any totalitarian regime is, of course, to wipe out any leadership that might organize resistance. Intellectuals, political leaders—any potential source of resistance—are exterminated or neutralized. Thus,

Between 1933 and 1944 German courts handed out 32,000 death sentences for purported treason. . . . Thoroughly cowed, German resistance had no organized structure and there were no partisan groups [within Germany] (p. 48).

This accomplished, it takes time for indigenous leadership to arise; meanwhile the oppressors are able to gain a significant advantage. By the time new resistance has emerged, the oppressor is in control, and the odds against success are staggering.

The resistance of the Warsaw Ghetto is an example where new leadership emerged. A handful of Jews fought the German Army's tanks and held them at bay for several weeks before the Ghetto was finally burned to the ground and the

rebels killed or sent to extermination camps. Sachar also provides a valuable account of resistance efforts mounted in other countries by the Jews, and tells of other heroes. Resistance is only one form of courage in the face of oppression. Sachar points out that most acts of individual heroism seemed to arise

from among the common folks—a humble parish priest here, a minister there, a Mother Superior of a convent, a modest housewife, a shopkeeper or small businessman, the people of a feisty French village, a mini-company of laborers, a group of students (p. 84).

While rare, Sachar notes that it is important to “recall that there were valiant spirits . . . whose actions pierced the Stygian darkness” (p. 84).

With the war over, the camps liberated, the survivors treated for the multitude of physical and psychic afflictions, and the heroes celebrated, two questions remained: first, what to do with the Nazi leaders who were captured; second, what to do with the Jews.

The first question was partially answered by the fact that 29 of the major Nazi leaders had already committed suicide—among them Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler—and four had disappeared. It was also answered by the convening of an International Military Tribunal in August 1945.

Twenty-two Nazis were brought to trial in Nuremberg. The trial lasted 284 days from November 25, 1945, into October of the following year. The process was beset by numerous disagreements among the victors, not the least of which was whether there should be a trial at all. The Russians and the British, for example, “were inclined to oppose the idea of international trials. Stalin . . . thought it was nonsense to go through with what he regarded as pantomime. He argued for quick execution of accused war criminals and almost invariably acted on the option when Nazi leaders were apprehended in the Russian jurisdiction” (p. 116). Likewise Churchill and Anthony Eden “felt it would be unseemly cant to follow a barbarous war with sanctimoniousness” (p. 116).

Franklin Roosevelt did not agree. The United States’ position was that execution without trial would “transform gangsters into martyrs. . . .” So the trials proceeded, defense and prosecution argued their cases, and verdicts were handed down. Some of the Nazis were condemned to death, others received prison terms and were eventually freed in the general pardon, and some were acquitted. Albert Speer, Hitler’s Minister of Armaments, received a 20-year prison term and, on release, wrote a book, *Inside the Third Reich*. He also made a fortune from interviews, lectures and television appearances, and article and book royalties (p. 122).

The Nuremberg Trials were the major show trials of the post-war period, but numerous other proceedings took place. Generally, Nazi leaders received more lenient treatment in the Western zone where, though more than 5,000 of the accused were convicted, death sentences were carried out for about 500 (p. 125). In the Eastern zones, “there were nearly 2,500 convictions that brought 630 sentences of death. . .” (p. 125).

After 1947, when the Cold War heated up, and “West Germany was welcomed into an anti-Russian bloc, further trials were no longer pressed, and there were only perfunctory efforts to capture criminals who had fled and were living under new identities in Spain, the Argentines, Egypt and other countries that offered asylum, tacitly or otherwise” (p. 125).

What of the Jewish survivors? To be sure, there was enough rhetoric of sympathy, but “no country offered any practical assistance. . .” (p. 146). Instead, many Jews lived in Displaced Person Camps. Some who attempted to return to their former homes were met with hatred and violence. As Sachar notes, “A common note was sounded: ‘If only Hitler had finished the job of the Final Solution!’” (p. 154). Pogroms were not unknown. For example, on July 4, 1946, in the Polish city of Kielce, scores of Jews who returned “to learn the fate of loved ones or to reclaim their homes and property” were lynched. As in the past, the pogrom was initiated by traditional anti-Semitic propaganda. Very soon, Jews began to flee Eastern Europe,

and the Displaced Person Camps, already crowded, filled to overflowing. By April 1947,

there were approximately 150,000 Jews in Displaced Person Camps in the American zone in Germany and another 27,000 in Austria. In addition there were about 15,000 in the British zone, and a few thousand more in the French zone, and the rest scattered in Southern Europe. The Jews, two years after the war ended, comprised about one-fourth of the population in the camps (p. 159).

Conditions in the camps were deplorable. Especially bothersome was the contrast with German civilians who, while the Jews were in the camps, lived outside the walls and moved about with relative freedom. Was this, then, to be the fate of the survivors—to be confined in camps by the liberators?

Spurred by Jewish leaders such as David Ben Gurion, the goal soon became to empty the camps and transfer the inmates to Palestine. The British Labor Government of Ernest Bevin, however, resisted this because it was determined not to alienate the Arabs in the Middle East. The Displaced Persons faced the stark prospect that, if they were to succeed in finding a Jewish homeland, it would have to be in the “teeth of British opposition, even armed opposition” (p. 173). So it was that the exodus to Israel in the form of “illegal immigration” was to continue until Israel was created in 1948.

The story of the illegal immigration to Palestine, of the effort to create the state of Israel, and of the armed struggle against the British and Arabs has been told and retold. The intricacies of the diplomatic maneuvering are nicely outlined in this book, as are the acts of repression and terrorism on both sides of the controversy. Finally, on November 29, 1948, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine and establish independent Arab and Jewish states; and on May 11, 1949, Israel was admitted as the 59th member of the United Nations.

Indeed, as Sachar notes, “the unwanted” had been redeemed, but they were not to experience peace.

Periods of terrorism and war and a renewed anti-Semitism focused on the Israeli state, as the manifestation of the Jew was to follow and remain a part of contemporary life. The legacy of the Holocaust and the Second World War remains very much a part of our contemporary life, and the daily headlines from the Middle East indicate that the redemption of the unwanted is still incomplete.

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**ALTERNATIVES FOR A NEW  
JEWISH-CHRISTIAN  
FUTURE**

*A Christian Theology of Judaism*  
By Clemens Thoma  
Paulist Press

A Review essay by Glenn R. Pratt

Although Clemens Thoma addresses his book directly to Christians, it is certain that he intends Jewish people to turn to it to understand how some Christians are also responding to a major problem. Problem, indeed! He speaks of Jewish-Christian relations through the years as being negative and irritating. He likens their history together to a brutal boxing match that has no rules and no referee. Most of the blows have been below the belt. A Christian theology of Judaism, he asserts, must locate the causes of this animosity, measure the extent of the hostility, and then find alternatives for a new Christian-Jewish future.

As a major promise, he declares Christians must affirm that the Jews of our time are "people of God." They continue to be Israel, for their call from God is irrevocable (*Romans* 11:19). Christian communities should beware of calling themselves "the people of God" apart from stipulating the continued chosenness of the Jewish people. An eschatological view that holds out the promise that all Israel ultimately will be saved is an insufficient outlook for a Christian as he or she assesses the place of Jews.

Thoma states that neither Jesus nor Paul pronounced a ban against Jewish people or Judaism. They did not teach that the Jews were cursed

by God or set aside. In fact nobody before Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE ever maintained a mutual exclusion between Jesus and his followers and the other people of Israel. The polemics of each side simply reflected inner Jewish disputes. This being the case, no one legitimately interprets the statements in the New Testament concerning the Jews (apart from the pre-70 CE context in which they were first cast) as idea and affirmation. Even assertions that might be dated as later in the New Testament indicate that, instead of rejection, the purpose of God was the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition" between Gentiles and Jews (*Ephesians* 2:14).

Thoma states that the Jewish-Christian alienation is far greater than is warranted by the actual differences. In fact, recent scholarship has disclosed that much material reflected in early Christian writing is of Jewish origin. Further, Christian disengagement from Judaism did not take place as promptly as all parties had believed. The Qumran data is a part, but only a part, of the emerging evidence of this. Thus, the separation between Christians and Jews and the accompanying hostility must be explained on the basis of newly understood facts rather than on older suppositions.

With this realization, we may see more clearly the Jewish character of Christianity and the Christian character of Judaism. On the basis of massive evidence, Thoma points out that Jesus of Nazareth was thoroughly Jewish in his origin and perspective. There is no foreign (Greek) admixture, and he is explainable by the Pharisaic and scriptural Judaism of his time. Also, the study of apocalyptic and pseudoepigraphical literature in circulation at the time of Jesus's ministry supports this reality. A serious problem arose sometime after 70 CE because the Gentiles who accepted Jesus did not appreciate or grasp his Jewish orientation. Writing before that date, Paul had defended the Jewish setting, but later Gentiles interpreted Jesus in terms of the Hellenistic religious and philosophic presuppositions with which they were familiar. Thus, they made of him a concept that was out of keeping with his true Jewish background.

Present-day theologians, in addition to Thoma, know the absolute

necessity of seeing Jesus as the Jewish individual he was—one who taught out of the rich resources of the religion of his birth. As a case in point, the Christian theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, in his book *The Responsible Self*, says that Christians are indebted to Jewish people because Jesus was a Jew. He affirms correctly that the Christian cannot understand Christ without turning to the Hebrew Scriptures (p. 170).

Thoma's stated purpose is to establish and prepare for a more balanced and better relationship between Christians and Jews. But he has no illusions about devising some type of doctrinal unity. Such a unity is beyond the realm of possibility because of the diversity within both faiths. In fact, in commenting on Judaism, he states that no unity ever was fully achieved. Diversity was tolerated as a matter of course and often was considered to be a source of enrichment. Even so, this attitude toward doctrinal unity does not advocate an acceptance of just anything in the way of belief. Judaism's fervor for God opposes cheap, overhasty religious ecumenism. The Jewish people have always resisted a leveling uniformism, which entails a giving up of significant belief.

Thus, Thoma has no intention of establishing a final or unique Christian theology of Judaism. Rather he considers the prospects of an approach toward Judaism and establishes examples of ways in which problems can be treated in their historical context.

We can look at but a few of these particular examples. Among them is a significant discussion of the seemingly anti-Semitic statements in the New Testament. They have plagued Jewish-Christian relationships through the years. Part of Thoma's critique is based on an analysis of the so-called redactional portions of the New Testament. The thesis is that the gospels in particular underwent editorial revision after the year 70 CE. Prior to that time, written sources and the oral tradition concerning Jesus were devoid of hostile elements concerning the Jews. Subsequently, the writers of the various gospels accounts modified the sources with

which they worked to form the gospels as we now have them. In their redaction, they inserted negative comments concerning the Jews that were a reflection of the deteriorating relations of the period in which they were writing. Thus, Thoma would remove from the basic Christian affirmation the redacted elements that indicate a negative stance toward Judaism. This mitigates against the harshness of the statements somewhat by not imputing them either to Jesus or his immediate disciples. This approach is fruitful, but the evidence within New Testament scholarship is not definite enough to make this a firm conclusion.

Another approach to the problem is taken by scholars who do not accept the redaction hypotheses in the same manner as Thoma. Such scholars take the statements at their face value and see if an accurate understanding of each yields an interpretation that in context reflects no anti-Semitism at all. Such approaches stress that Jesus, as a loyal member of the community of faith, made self-critical comments about existing Jewish religious practices that are essential for correction and healthy growth.

In taking up other than gospel passages that appear to be anti-Semitic, Thoma cites the half verse I

*Thessalonians* 2:15b: "They (the Jews) are displeasing to God, and are hostile toward all men." He states that this verse probably was not by Paul but rather by a later Gentile Christian glossator. There is no textual evidence for this hypothesis, but the flow of thought in the passage would not be interrupted by its excision. Even so, we see a more plausible explanation, one that can be used fruitfully in many other similar cases. In contrast to the speculation concerning a glossator, we would direct attention to the flow of the argument in the passage as a whole. In this segment of the letter, Paul addressed the fact that the Gentile people of Thessalonica who had accepted Jesus were objects of persecution by their fellow Gentiles who did not believe. They were suffering in the same manner that faithful Jewish people suffered at the hands of some of their own people (*I Thessalonians* 2:14-15b). The passage overtly distinguishes between Jews who are to be criticized for their behavior and Jews who are to be commended for their fidelity. The point is that since faithful Jews suffer, the faithful Gentiles should not be surprised that suffering comes from other Gentiles.

This being the case, Thoma is incorrect when he quotes the *I Thessalonians* 2:15b segment by bracketing

"(the Jews)" after the word "they." It is not the "Jews" that are indicted for their conduct but rather those particular Jews who are like the particular Gentiles who persecute the faithful.

One should not hypothesize so as to eliminate the statement from the New Testament canon. On the contrary, one simply needs to understand it. The same kind of reasoning can be applied to many of the other so-called anti-Semitic passages in the New Testament. In fact, Thoma does reason after this fashion when considering *John* 8. He states that Christian exegesis has tended to use the word "the Jews" too universally. If one were to give greater attention to the documentary context, he or she would legitimately note that the Jews in this chapter are only a segment of the Judean priests.

Christians and Jews are suspected of being at opposite poles on the law of God. Careful analysis indicates that this is not the case. In developing this theme, Thoma says that those outside Judaism maintain that Jews hold to a narrow hair-splitting interpretation of the Scriptures. At times, the stated views of Jewish people have hardened the Christian suspicion that Judaism is in the grasp of a rigid law.

Thoma argues against this supposition by pointing out that the law of

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the Hebrew Scriptures is a part of Christian revelation. Properly understood, law and grace are not opposed; they belong together. Another Christian theologian has spoken of the context out of which the law comes: "The exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, is temporally and in other respects prior to Sinai. . . . It is because of God's goodness, historically made known in the freeing of the children of Israel, that they ought to, and do, obey his commandment gladly." The law for the Christian is also a gift of God's grace (*Christ and the Moral Life*, pp. 34 and 45).

The Christian understanding of Jesus as "Son of God" has stood as a marked difference and a cause of contention. Thoma seeks to establish that there is a sense in which the term "Son of God" might not be objectionable to the Jews. The intimate relationship between Abraham and Isaac at the time when Abraham was set to offer his son in sacrifice stands in many Christian minds as the root of the meaning of the account of Jesus's baptism. According to Thoma, it could be that the New Testament authors considered the Abraham figure in this account to point in the direction of God the Father while Jesus was understood as the perfect Isaac. The voice from heaven affirming "This is my beloved son" (*Matthew* 3:17) expresses the intimate relationship and the harmony of will existing between Jesus and God. Isaac's attitude of devotion is that which is to be imitated by all who worship the God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, the anguish of the event coupled with the unquestioning obedience stand as a father-son relationship for all of Israel: a role that Jesus accepted without any resistance.

If this is in fact the limit of the Christian affirmation concerning the sonship of Jesus, no Jew should take offense. The subordination of the son to the father, of the created to the creator, is maintained, and the devoted love, surrender, and obedience are underscored. Jesus is reported in the gospel according to *John* to have said, "The Father is greater than I" (14:28). Yielding and giving himself to God's purpose are set forth as a

model of devotion for each of the children of Israel.

These facts, according to Thoma and other New Testament scholars, represent the original position in the Jesus tradition that was transmitted within the Christian community prior to 70 CE. After that, the "Son of God" concept within Christianity came more and more under the influence of Hellenistic conceptualizations. In time, that affirmation of Jesus's special relationship to the Father became translated into that which was seriously opposed to the pure monotheistic beliefs of the Jewish people. The Nicene-Constantinople Creed (325 CE) asserted Jesus Christ as "one Lord . . . only begotten Son of God; born of the Father before all ages; God from God . . . one in being with the Father by whom all things were made."

Linking this evolved competition of "Son of God" to the very Being of God results in the doctrine of the Trinity. Thoma says that this dogma should not upset Jews. Both Christians and Jews believe in a God who is not rationally comprehensible. We agree that the ultimate mysteriousness of God may well pull the teeth from biting debates about His essential and hidden Being. Notwithstanding, it is probable that the oneness of God expressed in Jewish monotheism and the dogma concerning the Trinity do have some radically distinctive differences. There is a problem here that cannot be bypassed through an appeal to inscrutability as Thoma suggests.

There are a myriad of topics in this book that have many strong points. Major issues are identified and treated firmly without vacillation. But the volume has the inherent weakness of any document that seeks to say something about all the facets of a large subject. It lacks depth in many places where one seeks for more information, discussion, and analysis.

I highly recommend this book. What is important is not to agree with Thoma on each particular point he addresses, but rather to see that in a general sense he is focusing on areas in which we can come to a mutual understanding, if not a consensus of opinion. From this constructive work, we can gain the encouragement to be together as

Christians and Jews in a relationship in which we can walk toward each other, stand as partners in service to God, and yet not carelessly mingle our views in such a manner as to compromise the integrity of each.

Glenn R. Pratt is professor of religious studies, VCU.

**IDENTIFYING JEWISH ART:  
A QUESTION OF MORAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS?**

*Jewish Experience in the Art of the  
Twentieth Century*  
By Avram Kampf  
Bergin and Garvey  
Publishers, Inc.

A Review essay by  
Fredrika Jacobs

*A work of art is a world in itself  
reflecting senses and emotions of  
the artist's world—Hans Hofmann*

Aristotle recognized, as a major function of art, the power of an image to stimulate a catharsis. Commenting on Aristotle, John Milton asserted a homeopathic theory, saying art is invested with the "power . . . to purge the mind of passions, to temper and reduce them to just measure." This "power to purge," contended Goethe, allows the individual to find a point of equilibrium between emotional extremes. Whether or not one ascribes to this theory of purgation, and many philosophers do not, it is clear by the mass of literature on the subject that art frequently elicits, at least to some degree, an emotion from the viewer. If one adds to this thesis another of Aristotle's contentions, namely that art often has provided society with a forum for assessing moral and ethical values, then art may be regarded as a potent vehicle for personal expression, one which may excite the passions and mold the ideas of a culture. For this reason, Plato advised governments to censor art judiciously, a policy stretched to distortion by

modern totalitarian governments such as Hitler's Third Reich.

Attempts to identify a specific source for this cathartic effect have yielded a variety of responses. In his essay, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), the abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky talked about the "psychic effect" of color, which may be "intensely moving" and, therefore, produce a "correspondent spiritual vibration" in the viewer. Others, however, have credited form as the catalyst for arousing a response. The recent controversy concerning the minimalist monument to the Vietnam War in Washington, D.C. attests to the validity of this theory. And some, such as Hans Hofmann, have refused to segregate these pictorial components, noting that empathy is aroused by the observer's search for and discovery of "the plastic and psychological qualities of form and color." But the purely formalistic elements of art—color, form, and composition—are arranged on a surface or molded and assembled into a three-dimensional object by an individual who will acknowledge that the resultant image is an expression of his or her personal life experiences and of a desire to make some kind of "statement." This is the topic Avram Kampf addresses in his extensively researched book, *Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century*.

The premise of Kampf's book is that there exists a collective experience that transcends chronological and geographical differences, enabling art historians and others to perceive and isolate in art a Jewish Experience. Acknowledging that there are a variety of styles and subject matter that comprise the art reflective of this experience, he, nevertheless, distills from these disparate modes of expression "an appeal to moral consciousness" and a "deep sympathy for the disadvantaged and exploited" as the elements collectively shared by Jews and visible in their work. He tries, with varying degrees of success, to isolate this "appeal to moral consciousness" and convince his reader not only of its existence throughout this century but of the strength of this art to move those who view it to a new sensitivity toward the cultural background from which it developed.

Kampf takes a realistic approach to his subject. By focusing on Jewish experience in the art of this century, he avoids the perennial question, "What is Jewish art?" Rather than struggle to determine the answer to an impossible question, he turns his attention toward the individual who made the art. Consequently, the objects he discusses become tenable images of self-exploration and self-definition, reflecting the artist's grappling with events of modern Jewish history, such as the increasing secularism of traditional Jewish communities and the Holocaust. One does not need to ask whether or not "Jewish art" is something made by a Jewish artist, an image that necessarily contains Jewish subject matter, or a decorative object that fulfills a specific ceremonial function. These become moot questions, and appropriately, the classifications and groupings suggested by Kampf become, in the words of the author, vehicles "intended to be ontological and metaphysical in nature, binding artists' reactions to events which may have occurred far apart in time and place." This has enabled Kampf to scrutinize the work not only of Jewish artists who have invested their works with Jewish themes and symbols, like Marc Chagall, but also those Jewish painters like Chaim Soutine who make images that are not specifically on Jewish subject matter, and others like Picasso, a non-Jew who, nonetheless, responded to the situation facing European Jewry on the eve of World War II. This approach removes confining restrictions, allowing a personally experienced ethnic culture to emerge above specific geopolitical boundaries.

In the introduction to his provocative study, Kampf explains the reasons for this approach: "The work of art does not fit into any of the conceptual categories which the rational mind constructs." Therefore, to categorize would be an expedient oversimplification of a complex issue. Instead, he focuses on experience, because "experience is a continuous process of the living organism interacting with aspects of the world in which it lives."

The theme of personal experience pervades the book. Quoting Vladimir Stassof, the prominent nineteenth-century Russian art critic who was

the first to accept unequivocally the concept and existence of Jewish art, Kampf sets the tone of his study:

... art derives from the depth of the people's soul. What the artist is born with, the impressions and images that surround him, among which he grew to manhood, to which his eyes and soul were riveted, only that can be rendered with deep expression, with truth and genuine force.

Tracing the evolution of Russian folk art from its roots in legend, ritual, proverb, superstition, and "primitive" vision, Kampf catalogs the process of its synthesis with contemporary Western modes of expression. From the Jewish *lubok* (popular prints illustrating religious ceremonies and objects) to the late works of Mark Rothko, in which the numinous and sublime dominate, the Jewish experiences of this century are discussed. Displacement, secularization, persecution, and, finally, resettlement and the hope for peace in Israel form the framework of historical events that shaped and molded the visions of Chagall, William Gropper, Leonard Baskin, Amadeo Modigliani, Max Beckmann, Itzhak Danziger, Mordecai Ardon, and many others. Still, Kampf does not lose sight of the individual helplessly caught within the web of traditional customs confronting conflicting cultural, political, and religious ideologies.

Discussing artists of the Holocaust, the author recounts individual biographies and assesses the impact of personal experience on art, correctly suggesting that while artists, such as Maryan S. Maryan, Samuel Bak, and Fritz Hundertwasser, collectively experienced the horrors of Nazi Europe, the horrors they witnessed differ. Maryan's hellish images of Auschwitz—of victims, inquisitors, and predatory animals—display a tension of rigid and angular line, as disturbing as the agonized figures he represents.

His paintings cannot be compared with the colorful and decorative canvases of Hundertwasser. Drawing on the style of Gustav Klimt and other Viennese artists of the *fin de siècle*,

Hundertwasser juxtaposes acrid colors within irregular labyrinthine forms to create compelling images of perilous journeys. There are no merciless faces or terrifying conflation of man and beast. Still, Hundertwasser, like Maryan, was trapped within the mechanism of a machine of terror, intent on his destruction. One cannot ignore the artist's experiences. The son of a Jewish mother and a deceased World War I hero, Hundertwasser was enrolled in the Hitler Youth Organization as a precautionary measure. His mother dutifully pinned his father's medals on his uniform. This display of Aryanism worked well enough to save him and his mother but not 69 of his maternal relatives, Jews who were deported to Eastern Europe in 1943 when Hundertwasser began to draw. Kampf's narrative of these and other events is both concise and chilling. Together, the text and images convey the colliding forces that Max Beckmann called "the world of spiritual life and the world of political reality."

Kampf's book must be valued as a worthy contribution to the literature on art of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, by designating "an appeal to moral consciousness" as the distinguishing characteristic and unifying factor of art born of the Jewish experience, he paradoxically faces the same classification pitfalls as found in the search for Jewish art, a journey whose limitations Kampf recognizes. Many would argue that an "appeal to moral consciousness" is the domain of all art. I cannot perceive a difference between Jacob Epstein's *East Side People* (1900-1901), William Gropper's *Tailor* (1940) and Degas's *Laundresses* (ca. 1884), *The Third-Class Carriage* (ca. 1862) by Honore Daumier or Courbet's *Stonebreakers* (1849). Each work communicates a sympathy for those who toil and struggle. These paintings stand as social comments on a specific social structure in a particular time and place, which is, nevertheless, universal and timeless. Denominational boundaries do not exist. Speaking of Gropper, Ben Shahn, Jack Levine, Rothko, and others, Kampf notes

their styles and mode of work are different, and yet they seem to share the same cosmos, partaking in a profound moral earnestness which characterizes the Jewish tradition. There shines through their work a

deep sympathy for the disadvantaged and exploited, a quest for meaning, an appeal to moral consciousness and an active commitment to social justice.

What, then, does Kampf do with Goya's canvas, *The Third of May, 1808* (1814-1815), a work that condemns injustice and politically motivated atrocity? And what of Rodin's powerfully moving sculpture representing selfless sacrifice, *The Burgers of Calais* (1886), or even the contemporary works by Lanigan Schmidt, a devout Catholic who attempts, he says, to create meditative tableaux that transform the worthless into something precious?

Moral consciousness and an active commitment to social justice are not qualities limited to art either Jewish in origin or beginning in the twentieth century. Art arises from personal experience. Whatever religious, ethnic, social, and political situations exist, it remains an image made by an individual. The process of visualizing these experiences may provide the artist "with the power to purge the mind of passions" and in a like manner may present the viewer with a vehicle for understanding the circumstances from which it evolved.

*Fredrika Jacobs is adjunct professor of art history, VCU.*

**BEING A JEW IN VIENNA**  
*The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914:*  
*Assimilation and Identity*  
By Marsha L. Rozenblit  
State University of New York Press,  
Albany

A Review essay by  
David Weinberg

*Fin-de-siècle* Vienna has a magical fascination for historians combining as it does the Old World charm of a dying empire with the embryonic ideals of modern life. As the works of Carl Schorske, Frederic Morton, and others have revealed, Jews played a major role in shaping the city's distinctive character. It was in end-of-century Vienna that Theodore Herzl spent his formative years, that Sigmund Freud developed his theories of psychoanalysis, that Adolf Hitler first dreamed his murderous

fantasies of the Final Solution. While much has been written about notable Viennese Jews who left their mark on European life before World War I, little attention has been paid to the mass of Jewry that formed a microcosm of the Habsburg Empire in particular and of European Jewry in general.

Marsha Rozenblit's excellent study fills this major void in historical scholarship. Eschewing discussions of the cultural and intellectual elite, Rozenblit concentrates on the Viennese Jewish community—its demography, residential patterns, economic structure, educational pursuits, political activity, and organizational make-up. Drawing on limited primary and secondary sources, she applies sophisticated quantification techniques to highlight the everyday reality of the largest Jewish community in western and central Europe at the turn of the century. In so doing, Rozenblit also dispels some generally held assumptions about the assimilation of emancipated Jewry in pre-war Europe. Thus, while Viennese Jews abandoned traditional occupations, they continued to engage in economic activity that differentiated them from non-Jews. Similarly, upwardly mobile Jews did not rush to socialize with other Viennese but instead remained in Jewish neighborhoods while establishing specifically Jewish organizations to meet their changing needs. Though integration into the larger society brought an increase in intermarriage and conversion, the continued survival of the community was never seriously threatened. In short, the history of Viennese Jews between 1867 and 1914 suggests that integration into the larger society after emancipation often led not to the disappearance of Jewish identification but to the creation of new forms of Jewish expression and affiliation.

In emphasizing the creative opportunities offered by modern society for the reaffirmation of Jewish identity, Rozenblit's work parallels the approach of a number of recent communal studies such as Todd Endelman's *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830* (Jewish Publication Society, 1979) and Steven Zipperstein's forthcoming book on Odessan Jewry in the nineteenth century (to be published by Stanford University Press). In contrast to more traditional studies that have portrayed emancipation as



a problem that often forced individuals to choose between their loyalty to Judaism and their commitment to the larger society, these new works stress the often unconscious and developmental process of integration and differentiation as revealed in the behavior of Jewish communities en masse. Such an approach has also led to significant changes in the parameter and methodology of modern Jewish historiography—from national to regional and local studies, from sweeping overviews to limited time periods, from intellectual and cultural investigation to social and economic analysis.

Despite its obvious attractions, Rozenblit's approach is not without its limitations. At times, she overstates the case, such as her contention that converts actively sought to remain tied to the Jewish community. Similarly, her failure to examine the nature of religious observation and affiliation within the community leaves the reader with the false impression that emancipation led to the disappearance of traditional forms of Jewish identification. (Given the author's

emphasis on the creation of new forms of Jewish expression, how would she explain the continued vitality of Orthodoxy and the failure of religious reform to take hold among Viennese Jews?) Nor does Rozenblit explain to what extent Viennese Jewry's maintenance of communal ties and assertion of Jewish identity were motivated by fear over the rise of anti-Semitic movements in the Empire, such as Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party.

Despite its shortcomings, Rozenblit's study is to be welcomed as part of an increasing body of serious research that effectively puts to rest the popular misconception that the history of modern European Jewry before World War II is simply a prelude to the Holocaust. Her skillful blending of general and Jewish historical methodology and her avoidance of both philopietism and detached narrative make the book an extremely useful model for future investigations of the modern European Jewish experience.

*David Weinberg is professor of history at Bowling Green State University.*

## INTRODUCTORY JUDAISM

For credit or audit, VCU will offer "The Development of Jewish Thought" in fall 1986. The course, listed as Religious Studies 304, surveys the dynamics and characteristic patterns of Jewish thought from earliest times to the present. It will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:45 am. Call 257-1224 for more information.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Alexander  
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