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MENORAH REVIEW



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For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

A Dissenting Voice

Ending Auschwitz: The Future of Jewish and Christian Life
by Marc Ellis
Louisville, KY: Westminster/
John Knox Press

A Review Essay
by Cliff Edwards

There is something to disturb everyone in Marc Ellis' *Ending Auschwitz*. A Jewish liberation theologian directing the Justice and Peace Program at Maryknoll School of Theology, Ellis' life and views cross multiple boundaries many treat as inviolable.

Do you view the establishment of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum as a positive event? Ellis suggests otherwise:

Will the continual replaying of the Holocaust narrative, sanctioned and funded by the monied Jewish elite and the U.S. government, provide a future for the Jewish people?

Do you view Judaism and Christianity as two rather distinct world religions, and do you see them as positive alternatives to atheism and paganism? Ellis questions such boundaries, counting Judaism and Christianity as one religion with "varying emphases," a path that should embrace "pagan spirituality" and value atheism's refusal of a stagnant monotheism.

Do you believe Jewish and Christian leadership, today, are moving us toward a more promising future? Not so for Ellis:

...Jewish leadership, and dominant Christian leadership too, are living on borrowed time, time purchased with great suffering, spoken and written about with great eloquence but also increasingly empty of meaning.

Central to Ellis' disturbing volume are the linked questions of the role of the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel in modern Jewish consciousness. Emerging from his trip as a delegate invited to consult with the museum staff at Auschwitz in 1992, Ellis' conclusions once again are

likely to bother many. He finds a continuing obsession with the Holocaust to be a manipulation by the power elite of suffering and mourning as a justification for living in the diaspora, a ploy against assimilation, and a pleading for victim status and non-accountability in the power-politics of the day:

...this episode in our history has created such anger, isolation and a pretense of non-accountability that it erodes the basic sensibilities and fundamental ethics of our existence.

Ellis links the obsession with the Holocaust to the militarization of Jewish theology and the problem of Israel and its victims:

A Jewish state with power was fundamentally altering the loss we mourned at Auschwitz of a flawed and beautiful people seeking a place in a world among other peoples. Auschwitz has put us on the march, and Israel had militarized our soul as well as our theology.

For Ellis, "ending Auschwitz" means ending the obsession with the Holocaust as a "badge of special privilege." He believes an honest approach to the Holocaust memorializes past sufferings by utilizing them as a way leading to an understanding and entering into the sufferings of others. Ellis looks to the future:

...ending Auschwitz is not the dismantling of Israel and the re-institution of pre-Israel Palestine as if history had stood still, but the movement beyond pre-Israel Palestine and present-day Israel to a Palestine/Israel combining elements of both while also transcending both.

Such a future, for Ellis, must involve a new Jewish consciousness and sensitivity:

IN THIS ISSUE

- A Dissenting Voice
- More Resources By, For and About Jewish Women
- Individuals of the Jewish Persuasion
- Recognizing the Other
- Book Listing
- Book Briefings

...the raising of the Palestine narrative in the Jewish imagination is one that advises of the Palestinian's prior rights that Jews transgressed and the displacement of Palestinians that Jews caused.

Much more is in this slim volume than I have indicated, a kind of completion of a trilogy he began in 1987 with *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation* and continued in 1990 with *Beyond Innocence and Redemption: Confronting the Holocaust and Israeli Power*. Among these further themes are an examination of the history of Christian imperialism and persecution, and an account of recent thought regarding the figure of Jesus and its relevance to Jews and Christians. The promising contributions toward a liberation/liberating theology of the future in the works of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Daly, John Dominic Crossan, James Cone, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Gustavo Gutierrez and many others are appreciatively cited. Ellis also acknowledges his debt to his teacher, Richard Rubenstein, though he makes clear his departure from Rubenstein's "neo-conservative" views.

Ellis' *Ending Auschwitz* defines "the essential religious goal of our time to be to cross boundaries," and enunciates the author's own guiding principles: "oppose all orthodoxy" and "beware the guardians of tradition." Ellis quotes, approvingly, Rabbi Irving Greenberg's test for a theological direction for the future:

After the Holocaust, no statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of the burning children.

For Ellis, this moves us toward a life called to dismantle barriers, create life and enhance its dignity, and labor toward community and hospitality for all.

There is something to disturb everyone in Ellis' book, but it is a shaking of the foundations of much of our thinking and acting that calls the reader and the religious institutions of our day to serious self-examination and acts of community.

Cliff Edwards is professor of Religious Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and a contributing editor.

More Resources By, For and About Jewish Women

Sarah Barbara Watstein

Common denominators are hard to find in this crop of books! These are all clear winners, albeit in different categories. Read on! Books are reviewed in alphabetical order; a final title, a valuable addition to reference collection everywhere, is reviewed out of sequence.

Active Voices: Women in Jewish Culture. Edited by Maurie Sacks. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. This wide-ranging collection of lively essays by scholars in diverse disciplines, including Penina Adelman, Dianne Ashton, Judith R. Baskin, Michael Berkowitz, Sally Charnow, Judith R. Cohen, Judith Davis, Myrna Goldenberg, Debra Renee Kaufman, Pamela S. Nadell, Esther Schely-Newman, Susan Starr Sered and Rita J. Simon. The collection begins with some "men's voices" so readers can later compare what they read with these more expected assertions. The following chapters are arranged in sections analyzing public, literary, ritual and folk voices.

"Women in Europe, Israel and North America" share center-stage in these essays. Readers will experience the history of Zionist women in central and western Europe from 1897-1933. They will follow the emergence and early maturation of Reform synagogue sisterhoods in the early 20th century. They will be introduced to Grace Aguilar, a writer of the Victorian era. They will revisit the experiences of Jewish women in the Holocaust through the testimonies and narratives of Jewish women writers. Other chapters explore the evolution of a ritual called *Kos Miriam*, the Cup of Miriam, by the women who invented it. And yes, there is a chapter on the Bar Mitzvah "balabusta"—mother's role in the family's rite of passage. The contemporary Hasidic world is visited, through the lens of women's perspectives on sexuality and domesticity. In the section entitled "Folk Voices," chapters concerning the role changes of Tunisian women in Israel are considered, the environs of an Orthodox girls high school and women's roles in Judeo-Spanish song traditions.

A final chapter, in the final section, "An Anthropological Voice," addresses an anthropology of Jewish women, and serves to bring together the cultural differences, the time spans and the geographical distances that the volume embraces. The author's conclusion—that Jewish women shape their own spirituality while simultaneously reaffirming the Jewish great tradition—resonates with most of the studies in this volume.

This collection was somewhat difficult for this reviewer to "sink her teeth into." The

separate chapters are indeed that—"separates"—good reads each and every one of them. While I applaud a multidisciplinary approach to Jewish women's lives and perceptions through time and space, this approach presents a unique challenge for the reader. My advice is to stay with it, especially if you doubt the value, abilities and power of Jewish women.

Emma Lazarus in Her World: Life and Letters. By Bette Roth Young. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. Nothing short of mystique surrounds the 19th-century American poet, Emma Lazarus. Was she a "radical"? Was she comfortably Jewish? Was she more at home in the cultured milieu of New York, Newport, Concord and London than in the Jewish world she so ardently embraced in the last years of her life? How did the Jewish community view Emma, her secular Jewishness and her call for a Jewish nation? Does her name deserve to stand with that of Deborah and Miriam? Did she really succeed in lifting the whole race of Israel in the public mind to its due and rightful position? How widespread was her popularity anyway? Was her soul really dedicated to the aid of the oppressed? Who were her contemporaries? Her mentors? Her soulmates? And, how do biographers and scholars remember and understand her life contributions?

Part I of the book, "The Life," explores the question, "Who, then, was Emma Lazarus and how did she live?" Her experience and work are reviewed carefully. The subjects and themes of her poetry and prose are examined. Lazarus' Jewish identity and polemic also are unraveled, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of her unorthodox concept of "Judaism." These introductory essays deepen our understanding of Lazarus' important but ambivalent sense of her Jewish identity.

The second part of the book, "The Letters," includes correspondence with Helena deKay Gilder, Thomas Wren Ward, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Edwin Robert Anderson Seligman and Henry James. Each collection of letters is preceded by an introduction that explains how Lazarus knew her correspondent, as well as some history of the correspondence. The book concludes with notes, a glossary of proper names, a bibliography and an index.

This well-written and well-researched book is, in a word, a fascinating "read." It benefits from both an interesting subject and the expertise of an author who is an established freelance writer, book critic and editor, as well as a member of the National Book Critics' Circle. Believe any advance praise you may hear about this book.

A Gay Synagogue in New York. By Moshe Shokeid. New York: Columbia University Press. As a reviewer, I cautiously approached this volume. Was it appropriate for me to review this book? Having lived in New

York City for 12 years before relocating to Richmond in 1992...and having been an active member (although not a founding member) of this synagogue during the 1980s and 90s...and as a Jewish lesbian still grappling with my personal gay Jewish dilemma, I debated...could I objectively review this book? And, could I honestly review this book without self-disclosure? My conclusions? I decided, yes, it was appropriate for me to review this book. Yes, I could objectively review this book. And, yes, self-disclosure was important, out of respect for *Menorah Review* readers and out of respect for myself. So, with no further ado...

The largest gay congregation in the world is a synagogue in New York City's West Village, Congregation Beth Simchat Torah (CBST). This book is the story of the creation of a new synagogue. It is also the story of the creation of a new social personality with a new type of community: gay and lesbian American Jews. Finally, it is the dramatic story of a unique group of gays and lesbians who have chosen to confront the questions of a new sexual community within the traditional and religious framework of their ancestors.

Accomplished Israeli anthropologist Shokeid approaches his subject matter by first acknowledging the journey of CBST and presenting the history of CBST. He then explores the question, "Why join a gay synagogue?" Rituals, both traditional and innovative, are discussed in detail, as is the Drashah and negotiating multiple realities, the Talmud Circle, and identities in conflict. The politics of a lay-led synagogue are discussed in full, from Board Chairs to styles and strategies to Board members and committees. Women's growing visibility in CBST is discussed. Shokeid does not avoid difficult issues. For instance, in Chapter 10, he tackles the social component at CBST head on: couples, gentiles, cruising and talking sex. In the following chapter, he explores how CBST confronted and continues to confront the rampage of the AIDS epidemic. The volume concludes with an exploration of what it means to have a gay space, a Jewish space and a safe space.

This volume is laden with queries, many of which remained unanswered. Heated political and religious debates also fill its pages, debates that are not always "settled." This volume traces the dynamic ongoing process of identity transformation...and leaves the reader with the knowledge that this transformation continues. For all of us who are Jewish and who believe we are in touch with scripture, here is the familiar and the unfamiliar. For all of us who are Jewish and who have sought spiritual and social outlet in our synagogues, here is the familiar and the unfamiliar. For all of us who are Jewish and who have struggled with social comfort and inclusion, here is the familiar and the unfamiliar. For all of us who are

Jewish and who have struggled with self-acceptance, here is the familiar and the unfamiliar. I challenge you to make the effort to understand, learn and inhabit another world, the world embodied in Shokeid's book.

Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women. By Paula E. Hyman. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Thumbs up to Hyman who, in this slender volume, accomplishes the two linked tasks she set out to do: to reclaim the experience of Jewish women as they accommodated to the socioeconomic and ideological challenges of modernity in western and central Europe, eastern Europe and the United States, particularly in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century; and to explore the role of ideas about gender in the construction of Jewish identity in the modern period. Light reading? Hardly! The research and analysis that form the backbone of this book is scholarly and stimulating. The author finds that Jewish women's patterns of assimilation differed from men's. She proceeds to examine those differences and exposes the tensions inherent in the project of Jewish assimilation.

For readers not familiar with either the debate or the paradoxes of assimilation, Hyman's first chapter is most welcome. Here, the author defines assimilation (as opposed to, for example, acculturation) and carefully distinguishes between assimilation as a sociological process and assimilation as a project. If you are interested in the Jewish women's history...in the economic and social roles of Jewish women in eastern Europe...in the economic and social roles of Jewish women in the immigrant community of the United States...in efforts to attain equality within the Jewish community or at European universities...in the political activism, secular education or spirituality of Jewish women, Hyman's book is for you.

Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story. Edited by Judith A. Kates and Gail Twersky Reimer. New York: Random House. Have you ever wondered what happens when a group of women focus on one text? Is it true that when women are involved, reading is not a singular enterprise? Here it is—finally, one volume—a collection of modern-day women's Biblical commentaries and interpretations on a single text, the *Book of Ruth*. The authors' words are worth quoting:

The *Book of Ruth* seems like a particularly fruitful place to begin exploring the riches that women's points of view might yield when brought to bear on traditional Jewish texts. So many experiences, qualities, dilemmas and issues traditionally of concern to women surface in this text. Its central figures are women, its central story (or stories) is relationship. It tells the story of marriage and childbirth, of widow-

hood and childlessness, from within women's experiences. It evokes the experience of mothers and daughters, while highlighting the tensions in a mother-in-law's relationship to her daughter-in-law. It focuses on the experience of being "other"—the other as foreigner and the other as woman. It addresses the problems of women's powerlessness and vulnerability in a man's world and illustrates the power generated when women mobilize their resources. It is the story of women caring and women plotting, women mourning and women rejoicing.

Reading Ruth brings together women from a wide spectrum of Jewish practice and affiliation. Here are essays, poetry, autobiographical meditations, fiction, midrash and other variations on traditional Jewish forms. The collection opens with a verse-by-verse commentary on Ruth. The pieces are organized into seven sections, each of which develops a theme or motif suggested by a specific verse or partial verse from the *Book of Ruth*. The sections have been designed as discrete units. Introductions to each section are used to point to related pieces elsewhere in the collection.

The central relationship for almost all the writers included is not that between Ruth and Boaz but that between Ruth and Naomi, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. This shift in focus is considered by the editors as "one of the most striking results of our invitation to women to interpret this text."

This is engaging and engrossing reading that will draw the reader into new interpretive possibilities. I join Judith Plaskow in her hope that this collection becomes part of a "bookcase of women's commentaries on Jewish sources."

Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing. Edited by Judith R. Baskin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. A companion volume to the author's well-received *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, this new collection of 17 essays surveys the achievements of Jewish women writers from the Renaissance through the Modern era. Written by scholars of Jewish literature, *Women of the Word* studies the works of women writers in Yiddish, Hebrew, English and Spanish. The themes of repression and equivocal liberation resonate throughout the text as the authors reflect on the silencing of the female voice in traditional Jewish culture. What did it mean to become a Jewish woman writer at the end of the 19th and in the early decades of the 20th century. What does it mean to be a female writer of Hebrew in this century? What were the experiences of the first female immigrant writers who chose to write English prose rather than Yiddish poetry? Here too is a fascinating essay on Jewish women in Latin America and an equally powerful essay on the transmutations of memory, testimony and survival in the words of women who survived the Holocaust.

Women of the Word succeeds in calling its readers to listen to the voices of Jewish women, past and present. Neither inclusive nor exclusive, it attempts to illuminate moments from the struggle of Jewish women to find literary legitimacy, often in Jewish cultures wary of female aspirations and feminist concerns. Today, Jewish women writers internationally are creating a wealth of diverse literary works. Baskin's volume notes the short time during which Jewish women's writing has flourished. It is easy to be inspired by the richness of the literature that such writers have produced.

Rav Jochanan, the beautiful, and Rav Shimon Ben Lakish (Resh Lakish), the ex-Robber, an ex-gliadiator. Much of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds contain their decisions and discussions. Meet when the former's bathing in the Jordan. The latter says, "You're handsome enough to get any girl you want." The former, "If you turn to God all your strength, I will give you as wife my sister, who is more beautiful than I."

He turns to God, and they become colleagues, the Robber providing the Beauty with criticism of his opinions no one else gives him. One day the Robber says something that suggests atheism, and Rav Jochanan stares at him and he dies. One day his nephew is walking down the street and meets his uncle, and his sister calls the kid away, afraid he'll also get a stare and die.

Jochanan has no one to contradict him now, so he can't really progress in thinking about the Talmud, so he dies of heartbreak. The other rabbis come to his death bed to pray for his death. Jochanan was so beautiful they said it was like a light shining from his skin. One rabbi wept that such beauty should vanish from the earth.

C&C Alcibiades
"The Basilisk Stare of Beauty"

And, a new reference resource...

Jewish History in 100 Nutshells. By Naomi Pasachoff and Robert J. Littman. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aaronson. Here is the history of the Jews broken down into 100 "nutshells," individual topics that stand on their own and can be understood without reading what has come before. Examples of these major individuals and events include: Saul and the establishment of the kingdom, The Dead Sea Scrolls, Bar Kokhba, the Jews in the Muslim world before 1400, Hebrew printing, Martin Luther and the Jews, the Pale of Settlement, the Balfour Declaration, the U.N. Partition Resolution, the Sinai Campaign, the Eichmann Trial, the Yom Kippur War and the Falashas Arrive in Israel. All periods are covered from early Israel and Biblical history to the Roman period, the Medieval period and the modern period. These "read-bytes" are intended for "ordinary" people, Jews and non-Jews, who are neither academics or scholars. In my estimation, the text is not as lively an introduction to the major events, personalities, and concepts of Jewish history and culture as it could be. However, it succeeds in furthering basic Jewish literacy and would make a nice addition to most personal libraries.

A feminist footnote is in order—none of the 100 nutshells introduces a female personality! Yes, Sarah is mentioned in the nutshell on Abraham and the Patriarchs but I was disappointed that the choice of 100 topics is so limited. Perhaps (publishers take note) there is room for a companion title—*Jewish Women's History in 100 Nutshells!*

Sarah Barbara Watstein is interim manager, University Computing Services, Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University and a contributing editor.

Individuals of the Jewish Persuasion

Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship
edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson
Princeton: Princeton University Press

A Review Essay
by Peter J. Haas

One hallmark of a classic Jewish text is that it is, at least formally, a commentary on another text. In these terms, *Paths of Emancipation* can be seen as a quintessentially Jewish book. The essays brought together here constitute an extended consideration, commentary and discussion of a statement made by Jacob Katz in *Out of the Ghetto*. In

this statement, cited in Birnbaum and Katznelson's introductory essay (p. 17), Katz claimed that "emancipation in its wider sense occurred more or less simultaneously. It can also be said to have followed a similar, if not identical, course." For Birnbaum and Katznelson, this view reflects a common set of misunderstandings about the emancipation of Jews, namely that it happened across Europe at roughly the same time, that it followed roughly the same course in the different countries of Europe and that the experience of the Jews in Germany is representative of the emancipation process in general. The essays brought together in *Paths* are designed not so much to reject this formulation as to supplement and complement it. While the editors concede that there were elements of simultaneity and similarity in the process of emancipation, they hope to show that there were also significant differences in time, process and outcome. In fact, the essays here show that the distinctions and variations of the process of emancipation as it took shape in the different areas of the West—France, Germany, England, America, Italy, Russia and Turkey—are in many ways more interesting and instructive than are the similarities.

"Emancipation," the editors point out in a striking turn of phrase, is a "congested term" (p. 4). By this they mean to say that the word encompasses in one semantic field what was in fact a very drawn out, multivariiegated and complex process. Emancipation can be said to have begun in earnest in the late 18th century and was largely completed in most of Europe by the late 19th century. It thus extended over at least a century. Nor did the process occur in the same way in the different nations of Europe. In France, it happened fairly suddenly and was largely imposed from the top in the wake of the Revolution. In England, by contrast, the Jews were admitted in the 17th century already under relatively liberal terms and further emancipation of the Jews in the 19th century tended to percolate up from the bottom. In Germany, to take a last example, the process of emancipation proceeded in fits and starts as Germany itself underwent its agonizing passage into modernity. In the words of Werner Mosse, in his chapter on the emancipation in Germany, the Jews of Germany at the end of the Napoleonic era had the unique experience of being "partially emancipated into a partially emancipated society" (p. 71). Needless to say, the experiences of Jews in Russia, Turkey and other countries treated in this volume have their own stories to tell.

The point of the volume before us is that these differences are not incidental or insignificant. The editors and contributors want to show us that the shape the emancipation took varied considerably from one nation to the other as a function of the broader trends that characterize that nation's entry into

modernity. The process and content of emancipation thus reflected not merely its own inner dynamic but also the economic, social and political context in which it occurred. To be sure, the social and political situation of most Jews in the period before emancipation was roughly the same throughout Europe and emancipation brought the same rights (at least on paper) to post-emancipation Jews wherever they were. Despite these congruities, however, there was not one route from pre-emancipation to post-emancipation that all Jewish communities traveled. There were, as the title of the book suggests, many paths of emancipation, each with its own message to relay. We tend to perceive all of these different experiences of emancipation in the light of emancipation as it unfolded in Germany. The essays here show us how far off the mark that simplistic understanding is.

There is yet another complicating factor: the reaction of the Jews themselves to the promise (and threat?) of emancipation. There is no doubt that ultimately the emancipation presented all Jews everywhere with the same dilemma: to accept integration into the secular state at the price of giving up Jewish specificity (through reform, assimilation or conversion) or to reject such integration to preserve Jewish distinctiveness. But the promises and costs of emancipation presented themselves in different forms and with different intensities as each national situation evolved in its own way. The forces acting on the Jewish community of Republican France (or the United States) in the early 19th century were remarkably different from the forces acting on the Jews of the German state of Baden, say, or of the Ottoman Empire. Local politics, and even the personalities of leading individuals (for example, Moses Montefiore in England, J.H. Duenner who headed the Netherlands Jewish Seminary in Holland, the banking family of the Pereire brothers in France) all gave individual shape and substance to the diverse Jewish responses to emancipation in the 19th century. The picture is even further complicated, as many of the essays point out, by the fact that in the late 19th century, especially in England and the United States, many Jews arrived from Eastern Europe. These new immigrants had not participated in the local process of emancipation and, in fact, brought with them their own distinctive responses to the modern world. They added yet another element to the already confusing interrelationship between emancipation, assimilation, traditionalism and Zionism that embodied modern Jewish life in the more emancipated communities of the West.

The perception of matters outlined above creates the epistemological problem of *Paths of Emancipation*: how to present this multi-sided picture in a coherent way. The strategy that formed the book took shape in a seminar taught by the authors in 1987 at

BOOK LISTING

Editor's Note: The following is a list of books received from publishers but, as of this printing, have not been reviewed for Menorah Review.

the New School for Social Research. They found that their comparative approach was not well-supported by scholarly literature on the subject, which either submerged local differences to address the problems of emancipation as a whole or focused on individual countries as self-contained experiences following their own inner dynamics without devoting attention to comparison with other experiences of emancipation. In response, the editors commissioned a number of papers from country specialists who were asked to address emancipation from a common perspective. A series of meetings between the contributors yielded the several chapters of this collection. Each chapter is a study of the emancipation as it unfolded in one area (Holland, Germany, France, England, America, Italy, Turkey and Russia, respectively). In each case, however, the discussion is informed by a common set of concerns and a vaguely shared methodological grid (established by the editors in their introductory chapter). Thus, we are invited to keep in mind a certain conceptual framework (provided by Albert Hirschman, Zigmunt Bauman, Brian Berry as well as others) as we read across a number of individual "case studies."

In many ways, the strategy works, although it does have its weaknesses. On the one hand, the complex and multi-dimensional character of the emancipation and the Jewish responses to it are related with striking clarity. On the other, the differences from country to country are so great that at times the common methodological grid fades into obscurity. In many cases, the articles read more like traditional area studies than as exercises in comparative analysis. The comparative language is there to be sure but often as a kind of afterthought than as an integral part of the presentation. In part, this is a function of the very point the book is trying to make, namely that the emancipation is not a monolithic event that occurred simultaneously and in roughly the same way across Europe. The difficulty inherent in making these chapters talk to each other grows from the fact that it is indeed hard to find commonalities between the experiences of Jews in the United States, Russia and Italy in the late 19th century, for example. So, in an ironic twist, the weakness of the book—the, at times, tenuous ties between chapters—is generated by the very thesis the book is meant to establish.

In the end, the editors have, I think, made their point. The term "emancipation" is congested indeed, and the process is far from the simultaneous and roughly homogeneous event that Katz claims it to be. The problem left by the book is where to go from here. The editors seem to leave two possibilities open. One is to forego the notion that there was a common experience of emancipation (with a capital "E") and to look instead at how individual Jews interpreted and

Anti-Semitism in Germany: The Post-Nazi Epoch Since 1945. By Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

A Modern Heretic and a Traditional Community: Mordecai M. Kaplan, Orthodoxy, and American Judaism. By Jeffery S. Gurock and Jacob S. Schacter. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lest Memory Cease: Finding Meaning in the American Jewish Past. By Henry L. Feingold. Syracuse University Press.

At the Center. By Norman Rosen. Syracuse University Press.

Shira. By S.Y. Agnon. Syracuse University Press.

A Man For All Connections: Raoul Wallenberg and the Hungarian State Apparatus, 1944-1945. By Andrew Handler. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

The Israel-American Connection: Its Roots in the Yishuv, 1914-1945. By Michael Brown. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

David E. Lillienthal: The Journey of an American Liberal. By Steven M. Neuse. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

The Jews: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (2nd rev. ed.). By Alan Unterman. Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press.

Close Encounters: Jewish Views About God. By Ronald H. Isaacs. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.

Critical Essays on Israeli Society, Religion and Government (Books on Israel, Volume IV). Edited by Kevin Avruch and Walter P. Zenner. Albany: State University of New York Press.

People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity. Edited by Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky and Shelley Fisher. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation. Edited by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr. and Edward Cook. HarperSanFrancisco.

Between the Flag and the Banner: Women in Israeli Politics. By Yael Yishai. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Under the Wedding Canopy: Love and Marriage in Judaism. By David C. and Esther R. Gross. New York: Hippocrene Books Inc.

Jewish Identity and Civilizing Process. By Steven Russell. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Our Parents' Lives: Jewish Assimilation and Everyday Life. By Neil M. Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cowan. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

The World Reacts to the Holocaust. Edited by David S. Wyman. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

What a Country! Dry Bones Looks at Israel. By Ya'akov Kirschen. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.

Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews. Edited by Allon Gal. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany. By Michael Brenner. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

The Jewish Experience. Edited by Norman F. Cantor. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Israel and the Peace Process, 1977-1982: In Search of Legitimacy For Peace. By Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov. Albany: State University of New York Press.

reacted to modernity and the liberal offer as it presented itself to them in each case. This more atomistic approach would help us see how individual or small populations of Jews make sense of their Judaism in terms of the political and social world around them. The second is to forge a more inclusive and flexible definition of "emancipation" and, with it, a new grid of comparison so that the variety of experiences that comprise emancipation can be brought together in a coherent and meaningful way. It would have been a real service if the book before us had been able to forge such a new definition. But maybe it is too early to hope for this. At least now, the question is firmly and starkly on the table. After reading this book, it will be impossible to ever look at the Jewish experiences of emancipation in quite the same monolithic way.

Peter J. Haas is professor of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University and a contributing editor.

Recognizing the Other

*Difficult Freedom:
Essays on Judaism*
by Emmanuel Levinas
Baltimore: The John Hopkins
University Press

A Review Essay
by Eric David Fox

The perplexities that Jews face often vary as much as the individual lives of those in the diverse world Jewish community, but certain phenomena are recognizable as central to a Jewish experience. Through an examination of these phenomena, Emmanuel Levinas, a leading 20th-century French philosopher and Jewish scholar, has thematized the essence of Judaism as a "difficult freedom." In his recently translated exposition on this theme, Levinas explores the complex responsibility of Jewish life as an integration of its spiritual, philosophical, historical and political realities.

Through his interpretation of the revelatory phrase "difficult freedom," Levinas has come to identify many essential aspects of the Jewish experience and offers a rich collection of insights to guide the reader into the existential possibilities of Judaism. His insights are philosophically challenging and require a careful reader with the willingness to dig through the many layers of his discourse. My essay is written with these complexities in mind and, hopefully, will serve as both a commentary and as a guide through a collection of ideas that, like Judaism itself, offer great rewards in return for the difficulty of their exploration.

The phrase "difficult freedom" indicates the responsibility to a just existence inherent in the emergence and continuance of Judaism. "The fact that the relationship with the Divine crosses the relationship with men and coincides with social justice is therefore what epitomizes the entire spirit of the Jewish Bible" (p. 19). In this statement, Levinas links the Jewish relationship with God to a responsibility to the Law and to its social manifestations. In this sense, Jews come into relation with God through our social relationships as a responsibility to act justly toward other human beings in the world we share.

The relationship becomes difficult and quite complex as Levinas indicates in his chapter entitled "A Religion for Adults." The essence of Judaism is the social responsibility of God's Law that is born of the covenant between God and Jews. This responsibility becomes difficult in that humans possess the free will to choose their actions. The Law has been given, and it is a challenging responsibility for human beings to decide whether or not to follow it as a code for worldly relationships. In this light, Levinas argues that "the personal responsibility of man with regard to man is such that God cannot annul it" (p. 20). With this insight, we can prepare to understand the notion that Levinas addresses in his chapter "Loving the Torah More Than God." For Jews, "the link between God and man is not an emotional communion that takes place within the love of a God incarnate but a spiritual or intellectual ["esprit"] relationship which takes place through an education in Torah" (p. 144). Judaism is a religion of individual and collective responsibility made worthy by the "challenge and response" (Levinas quoting Toynbee) of Jews to the spiritual strenuousness presented by the Law and the historical obstacles presented by those choosing to live outside the Law.

Jewish responsibility becomes complex in that we are connected to God through the Torah yet we can freely choose to break the covenant and, in turn, compromise the relationship that is the source of our being. Amidst this freedom, the love of Torah makes possible and eventual the love of God and humanity. Levinas addresses this dynamic by exploring the ways we may use the teachings of Judaism to guide us through the challenges of this "difficult freedom" that connects our origin, the essence of our relationships, and the future of our existence.

Out of the challenge and response to our relationship with God and the Law emerges perhaps one of the more integrating truths of the spiritual, philosophical, historical and political aspects of Judaism. This concerns the notion of the Jews as the "chosen people." What does such a designation mean to the people of Israel and how does such a privileged assignment affect our relationships with other peoples of the world? Such

questions resonate quite well with Levinas' theme of Judaism as a "difficult freedom." Throughout his work, Levinas addresses the concept of monotheism and the rigorous response of the Jews to this ethical precept. For Judaism, this response is found through an education in the Law that God has entrusted to the responsibility of the Jewish people. This covenant is neither inclusive nor exclusive as a privilege of favoritism. Such an interpretation would reduce our responsibility from a "difficult freedom" to the level of childish dependency. The Jewish responsibility to the Law is not based on the privileges of being chosen but rather on the universalism to which "the Judaism that links the Divine to the moral has always aspired" (p. 21). For the Jew, the establishment of an ethical life on earth brings a joy achieved through a knowledge of God. As Levinas states, the responsibility of humanity to God's Law "is the extreme humanism of a God who demands much of man..." (p. 26). In response to these demands, the Jew knowingly accepts the yoke of the Law and the obligation to demand more of him or herself than of others. In this sense, the chosen people are commanded by God to learn the law so we may teach by example.

Living by the Law as a chosen people in a world in which identity is often constituted by comparison and difference has presented interesting challenges for Judaism. The historical and political conditions of Jews living in the West have made available to Jewish thought a philosophical tradition that calls spiritual identity into question as a condition of allegiance. As Levinas states, "the Western mentality to which the Jew became assimilated, to such a degree that henceforth he touched only the surface of Judaism, is perhaps defined by its refusal to adhere to anything unless it performs an act of adhesion" (p. 51). From a Jewish perspective, this mentality has presented a serious challenge to the possibility of an immediate Jewish identity.

Jews experience a crisis of identity through anti-Semitism, which has its roots in fear. Fear arises from the ontological challenge of alterity (otherness). If we see in others that which we fear or may even dislike in ourselves, we may criticize them rather than recognize our own freedom to improve ourselves and the world. More explicitly, when people constitute their own identity by attacking the actions of others, they regularly neglect to address the responsibilities through which their humanity is truly constituted. Replacing the immature desire to blame with a learned desire to infuse all human relationships with the Divine is a goal worthy of a chosen people.

Anti-Semitism is a disease of the human spirit. Hate and xenophobia are painful symptoms of an ongoing spiritual crisis of which we are too often reminded. For Emmanuel Levinas, the crisis presents us

with an essentially ethical dilemma. We have a responsibility, a "difficult freedom" that calls for us to see ourselves in the face of the Other. Such a recognition can bring a freedom from the fear that allows people to hate. Perhaps this freedom is best realized through its difficulty, for it acts as a constant reminder of the joys that we can achieve if we try. Placing blame on others is easy but this action denies one's humanity and enslaves us to our fears. Taking responsibility for our "difficult freedom," an action that Levinas recognizes as "substituting oneself for the other" (p. 295), is an essentially ethical response to our fears through which we can help make peace in the world.

I dedicate this essay to the memory of Yitzak Rabin. His murder, at the hands of a fellow Israeli Jew, arose from a complex crisis of alterity. Tragically, the fear of the Other so overwhelmed his killer that he chose to symbolically assassinate his "self" rather than exist "other" wise.

Eric David Fox is an instructor of Business Ethics and Research in the MBA program at Averett College in Richmond.

COPYING TORAH, COPYING LOVE

If copying this Torah doesn't help your soul
return to God it might help mine
endure life without you except in mind.

These thick black letters dispell the darkness
where you might wander as lost as I.
Each of us giving light
to comfort us through death.

I can barely lift this scroll in your name
before the congregation.
See see God's truth. No. See.
See the blood love writes its truths with

There must be some place in God
where blossoms never fall,
some time before art and
nature's illusions of things passing forever.

Though older than he, though he left me,
he kept returning,
no more able to live without me
than I can without him.

Only his wife and death could keep
him away so long.
I loved him for his sense of duty
as much as his beauty and self

At sixty I say it's mad to have had no heart
left these thirty years
What love did I bring the dead
becoming our cenotaph.

—Richard Sherwin

BOOK BRIEFINGS

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

***The Imaginary Jew.* By Alain Finkielkraut. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.** The author decodes the shifts in anti-Semitism occurring at the end of the Cold War, chronicles the impact of Israel's policies on Jews in Europe, opposes arguments both for and against cultural assimilation, reopens questions about Marx and Judaism, and marks the extent of the loss of European Jewish culture through catastrophe, ignorance and cliché. What should we remember? Not only grievance, not only good days gone by. Finkielkraut argues for a memory with depth, no mere catalog of facts and indictments but a recollection that knows pain and can bear it.

***Ethics of Responsibility: Pluralistic Approaches to Covenantal Ethics.* By Walter s. Wurzbürger. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.** Wurzbürger develops a convincing statement for the role of human conscience in determining right and wrong, good and evil. Building on the writing of many traditional Jewish thinkers who contend that only halachic norms dictate matters of ethics, the author believes that the cultivation of an ethical personality is a religious imperative. He maintains that halachah serves as the matrix of a distinct ethical approach and assigns to the dictates of conscience a vital role in religious life. This work bridges the gap between liberal Jewish philosophy and modern Orthodoxy. It is thoughtful reading for both the Jewish and non-Jewish scholar, teacher and for all readers interested in the study of ethics and morality.

***Torah and Law in Paradise Lost.* By Jason P. Rosenblatt. Princeton University Press.** Rosenblatt reveals Milton's epic representation of paradise and the fallen world to be the supreme coordinates of an interpretive struggle in which Jews believe the Hebrew Bible, with the eternally authoritative Torah, were set against the Christian view that it was a temporary law superseded by the New Testament. Arguing persuasively that the Milton of the 1643-45 prose tracts saw the Hebrew Bible from the Jewish perspective, the author shows that these tracts are the principal doctrinal matrix of the middle books of *Paradise Lost*, which present the Hebrew Bible, as well as Adam and Eve, as self-sufficient entities. Rosenblatt shows that Milton's poetry derives much of its power from deep internal struggles with the value and meaning of law, grace, charity, Christian liberty, and the relationships among natural law, the Mosaic law and the gospel.

***East Side/East End: Eastern European Jews in London and New York, 1970-1920.* By Selma Berrol. Westport, CT: Praeger.** The author of this volume presents a comparative study of similar people in different environments at the same point in time. She discusses why eastern European Jews came to London and New York, differences and similarities in the settlement process, the schools they found, the use they made of them, and the mobility they achieved. The study concludes that individual and societal conditions made it impossible for more than a small proportion of the generation that grew to maturity before World War I to use schooling as a road to the middle class. In general, the Russian and Polish Jews who came to New York reached the middle class sooner than those who remained in London.

***Summing Up: An Autobiography.* By Yitzhak Shamir. New York: Little, Brown and Company.** In his fascinating memoir, Shamir has set down the story of his life. He has been a notable figure in Israel's bitter struggle for statehood and an important eyewitness to the complexities of its recent history. Insightful, and always controversial, he candidly discloses his own view of the intricacies of the peace process and present-day United States-Israeli relations, as well as provides an inside look into such personalities as Meacham Begin, Anwar Sadat, Ronald Reagan, George Bush and John Major and into Israel's right wing—its origins, its philosophies and its heroes.

***The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991.* By David Cesarani. New York: Cambridge University Press.** Founded in 1841, the Jewish Chronicle is the oldest Jewish newspaper in the world that has been continuously published. Recognized as a force for change, a forum for debate and a shaper of Jewish identity, it has played a central role in the development of modern Anglo-Jewry. No historian is capable of understanding the inner life of British Jews without looking at the reports, columns and varied coverage the paper has carried. This book gives an insight ful look into the working of a newspaper, the struggles between editors and directors, and the boardroom politics. It is the story of a publishing adventure that became an institution and helped shape the destiny of an entire community.

Friend in Deed: Inside the United States-Israeli Alliance. By Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman. New York: Hyperion. This book explores the dramatic history of an alliance: from the United States' reluctant support for the new Jewish state to the secret cooperation between the CIA and the Mossad, to the aiding of Israel's nuclear program but then spying on it, to the connection between American mobsters and Israeli fundraising, to the American influence in the Middle East peace talks. The authors have uncovered and documented many revelations about the secret side of the alliance, including new details of the intimacy between the intelligence networks, the surprising scope of military cooperation—and the truth about Israeli lobbying activity in Washington. This is a thorough and intricate work of investigation and research, giving a new level of understanding for America's most intense international alliance.

The Jews in Germany, 1945-1993: The Building of a Minority. By Michael Cohn. Westport, CT: Praeger. Germany, today, is not "Judenfrei," free of Jews. About 80,000 Jews now live within the borders of the German state. Some are religious, some are not. Some are Jews by the rules of ritual law, some are not. All the Jews in Germany, originally from many countries and believing in many different forms of Judaism, have joined together to create a new minority community that has been given the official title of "Jews in Germany." This informative book shows how the Jews in Germany have built a social structure that acknowledges the influence of the Holocaust, state Communism, theoretical Socialism and the establishment of the state of Israel. They have created a new community in Germany, built on the ruins of the old.

Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment. By Allan Arkush. Albany: State University of New York Press. Mendelssohn, author of numerous works on natural theology and ethics, was also the first modern philosopher of Judaism. This book places Mendelssohn's

thought within the context of the Leibnizian-Wolffian school, the writings of Kant and Lessing and other major figures of the Enlightenment, and within the age-old tradition of Jewish rationalism. More than any previous treatment of this subject, it questions the extent to which Mendelssohn truly succeeded in reconciling his allegiance to the philosophy of the Enlightenment with his adherence to Judaism.

Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature. By David Kraemer. New York: Oxford University Press. This volume is the first comprehensive history of teachings related to suffering in Rabbinic literature. Beginning with the Mishnah, the author examines traditions on suffering, divine justice, national catastrophe, and the like, in all major rabbinic works. Bringing to bear recent methods in the history of religions, literary criticism, canonical criticism and the sociology of religion, Kraemer offers a rich analysis of the development of attitudes that are central to and remain contemporary concerns of any religious society.

Death of a Language: The History of Judeo-Spanish. By Tracy K. Harris. Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press. After expulsion from Spain in 1492, a large number of Spanish Jews found refuge in lands of the Ottoman Empire. These Jews continued speaking a Spanish that, because of their isolation from Spain, developed independently in the empire from the various peninsular dialects. This language is the focus of Harris' book, a sociolinguistic study describing the development of Judeo-Spanish from 1492 to the present, its characteristics, survival and decline. To determine the current status of the language, Harris interviewed native Judeo-Spanish speakers from the Sephardic communities of New York, Israel and Los Angeles. This informative study analyzes the informant's use of the language, the characteristics of their speech and the role of the language in Sephardic ethnicity.



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BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to *Menorah Review*

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

Book of Fables: The Yiddish Fable Collection of Reb Moshe Wallich. Edited by Eli Katz. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. This is a bilingual edition of *Sefer Mesholim*, an important collection of fables published in Yiddish in 1695. Thirty-four fables are included, derived mainly from the Aesopic canon, and from both medieval Hebrew and German sources. By providing Yiddish text as it appeared hundreds of years ago, Katz facilitates access by scholars in the fields of Yiddish language, literature and folklore, and areas of more general Jewish social history.

Israel's Prophets: An Introduction for Christians and Jews. By David J. Zucker. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Zucker places the Hebrew prophets within their own historical contexts so the words, message, literary style and even personal witness reveal the prophets' different and unique understandings of the events of their own time. He then skillfully traces how the sacred texts of their writings were read and understood by both the early Christian and the early rabbinic communities. He explains how both religions used Biblical prophecy to teach and develop their own values. Readers can begin to understand how the rabbis and the Gospel writers each saw radically different messages in the words of the prophets.

Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788-1828: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual. By Gary Phillip Zola. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press. By studying Isaac Harby, one of the few Jews in his city's literary circle, we add significantly to our understanding of Jewish life in the South during the early national period. Harby's active role in the establishment of the Reformed Society of Israelites, the first formalized effort to reform Judaism in North America, has attracted considerable attention. Drawing from many sources, together with the newly discovered contents of Harby's personal library and papers, this book constitutes an entirely new analysis of Harby's life.

Nietzsche, God and the Jews. By Weaver Santaniello. Albany: State University of New York Press. This book explores Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, Judaism and anti-Semitism. The first part is concerned with psychological aspects and biographical elements. Part Two focuses on the ethical and political aspects of Nietzsche's views. In this clear and systematic study, Santaniello responds to Nietzsche in his fierce but complex critique of Christianity and his even more complex and often ambivalent responses to Judaism united to his consistent attack on the growing anti-Semitism of the period.

How Do We Know This? Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism. By Jay M. Harris. Albany: State University of New York Press. This book is a study of rabbinic legal interpretation in Judaism's rabbinic, medieval and modern periods. It shows how the rise of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism in the modern period is tied to distinct attitudes toward the classical Jewish heritage. In this seminal work, Harris deals with the extent to which

the fragmentation of modern Judaism is related to the interpretative foundations of classical Judaism. New questions arouse about Biblical and rabbinic laws: Were they compelling? Were they reasonable? Were they relevant? Each form of Judaism fashioned its own response to these challenges. Harris explores a vital aspect of Jewish religious thought.

The Partition of Palestine: Decision Crossroads in the Zionist Movement. By Itzhak Galnoor. Albany: State University of New York Press. Some 75 years after the boundaries of the British Mandate for Palestine were set, Israel still lacks a defined territory and agreed-upon boundaries, except for its boundary with Egypt. Galnoor examines this unusual situation, concentrating on the perceptions of territory and boundaries within the Zionist movement. His findings are of direct relevance to the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, which, once again, revolve around the trade-off between national goals and territorial aspirations.

"To Write the Lips of Sleepers": The Poetry of Amir Gilboa. By Warren Bargad. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press. Bargad describes and interprets Amir Gilboa's works at the various stages of his career and defines his place in the tradition of modern Hebrew poetry. Spanning nearly 50 years, the poet reflects the many norms of Israeli poetry and the personal vicissitudes that moved Gilboa from one set of poetics to another in the course of his life's work. The poetry and the moving interpretations disclose an autobiographical voice, which provides much of the force, fervor, charm and poignancy of Gilboa's unique style.

Jewish American Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical and Critical Sourcebook. Edited by Ann R. Shapiro. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. This volume explores the extraordinary achievement of Jewish American women novelists, poets and playwrights who have written in the English language. A reference work, composed mainly of entries alphabetically arranged by writer, the book not only supplies information on biography, bibliography and a survey of criticism on each writer, but it also provides an analysis of the writer's work by a scholar in Jewish American literature, women's literature or a related field. Every effort was made by the editor-in-chief to offer a representative selection of writers.

The Jews in European History: Seven Lectures. Edited by Wolfgang Beck. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, in association with the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. These lectures by internationally renowned historians enjoyed remarkable popularity in Germany and now appear together in English. The topics are varied: problems of the Holocaust, the interdependence between Judaism and Christianity, the ambivalent relationship between *philosophes* and Jews, the emphasis of Jewish identity in relation to Zionism, and so on. These lectures help the reader see, from the inside, the history of an amazing minority.

Binah: Studies in Jewish History (Volume I) and Studies in Jewish Thought (Volume II). Edited by Joseph Dan. New York: Praeger Publishers. The *Binah* series is designed for the university undergraduate student who is taking a general "Introduction to Judaism" course or studying a more specialized area of Jewish civilization. The articles are all adapted from scholarly journals, written originally in Hebrew, and have not been previously available in English. They are not parts or chapters of books but present a thesis in its entirety, as intended by the author. The articles included in these first two volumes indicate the wealth of scholarly studies published in Hebrew and the important potential available for the teaching of Jewish civilization.

A Small Place in Galilee: Religion and Social Conflict in an Israeli Village. By Zvi Sobel. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. Situated in a fertile valley overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Yavneel is one of the oldest farming communities in modern Israel, founded at the turn of the century. This rural village has become a microcosm of Israeli society at large, reflecting its social, religious, economic, ethnic and ideological conflicts as well as competing claims to its national history, memory, identity and founding myths. The dynamic interaction of the diverse components of this complex society is brought into bold relief by this lively and illuminating book. Sobel takes us deeply into the world of Yavneel and demonstrates how intimately religion is bound to Israeli identity, national legitimacy and the collective need for shared memory and social continuity.

The Wiesenthal File. By Alan Levy. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. This book is the first critical study of Wiesenthal's life and work, telling the story of his relentless pursuit of Nazi war criminals. Since 1947, he has brought nearly 1,200 Nazis to trial. His bravery, dedication and moral energy remain undimmed, his call for "justice, not vengeance," is a legend. This is an important book about one of the most important Jewish figures of our time, especially significant in view of the recent resurgence of anti-Semitism in the United States and Europe.

The Sacred Chain: The History of the Jews. By Norman F. Cantor. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Cantor has written a compelling and comprehensive history of the Jewish people. He engages the reader into confronting issues and ideas, traditions and turning points that constitute a genuine revision of the way the Jewish past, present and future have conventionally been presented. His interpretations will provoke intense debate within the Jewish community. Also, it will compel many Christians and Muslims to reconsider their attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. Not only does this book illuminate the past, it also gives new meaning to the present.

Whither Israel? The Domestic Challenges. Edited by Keith Kyle and Joel Peters. London: I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., distributed by St. Martin's Press. Thirteen contributors examine the social and ideological divisions that have beset Israel, the roots of economic decline and the recent developments within, and dynamics of, political parties and groupings. This book gives a clearer understanding of the domestic challenge for the future direction of Israeli society, particularly in light of the Rabin government.

Defiance: The Bielski Partisans. By Nechama Tec. New York: Oxford University Press. The prevailing image of European Jews during the Holocaust years is one of helpless victims under a death sentence. In fact, many Jews struggled alone or with others against the terrors of the Third Reich, risking their lives against overwhelming odds for the slimmest chance of survival or a mere glimpse of freedom. In this book, Tec offers a riveting history of one such group, a forest community in western Belorussia that would number

more than 1,200 Jews by 1944. She recounts the amazing details of how this partisan unit took on the dual role of fighters and rescuers. She also offers penetrating insight into the group's charismatic commander, Tuvia Bielski.

From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History (revised ed.). By Arthur Kurzweil. New York: HarperReference. Kurzweil provides a pathway through the morass of researching family history. Originally published in 1980, it became a classic guide. Now, in a fully revised edition, the author offers invaluable insight into obtaining information about Eastern European branches of Jewish families. He leaves no stone unturned in his explanation of Jewish identity, providing everything from the origin and meaning of names to a lucid explanation of rabbinic descent to how to plan a trip to "the old country" for a research visit.

Esau. By Meir Shalev. New York: HarperCollins. In this novel, Shalev creates a sensuous, complex world brimming with a myriad of interwoven, humorous, sorrowful and hauntingly memorable stories. Utilizing Biblical archetypes, Shalev relates the saga of the Levy family, presided over by patriarch Abraham, the proud descendant of 15 generations of Sephardic Jews.

What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance. By Murray Friedman. New York: The Free Press. Friedman provides a fresh perspective on the Jewish involvement in the struggle for black rights throughout the 20th century. He discusses the tension between blacks and Jews that figures most predominantly today in the extremism of Louis Farrakhan, Khalil Abdul Mohammed and Leonard Jeffries. Friedman also addresses the alarming "revisionist" contention that Jews used the civil rights movement purely to promote their own interests. This position has been all too readily condoned by a white, middle-class left hostile to Israel and tolerant of black nationalism.

Tekiah. By Richard Chess. Athens: The University of Georgia Press. The poems in this collection are concerned with the compatibility of contemporary consciousness and a rich, ancient liturgical tradition. They explore the deep feelings of joy and regret, shame and hope associated with the High Holydays. The book's title refers to the sound of the shofar, which can be heard on multiple levels of understanding.

A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity. By Daniel Boyarin. Berkeley: University of California Press. Boyarin probes the letters of Paul as the spiritual autobiography of a first-century Jewish cultural critic. He argues that we still grapple with the issues that engrossed Paul, as a Jew and a Christian. Paul's thought resulted from the interplay of Hebrew monotheism and the Greek longing for universals. This stimulating book claims that an exploration of the tensions in the Pauline corpus will lead us to a deeper and richer appreciation of our own cultural quandaries as male and female, gay and straight, Jew and Palestinian—and as human beings.

In the Time of the Nations. By Emmanuel Levinas. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. The "nations" of the title are the "70 nations": in the Talmudic idiom, the whole of humanity surrounding Israel. In this major collection of essays, Levinas considers Judaism's uncertain relationship to European culture since the Enlightenment, problems of distance and integration. It also includes five Talmudic readings, essays on Rosenzweig and Mendelssohn, and a discussion with Françoise Armengaud, which raises questions of central importance to Jewish philosophy in the context of general philosophy. This work brings to fore the vital encounter between philosophy and Judaism, a hallmark of Levinas' thought.