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MENORAH REVIEW



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For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

The Influence of Russian Emigres on American Policy Toward Russia and the USSR, 1900 - 1933, With Observations on Analogous Developments in Great Britain

Part 2 of 2

by Eugene P. Trani

III. Between 1920 and the reestablishment of Russian-American treaty relations in 1933, intellectuals among the Russian emigres began to exert considerable influence on American ideas about Russia. The proportion of scholars among emigres was unusually high, and historians formed a notable group among them. Perhaps those who established Russian history as a field of professional study were most important; it was they, through their academic alliances, teaching and writing, who created new and lasting images of Russia in the minds of America's leadership caste. To be sure, most of the scholars chose affiliations with universities in Europe. Still, emigre historians played an important part in establishing Russian studies in the United States; indeed, they came to dominate the field.

American universities had been slow to include history, especially of nations other than the United States, among the essential components of a higher education. The role of founding Russian studies fell to Archibald Cary Coolidge, a Harvard-trained, widely-traveled, multilingual Boston Brahmin, just after the turn of the century. But before World War I very few native scholars showed interest.

During the 1920s curriculum reform and the intellectual curiosity of a rapidly growing number of university students created jobs for Russian emigres. Three Russian-Americans in particular - Michael Karpovich at Harvard, Michael Florinsky of Columbia and George Vernadsky at Yale -

set the tone of new scholarship and trained a generation of graduate students, who, in turn, carried the orientation of their mentors deep into the community of educated Americans. That orientation was both anti-autocratic and anti-Bolshevist. It held that a great reservoir of humane and democratic sentiment amongst the Russian people had been stifled first by the arrogance of the reactionary right and then by the doctrinal rigidity of the revolutionary left. The clear message to American students was that in matters of social/political development there was not much about Russia to love.

Archibald Coolidge had helped Michael Karpovich (1888-1959) onto the college lecture circuit in 1918 when the native of Russian Georgia found himself out of a job as confidential secretary to Boris A. Bakhmeteff, the Provisional Government's ambassador to the United States. Then in 1927 Coolidge supported Karpovich for a faculty position at Harvard and thereby gave Harvard its first great strength in Russian studies. Karpovich directed more than 30 Ph.D. dissertations in Russian history. Mostly through his students, who included - to name only a few - Richard Pipes, Donald Treadgold, George Fischer, Robert Daniels, Hans Rogger and Robert Paul Browder, he influenced what educated Americans knew and thought about Russia.

George Vernadsky (1887-1973) left Russia in 1920, spent seven years as an

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expatriate in Europe and in 1927 joined the faculty at Yale. Perhaps Vernadsky's greatest influence on America was through the written word, particularly his textbook, *A History of Russia*. First published in 1929, five editions later and 17 years after his death, it is still in print. Vernadsky's monographic work, a series beginning with *Ancient Russia*, set a standard for scholarship in the West. Like Karpovich, Vernadsky told modern Russian history mostly as a story of wrong paths taken, a tale in which the good guys seldom won.

Michael Florinsky (1895-1981), who left Russia after the Bolshevik revolution, spent the immediate postwar years in London. In 1925, Florinsky came to the United States to work with Yale University Press and James T. Shotwell, the Carnegie Endowment's general editor. The self-proclaimed "outspoken critic of the Soviet system" stayed on to finish his Ph.D. at Columbia, to teach there and to write, eventually, *Russia: A History and an Interpretation*, a two-volume work hailed as "the first comprehensive and yet concise history of Russia which is not a textbook." It had gone through 10 editions when he died in 1981. His study of the prospects for

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European integration and his book on social and economic policies in totalitarian states are still in print.

Of the trickle-down effect of Florinsky's scholarship there seems little doubt. In 1985 a commission of Soviet scholars investigating the coverage of Russia in American junior high and high school textbooks was insulted by the failure of several authors even to get the name right of the founder of the Soviet state. But those authors, synthesizers all, obviously had drawn from Michael Florinsky, who, for many years, explained that Vladimir Ilich Ulianov's pseudonym was "Nicholas" Lenin. Other examiners of Russian-Soviet coverage in American-authored textbooks for school children agreed that "a negative emotional tone is definitely evident either explicitly or implicitly in much of the content."

These and selected other Russian scholars focused attention on some common themes, none more important than the nature of the Russian state. They seemed to take their theme from Paul Miliukov, an eminent prewar scholar and short-term Provisional Minister of Foreign Affairs. The general features of Russia in the long run, they thought it important to convey, were European but different because of backwardness, the slow pace of development and unique problems as well as contacts in expansion and defense.

In Great Britain, public understanding and attitudes toward Russian/Soviet life derived much more from native scholars and writers. Since the seventeenth century the interests of the Russian and British empires alternatively clashed and coincided. Issues of territorial expansion, trading rights and military might in the quarrels of Eurasia clearly figured large in the world view of educated Britons and created a need for interpreters of the Russian past. Too, the tradition of higher education was better developed in Great Britain and, perhaps, made it easier for professionals to devote their lives to subjects that fell between the classics and the resolution of contemporary problems.

Before Russian studies became almost exclusively an academic enterprise, a number of educated Britons, self-selected by personal interests and "a sufficiency of private means" to live long periods abroad, offered occasional explanations of the exotic places they had come to know. Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841-1919) and Emile Joseph Dillion (1854-1933) were memorable examples of this type.

Bernard Pares (1867-1949), better born and more committed to academic orthodoxy than Dillion or Wallace, emerged as a major architect of Russian studies in Britain by establishing Russian history at the University of Liverpool. From all accounts, Pares developed his role as interpreter of Russian life with missionary zeal. And like Dillion

and Wallace before him, he apparently saw no conflict between scholarship and his own patriotic duty. Liberalizing Czarist Russia seemed in British interests; and Pares fostered high level visits between members of the Duma and British reformers to promote it. The Bolshevik Revolution did not; and, according to his own account, Pares gave "a series of public addresses in Russian in all the chief towns in Siberia" justifying allied military intervention to put it down.

Pares became director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London in 1922 and within a decade made its work "a central activity" of the university. Equally important, he guided the development of the *Slavonic Review* (also established in 1922) as a forum and outlet of scholarship.

By the end of the 1930s the emigre historians in Europe had begun to publish the Russian studies that would influence English readers for the rest of the 20th century. They enshrined the basic premise . . . that the Bolshevik Revolution was inconsistent with the evolutionary course of which Russia was set.

Pares' *A History of Russia*, 1926; *The Fall of the Russian Monarchy*, 1939; and *Russia*, 1940, reflected the author's preference for a strengthened Duma and reliance on the liberal gentry and intelligentsia. His tone and his descriptors changed dramatically in his accounts of Lenin and the early Soviet era. He wrote of "crying" and "conspicuous" failures, that which "inflicted gravest harm," "terrorism which never ceased" and a people "sick of politics." There could be no doubt of his disgust for Stalin's heavy-handed efforts at social engineering. Commenting on this or that Stalinist program, he was likely to erupt, "Defend this, who can!"

Historians among the Russian emigres, Jewish and anti-Bolshevik, did not find a student boom to serve or an academic vacuum to fill in postwar Britain. As Marc Raeff has shown, emigre historians in Europe clustered mostly in Prague, Paris and Berlin. At the same time, a remarkable generation of scholars served their apprenticeships in British universities and tried to reconcile their ideals with the disturbing events of the day. By the end of the 1930s they had begun to publish the Russian studies that would influence English readers for the rest of the 20th century. They enshrined the basic premise of Pares and other mentors; namely, that the Bolshevik Revolution was

inconsistent with the evolutionary course of which Russia was set. Like the emigre historians in the United States, they concentrated on the sins of the Communists and, for the earlier period, on "what went wrong" with the movement toward constitutional monarchy.

This is not to say that no emigre contributed significantly to British thinking about Russia. Paul Vinogradoff, Corpus Christi chair of jurisprudence at Oxford from 1903 until his death in 1925, was an early migrant who spoke out in times of Russian crisis.

In this age of flourishing centers and institutes for Russian studies and of information overload, it is easy to forget how little was known and how few people were involved 60 years ago. Even by the end of World War II, practitioners complained, "little scholarly and research material on Russia was available" in the United States. During the 1920s and 1930s, according to another study, the number of American-born scholars, equipped for research and teaching in Russian studies, amounted to "not more than a dozen or so." This setting, of itself, gave the dozen or so seminal books published by Florinsky, Karpovich and Vernadsky before 1940 greater impact on what Americans thought. The influence of these anti-autocratic, anti-Bolshevik emigres, it seems safe to assume, was a major reason educated readers of English found it difficult to break with the ideas that the democratic spirit among Russians was no different than that among Kansans or Cornishmen, that Bolshevism was a jarring anomaly in the evolution of the Russian state, and that, somehow, Russians would eliminate collectivism and one-party government.

Whatever the differences between early-day scholars of Russia/U.S.S.R. in the United States and Great Britain over the evolution of nation states, the efficacy of constitutional monarchy or republican government or the wisdom of various policies, they generally agreed that the Bolsheviks (Communists) destroyed the potential for a happier life in Russia. Insofar as these scholars trained students to carry on the historical examination of the Soviet Union, they were the precursors of what has been called the Anglo-American totalitarian school of Sovietology. Orthodox truth, from the late 1940s into the 1960s, held that the Bolsheviks were embryonically totalitarian and that "out of the totalitarian embryo would come totalitarianism full-blown." Historians preoccupied themselves, Stephen F. Cohen has written, with showing "continuity," with how the Soviet regime imposed its "inner totalitarian logic" on an exhausted and exploited society—all of which was "designed to shape the behavior of the free world in its opposition to Communism." In the process, the Anglo-American totalitarian school neglected or excluded personalities, class

personalities, class conflict, institutional imperatives, group interests, generation gaps and dozens of other factors that are the real stuff of historical study. The intellectual consequences of rabid anti-Bolshevism – common ground of nationalistic historians in Great Britain and disgruntled emigres in the United States and the further politicization of history during the Cold War of the 1940s and 50s – are now clearer. One of the most important was the negative orientation of most or all things Russian. Cohen notes perceptively that while most scholars of China are enamored of its history, culture and people, “many Sovietologists, on the other hand, seemed to dislike or hate their subject.” One can imagine that the sentiment, if not its expression, would please those who were present at the creation of Russian/Soviet studies in the 1920s and 1930s.

IV. By 1933, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt determined to reestablish treaty relations with the Soviet Union, most of the zealous leaders of the Russian-American crusade against the Czar’s human rights policies were dead and the radical image of Russian-Americans that accompanied the Red Scare had blurred somewhat. “Causes” formerly associated with Russian-Americans were not factors in the signing of a new Russian-American treaty. For the moment, at least, strategic and economic factors outweighed ideological and ethnic considerations.

In the early 20th century Russian-Americans, most of whom were Jews, had provided the bedrock support for a campaign to foment a brief outburst against the Czar during which the Russo-American Treaty of 1832 was abrogated as punishment for antisemitism. Because the Russian policy toward minorities did not change, Russian-Americans had not supported the allies during World War I until the Czar abdicated in March 1917. Then, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, Russian-Americans themselves became targets during a moment of public hysteria – dangerous enemies of private property and Christian ethics by virtue of birth and heritage. Thereafter, emigre intellectuals, almost all of whom identified with the losers in the Russian Revolution, exercised considerable control over the synthesis of information about Russia and projected an image of life both before and after the revolution that was largely negative.

During these years the relatively small number of Russian emigres in Great Britain had experienced something of the same trials. But theirs were not simply reduced mirror images. The Balfour Declaration, as a gesture on behalf of Russian Jews, coincided with British geopolitical interests. The stronger Zionist movement in Great Britain gave the postwar reaction more an antisemitic complexion. And the negative orientation

toward Russia/U.S.S.R. of native-born academics was undergirded as much by unspoken national loyalty as by the sense of a wrongly lost cause.

Still, by the time the United States reestablished diplomatic relations with the largest nation on earth in 1933, time and events had worn down the immigrant generation in both English-speaking nations. Most of the former Russian subjects were ready to change their hyphenate status and find a cozier niche in the social scheme of their adopted homelands.

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Christian Theological Antisemitism: Jewish Values Turned Upside-Down

*Jews and Christians:
Exploring the Past, Present
and Future*
Edited by James H.
Charlesworth
New York: Crossroad
Publishing Company

A Review Essay by
Robert Michael

The moral universe into which most Westerners have been born, raised and which they acknowledge as their own has been shaped by the stories, myths, beliefs and rituals of Christianity. When, from the first century of the Common Era onward, the Latin Christian churches came into conflict with Jews, many within the churches opposed Jews, Jewishness and Judaism with every weapon at their disposal, the primary one being theological, which has conditioned and justified all the rest whether political, economic or cultural. Therefore, anti-Jewish theological defamations, empowered by the Church and communicated by its theologians, have educated the Christian populace in an anti-Jewish ideology. Moreover, this repugnance to Jewishness has not been restricted to the realm of ideas; like any ideology, it has boiled over into contemptuous feelings and behaviors.

Although many Christians, from Paul in Romans 11 onward, have recognized the indispensable historical and spiritual roots

of the Jewish tradition has provided for Christianity, the predominant position of the churches has been characterized by an opposition to the very spirit of Jewishness. What is unusual about Christian antisemitism is that over a period of two millennia it has managed to transform the image of the Jewish people into a uniquely evil symbol that denies the empirical reality of the Jewish condition and justifies the total elimination of Jews as Jews from the earth.

From a historical point of view, antisemitism is as distinctive for its geographical and historical span. *Jews and Christians* contains a series of papers covering the bimillennial longevity, presented by a talented cast of scholars, including Hans Hillerbrand and A. Roy Eckardt along with the distinguished theologian and editor of the volume, James Charlesworth. His brilliant article, “Exploring Opportunities for Rethinking Relations Among Jews and Christians,” is the clearest and most thoughtful exposition of this matter I have ever read.

The unique nature of Christian antisemitism may explain the discrepancy between the common place immediate causes of antisemitic events and the enormity of the eventualities. That is, the mass slaughter of European Jews during the medieval period of the Crusades, plagues, “ritual murders” and “host desecrations” cannot nearly be accounted for by an examination of only contemporary economic, social or political causes. To understand these events one must comprehend the long history of religious antisemitism, especially as it relates to the churches and the theology of Christianity. The same holds true for the events of the Holocaust. Nothing any Jews could have done in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could explain the disproportionate suffering and death the Jews of Europe experienced in the years 1933 to 1945.

It is obvious that, in a positive sense, Christianity could not have existed without the Jewish tradition. Moreover, even though Christian goodness and righteousness toward the Jewish people is difficult to discern in the documentary evidence, there are indications that in every generation there were Christians who were friendly toward Jews. During the Carolinian era, for example, Jews were respected as the heirs and descendants of the patriarchs and prophets of testamentary times. When we read of church and church-inspired secular prohibitions against Christian-Jewish fraternization, we must assume that worthwhile relationships existed that the Church sought to discourage. And so Christian theologians continually complained about the faithful who grew close to Jews or treated them as human beings rather than as theological types.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the dominant relationships between Judaism and Jews and the Christian church

were negative. The Judaism of the past was pillaged from the Jews by the theologians of the Latin church to supply Christianity with an unimpeachable history and with the prestige the new church otherwise would not have possessed. To establish that Christ was not a Greek or Roman god, for example, the early Christians argued that Christian history was even older than Jewish history, having begun at the beginning of time but only recorded in the Jewish scriptures. To accomplish this, the patristic theologians of the late Roman Empire and early Middle Ages claimed the Jewish scriptures as their own birthright. As Augustine himself has observed, "The one and true God, creator of goodness... is the author of both Testaments; but what is New is predicted in the Old Testament, and what is Old is revealed in the New." The Church, therefore, co-opted all the Jewish patriarchs, saints and true believers in God all the way back to Adam as Christians. Eusebius and Augustine argued that Abraham was "father of the faithful;" Abel was progenitor of the Church. Only those scriptural figures who had sinned were considered Jewish; it was they who had expressed their evil by murdering the prophets and by continuing to manifest their maliciousness in each and every generation. Thus, the Church falsified the whole of Jewish history. Pseudo-Cyprian summarized the Church's interpretation: "Moses they (the Jews) cursed because he proclaimed Christ... David they hated because he sang of Christ... Isaiah they sawed asunder shouting His glories... John they slew revealing Christ... Judas they loved for betraying Him." Had the Jews realized to what use their Law and Prophets would be put by Christians, as Irenaeus, the second-century Bishop of Lyon, has written, "they would never have hesitated themselves to burn their own Scriptures."

And so, to make the Old Testament their own, these theologians of the Church had to denounce the Jews. They proclaimed that the Jews are, have always been and will always be evil. They imagined that the Jews repeated their sin of decide each year by ritually murdering an innocent Christian child during Holy Week, and each day in their synagogue prayers when they insulted Christ and the Holy Virgin. For these crimes, Jews must suffer continual punishment on earth and eternal damnation in the afterlife, unless they sought salvation through the one true faith, Christianity.

As *Christians and Jews* shows, much Christian antisemitism centers around the defamatory myth of exclusive Jewish responsibility for the assassination of Jesus Christ. Down to the present day, sometimes disguised as, or mixed with, secular prejudice, theological antisemitism has convinced Christians to blame innocent Jews for decide. Up to the present generation, to love Christ for many if not most Christians came to

mean hatred of his alleged murderers. How could Christians have ever learned to love the Jewish people when favorable religious ideas about Jews were, as Pierre Pierrard has stated, "lost in the blood of Calvary?" The Church has refused to allow Judaism to shake its image as the work of Satan and the Antichrist and has persistently regarded Jews as sacred horror. The Churches' anti-Jewish theology has been so pervasive that otherwise decent, polite Christians have sometimes uttered the most unhistorical and libelous statements about Jews. Moreover, these negative perceptions have existed independent of what Jews themselves have actually done or, indeed, of a Jewish presence at all. In their ideological assault on the Jews, early Christian writers, for example, sometimes noted the Roman victory over the Jews, the loss of the secular Jewish kingdom, of the Jews' holy capital, Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel. But they interpreted these disasters through theological myths that proclaimed God's abandonment of the Jews as a result of their decide and their eternal punishment in this life and the next. God was always pictured, as Rosemary Ruether has noted, as "in there punching" on the side of Christianity and the Christians against Jews and Judaism.

Even though historically, and indeed theologically, Christianity has been a derivative of the Jewish tradition and, therefore, owed much to the mother religion, it had to overthrow the theological dominance of Judaism to establish its own sense of self, its legitimacy and its sanctity.

Another goal of the early and medieval Christian theologians was to render the tenacious Jews hateful to keep the faithful from being attracted to Judaism. The stubborn persistence of Judaism and Jews threw into constant question Christian claims of earthly and spiritual triumph. The intensity of anti-Jewish language in portions of the Christian Scriptures and in almost every Christian theologian from the Church Fathers forward (their writings became almost as authoritative as scripture) was both the cause and the result of this concern for the potential loss of Christian souls. The Christian Scriptures were, therefore, not a reasoned, disinterested debate with the Jews, such as the pagans may have had. They were written as part of a theological war to the death and beyond. In the writings and sermons of these religious propagandists, namely the Church Fathers, no evil was too great for the Jews not to have revealed in, no crime too appalling for the Jews not to have rejoiced in. Through

anti-Jewish theological myths and defamations, the Jews were pictured no longer as the chosen People, heroes of holiness and morality; instead, they were portrayed as the earthly representatives of the Powers of Evil.

Furthermore, considering Jews the very model for evil helped unite Christendom and provide the Church with a clearly contrasting identity for itself. Even though historically, and indeed theologically, Christianity has been a derivative of the Jewish tradition and, therefore, owed much to the mother religion, it had to overthrow the theological dominance of Judaism to establish its own sense of self, its legitimacy and its sanctity. This became the paramount task of the emerging new Christian religion. When comparing Jacob and Esau, for example, Paul may have been referring to God's rejection of Jews and his adoption of Christians as the new Chosen People. "It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants... 'The elder will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'" (Romans 9:8-13) John Chrysostom has been blunt about it, "Don't you realize, if the Jewish rites are holy and venerable, our way of life must be false." When Jews persisted as authentic Jews proudly asserting their Judaism, they had to be segregated, expelled, converted or sometimes killed, for their loyalty to their own beliefs was interpreted as an insult and a danger to the Christian image of itself. The Christian dilemma was that without Judaism, Christianity had no independent meaning. Therefore, Judaism had to be preserved but in a condition where it could do no "harm" to Christianity, like a corpse in suspended animation or like a degraded Cain living his death within life.

In an attempt to establish the orthodoxy of Christian doctrine, early Christian writers condemned heretics. Even before the official Christian canon of scripture was established at the Council of Carthage in 397, in letters attributed to Paul, 1 Corinthians (11:18-19) and the Epistle to Titus (3:10-11), the haereticum hominum (the factious man) "is perverted and sinful" (see also Mt. 18:15). Although the first heretics were the Gnostics, many Church Fathers saw heresy as essentially Jewish in spirit, among them Eusebius, Irenaeus, Gregory Bishop of Nyssa, Basil Bishop of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzus, Justin Martyr and Tertullian. They believed that a heretic was a person whose intelligence and will had been perverted by the Devil and his Jewish agents. For example, Ambrose identified five kinds of heresy, which he associated with Judaism. He believed that Jews could only be heretics because they, in essence, ceased to be since their rejection of Christ. Pseudo-Ambrose argued that all Jews were apostates to Judaism because they had maliciously rejected the

truth of the Messiahship of Jesus. Jews were "apostates, for denial of Christ is essentially a violation of the Law." This idea was also carried in a host of apocryphal Acts and Gospels. There was a degree of truth to this association of Jews and heretics for in response to Christian deprecations, the Jews may have supported heretical groups who were not anti-Jewish, like the Arians, with whom the Jews were classed as the most unrelenting and dangerous enemies of orthodoxy. Furthermore, it can be argued that by focusing on the Jewish scapegoat and villain as the cause of all the specific historical ills of Europe, the Church could explain away the evidence that contravened its claim that the Kingdom of God had truly arrived with Christ and accounted for the continued existence of evil in the world. In this way, for two millennia, the Jewish people have served as a "magic betrayer" to help Christians explain the plagues, wars and revolutions of history the Church could not control.

So far we have been discussing the exploitation of Judaism by Christianity. We now turn to the technique of argumentation and rhetoric used by Christian theologians to achieve their anti-Jewish goals. They were adherents of the theology of glory who, wrote Luther, call "evil good and good evil . . . everything has been completely turned upside-down." This has been Christianity's normative theological position in regard to Judaism and Jews, although there is a contrasting ideology or theologia crucis, theology of the cross.

This theology of glory has several premises, most of them interpretations of biblical passages. The Christian Church, the new Israel – supposedly ordained and sanctioned by God – has succeeded the cursed and rejected old Israel morally, historically and metaphysically. In addition, the Jews, who denied and murdered the allegedly true Messiah, the Christ, for which they were collectively guilty, must forever suffer. Moreover, although many adherents of theologia gloriae questioned the Jews' right to exist at all. However, the predominant position was that the Jews were not to be exterminated since they adhered to the Torah, or Law, and gave Christianity the history it needed to legitimize itself. They were "Witness People" who must wander like the suffering Cain as paradigmatic examples of those rejecting the truth of Christian faith. Finally, based on Matthew 23, the Jews were condemned as evil-doers even before their atrocious act of decide, indeed from the beginning of their history. In the words of the fourth-century Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, Judaism was "ever . . . mighty in wickedness; . . . when it cursed Moses; when it hated God; when it vowed its sons to demons; when it killed the prophets; and finally when it betrayed to the Praetor and crucified our God himself and Lord. . . . And so glorying

through all its existence in iniquity. . ."

In a similar manner, to denigrate Jews and the Jewish spirit, Christian theologians have been capable of turning the values of Judaism on their head. This value-inversion was first employed by Latin Christians in response to the crucifixion itself. Most ancient peoples within the Roman Empire, Jews and Gentiles, regarded crucifixion as demeaning. But Latin Christians took the "scandal of the Cross" and converted it into an act of metaphysical and eschatological importance. A meaningless execution in the political life of the Roman Empire and Judean politics became, for Christians, the most meaningful act in history, human and divine. Jesus' death would lead to his life (resurrection) and potentially to eternal life for all the faithful. That the founder of Christianity was despised and had been crucified like any common criminal was, in fact, gloried in by Christians. In a like manner, they attacked the traits most identified as Jewish (Covenant, monotheism, synagogue, kosher rules, circumcision, Chosenness, Promised Land, Jerusalem, Temple) by reinterpreting, modifying and adapting them to fit the requirements of the Christian self-image – in essence, turning them upside-down.

The Church thus took from the Jews their scriptures, priesthood and their claim to be the Chosen People. Christian theological writings attempted to strip the Jews of the religious values embodied in Talmud, Torah, synagogue, peoplehood, mission and the one spiritual God – the very heart and soul of Judaism. The strengths that made Jewish identity possible, valuable and valid, and for which Jews were willing to die, were converted into weakness, vice and crime. The imagined existence of this fictitious, transvaluated Judaism was used over and over again by the Latin Church Fathers of the first millennium of the Common Era to justify anti-Jewish church laws and church-inspired secular laws, policies and actions.

Consequently, it is not surprising that when the years 1933 to 1945 came, even apparently secular Westerners saw Jews in this Christian anti-Jewish way. Jews were not real people being discriminated against, expropriated, sent to prison and murdered in concentration camps. They were sinners and cohorts of the devil who had already been condemned by the theologians and leaders of the churches. This theologically generated "demonization" of the Jews long before Hitler's rise had left the Jews without protection when the murderers came to collect them for the gas chambers.

Robert Michael is a professor of European history at Southeastern Massachusetts University and a contributing editor for Menorah Review.

Faith Saving

*Defending the Faith:
Nineteenth-Century American
Jewish Writings on
Christianity and Jesus*
by George L. Berlin
State University of New York
Press

A Review Essay
by Earle J. Coleman

Adding keen observations to a collection of primary sources, Berlin presents an evenhanded account of 19th century Christian attacks on Jews together with the inevitable Jewish responses. He emphasizes that conversion posed a significant threat to American Jews because conservative Protestants were waging a war of conversion and millenarians, in particular, regarded the conversion of Jews as "inextricably intertwined" with the conversion of "heathen peoples." Isaac Lesser, the preeminent 19th century traditionalist American Jewish writer on Christianity, interpreted conversion as an attempt to validate Christianity, for unless Jews became Christians, the truth claims of Christianity would be undermined. Lesser, who lamented that the traditionalist-Reform split within Judaism also contributed to Jews embracing Christianity, identified two evils in proselytism: first, Christian missionaries offered bribes and misrepresentations of Judaism; second, Jews converted because of bad motives, e.g., the desire to acquire material gain. In fact, the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, known earlier as the American Society for Evangelizing the Jews, went so far as to plan the establishment of a settlement in America for European converts. Solomon Henry Jackson, editor of the first American Jewish newspaper, *The Jew*, charged that when the weak argumentation in Christian missionary tracts failed to convert Jews, Christians resorted to bribery. Indeed, bribery is only one of the immoral techniques for conversion he attributed to Christians: "Mulks, robberies, assassinations, persecutions, massacres, martyrdoms, exilings, alienations, inquisitions, tortures, flatteries, persuasions and bribes have been used at various times." He was not alone in denouncing missionary activities as a form of antisemitism.

Demonstrating that conversion was as ineffective as it was immoral, Jackson declared that for 1,400 years the Gentiles had failed in their attempts to convert the Jews, a declaration that is no less true a century later. In a similarly straightforward

way, Lesser argued that if God had wished for Christianity to supersede Judaism, the latter would have vanished long ago. That many other rival religions have survived and flourished alongside Christianity surely supports Lesser's reasoning. Maurice Harris added that although Christianity was to be one, universal or Catholic, it became splintered into numerous denominations that were, in effect, different religions.

Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, who converted from Judaism to Christianity, wrote and spoke zealously to bring Jews to his new faith. He also predicted that the successful conversion of all Jews was certain, his being just one of the many such predictions that failed to materialize. Indeed, the Christian vision of other religions as unfulfilled expressions that can only find their culmination in Christianity has not been demonstrated through significant conversions from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or Judaism. In fine, however well the doctrine of "survival of the fittest" serves the biologist, it does not seem to obtain among the world religions. Berlin provides an ironic footnote on the topic of conversion when he explains one reason why Jews were unable to missionize among Christians: "To do so would have been to abandon the argument that Jews were more tolerant than Christians, since Judaism accorded the possibility of salvation to non-Jews."

Frequently, 19th century American Jews repudiated Christianity, because they found the doctrine of the Trinity to be an affront against monotheism. Benjamin Dias Fernandes, drawing on Jewish polemical literature, denounced the doctrine as an absurdity. According to Lesser, rather than uphold the unity of God, Christians seek to "propagate the doctrine of the trinity." As he saw it, "there can be no unity of purpose . . . if a sacrifice can be accepted by one part of the Deity from the other. . ." He accused Christians of clinging to an absurd polytheism, failing to render the doctrine intelligible and choosing to persecute the Jews who questioned it. Lesser predicted that Gentiles would eventually accept the truth of monotheism. Rabbi W. Schlessinger, who wrote under the pseudonym Israel Philalethes, regarded the Trinity as a transition between polytheism and monotheism. Similarly, some have spoken of henotheism as a transition between polytheism and monotheism. But henotheism, which refers to a stage in the evolution of religions, has not endured and a trinitarian doctrine of the Absolute continues to be fundamental in Buddhism (the Trikaya doctrine), Christianity and Hinduism (Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu). Thus it is not clear how such a doctrine is representative of a less developed phase of religion. J. R. Peynado, Lesser's correspondent in England, related that some Christians were afraid to express a non-literal interpretation of the

Trinity. The sort of figurative understanding they favored would be more congenial to Jews. If, for example, one thinks of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, not as totally distinct substances, persons or beings, but as metaphorically expressed attributes or aspects of one God or if one conceives of the three as primary manifestations of the inexhaustible Absolute (Donotmonotheisms invariably ascribe cognitive, affective and volitional properties to the Divine?), rather than as parts of God, then God's unity is preserved and, indeed, deepened in significance by this threefold diversity. Is not a great work of art a unity of diversities? And, as a Platonist might ask, Is God not beauty itself? In Hinduism, the monotheistic *Bhagavad-Gita* recognizes three expressions of human nature: karma marga (the way of action), jnana marga (the way of thought) and bhakti marga (the way of devotion). Similarly, Plato identified three features of the single, human soul, Aristotle located three levels of soul at work in each person and Frank Baum, author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, detected three faculties in every individual. If we are made in God's image and we have a threefold nature, might not our threefold nature be one of the ways in which we resemble God? In any case, as literally understood, the Trinity will remain an insurmountable obstacle to Jewish-Christian dialogue and to unity among Christians themselves.

The Christian doctrine of atonement proved to be another target of Jewish polemics in 19th century America. Schlessinger asked how anyone could honestly believe that the death of one man could remit the sins of an entire race – especially since it is evident that man's sinfulness still persists after 2,000 years. Bernard Felsenthal considered the idea that sin is inherited from Adam to be un-Jewish, without Biblical support, and irrational. He held that no ransom can be paid for one's sin, no one else can die in place of a guilty party and no one's sin can be expunged by a sacrifice. Lesser found no reference to a mediator in the Bible, no atonement apart from individual repentance. Emil G. Hirsch asserted that the idea of obtaining vicarious atonement through Jesus' death is Semitic, not Jewish, but Berlin notes that Hirsch dismissed as poetry any passages in rabbinic literature that one might use to support the concept of transmitted sin or vicarious atonement. On the related subject of human depravity, Jews were again critical of the Christian position. Hirsch faulted Christians for taking a disparaging view of man, including, of course, Paul who seemed preoccupied with man's sinful nature. Felsenthal pointedly asked: "Did the Creator befool man's nature by incorrigible wickedness and moral rotteness from the beginning?" Of course, every religion assumes humans are "fallen" and need to be

uplifted, transformed or enlightened – otherwise, there would be no need for religion. But the tendency of Christian theology to dwell on human baseness disturbed Jews as it does contemporary Christians.

To the doctrine of the incarnation, which says that Jesus is the unique son of God, David Philipson replied, "Judaism teaches that every man is the son of God." For Berlin, one implication of the doctrine, ironically enough, vitiates Christian claims to uniqueness: "If God's spirit infused human culture, then all cultures (and their religious systems) should be deemed of equal worth." In late nineteenth century Judaism, Reformers argued that Jesus, in both thought and deed, was squarely within the Jewish tradition. According to Isaac M. Wise, Jesus did not declare himself to be the messiah. Schlessinger, Jackson and Lesser pointed out that Christ was not the messiah, since he did not bring about universal peace while he flourished and his death was followed by an increase in wars, persecution and fanaticism. While Reform writers depicted Jesus as a faithful Jew, others viewed him as special, e.g., as the paradigm for rabbinic teachers. Rabbi Henry Berkowitz called Jesus "the greatest, noblest rabbi of them all." Other Jews recognized Jesus as an inspiring but unoriginal teacher of Jewish doctrine. Hirsch, for example, asserted that many of Jesus' sayings are found verbatim in Talmudic writings. Describing Jesus' "Our Father" prayer as "an anthology of Jewish prayers," Hirsch held that "there is scarcely an expression credited to him [Jesus] but has its analog in the well-known sayings of the rabbi." Even Jesus as the good shepherd is anticipated in Moses carrying a sheep on his shoulders to return it to the flock. But Hirsch concludes, "in the form which Jesus gave to these old Jewish maxims they were given force and directness and pithiness that the rabbinical maxims of equal tenor almost lack altogether." Kaufmann Kohler detects "the charm of true originality" in Jesus' remarks such as "let him that is without sin cast the first stone" and "be like children and you are not far from the kingdom of God." Morris Jastrow, professor of Semitic languages, credits Jesus with going beyond the prophets through his utter indifference toward theological speculation and religious rites. But Jesus' status was directly challenged by Felsenthal who emphasized that Jews are hardly alone in denying the messiahship of Jesus, since it is not affirmed by deists, pantheists, agnostics, Buddhists, Darwinian evolutionists and adherents of numerous other theological and philosophical systems.

Another refrain in Jewish responses to the Christian message was that Christianity had mistakenly placed the virtue of love above that of justice. Kohler denied that love could be the basis for social relations, for he

believed it to be subjective, thereby making it impossible for an individual to love all others equally. Moreover, he asserted that by overlooking faults, love sanctions wrongdoing; whereas justice affirms the value and dignity of every individual. Dissenters included Felix Adler, the son of Rabbi Samuel Adler, who favored love over justice on the grounds that it was better able to address the social needs of humans. In addition, Josephine Lazarus, an American Jew with sympathies toward liberal Protestantism, who advocated the merging of Judaism and Christianity into a universalistic religion, believed that love surpasses justice, for love embraces it. Still, Marcus Jastrow preferred justice over "an unrealizable ideal of love" and he doubted that loving one's enemy could have ever been seriously intended. But Maurice Harris quotes scripture to demonstrate that loving one's neighbor is indeed part of Judaism – whether the neighbor is friend or foe. Augustine, who dramatizes the significance of love by urging one to "love and do what you will," provided a classic Christian statement on the difficult job of loving one's enemy: "Do not love the error in man but love the man. For man is the work of God; error is the work of man." One who seeks to love her enemies will find encouragement in Martin Buber's idea that one cannot fully hate them: "The basic word I-It can never be spoken with one's whole being." Of course, this is true for Buber because he holds that every finite thou – however despicable – is animated by the Eternal Thou. Since Christians as well as Jews disagree among themselves on whether love or justice should be given greater weight, it is a mistake to characterize their religions in terms of these virtues. Consider Kohler who assigns love, "the feminine element of the world," to Christianity and "righteousness, the stronger and more indispensable," to Judaism. Whether one is disposed toward justice, love or their equilibrium, a tension persists since justice seems to require that a person receive exactly what she deserves, no more or no less, but love entails being willing to give a person more than she, strictly speaking, deserves.

There is an urgent need to come to terms with Berlin's analysis of the encounters, relations and conflicting doctrines between nineteenth century Jews and Christians, for many of the same issues inform the contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue, a conversation that is in a promising if nascent state. Kohler foresaw the resolution of difficulties in the "Church Universal," one that "is neither Jewish nor Christian, but which knows only of God's children." Lazarus also proposed a new, universal religion that would incorporate Judaism and Christianity, but others would question if one religion would be any more desirable

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On Causes

On reading Eva Fleischner's essay "Acts of Faith and Compassion: Some Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust" (*Menorah Review*, No. 23, 1991), I was struck by a *rageful* feeling of *deja vu*. The feeling stems from the simplistic reasoning about the "whys" of the Holocaust with the implied suggestion that if we could only understand "why" people acted as they did, such things may be prevented in the future.

Dr. Fleischner's "why" is "the teaching of contempt." It is the doctrine that the homicidal Jew "killed Christ." She inexplicably overlooks the fact that presumably those who saved Jews were as exposed to the doctrine as those who did not; that millions of those who were exposed to it outside Germany – including the Allied countries – did not kill Jews even if, as Wyman suggested in the book cited by Fleischner, "Jews were expendable."

The truth of the matter is that in the large Holocaust literature no one has so far succeeded in assigning one or more *credible, single causes* for what happened. And this includes the devils and the saints. No one knows why some people, exposed to the same education, upbringing, societal ethos and religious influences do not kill their neighbors while others do.

This raises a far larger issue. It is one strange to a society in which everything needs to have simple "causes," and in which, if one could only find a single one, one could feel assured that it only resides in other people. It is a convenient cop-out that implies that only Germans in the 1930s could ever do what they did; that we as a people, being free of the causes that account for the Holocaust, could not possibly engage in one. It is to put blinders on American history and to engage in self-righteousness where there ought to reside contempt coupled with fear and humility. It is not the fear of "causes;" rather, it is the fear all of us might well confront in ourselves that we, too, are potentially capable of "causing" mass murder of innocent people. Why did so many Germans cause or tolerate the mass murders of their fellow citizens?

Because people can be like that. And why did some save Jews? Because people can be like that too.

Hans S. Falck
Professor of Social Work and Psychiatry
Virginia Commonwealth University

Rejoinder

There is much in Dr. Falck's letter with which I agree. Perhaps his "rageful feeling" is caused, at least partly, by the fact one cannot say everything in a short article.

I share his concern that we not present the Holocaust as a terrible evil of which only others – in this case the Germans – are capable and which we, in our innocence and purity of heart, could never commit. This "we/they" dichotomy is a real danger in speaking and teaching about the Holocaust because it does indeed, as Falck points out, provide a far too easy cop-out and saves us the painful task of confronting the darkness in ourselves. Yes, we must live with the ever-present fear of what we, as human beings, are capable of doing.

At the same time, we also need hope in goodness, in the possibility we can freely choose good over evil. It is this hope, I believe, that is strengthened by an awareness of those who "chose life" rather than death during the darkness that was the Holocaust. Rabbi Harold Schulweis has written extensively on this subject and I shall not pursue it here.

I am not trying to find "simplistic causes" for everything, least of all the Holocaust, which in its enormous complexity defies easy categorization. It is quite true that some who were exposed to the "teaching of contempt" rejected it and saved Jews, while others saved Jews in spite of it and still others helped murder them or did nothing. This is precisely one of the points that interests me: Can we account for the difference in behavior and attitude? By looking at the background, education and value system of rescuers, can we find some factors that can guide us, as educators and parents, in our efforts to help children and young people become decent, compassionate human beings? What is it that can make the difference? One important step in this process, I am convinced, is to provide them with authentic, real-life models of goodness, decency and courage.

Eva Fleischner
Professor of Religion
The Netherlands

than one world art. Religions may be fruitfully compared to art works, for both, at their best, are always particular expressions of universal truths. Generic religion is idolatry and generic art is counterfeit art or debased craft. If follows that particularity, individuality or identity is as important to religion as it is to art. Maurice Harris endorses this sort of outlook when he says, "The world is absorbing Jewish teachings; Judaism is absorbing Christian teachings; every day the mutual debt is growing, yet, without either renouncing the religion that it loves and believes." An apt question is posed by the contemporary writer, Anne Roiphe: "I am wondering if one feels a primary identification with all the boat peoples afloat on all the waters of the globe, can there ever be a return to the particular group again?"

There is another approach to Jewish-Christian accord that might be termed experiential. Here, religious experiences — from prayer, to rituals, to social action, to union with God in mystical experiences — take precedence over doctrines and theology. In the language of St. Teresa of Avila, "the important thing is not to think much but to love much." Working together and celebrating together take priority over creeds. Such an orientation explains why the Renaissance figure Pico della Mirandola was especially drawn to Kabbalism and found it to be consonant with his own Christianity. Existentialists, who place the exercise of

freedom and character-shaping choices above intellectual speculation, also have affinities with this perspective. Jewish existentialists like Buber and Christian existentialists like Kierkegaard share a regard for live experience or encounters over ideology. Buber stressed that even if we cannot comprehend life we can embrace it. Felsenthal was ahead of his era with his proposal, "Let us consider these articles of creed on which we disagree as personal opinions." To the charge that this is a non-cognitive position, one might reply that perhaps knowledge is not abandoned; instead, ordinary knowledge gives way to insight.

Berlin remarks that, in the past, the debate between Christians and Jews "was fought in absolutist and mutually exclusive terms." Jews predicted the extinction of Christianity and Christians looked for the inevitable eclipse of Judaism. As long as a Jew, such as Lesser, hoped that Christians would come "to embrace the full effulgence of light which is with Israel" and a Christian, such as Karl Barth, spoke of all non-Christian religions as being in "endarkenment," both parties remained blinded by the "light." In the spirit of promoting harmony, Berlin concludes his study by stating that Christians have tried to get Jews to appreciate Jesus in every way except one, the way of love. "Try that, for they believe in love; and you believe in love. Let both Jew and Christian get on

this common ground, and have respect for the honest convictions of one another, and then both may clasp hands and look into each other's eyes, and repeat the words uttered by Moses and Jesus: 'The Lord our God is one God. And thou shalt love.'

Earle J. Coleman is professor of philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kindling

*Haven't we outgrown
those childish games of lighting candles
reciting charms
singing innocuous love songs
to an invisible ghost
or at best an undependable father?*

*Do we really need "special days"
to once more commemorate history's
hecatombs
baking of three-cornered pastries
for Napoleonic Haman-hats
kindling of Hasmonean eight-fingered
fists?*

No.

Yes.

— Carol Adler



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BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to *Menorah Review*
Spring 1992

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

Deceptive Images: Toward a Redefinition of American Judaism. By Charles S. Liebman. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books. This volume is a thoughtful effort by a social scientist to come to terms with his concerns about how American Jews and Judaism have been studied and his sensitivity to the policy implications of such studies. The author contends that those concerned with American Jews have placed too much emphasis on what Jews do and too little on Judaism itself. They have given too little encouragement to efforts to probe the meaning of Judaism in the lives of American Jews. This probing study calls for reassessment both of the study of American Judaism and the priorities of American Jewish organizations.

Spinoza and other Heretics. Vol. I: The Marrano of Reason. Vol. II: The Adventures of Immanence. By Yirmiyahu Yovel. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. This ambitious and original study presents Baruch Spinoza as the most outstanding thinker of modernity. He anticipated secularization, the rise of natural science, biblical criticism, the Enlightenment, the liberal-democratic state.

The first volume traces the origins of the idea of immanence to the culture of Spinoza's Marrano ancestors. The authors argue that crypto-Jewish life had mixed Judaism and Christianity in ways that undermined both these religions and led to rational skepticism and secularism.

The second volume unveils the presence of Spinoza's philosophical revolution in the work of later thinkers who helped shape the modern mind. The most innovative figures in the past two centuries were profoundly influenced by Spinoza and shared the essentials of his philosophy of immanence. The Epilogue of this outstanding work examines Spinoza's significance to Jews today and the question of whether he was the "first secular Jew."

These two volumes are a remarkable achievement.

When Mourning Comes: A Book of Comfort for the Grieving. by William B. Silverman and Kenneth M. Cinnamon. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc. This is not a book about grief, but a guide for the grieving. The authors help readers to find a spiritual context for their grief. Step by step, they point the way to rebuilding life after the loss of a loved one, treating many themes that absorb someone struck with the loss of a loved one.

Settings of Silver: An Introduction to Judaism. By Stephen M. Wylen. New York: Paulist Press. Effectively organized for classroom use, thorough and well-informed without being technical, this is an excellent and comprehensive introduction to Judaism, which considers and answers two encompassing questions: "What is Torah?" and "What is a Jew?" The author engagingly examines observances, beliefs and history.

Facing a Cruel Mirror: Israel's Moment of Truth. By Michael Bar-Zohar. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. The author depicts a nation struggling to maintain its moral values and democratic ideals. He examines the crisis of conscience that the country has undergone in dealing with the occupied territories. He also analyzes the weaknesses of the political system. Despite the country's disarray, Bar-Zohar believes that Israel can again work towards its original dream of a just, humane, Jewish society – largely through a reform of the government.

Gardens and Ghettos: The Art of Jewish Life in Italy. Edited by Vivian B. Mann. Berkeley: University of California Press in cooperation with The Jewish Museum. An exquisite presentation of the millennial history of the Jews of Italy, an exhibition rich in art work interwoven with eight brilliant essays on Jewish-Italian life including Jewish art and culture in ancient Rome, Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, ceremonial art during the era of the city-states and ghettos, Jewish artists in Italy from the Risorgimento to the Resistance, and the history of Hebrew poetry in Italy. A visual and intellectual experience.

Shylock Reconsidered: Jews, Moneylending, and Medieval Society. By Joseph Shatzmiller. Berkeley: University of California Press. The author offers an excellent overview of medieval European Jewish moneylending, in its legal and institutional theory as well as in its practice. In this fascinating investigation of previously unknown medieval documents, the author finds expressions of resentment and frustration over hardhearted creditors matched by appreciative tributes to a benign, generous Jewish moneylender, who may be a respected member of his community. A refreshing revision of the traditional stereotype.

Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response. By Robert Chazan. Berkeley: University of Californian Press. A balanced account of Christian missionizing among the Jews. Arguing that until the 13th century Western Christendom showed little serious commitment to converting Jews, the author details the special circumstances of that critical century in European history.

The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Response and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944. By Jacques Adler. New York: Oxford University Press. A former member of the French Resistance, the author examines the roles, activities, and policies of the diverse Jewish organizations that existed in Paris during the German occupation from 1940 to 1944. Thoroughly researched and drawing upon previously unavailable materials, this volume presents an important portrait of communal solidarity and communal conflict, of heroes and those whose courage failed.

Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History. By Steven Beller. Cambridge University Press. This book studies the role played by Jews in the explosion of cultural innovation in Vienna at the turn of the century, which had its roots in the years following the "Ausgleich" of 1867 and its demise in the sweeping events of the 1930s. The author shows that Jews were predominant throughout most of Viennese modern high culture. The culture of Vienna during this period was born out of the vivid encounter between the Jewish background and the Viennese context.

Jewish Philosophy in a Secular Age. By Kenneth Seeskin. Albany: State University of New York Press. This volume presents a dialogue between a rationalist understanding of religion and its many critics, ranging from Descartes and Hume to Kierkegaard, Buber and Fackenheim. The author confronts such classical problems as divine attributes, creation, revelation, suspension of the ethical, ethics and secular philosophy, the problem of evil, and the importance of the Holocaust. On each issue, he sets the terms of the debate and works towards a constructive resolution.

The Saint of Beersheba. By Alex Weingrod. Albany: State University of New York Press. The author presents an anthropological study of the development of a Jewish saint, or "tsaddik," in Israel and of the annual pilgrimage to his enshrined grave by thousands of North African Jews. It is the fascinating story of how Rabbi Chayim Chouri, an aged Tunisian rabbi, became famed as the "Saint of Beersheba," after his death in the 1950s. The author focuses on the meaning of this event in the lives of the participants, and interprets the relevance of mystical-religious traditions to present-day Israeli society, politics and culture.

The Great Torah Commentators. By Avraham Yaakov Finkel. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc. A unique and monumental compendium, this volume provides rich insight into the Torah process itself and into the individuals who have performed the vital task of interpreting and explaining Jewish thought and wisdom. There are biographies of over 100 of the greatest Torah sages and representative selections of their work.

The Holy Temple Revisited. By Leibel Reznick. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc. This volume is a detailed exploration of the Temple Mount and ancient Jerusalem: Where was the Holy of Holies located? What is the significance of the Rock that rests upon the mount today? What function did the secret tunnels serve? Where was the Holy Ark hidden? Where did the Maccabees find the jug of oil that is commemorated in the holiday of Hanukkah? The book tries to answer these and many other fascinating questions. It is an excellent synthesis of traditional rabbinical literature and modern archaeology, containing over 100 photographs, drawings and maps.

The Jews of St. Petersburg: Excursions through a Noble Past. By Mikhail Beizer. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. This is a richly detailed and illustrated volume, in which the author leads the reader on six long and lively excursions through a fascinating period of Russian Jewish history, 1880-1930. These were the years when many Jews left their small villages – the shtetls – and came to the Czarist capital. These were also years of great flourishing in the cultural life of St. Petersburg Jews – in Hebrew writing, Jewish ethnography and history, in drama, art and music.

Beyond Appearances: Stories From the Kabbalistic Ethical Writings. Edited by Aryeh Wineman. The Jewish Publication Society. Fifty-four charming and evocative tales, especially translated from Hebrew for this volume, recapture a rich yet virtually forgotten chapter in the history of Jewish narrative. They form the important transitional link between the esoteric mystical teachings of the 16th century Kabbalists and the populist tales of the 18th century Eastern European Hasidim. An overriding message in the stories is that the true meaning of things isn't necessarily what they seem; it can be "beyond appearances." Wineman's introductory essay presents the historical setting and the ethos of the community that produced this body of Jewish imaginative writing. He also prepared an excellent commentary around the stories that recapture a rich yet forgotten chapter of Jewish narrative.

Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew. By Neil Gillman. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. In forthright, non-technical language, the author addresses the most difficult theological questions of our time and shows there are still viable Jewish answers, even for skeptics. Retaining the sacred fragments of the traditional system of belief, he explains how they can be rethought and reformulated despite the strains and tensions of modernity. Each chapter addresses one of the perplexing issues for Jewish theology today, and for each issue the author presents a range of authentic Jewish perspectives.

Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition. By Anson Laytner. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc. The author admirably details Judaism's rich and pervasive tradition of calling God to task over human suffering and experienced injustice. It is a tradition that originated in the biblical period and continued through the Holocaust and beyond. This stance, rooted in faith, holds that it is right and proper for human beings to argue with God about human suffering. This volume is the first and only comprehensive study of a time-honored aspect of Jewish prayer and theology.

Torah Umadda: The Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition. By Norman Lamm. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, Inc. The centrality of Torah in Judaism is beyond doubt, but less clear is the value of "Madda," secular knowledge. If the study of Torah is the single most important precept of Judaism, does this leave room for the rest of human intellectual pursuits? This volume shows that such concerns are by no means unprecedented. The author explores six models of "Torah umadda," providing thorough overviews of great Jewish thinkers on this issue.

The Story of Scripture: From Oral Tradition to the Written Word. By Daniel Jeremy Silver. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers. This book recounts in fascinating details how the spread of literacy among the upper classes, more than any religious imperative, prompted the community to write down its living oral traditions. The emergence of a scripture helped define a faith's teachings with greater precision but, at the same time, hampered the faith's freedom to adapt to changing circumstance. A second scripture inevitably arose – the Talmud – that was more systematic as well as pedantic and that tended to justify and interpret positions adopted by new religious leaders. The history of scripture depended on who controlled the apparatus of interpretation and what readings they authorized.