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MENORAH REVIEW

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For the Enrichment of Jewish Thought

Books on Contemporary Israel: Process, Perception and Progress

On the Occasion of Israel's 50th Anniversary
by Esther Fuchs

The following books are outstanding resources for readers who seek a better grasp of major transformations and new directions in Israeli society, polity and culture. These books assess the impact of both external and internal changes in the status of Israel as well as changes in the perception and understanding of Israel by outsiders.

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.* This book studies the mechanisms and implications of the peace process between Israel and Egypt in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The author, Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, does not want us to lose sight of the momentous change Israeli foreign policy underwent from a war to a peace relationship. He calls our attention to problems of recognition, interpretation, value-complexity and uncertainity entailed in a shift from war to peace. This shift also implies problems of legitimacy and consensus building. The pursuit of legitimacy involves the manipulation of national symbols, language and rituals.

Bar-Siman-Tov credits Menachem Begin, who opposed concessions to the Arabs throughouthis political career, with the drastic change in Israel's foreign policy. Begin realized that the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict became too costly in terms of human and nonhuman resources. He also sought to rid himself of the image of war monger. Begin began to signal to Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt, of his interest in negotiating for peace. Sadat's announcement that he intended to visit Jerusalem was surprising even to Begin. The author indicates that Begin welcomed the visit, but there was not agreement among Israeli decision makers about the possible results and implications of the visit. With his visit to Israel, Sadat was able to put the ball in Israel's court. The visit presented Israel with a great opportunity and with thorny problems. Israel was interested in a peace treaty with Egypt but not in Sadat'sproposal of a comprehensive peace including concessions on the West Bank. In terms of public perception, Sadat's heavily televised visit created a peace ritual laden with heavily symbolic gestures. Sadat's visit ended with a private agreement with Begin according to which the state of war between the two countries was ended, Egypt resumed sovereignity over the Sinai and most of the Sinai was demilitarized. The Knesset approved Begin's peace plan despite opposition from Gush Emunim, the radical right group in Begin's own camp.

But the peace euphoria was shattered after the Ismailia summit, which reiterated Egypt's insistence on Israel's withdrawal from all territories. The peace process seemed deadlocked and the government's peace policy began to face serious problems of legitimacy. Only by an all-out attempt did Begin succeed in quieting the growing disillusionment among the cabinet, the Knesset and the public. It was Begin's immediate acceptance of the invitation to Camp David that solidified support for the government's peace policy.

Camp David was seen by Moshe Dayan as the most difficult stage of the Egypt-Israeli peace negotiations. To accept its terms, Israel had to abandon long-held traditional viewpoints. At Camp David, the Israeli delegation was asked to accept the applicability of Resolution 242 to the West Bank and Gaza, namely to give up the territories taken in war. While Dayan and Weizman decided that the peace agreement warranted such concessions, Begin was less willing to give up the original terms of his unilateral peace plan with Egypt. But Begin relented under pressure from President Carter and members of his own delegation, especially Dayan and Weizman. Begin agreed to submit the new peace plan to the Knesset and they approved the Camp David accords with a massive majority. The Knesset debate was itself a peace ritual with Begin mincing no symbolic means to achieve legitimacy. The Knesset vote constituted a great success for Begin and his peace policy, but the settlement policy polarized the cabinet, the Knesset and Israeli society more than any other issue. With the signing of the peace treaty, Israel faced the problem of peace implementation. The two immediate tasks were the interim withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai and the conducting of autonomy talks. The 1982 withdrawal was the important test of the government's legitimacy for implementation of the treaty. Despite organized political opposition to the withdrawal and the resistence of evacuees, the government honored the peace treaty and retreated all Israeli forces from the Sinai on time.

The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was a unique event in which a protracted political and military conflict was resolved. This study argues that the domestic context plays an important role in conflict resolution and peace-making. The intervention of a third-party, the willingness to negotiate and reorganize priorities, and the strong determination of two leaders to change a conflictual relationship into a peace relationship were crucial factors in this context. The author suggests that we study the various factors as well as the differences and similarities between the relationship with Egypt and the one with Syria and the Palestinians. The more concessions the leaders are asked to make, the greater the risks to the legitimacy of their policies and their authority.

Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews. *Edited by Allon Gal. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press and Detroit: Wayne State University Press.* This collection explores the deeply entwined yet often problematic historical relationship between American Jewry and the Jewish community of Israel. Most articles analyze the envisioniong of Israel as

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the great success of a stubborn nation that has gone through tragic experiences and as a unique promise of morality and justice. Part I, "The Zionist Ideals," focuses on American expectations of the organized Zionist movements; Part II, "Religious Vision and Education," deals with the image and identity of the state of Israel as both a religious ideal and a modern secular reality; Part III, "Fundraising and Jewish Commitment," discusses aspects of various perceptions of Israel as a young struggling nation and their implications for fundraising activities; Part IV, "The Cultural Connectioon," discusses the ideology of literary productions and American films on Israel; and Part V, "Tangled Relations," discusses the paradoxes and tensions in the relationship between American Jews and Israel.

In his introductory essay, "Overview: Envisioning Israel—The American Jewish Tradition," the editor, Allan Gal, identifies the American Jewish vision of Israel as a compassionate one, falling into line with the liberal tradition of American Jewry. This liberal tradition has its roots in American civil political culture, on the one hand, and in Jewish religion and ethical tradition, on the other. Gal emphasizes that immigration to Israel—a fundamental element in Israeli Zionism—has always been lacking in American Zionism. American Zionists sought to emphasize the continuity of Jewish history and the harmony in Israel-Diaspora relations. Leading American Zionists conceived of the Zionist endeavor in terms of the American liberal-humanistic mission. This background explains, according to Gal, the overwhelming support offered by American Jewish leaders for the peace process and for territorial concessions in exchange for Arab recognition as these play themselves out in the 1980s and 1990s.

In "A Projection of America As It Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind's Eye of American Jews," Jonathan Sarna analyzes the idealistic images American Jews projected on the new state. He points out that more than these images reflected historical reality, they in fact answered deep needs felt by American Jews. The projected images were often based on the most cherished values held by American Jews and represented often what in their imagination Zion ought to be. David Ellenson complements this analysis by providing a close reading of the liturgies of the Reconstructionist, Reform and Conservative movements. In "Envisioning Israel in the Liturgies of North American Liberal Judaism," Ellenson analyzes the idealistic images of Israel embedded in American Jewish religious tradition. As religious documents, these texts incorporate the religious myths and symbolic language that provide the framework for how most American Jews view and understand Israel. In "Homelands of the Heart: Israel and Jewish Identity in American Jewish Fiction," Sylvia Barack-Fishman examines American fiction and how it refracts Israel. israel provides the physical, intellectual and emotional setting in which many American Jewish writers confront and re-examine the nature of Jewish peoplehood and their Jewish identity.

The last part discusses the tensions and rifts between American Jewry and Israel, including some of the most incisive and thought-provoking essays in this collection. It also deals with political realities and implications. In "Dual Loyalties: Zionism and Liberalism," Naomi Cohen discusses the long alliance between Zionism and Liberalism in the United States and the important shifts that occurred in the 1980s as liberals and mainline churches no longer felt impelled to defend Israel's basic security. The tension between the liberal position with its increasingly pro-Arab tilt and Israel may put Jewish loyalties to the ultimate test. In "Are We One? Menachem Begin and the Long Shadow of 1977," Jerold Auerbach argues that the increasingly pro-Arab tilt in Jewish liberal circles was catalyzed by the right wing politics of Menachem Begin. Once Israel turned right, Jewish liberals turned away. Steven Cohen, on the other hand, argues that there is no objective data to suggest that American Jewish attitudes changed drastically in the 1980s. In "American Jews and Israel, 1983-1993," Cohen argues that while U.S. foreign policy elites may indeed have adopted a more critical view of Israel in the 1980s, the American public demonstrated far more stable attitudes. Cohen challenges what he calls the "distancing argument," suggesting instead that the shift that occured in the 1980s testifies to a disenchantment with Israeli policies, which does not necessarily indicate a general disaffection with or distance from Israel. The "distancing argument" is endorsed by Chaim Waxman's "Weakening Ties: American Jewish Baby-Boomers and Israel." According to Waxman, the mainstay of America's contemporary Jewish community has significantly weaker ties with Israel than their predecessors. In "Critics of Israel," Jack Wertheimer studies Jewish American responses to groups critical of Israel, such as Breira and New Jewish Agenda. Wertheimer argues that the more accepting attitude toward the latter group indicates that American Jewish leaders have become less monolithic in their approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Envisioning Israel offers no resolution to the different perceptions and interpretations of the relationship between American and Israeli Jewry. Its strongest asset inheres in the diversity and plurality of the views it includes.

Israel in the Nineties: Development and Conflict. *Edited by Frederick A. Lazin and Gregory S. Mahler. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.* This book is a collection of essays prepared for a conference on Israel in the 1990s. Each essay addresses one of several dramatic dimensions of change in Israel during recent years. The topics discussed in this volume are the relationship between religion and politics, the general operation of the political system, Israel's foreign policy, social and cultural changes, and changes in the economy. The editors point out that given the magnitude of the changes, it is surprising that the political system of Israel has remained stable.

In "Protecting the Majority: Political Freedom for Non-Orthodox Jews in Israel," Martin Edelman argues that the Israeli experience is contrary to the spirit of majoritarian democracies. In Israel it is the secular majority who needs to be protected from the tyranny of the Orthodox minority. Edelman believes that a constitutional bill guaranteeing freedom of religion may resolve this paradox but he doubts that this change will happen in the 1990s. In "Different Set of Political Game Rules: Israeli Democracy in the 1990s," Gideon Doron posits that Israel is a vivid democracy undergoing significant normative and procedural political changes. These changes are enacted on two levels: first, a shift to a liberal concept and practice of democracy and, second, a transition from a party system to a politics of images. The new language of politics uses terms such as sensitivity, accountability, responsiveness and efficiency. These concepts are replacing the traditional concepts of loyalty, solidarity or obedience. The new set of values is individual-oriented, the second is geared more toward the activities of the group.

In "Israel and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process in the 1990s," Ziva Flamhaft suggests that peace may enable Israel to shrink its defense forces and improve their mobility. Progress toward peace would enable Israel to focus on serious threats from more distant enemies supported and trained by Iran. A fascinating overview of informal contacts between Israel and the Palestinians in past decades is offered in Peter Demant's "Unofficial Contacts and Peacemaking: Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, 1967-1993." This survey suggests that the official historical handshake between Rabin and Arafat in 1993 was preceded and made possible by informal dialogues between Israelis and Palestinians. Demant believes there is still considerable growth potential for both private and public dialogues: Palestinians speaking in front of Israeli audiences and vice versa. In "Israeli-Russian Relations Since the Collapse of the Soviet Union," Robert Freedman argues that relations between Russia and Israel have been, on the whole, good in the early 1990s. Russian Jews continued to be allowed to leave Russia in large numbers, and Russia was, on the whole, supportive of the peace process. Israeli foreign policy should pay close attention to Russia's domestic politics to insure the continuation of this positive trend.

The section on cultural issues includes the role of Israeli women, Israeli cinema and Jewish-Indian culture in Israel. In "The Changing Roles of Israeli Women," Harriet Hartman suggests that two factors may delay the progress of Israeli women toward greater equality in the workplace: family obligations and women's willingness to give precedence to these obligations above their careers. In "Israeli Cinema and the Ending of Zionist Ideology," Ilan Avisar posits that Israeli films of the last decade point to a progressive disintegration of Zionist ideology. The avowedly left of center cinema reflects a mood of doubt, apprehension, political numbness, loss of faith and idealism, and loss of national solidarity among Jews of different convictions in Israel.

The final section includes two articles on economic issues. In "In Institutionalized Discrimination in Democracy: The Case of Israeli Agriculture," Shimon Avish argues that despite the relaxation of conditions for the entrance of Arab farmers into a high level of productivity, there is a continued unwillingness in the Jewish agricultural sector to admit Arab farmers into the allocative bodies as co-equal members with a legitimate claim to a share of the agricultural pie. In "The Organization of Industrial Production in Israel: From Diversity to Convergence," Allan Lichtenstein argues that the desire of the state to privatize government-owned industry signifies a departure from its historical ideological position.

Israel in the Nineties is a collection of critical, trenchant and thought-provoking essays pointing the way to possible transformations in various aspects of the Israeli polity beyond the last decade of the century. It is recommended for courses on Modern Israel and Zionism.

Between the Flag and the Banner: Women in Israel Politics. *By Yael Yishai. New York: State University of New York Press.* This book offers an outstanding analysis of the political and social status of women in Israel. According to the author, Yael Yishai, the political lives of women in Israel have been shaped by an acute dilemma: a choice between their desire to foster national progress and their quest for self-fulfillment. Vacillation between two contrasting loyalties weakens effectiveness of action and hinders social change. This book is largely about the origins and nature of the quandary of Israeli women and its consequences for political power and influence.

Israel has been portrayed as a dynamic, rapidly developing society, sustaining an expanding economy and a burgeoning cultural as well as scientific life. Yet women's representation in the elite decision-making institutions has grown slowly. In the Knesset, the government and on the local level, power has remained concentrated mostly in male hands. The reasons adduced to explain the small numbers of women in Israel's polity are alleged absence of political ambition, traditional mores, structural constraints and vacillation between gender interests and national imperatives. However, the creation of a women's subcommittee in the Knesset and the increased proportion of women in party leadership may herald brighter prospects for women on their arduous road to equality at the top.

Women's associations have always been active and visible but most of them—notably, Naamat and WIZO—have avoided a struggle against male organizations. Most women's associations defined themselves in terms of women's traditional interests. The Feminist Movement, entering the scene in the 1970s, brought about some important changes. It spawned many self-help movements attempting to raise feminist consciousness among women and promoted the feminist focus on women's own interests. The inception of the Women's Network further enhanced the role of feminism and gave it a political tilt. The network brought together representatives of various parties to form a coalition promoting women's interests but, according to Yishai, it too is harnessed to tradition. Thus, progress has been made but it has been slow and halting.

Data on political participation reveal that women are less active than men in politics and that there is a clear gender gap. The discrepancy between women and men is even more evident among the non-Jewish constituency, which still widely adheres to traditional mores. Interestingly, the more affluent and educated the woman is, the more likely she is to shy away from affiliation with political parties. Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, women tend to display hawkish stands on issues regarding the country's security. Yishai argues that this is a manifestation of an attempt to prove loyalty or to be "holier than the Pope." Women go out of their way to demonstrate that their loyalty to the flag cannot be questioned. Contrary to findings in other Western countries, those characterized as possessing a high gender identity shunned separate female political activity. Arab women, on the other hand, have renounced neither national nor gender identity but rather have combined these two identities to form an aggregate of nationalist-inclined feminism.

In terms of labor policies, Yishai argues that the state has been unwilling to tackle the problem of gender economic inequality. Both legislators and the courts have tended to accept the stereotypes of women as needing protection. Studies reveal the reluctance of women themselves to take advantage of their theoretical equality in the law. But the growing awareness by individual women of their professional needs and the increased politicization of women's lobbying activity portend a continuous movement toward equality in the workplace.

A major factor in slowing the progress toward equality is the issue of domestic law. The state surrendered to the rabbinical courts all jurisdiction concerning marriage and divorce. It has held steadfast to its alliance with the religious authorities regarding personal status. Women have attempted to ally with establishment forces and persuade them from within to change the course of family policy but so far with little success. On the other hand, Israel has adopted a specific form of abortion liberalization. By keeping the procedure under strict and meticulous state supervision, the authorities have given women a certain leeway.

In conclusion, when compared with other Western countries Israel does not fare badly. The country lies in the middle of the spectrum, between advanced European countries and the United States. Women's access to power in Israel has recently been enhanced. In the 1990s, women began to penetrate decision-making committees reserved so far for men. In addition, feminist ideas have changed the ideals and structures of the large traditional women's associations. Also, there are now some 30 laws safeguarding aspects of women's equality. In 1994, the Ministry of Education adopted a comprehensive program to introduce education in gender equality into the state-controlled school system. Progress may be slow but it is unmistakably changing the face of Israeli society.

All four books include exciting insights into the progress made by Israel toward greater democracy, peace, prosperity and equality. They offer both appreciative and critical perspectives on this progress. The two collections of essays are broad and comprehensive, seeking to include a variety of perspectives and emphasizing diversity. The single author books are well written and thoroughly researched. For the student of Modern and Contemporary Israel, all four volumes are highly recommended.

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A Story Too Often Told: Supersessionism and Triumphalism

The Broken Staff: Judaism Through Christian Eyes
by Frank E. Manuel
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

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

Frank Manuel, a professor emeritus at Brandeis University, has formulated in *The*

Broken Staff the story of Christianity's mixed perception of Judaism from the 13th century to the present. Especially important to his presentation are the periods of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. The title of the book reminds us of a favorite caricature of Jews/Judaism by official Christianity during the Medieval Era, namely the depiction of Judaism in various iconographic forms as a beautiful but blindfolded and thus misguided Jewess, who held in one hand a broken staff, frequently in the other hand the tablets of the Law slipping precariously from her hand, and a crown, also falling to one side from her head. This figure, designated *Synagogue*, was set in contrast to *Ecclesia*, the Church, a beautiful woman whose vision is unfettered and who is the antithesis of *Synagogue*. This depiction of Judaism was one of the ways of propagating anti-Semitism during the Medieval Era and, unfortunately, the fallout of this has continued to the present day.

One could argue whether Manuel's book is best developed by his multiple vignettes as opposed to an emphasis on themes or concepts, as well as one might argue with certain of his conclusions. For example, he claims that "the major churches do not vibrate with anticipation of the imminent second coming of Christ" (p. 322). This is probably much too generous a statement, for not only are the fundamentalist churches/denominations within Christianity arguably the fastest growing portion of Christianity, so too, even in the mainstream churches, one observes the intensification of fundamentalism or at least deep-seated conservatism in multiple manifestations. In addition, his inclination toward the term "Judeo-Christian tradition" is dangerous and antithetical to his overall thrust (see p. 321). For this term to designate a form of "rapproachement," one must move both Judaism and Christianity into an essentially secular perception, precisely the move that is most destructive to Judaism as an independent and viable faith, the very argument that he advances regarding Judaism's situation during the Enlightenment.

On the other hand, much of his text strikes a helpful chord. For instance, it is helpful to grapple with the fact that whereas the Enlightenment freed the Bible in its entirety to be investigated openly by scholars within the universities, the Enlightenment often made even more precarious the position of the Jews. Voltaire, who was so anti-Christian, struck out at the Jews also, diminishing the Jews served his purpose of undermining Christianity. In short, the Enlightenment, by diminishing Christianity and radicalizing the breach between Judaism and Christianity, severed what cultural roots existed for Judaism in the Western world and thus made more tenuous the Jewish plight. It is no wonder that virulent forms of anti-Semitism emerged!

At the conclusion of the book, Manuel notes that both the Roman Catholic Church (as *Nostra Aetate, 4* and the 1990 declaration indicated on p. 320) and some Protestant denominations have developed statements regarding the relationship of Jews and Christians. Except for his references to the Roman Catholic statements, he pursues this no further and yet, for modernity, the statements of the various Protestant denominations (as the Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ and the World Council of Churches) hold out the greatest hope that this "story too often told" might finally be addressed in helpful fashion.

As example, the statement adopted by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in 1987, entitled "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship Between Christians and Jews," addresses in a most helpful fashion those issues that have made difficult if not impossible meaningful Jewish and Christian relations via seven affirmations, which are given both historical and theological exposition. Probably the most helpful words with which this essay might conclude are those seven affirmations:

(1) We affirm that the living God whom Christians worship is the same God who is worshiped and served by Jews. We bear witness that the God revealed in Jesus, a Jew, to be the Triune Lord of all, is the same one disclosed in the life and worship of Israel.

(2) We affirm that the church, elected in Jesus Christ, has been engrafted into the people of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, Christians have not replaced Jews.

(3) We affirm that both the church and the Jewish people are elected by God for witness to the world and that the relationship of the church to contemporary Jews is based on that gracious and irrevocable election of both.

(4) We affirm that the reign of God is attested both by the continuing existence of the Jewish people and by the church's proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, when speaking with Jews about matters of faith, we must always acknowledge that Jews are already in a covenantal relationship with God.

(5) We acknowledge in repentance the church's long and deep complicity in the proliferation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions through its "teaching of contempt" for the Jews. Such teaching we now repudiate, together with the acts and attitudes which it generates.

(6) We affirm the continuity of God's promise of land along with the obligations of that promise to the people of Israel.

(7) We affirm that Jews and Christians are partners in waiting. Christians see in Christ the redemption not yet fully visible in the world, and Jews await the messianic redemption. Christians and Jews together await the final manifestation of God's promise of the peaceable kingdom.

Whereas Jews and Christians could discuss each of these affirmations, finding issues on which they would both agree and disagree, the adoption of such a statement by a mainline Protestant Christian denomination signals that maybe we are finally at the point where we can begin to see the demise of such imagery as *The Broken Staff*, imagery that has been built on the shoulders of supersessionistic and triumphalistic theology. Maybe "Judaism through Christian eyes" is finally being recognized as a viable and meaningful mode of relationship to God, man and the world, a faith understanding that needs nothing outside of itself for its fulfillment because "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

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By the Law of the Land

Origins of the National Idea
by Avi Erlich
New York: The Free Press

A *Review* Essay
by Kristin M. Swenson

Avi Erlich approaches the question of land identification and ownership by Jews in a fresh way, explaining outright that his concern in this book is less with contemporary political issues than with the image and ideology of the land portrayed in the Hebrew Bible as a creative, literary construct. Despite this claim, Erlich is not afraid to address the implications of his study for understanding and commenting on the modern state of Israel, and he does so on more than one occasion.

Erlich's unique contribution reflects his interdisciplinary expertise: psychotherapy and English inextricably bound in his own Jewish faith and literacy. The results reach even further, into areas of ecology/land stewardship, hermeneutics and ethics as Erlich invites his readers to think of land as congruent with Torah and the people. Erlich approaches biblical text as an economical narrative, one in which the barest facts and information provide occasion to expound on possibilities of meaning. Erlich does this with varying degrees of success, drawing conclusions about character and purpose, for example, that are interesting, almost always logical and almost always arguable. Erlich presents us with an intriguing proposition and he develops it with a confident creativity. He raises compelling questions and posits challenging conclusions that only a profoundly disinterested reader could dis-

miss without comment.

The notion of land as a poetic concept requires a great deal of explanation, which Erlich provides throughout the book. His foundation is the biblical text itself as "a sophisticated, self-referential, literary narrative about the Hebrew mind and the relationship to the Land." He adds that it "see[s] intellectual nationalism as the antidote to self-preoccupation because, like poetry itself, the Land can be made to stand for the reach of human consciousness" (9). Erlich maintains that such consciousness received the name Zion from David and the prophets as "the use of the Land of Israel to represent the civilization of Israel" (12). Among the characteristics of this civilization are monotheism and a literary intelligence that enabled critical reflection on the nature of God's relationship with Israel. Erlich's conclusion is that the Land itself embodies the particularities of a right relationship with God as articulated in Torah and experienced by those whose narratives and hymns found a home in the biblical text. The literature by and about those people, consequently, serves to direct and correct the generations that follow. In this respect, the terms "self-referential" and "self-preoccupation" merit closer attention.

Indeed, the Hebrew Bible presents a people explicitly concerned with themselves. Some might describe such a posture as decidedly solipsistic and an exercise in egotistical navel-gazing. Erlich does not allow room for such an impression to remain. Instead, he shows how it is that the Israelites examined their relationship to God and the Land under a critically watchful eye, creatively describing in narratives, prophetic oracles, poems and wise contemplation the culpability of Israel and their fragile grasp of the Land. The literature is "self-referential" precisely to provide a constant check and balance to what Erlich identifies as the seductive power of ownership and the insidious attraction of the religions surrounding ancient Israel. It presents a record, if you will, of the challenges confronting people in the forms of basic human greed and a desire for the simplest, easiest way, a way that may seem logical but forsakes the rigorous faith demanded of the one God who had chosen a particular people. It is, therefore, a kind of autobiography, chronicling a people's own discovery of what the Land requires in relation to the one who granted it and who demands a certain attitude and behavior. Consequently, it is "self-referential" to teach and teach again by means of their own experience, how God desires the intellectual and moral environment/climate of the Land. Such a critical examination includes, side-by-side with the claim of fortunate chosen-ness, a description of the people's misunderstanding and failure. This inclusion provides an antidote to the danger of "self-preoccupation." Chosen, indeed, but chosen to be in relation to God who requires proper relation to and in the Land, a privileged people for whom much is required.

What is the Land to which Erlich refers that could carry all these implication? It sustains an ethics, ideology and theology that transcends a particular place and time. It even transcends a particular people, though such people may well be the conveyers of its intellectual blueprint. Indeed, Erlich describes how it is that the people of the Hebrew Bible in relation to one God form such a paradigmatic group. Erlich begins at the beginning, with Abraham, and he writes that "the ancient Hebrew redactors make clear at the outset that the Land was more a cornerstone of Abraham's intellectual life than the object of a claim" (25). This emphasis on the intellectual component runs like a golden thread throughout Erlich's book as he explains his observation that success in the Land required a high level of literacy from each generation. Failure on this count assured failure for the people...and destruction in the Land. For literacy was not merely a matter of knowing how to read but how to think and how to think in the categories of monotheism and dynamic relationships. For instance, Erlich explains that in Gen. 22 God applauds Abraham "not for his literal obedience to the command that Isaac be sacrificed but for his obedience to God's latent 'voice,' which forbids the crassness of literalness just as it forbids child-sacrifice" (42).

The reading that Erlich gives to this story indicates the manner with which he approaches the text, discussing possibilities that the reader may not find as plausible as Erlich assumes. Nevertheless, they are thought-provoking and often sustain the general implications Erlich presents in support of his thesis. A couple of cases would benefit from further research as, for example, Erlich's exposition of Abraham's deal with Ephron in Gen. 23 that involves a Hittite purchasing custom. The existence of such a custom unfortunately undermines much of his discussion. Such occurrences and the notable lack of footnotes and bibliography do not commend Erlich's book to the annals of academic scholarship but neither does he claim that it belongs there. As stated above, Erlich's contribution is an important and valuable one in his willingness to posit a unique idea for which he chose a conversational, essay style. This method succeeds in pressing the reader to think for herself or himself, evaluating the plausibility of Erlich's claims and the relevance of his conclusions.

Just as the literacy to which Erlich refers demanded both sophisticated reasoning and knowledge of the past history and traditions of the Israelite people, so it involved an element of play. That is, it allowed a sometimes "outrageous" (52) imagination within the limits of the Land. Erlich fleshes out this idea in his discussion of the book of Ruth, concluding that "the ancient Hebrews hoped that imagination would root into the Land, where it would be harnessed, given borders. But that is not what happened. In fact, imagination often ran wild. Yet the Hebrews stuck with it because imagination provided the only road to monotheism" (52). The ability to develop an alternative to the norms of their neighbors, required that the Hebrew people reflect on their history in relation to the divine and creatively devise a theology in keeping with their experience. Such reflection, according to Erlich's hypothesis, required the boost of a playful imagination.

Imagination can be a dangerous thing, however, and Erlich exposes a degree of ambivalence in his discussion of the unpredictability of imagination that is sadly reflective of it. That is, he wants at once to express how it worked to imagine and facilitate a kind of thinking unique in the Ancient Near East without allowing for the possibility that such necessarily unbridled creativity would lead into (and out of) aspects of neighboring religious thought. Erlich recognizes the danger but rejects the conclusion that the Hebrews* succumbed to it except at those times when they are explicitly chastised for it. He does not allow for the positive assimilation of theological images and ideas from the Ancient Near East into the developing Jewish consciousness.

As noted above, Erlich imagines this consciousness as rooted in and permeating the Land, and it finds articulation in the law. "There is a meaning to it: keeping unmixed orchards can remind one not to mix in the mind God with gods" (60). Erlich's discussion of the Sabbath is an excellent example of the manner in which he combines the elements noted above. It is simultaneously a product of the imagination and intimately connected to the physical land. It is characterized by the (learned) remembrance of God's creative activity both of the universe and of a particular people, and it reflects an awareness of God's ongoing involvement with the people and the Land. Finally, its observance assumes distinction from the religions surrounding the emerging state of Israel.

Proper observation of the Hebrew's relationship to God, vigilant instruction and appropriate fiction-making were necessary elements for continued life in the Land. Erlich admits with the biblical text that temptation and inattentiveness would cost the people their Land. For, "Hebrew culture constantly forgot itself, thus allowing the Land to crumble into meaningless parts" (88). Erlich cites occasions of "chronic forgetting" during the time of the judges and the apostasy as well as a lack of intellect, which eventually led to the exiling first of Israel, then of Judah. In mitigating against such disaster, Erlich stresses the inestimable importance of memory. "Monotheism begets

poetry and law, and these beget history, which transmits monotheism—*as long as Hebrews remember* what Jerusalem and the Land signify" (93, the italics are mine).

Forgetting the signification of the Land, Erlich describes the resultant tendency toward blood in chapters 5-8. He doesn't deride the divine command to wreak havoc on the indigenous people but Erlich's discomfort with such violence propels him to cry "Enough!" He writes that though "a nation could be secured in no other way" than by "the inescapable habit" of "ugly warfare...the ugliness lingers" (115). He reads the narratives of conquest as a necessary step whose bloodshed ought to end immediately on the people's establishment in the land. Once there, they were called to be a model of the theological and ethical alternative of the monotheism of Torah. However, rather than modeling and promoting an alternative to violence and bloodshed, Erlich writes that the Hebrews occasionally forgot their place and failed "to master the interdependent arts of metaphor and monotheism," (123) thus succumbing to a simple thirst for blood and the kind of deities that could be controlled (mere idols). Erlich explains that the regular observance of rituals could mitigate against this danger. "Observance" is the key, though, for without an active engagement of intellect, the ritual becomes meaningless, useless against an inclination for gratuitous violence. "The Hebrews hoped that a mind-centered ritual that encouraged 'remembrance' and 'memorial,' that emphasized fiction-making and distinction-making, would minimize crimes of passion" (135).

Erlich continues to trace the monotheism exemplified by imaginative poets, directed by the Torah, and enacted in rituals and relationships through several outstanding biblical characters. He highlights the wisdom of Solomon who "understood that the dreaming mind and the distinction-making mind sustain the Land" (148), expounding on such texts as the Song of Songs and the maternity battle between two harlots. He discusses the character of Jonah who transforms his literalist thinking into poetically metaphorical thinking in the belly of the whale, thereby realizing his salvation. Erlich explains, however, that Jonah failed to appreciate the power of the Land's poetic monotheism as something that transcends geographical boundaries and "rever[ts] to the literary naivete that characterizes his thinking in chapter 1" (176).

Erlich could have developed the latter point a bit further. For instance, in discussing God's reaction to Jonah's insolence, there exists an excellent opportunity to point out the role the natural world plays. The poetry that God crafts into a parable for Jonah finds expression in the sun, the gourd and the worm. Shaping elements of the land, God produces a parable to teach Jonah, to encourage him to exercise his literary imagination. Again, the interrelationship of land and God finds expression in the land's active participation in God's corrective action in Num. 16 where we read it swallowed the rebellious Korah-ites. Likewise, Erlich might have developed further God's close association with the fertility of the land in his discussion of Hosea, for example. (Perhaps this comes uncomfortably close to Erlich's understanding of the other religions, though, and he avoided it on the basis of not wanting Hebrews to appear like their neighbors.) That Erlich does not expound on the possibilities of the interrelationship of the (natural-world) land, the Hebrews and God may simply provide fertile ground for another study. It also may indicate that Erlich's primary interest for the implications of his thesis lies elsewhere.

Indeed, after discussing the demise of historic Israel and its reinstitution as a geographical place of Torah, Erlich concludes his book with a discussion of the political implications of the Land. In the chapter entitled "Ancient Zionism and Its Modern Competitors" Erlich explains that "ancient Zionism has taught us to think more deeply about what nations ought to be" (257). Having laid out six possible categories for envisioning a nation, Erlich claims that the obvious choice is "to adopt none of [them] with conviction but of [them] situationally" (260). Consequently, his emphasis on intelligent, well-informed and ethically responsible creative decision-making finds contemporary application. In this case, Erlich's concern is with the modern state of Israel, which he defends only to the extent that it realizes true peace. With this word of vision and hope, Erlich ends his book: Peace.

*Aware that "Israelite" is currently the regnant term, I have chosen to retain Erlich's designation "Hebrews to maintain consistency in this review of his book.

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A Complex Partnership?

Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel Relations After the Cold War
by Bernard Reich
Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc.

A *Review* Essay
by Steven F. Windmueller

Bernard Reich, who has long commented on Middle East politics, offers us on this occasion a primer on the core components affecting the United States-Israel connections associated with the first half of this decade. This 128-page text is divided into four basic areas: "The Special Relationship," "The Strategic Connection," "The Political Component" and "The Maturing of Economic Relations." Joining this descriptive analysis, we are treated to a useful chronology defining the United States-Israel relationship.

Reich himself defined the intent of his work when he writes: "This book is designed to reassess the foundations of the bilateral relationship and to offer suggestions for its future..." The organization of this material is focused initially on the background and evolution of the United States-Israel connection, both pre- and post-state. Acknowledging that the effort here is not to create a diplomatic history, the author describes this unique and special relationship in the context of the shared ideological, moral, political, strategic and economic factors that comprise the Washington-Jerusalem axis.

Reich's closing chapter, entitled "Policy Parameters," offers us the only insights provided in this volume as to the character and scope of the partnership. Several core ingredients both sustain this relationship and give us a glimpse into the future of this nearly 50-year association. As Reich notes: "This nurturing environment, an outgrowth of the symbiotic interaction among the American Jewish community, public opinion and Congress has no precise parallel in other bilateral relationships." The structure of this partnership is framed by a "safety net" of "a sympathetic Congress," buoyed by favorable public opinion and influenced by an "active Jewish community..."

At best, this book serves as a primer for those seeking basic information on United States-Israel affairs. This literature sadly fails to bring new insights into this exciting, complex relationship. The text disappointingly does not expose the reader to significant new data but rather concentrates on the use of available primary sources, covering three decades of decision-making in both societies. Reich notes that interviews were conducted with government officials and experts, journalists, and scholars. But there is little evidence that the author used these contacts in any significant manner. Because of Reich's high profile as both a researcher and policy analyst, he is exposed to documents from a host of unpublished reports from think-tanks, government researchers and private organizational groups that could have helped to facilitate a marvelous historical and contemporary analysis. Instead, we are subjected to a stale review of both the events of the past and a simplistic narrative of this diplomatic connection. The book's publication date is identified as 1995 yet the material introduced, covering the post-Gulf War, is at best brief and incomplete. Even

the key economic data that comprises a significant part of the survey only brings us to 1990. Considering the historical impact of the peace process on Israel's financial structure, the absence of this information is disappointing.

But even more serious may be the author's unwillingness to create a theoretical context in which to shape and evaluate this case study or to offer his readers any meaningful assessment of where the relationship may be moving in the future. This volume joins the list of books featuring many other introductory historical essays and analyses on the Jewish state, unfortunately shedding little new or creative insights on the subject. It also represents a more recent unfortunate trend among some political researchers to foster a cheerleading approach, designed to justify policies, practices or events, absent the necessary critical analysis more reminiscent of what advocacy agencies might produce.

More useful for audiences interested in the Middle East, in general, and American-Israeli relations, in particular, would be selective case studies focusing on how decisions are constructed, who are the principle forces of influence and where there appear to be patterns to such policy processes. The literature on Jewish public policy and interest group behavior lacks the presence of a series of thoughtful case studies on United States-Israel relations, where the focus also needs to be on identifying the impact of outside factors, both domestic and international. On a broader basis, an exploration of the ideological factors that helped shape the behaviors and organizational priorities both within American Jewry and with regard to Jews of Israel would have made a valuable contribution.

Reich's chapter on "The Political Component of the Special Relationship" to this reviewer was especially disappointing for its elementary approach and incomplete analysis. Here, the author has an opportunity to introduce his readership to the other streams of Israeli political support, including American labor unions. Reich barely mentions the impact by Christian elements as a part of the pro-Israel constituency. Further, his mere six pages is filled with gross generalities and incomplete data.

The failure of this book ought to stimulate a more serious and extensive research effort. There is a need as well for a comparative study of the growth of American-Arab political influence in this nation where an analysis can provide to the serious student of international affairs insights into the differing agendas and styles of these two important communities.

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On Heroes and Jews

Crisis and Reaction: The Hero in Jewish History
edited by Menahem Mor
Omaha, NE: Creighton University

A *Review* Essay
by Matthew B. Schwartz

In *Crisis and Reaction: The Hero in Jewish History*, Professor Menahem Mor presents an anthology of essays that studies from many approaches the topic of the hero in Jewish history. There are essays on biblical figures; on American Jews, including one on the use of hero biographies in synagogue schools; and on heroes of the Holocaust, including Raul Wallenberg.

Let me offer my own view of the concept of hero as it might apply to Jewish thought. There have indeed been great Jews throughout history—whether religious figures, Nobel Prize-winning scientists, violinists, ballplayers... It is part of Judaism that the Jew seeks greatness, fulfillment (*shelemut*) in his person and in his thought and work. Yet the concept of hero in itself is not essential to the Jewish world, whose God loves wisdom and goodness, not victory, glory and celebrity. Heroism as we know it today is rooted in the mores of a Hellenic society where everything from athletics to the theater was established as a competition. Greek myths too are replete with stories of contests and challenges not only between people but even between people and gods or monsters. Let us consider the idea of heroism among Greeks and the contrasting Judaic concept of human fulfillment.

The heroes of the Greek tragic theater are defined by Aristotle as arousing fear and pity in the audience. The hero takes upon himself tasks that are beyond the capacity of human beings, and he is a tragic figure because he knows that fate and not he himself controls the result of his actions. No matter how crushing his self-sacrifice or how exceptional his accomplishment, he can never sacrifice or accomplish enough to save himself from his destined doom or to give his life ultimate value. Self-destruction is the most complete offering the hero can make. In a sense, it is the only way he can exert control and power in his own life. Yet it is not enough. The spectators at the Greek drama are roused to fear and pity, and they share the hero's fatalistic obsession with doom but they cannot help him. They can only participate vicariously and in a manner inadequate to supply more than a temporary catharsis to their own drives and fears.

The Greek hero moves in a world that is tragically flawed, and he suffers from tragic flaws in his own personality as well. He cannot avoid errors in act or judgment, nor once the error is committed can he correct or modify it. He can never repent. In the *Iliad*, Achilles, against his better judgment, sent his friend, Patroklos, to battle and to his death at the hand of Hector, prince of Troy. Then Achilles felt impelled to avenge Patroklos by slaying Hector, although he knew of a prediction that his own death would soon follow Hector's. Hector, himself opposed to the war from the first, reluctantly accepted Achilles' challenge to battle. Alas, the goddess Athene tricked Hector into thinking that Deiphobos, his brother, would help him. Hector decided to fight based on this wrong information only to learn after the combat had begun that Deiphobos was never there; it was only Athene disguised as Deiphobos. Hector must now face certain doom all alone. Achilles, too late, fulfilled the predictions by dying miserably in battle.

When the hero has accomplished his quest, what remains to be done? In the Arthurian legends, Sir Galahad, purest of knights, finds the holy grail and having succeeded beyond all his great fellows can only pray and die. Greek heroes tend to be loners, indeed awesome in their loneliness and alienation from others. Neither man nor god helps or supports them.

The athlete ancient or modern must devote himself totally, give all in his quest for victory. Yet the moment of victory is inadequate because it changes nothing. On Monday morning, Sunday's heroics no longer protect him from fate and from life's imperfections. Glory is but a feeble antidote to depression. It is not surprising that the great ballplayers worshipped by American youth during the last few generations have sometimes been drunks, have cheated on their income taxes and on their wives.

Can we measure heroism by suffering, self-denial, self-punishment and loneliness? Surely much of monasticism was founded on these principles. In his dramatic short story, "Father Sergius," Leo Tolstoy tells of an eremitic monk who cut off his fingers to avoid being tempted by a woman who entered his solitary cave at night. Ancient monks denied themselves physical pleasures and even human company to purify their spirits, the more extreme the denial the better. Yet, like Hamlet, the more deeply a hero looks at the world the more he is loath to act in it, making him susceptible to suffering and depression. The Greek-style hero is a troubled figure who may be well motivated and even highly intelligent but who cannot find joy and satisfaction in life and who feels pursued by forces he can't manage.

Jewish thought offers a very different view of humanity in which the Greek-style hero has no place. There are several Jewish types who have some characteristics of the hero. The *gibor* is a mighty warrior. The *giborim* of King David and some of their valorous deeds are listed in the Bible, and

David himself "slew his ten thousands." Samson is another of this type and so is Jephtah, and David laments Saul and Jonathan as "how the *giborim* are fallen." Solomon had 60 *giborim* guarding him at night. Yet while Samson and Saul did meet tragic ends, David and his *giborim* were great fighters but not tragic heroes. The rabbis of the Talmud viewed Bar Kochba as a moral failure despite his martial prowess and some initial victories in his rebellion against Rome. There is no idealization of heroic self-sacrifice or of tragic flaws. The Mishnah carries the thought further. "Who is a *gibor*? One who conquers his own inclinations" (*Avot* 4:1). To this, the great Maharal commented that any animal can defeat another animal, and the true *gibor* is one who can conquer himself.

Can one actually gain something of permanent meaning from hard work in this world or sometimes even without it? The Talmud speaks of "one who acquires his world in an hour." A person can attain a life of goodness, creativity and moral success. However, even a man like Eleazar ben Durdaya, who lived a life of profligacy and dissipation, can find himself in a moment of honest self-realization. Unlike Oedipus and Narcissus who destroyed themselves by seeking self-knowledge, the thrust of Jewish thought is that man must search for knowledge both of self and of the spiritual and physical world around him.

The elevation of the moment compares to the moment "Ah yet delay thou art so fair" in which Goethe's Faust belatedly found meaning in life by helping others and foregoing his egocentric drives. This moment goes beyond the moment of glory for the warrior or athlete because it offers real meaning and hope for the future and not merely ephemeral victories, prizes and adulation.

The Jew's moment of blessing can come in many ways. Jael becomes "blessed among women" for slaying Sisera, the Canaanite general. A woman saved the city of Abel Beth-maacah from destruction by delivering the fugitive rebel Sheba ben Bichri to Joab, and the rabbis praised her as the prototype of the ability to make wise decisions.

The lives of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs form the foundational model of Jewish faith and life. However, the Bible is a truthful and critical book, far from the insipid biographies that we hand our children about sports heroes, "great" men and women of history, and even of famous Jews. It is of the essence of Jewish truthfulness for our children to know that biblical figures sometimes did wrong to each other, to God and to themselves. It is thus that the Bible teaches that people can be truthful to themselves without destroying themselves, unlike Oedipus and Narcissus. The biblical characters are highly respected but not idolized or deified. As such, they become role models whose stories teach that it is important to make wise decisions and that one still can and should keep trying even when he makes a wrong decision. Instead of seeking the hero's nightmarish glory of aloneness, alienation and self-centered achievement, one can live better and grow in wisdom by continuing to interact with both God and humanity. If wisdom occasionally brings vexation, as Koheletopines, lack of wisdom is far worse. Devoting long hours to books is important, yet the Talmud says that personal contact with the wise (*shimush talmidei chachamim*) is the best way to learn. Perhaps the Jewish hero is the wise person who learns from all people (*Avot* 4:1, "Who is a wise man? One who learns from all people.") and never stops learning.

As long as one continues to learn and grow and do good, no moment need be lost or worthless, and human life is never without meaning and love. This is a Jewish hero.

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BOOK BRIEFINGS

A Supplement to Menorah Review

Spring/Summer 1998

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

The Jew in the Modern World *(2nd Edition). Edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz. New York: Oxford University Press.* Tracing the Jewish experience in the modern period and illustrating the transformation of Jewish religion, culture and identity from the 17th century to 1948, the updated edition of this critically acclaimed volume of primary materials remains the most complete sourcebook on modern Jewish history. The documents are annotated and cross-referenced to provide the reader with ready access to a wide variety of issues, key historical figures and events. Complete with some 20 useful tables detailing Jewish demographic trends, this is a unique resource for any course in Jewish history, Zionism and Israel, the Holocaust, or European and American history.

The Veneration of Divine Justice: The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity. *By Roy A. Rosenberg. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.* In this study, Rosenberg unravels the identity of the Essenes, explores their relationship to Pharisees and Sadducees, and discusses the concept of "tsedek" (divine justice) as developed both in the Bible and in the Qumran materials. He also explores the messianic concept held by 1st-century Jews and the possible relationship between Jesus and Qumran.

French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and the Ideology of Culture. *By David Carroll. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.* This is the first book to provide a sustained critical analysis of the literary-esthetic dimension of French fascism. Carroll is concerned with the internal relations of fascism and literature—how literary fascists conceived of politics as a technique for fashioning a unified people and transforming the disparate elements of society into an organic, totalized work of art. A cogent analysis of the ideological function of literature and culture in fascism, this work helps us see the ramifications of thinking for literature or art as the truth or essence of politics.

Salo Wittmayer Baron: Architect of Jewish History. *By Robert Liberles. New York: New York University Press.* Alongside Dubnow and Graetz, Baron was one of the three most important figures in the study of Jewish history. Liberles traces the remarkable life and career of this influential historian. The book also examines Baron's major works and provides an intriguing look at the politics of the academic communities Baron inhabited. Baron's life sheds light on a range of broader issues facing American Jewry: transplanting Jewish studies from Europe to America, the use of social history in defense against anti-Semitism and the emergence of the American Jewish community as leaders of world Jewry.

The Jews of Moscow, Kiev and Minsk: Identity, Anti-Semitism, Emigration. *By Robert J. Brym. New York: New York University Press.* This volume is the first based on an onsite survey of Jews in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The author places the survey results in their social and historical contexts. He explains why ethnic distinctiveness persisted and even became accentuated in the Soviet era as well as describes the position of Jews in Soviet and post-Soviet society and some of the dilemmas they face. This book is crucial reading for anyone interested not only in the general situation of the Jews in the former Soviet Union but in their actual perceptions, worldviews and plans for the future.

The Zionist Ideology. *By Gideon Shimoni. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press in association with the University Press of New England.* This superb and highly nuanced study traces the development and ramifications of the ideology of Zionism from its roots in Europe to its full flowering in the establishment of the State of Israel. Throughout this comprehensive survey of the interplay of historical events, ideas and personalities, Shimoni finds and follows Zionism's common thread: the underlying axiom "that the Jews are a single, distinctive entity possessing national, not just religious, attributes.

The Classics of Judaism: A Textbook and Reader. *By Jacob Neusner. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.* In this book, Neusner introduces the reader to selections from all the documents of the Torah, in addition to scripture, that define the canon of Judaism in its formative age. It is more than a collection of writings. It is also a primer for learning how to approach and read any book of Judaism. This book will assist the student, seminarian and general reader in meeting the Jewish tradition "where it lives."

Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing. *Edited by Judith R. Baskin. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.* This collection of 17 essays surveys the achievements of Jewish women writers from the Renaissance through the Modern Era. The work examines the contributions of women writers in Yiddish, Hebrew, English and Spanish. The themes of repression and equivocal liberation resonate throughout this work. This book is part of an emerging effort to listen to voices of Jewish women both past and present, inspiring readers with the richness of the literature that these writers have already produced.

The Revival of Israel: Rome and Jerusalem, the Last Nationalist Question. *By Moses Hess, introduced by Melvin I. Urofsky. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.* Important as the first book to give theoretical expression to Zionism, *The Revival of Israel* was originally published in 1862. The scholar Melvin Urofsky notes that it "laid down nearly all of the premises and proposals" that Herzl would popularize four decades later. Hess' book was rediscovered and adopted by Zionists. What Hess has to say about German anti-Semitism is eerily prescient.

Jewish Liberal Politics in Tsarist Russia, 1900-14: The Modernization of Russian Jewry. *By Christoph Gassenschmidt. New York: New York University Press.* At the beginning of the 20th century, Jewish liberals aggressively mobilized and politicized Russian Jewry and lobbied for legal emancipation in Parliament. After the 1907 coup d'etat, Jewish forces radically changed their focus, opting not just to lobby non-Jewish institutions on behalf of Jewish inter-

ests but to modernize the Jewish community itself. This shift to an inward-looking, organic activism had as its goal the integration of Jews into a modernized Russian society and economy. As this study convincingly argues, Jewish political activists, contrary to general perceptions, were significant players in transforming and modernizing Jewish society during the Tsarist era.

Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation. *By Michael Lerner. New York: Harper Perennial.* In this book, Lerner constructs an impassioned yet pragmatic approach to a spiritual revitalization that is at once proud of group identity while also being outward-focused in its deep concern with the world. For secular Jews wary of new religious orthodoxy, for feminists struggling against patriarchy, for Jewish intellectuals and theologians suspicious of the merely trendy, or spiritually homeless Jews who have been attracted to other religious traditions, this book provides a rich and profound encounter with the deepest concerns of mind and soul.

Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto. *By Ernest P. Heppner. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.* Heppner was only a boy when the devastation of the November 1938 pogram, euphemistically known as "Crystal Night," introduced a new level of Nazi horror that ended his family's happy life. He and his mother sailed to Shanghai, the only city in the world that did not require a visa. The 18,000 Jews who fled to Shanghai were confined by Japanese forces to an area of one square mile. He describes the daily struggle to survive. This first documented nonfiction account by a survivor is a tribute to human endurance.

Active Voices: Women in Jewish Culture. *Edited by Maurie Sacks. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.* Unique in its multidisciplinary approach to Jewish women's lives and perceptions through time and space, this collection considers women in Europe, Israel and North America, sidestepping the shopworn question of which gender is dominant or subordinate in Judaism in favor of showing how women shape Jewish culture. It includes the teller of tales and the singer of songs, the Jewish woman at prayer and as ritual organizer, also religious leader and writer, and author of ideas, as well as the modern woman struggling to find her place in a postmodern Jewish world.

Events and Movements in Modern Judaism. *Edited by Raphael Patai and Emanuel Goldsmith. New York: Paragon House.* This unique collection of essays analyzes the emergence of Jewish religious thinking and the developments of culture and social philosophy during the past century, focusing on the major events and movements that have brought Judaism into the modern world. Leading scholars describe the challenges of modernization on the historical continuity of Judaism. The essays elucidate the major events and responses to events that have illuminated current Jewish issues and led to the strengthening of modern Jewish life.

Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays. *By Lawrence L. Langer. New York: Oxford University Press.* Langer presents a series of penetrating and gripping essays representing his effort, for more than a decade, to wrestle with a rupture in human values and to see the Holocaust as it really was. His vision is dark but he does not see the Holocaust as a warrant for futility or as a witness to the death of hope. It is a summons to reconsider our values and rethink what it means to be human. He covers a wide range of issues, from the Holocaust's relation to time and memory, to its portrayal in literature, to its use and abuse by culture, to its role in reshaping our sense of history's legacy.

Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land. *By Meron Benvenisti. Los Angeles: University of California Press.* The author's theme is the intercommunal violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the vortex of religion and geopolitics. The discussion is sandwiched between a description of two widely different events: the Temple Mount incident in 1990, during which a number of Palestinians were assaulted by Israeli police at a Muslim holy shrine in Jerusalem, and the handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat at the White House in 1993. The idea presented is that the violence escalated to a point where a decision had to be made and the peace process was chosen. However, Benvenisti is quick to point out that the beliefs of the two communities leave precious little over which to compromise. This is a sharp-toned analysis of a long-term conflict, recommended for a wide range of readers.

Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew. *By John Felstiner. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.* Drawing on interviews with Celan's family and friends, unpublished letters and manuscripts, and materials from his personal library, Felstiner masterfully interweaves Celan's poetry with his life experience in a way that enriches our understanding of both. The book also offers new translations of well-known and little-known poems. This biography brings out the poet's intense affinities with Kafka, Heine, Rilke, Buber and others. The result is a moving portrait of a courageous and troubled man whose life cannot be separated from his poetry.

Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey, 1882-1920. *By Ellen Eisenberg. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.* Southern New Jersey once contained active Jewish colonies—the largest and most successful of the settlement experiments undertaken by Russian-Jewish immigrants in America during the late 19th century. Originially established as socialistic agrarian settlements by young idealists from the "Am Olam" movement, the colonies eventually became dependent on industrial employment, based on private ownership. The author tells the fascinatig story of the conflicts between the early ideological settlers with the financial sponsors and the migrants they recruited, who did not share the settlers' communitarian and agrarian goals.

A Storyteller's Worlds: The Education of Shlomo Noble in Europe and America. *By Jonathan Boyarin. New York: Holmes & Meier.* Shlomo Noble was born in Galicia before World War I and raised in a traditional East European Jewish community until he came to America at the age of 15. Witness and memoirist, extraordinary storyteller and scholar, he was an explorer of a vanished world. In this engaging oral history, Boyarin records and put in context Noble's instructive and amusing stories of his Jewish upbringing and education in Europe and America. His testimony is intimately linked to the Jewish struggle for identity in the 20th century.

Abraham: Sign of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims. *By Karl-Josef Kuschel. New York: The Continuum Publishing Group.* The figure of Abraham is one of fundamental importance in the three great monotheistic religions. Abraham also offers a representation of unity in a world where all three religions often seem to be at violent odds with one another. Kuschel charts the role Abraham has been made to play in each of the religions. He argues that Abraham is the best example of a possible future relationship between the religions, which could rescue us from sectarianism and division.

The Truth About the Virgin: Sex and Ritual in the Dead Sea Scrolls. *By Ita Sheres and Anne Kohn Blau. New York: The Continuum Publishing Group.* This is the first book to focus on issues of gender in the community that clustered around the desert encampment of Qumran, the first to explore the place of women in the "camps" of the Qumran sectarians. The authors depict a pre-Christian, Jewish sect obsessed with sex and secrecy, and show how the secrecy of the Scrolls was directly related to the sect's obsession with virginity and purity. They deal with two spectacular sectarian rituals that were meant to overcome "sexual pollution."