

Cultural

LITERATURE

THE PERIOD UNDER review in this article, from June 1949 to June 1950, was unusually rich in books of overt Jewish interest¹ and concern. The scope of these books was remarkably broad, ranging from philosophy to Jewish cookery. By and large, writers seemed during this period to deal with the Jew as a historical and cultural phenomenon rather than as a social or political problem, as a unique being rather than as the archetype of the victims of persecution or prejudice. The tone of the period was, in general, more contemplative than polemical.

Nevertheless, easy stereotypes of the Jew continued to furnish a substitute for creative interpretation to less gifted novelists who utilized the Jew as projections of their own inner difficulties. There were also more books of sentimental and nostalgic reminiscence, more purely descriptive accounts of the various Jewish milieus in America. Thus, the year saw a remarkably large crop of autobiographies and biographies of a wide variety of Jewish notables, from Albert Einstein to the Marx brothers.

A plenitude of literature on the new Jewish state also appeared, most of it more detached from political struggles and controversies than was formerly the case. Not without trembling and misgivings, the existence of Israel was more or less taken for granted. The tendency among authors was to concentrate on some of the more quotidian aspects of Israeli life, to describe its people, and consider the difficult, practical problems which confronted the new nation.

Fiction

Of the entire annual output of fiction of Jewish interest, John Hersey's *The Wall* was by all odds the most impressive because of its scale, subject matter, and prodigious research. The story of life in the Warsaw Ghetto from the beginning of the German conquest of Europe to the final battle purported to be based on the work of a contemporary diarist and other buried records. It was universally agreed among critics that whatever the artistic shortcomings of the books, they were overshadowed by "the reverence for human personality, genuine feeling and compassion on almost every page. . . ."

¹The books selected for review in this article were those which contained manifest Jewish content, were of a "popular order," and were either generally considered meritorious or revealed significant attitudes and patterns of thought. For a complete, annotated bibliography, see American Jewish Bibliography.

(*Commonweal*, March 17, 1950). However, some disappointment was voiced over Hersey's failure to make his subject matter yield greater dimensions of meaning, "to realize the implications of his subject for twentieth-century politics, as an Arthur Koestler or George Orwell might have done." (*The New Yorker*, March 4, 1950).

While other novels involving Jewish characters lacked the distinction of *The Wall*, or failed to reach the level attained in the previous period, a great variety of themes was nevertheless explored in fiction ranging from the popular novelizations of biblical episodes to nostalgic re-creations of family life. By and large such books were distinguished by a marked reduction in vehemence of feeling about minority discrimination—the dominant tone of the "war novels" and other social novels during the previous period (1948–49). Perhaps some relaxation of early post-war tensions was responsible for this diminished sense of grievance. To be sure, there was no dearth of fiction depicting injustices visited upon minorities, but the tone was certainly less of castigation than exhortation. Frequently, when the evils of discrimination were present in these works, their occurrence was ancillary to such themes as the adaptation of an immigrant to America, or the rise of an American Jew in his profession.

AMERICAN LIFE

Norman Katkov's *A Little Sleep, A Little Slumber* illustrated this shift in mood. In this novel Katkov, the author of a first novel, *Eagle at My Eyes*, which aroused a violent controversy, presents in a more tranquil key a sympathetic account of a Jewish immigrant peddler who struggled to give his four sons a college education. Generally, reviewers of this work praised the tenderness and verisimilitude of the story but deplored lapses into sentimentality and vulgarity.

Among other books by Jews and non-Jews treating of the impact of America upon the lives of immigrants or refugees and, conversely, of the effects of those people on Americans with whom they came into intimate contact, the most prominent were *The Darkness Below* by Frederic Morton, *Homeward Borne* by Ruth Chatterton, and *The Sidewalks Are Free* by Sam Ross.

Darkness Below relates the trials of a half-Jewish refugee physician who works his way through medical school by becoming a baker's assistant. According to many reviewers, the author displayed talent and power, but failed to explore fully the obscure conflicts of his protagonist.

In *Homeward Borne*, a Polish refugee boy exercises a profound effect on the lives of a genteel American family. Though it was regarded as uneven, the novel was significant for its revelation of a troubled American consciousness of the existence of narrowness and bigotry in small-town life.

The Sidewalks Are Free deals with the struggles of a young Jewish immigrant and contains vaguely symbolic overtones. In this novel, a youthful immigrant withstands his trying ordeals and the ravages of disillusionment by learning to appreciate his Jewish traditions while becoming an American. In spite of marked defects of style, it appeared to win appreciation from reviewers for its sincerity and warmth. It was deemed particularly successful in portraying the Chicago Jewish milieu.

In much the same manner as *The Sidewalks Are Free*, Hannah Stein's *The Wedding* attempted to evoke the atmosphere of a particular metropolitan Jewish section—in this case the Lower East Side of New York City. It was praised for its honesty but deplored for "a surfeit of feeling, personal or supra-personal, that has drained the Weinbergers of most other distinctive qualities." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, April 22, 1950.)

A class of novels depicting the difficulties that second-generation American Jews faced in universities and certain professions and industries were typified by Beatrice Levin's *The Lonely Room*, *The Dream Merchants* by Harold Robbins, and *My Son, the Lawyer* by Henry Denker.

Wavering between a novel of race relations and a novel of urban sophistication, *The Lonely Room* was regarded as containing some effective scenes but too split in intention to achieve a dramatic climax of intellectual unity.

The Dream Merchants, written in a popular naturalistic style, displayed the characteristic defects of its genre, tending to sacrifice verisimilitude to sex and melodrama. However, most reviewers found that the author showed a fairly sharp eye in describing the "upward climb of immigrant shopkeepers to positions of power in the movie industry." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, October 29, 1949.) One reviewer, Solomon Grayzel, commented on the book's implication that the Jews were by no means dominant factors in that industry. (*In Jewish Bookland*, March, 1950.)

My Son, the Lawyer takes a Jewish youth through college, law school, and his earnest attempts to establish a practice. While its glibness and superficiality repelled many reviewers, there were others who accorded it some praise for its account of the more specialized elements of the legal profession.

THE BIBLICAL NOVEL

Contemporary interest in religion and the Bible made itself felt in the fiction of this period. Two novels, *Ruth* by Irving Fineman and *Mary* by Sholem Asch, enjoyed wide popularity as well as considerable critical appreciation.

Ruth is a novelized version of the life of Ruth the Moabite and ends with the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. Mr. Fineman's novel is also a parable of tolerance. All reviewers of the book regarded it as an honest and successful attempt to give a picture of life in Palestine as it must have been three thousand years ago, but a few voiced doubts as to the felicity of style, and complained of its over-elaborate descriptions. "Against its embroidered background, Ruth herself has disappeared." (*N. Y. Herald Tribune, Book Review*, September 24, 1949.)

Mary by Sholem Asch was the final volume of the author's trilogy, completing the story begun in *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle*. This follows the story of Mary and her son from Mary's marriage to Joseph, to the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Hailed as an epic work in the general press, and compared favorably with Thomas Mann's biblical re-creations, it was subjected to severe strictures in the Jewish and Catholic presses for both religious and intellectual reasons. *The Catholic World* (January, 1950), alternating praise and censure, believed that the novel would "occasion many misunderstandings about the true Mary. . . ."

History and Contemporary Problems

During the period under review, the books treating the history of the Jews, or their status in modern society, seemed to differ markedly in temper from the more conventional works of previous years. There appeared to be an accentuation of what might be termed an introspective, detached, and reflective cast of mind. The standard world history, chronicling the external relations of Jews, yielded to books with greater emphasis on cultural, spiritual, and religious elements. There was an ardent effort to recapture past Jewish experience, the spirit of times vague and remote to the modern mind. This tendency revealed itself in books interpreting the Hasidic movement of the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, and, more pronouncedly, in the varied popular books on religion and the Bible. The same quality of detachment, along with a deeper consideration of human values, was also apparent in the books on the Warsaw Ghetto, concentration camps, and Israel. There was a marked diminution of the tendency to exploit these phenomena in simply dramatic or melodramatic terms. It could be reasonably concluded that, in the main, this temper tended to produce literature of a more distinguished caliber.

JEWISH HISTORY

The most prominent of the books of this period which were concerned with Jewish history was the two-volume *The Jews: Their History Culture and Religion*, edited by Louis Finkelstein. Indeed, the volumes represented an attempt at a comprehensive description of Judaism and the Jews, "a panoramic record by thirty-four scholars of every aspect of Jewish culture and religion, ancient and modern." (*School and Society*.) The more thoughtful reviews tempered praise of the aims and achievements of the volumes with caveats at the uneven quality of the contributions. There were also some complaints about purportedly grievous omissions, particularly the lack of an account of the Jewish community in Palestine. In spite of these defects, reviewers enthusiastically agreed that the work made available to the general reader the fruits of Jewish scholarship in many specialized fields.

The Earth Is the Lord's by Abraham Joshua Heschel was a history that was peculiarly individual, in the sense that it was frankly unconcerned with meeting the common criteria of "good histories"—objectivity. The author's aim was to present an eloquent account of the creative, spiritual forces in Hasidism. The beauty, fervor, and eloquence of the book were apparent to reviewers. Their reservations centered on the intentions of the author rather than on deficiency of execution, on what was termed a 'romantic simplification.' (*Commentary*, May, 1950.)

A more conventional treatment of Jewish history was Guido Kisch's *In Search of Freedom*, a carefully annotated and documented history of American Jews from Czechoslovakia. The author did not restrict his account to a mere compilation of names of distinguished individuals, but also analyzed the causes of Jewish emigration to America from Bohemia. It was the author's thesis that these emigrees were ardent devotees of freedom and possessed

"a strong combination of Jewish tradition and European civilization"; their Jewish tradition kept them from surrendering their identity, while their European tradition facilitated the rapid process of cultural acclimatization. While it was asserted that the book was overburdened with facts, *In Search of Freedom* was generally found to be "a vivid and commendable account reflecting great honor upon the record of the American Jewish community of Czech derivation." (*In Jewish Bookland*, May, 1950.)

THE EUROPEAN TRAGEDY

The continued output of books relating the stories of the survivors of the concentration camps and the Warsaw Ghetto moved many critics to speculate about the persistence of such interest. Perhaps the most apposite reflection was voiced by Monroe Engel (*Commentary*, June, 1950) who commented that in reading these accounts "we suddenly came to grips with our own condition" and noted that David Rousset had envisaged the concentration camps as the most intense manifestation of a universal condition. Other critics simply found these accounts inspiring rather than harrowing and tending to reinforce individual faith in the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.

The two most noteworthy books inspiring these comments were *The Root and The Bough*, edited by Leo W. Schwarz, and *We Survived*, edited by Eric H. Boehm.

The Root and The Bough was made up of personal records and transcripts of interviews which, taken together, projected the dreadful pattern of persecution by the Nazis. The editor compiled thirty-three first-person accounts by individuals who survived the Nazi experience with unbroken spirit. They gave vivid impressions of life in the ghettos of Warsaw and Vilna, described the partisans in the forests of Russia and Poland, and the horrors of such slave-labor camps as Auschwitz. Without exception, the reviewers accorded the book unstinting praise for its revelation of human courage.

A similar note was struck in critiques of *We Survived*, but not with quite the same unanimity. This book was a compilation of the stories of fourteen of the "hidden and the hunted" of Nazi Germany, as told to Eric H. Boehm. These personalities included workers, aristocrats, Jews, artists, clergymen, and some of those involved in the plot to assassinate Hitler.

David Pablo Boder's *I Did Not Interview the Dead*, in spite of the fact that it was a more technical work than *The Root and The Bough* and *We Survived*, also seems to have drawn a deep emotional response from reviewers. "A great human document" wrote a reviewer in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 5, 1950. *I Did Not Interview the Dead* was a study derived from 120 hours of interviews with 70 displaced persons in France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. The full translations of eight wire-recorded interviews together with the author's introduction made up the volume. The results of this unusual technique were adjudged highly successful.

Contemporary Jewish Thought

Speculation about Jewish life, problems, and status in modern society were engaged in with varying degrees of thoroughness by four thinkers: by two,

Morris Raphael Cohen and Albert Einstein, whose major preoccupations lay in other fields, and by two whose professional interest were engrossed by such problems, Trude Weiss-Rosmarin and Julian Morgenstern.

The late Professor Cohen, author of *Reflections of a Wondering Jew*, had intended to write a comprehensive treatise on Jewish history and present problems, but his death intervened before he could realize this intention. However, his son, Felix, collected Professor Cohen's essays and reviews in a compilation which shed considerable light on Cohen's basic ideas concerning Judaism. The "reflections" were divided into three parts: The first dealt with Jews in America, the second with "Jews and the World," and the third presented penetrating comments on a dozen books by and about Jews, from Freud to Spinoza. While the scattered and random essays (some merely reprinted addresses) contained brilliant and original *aperçus* and impressions of Jewish life, they did not reveal any consecutive or all-embracing system of ideas. Nevertheless, the book was generally acclaimed as the product of a broad-minded, deeply meditative man, and a "rare soul."

Albert Einstein's *The World As I See It* dealt with Jewish problems, particularly Zionism, in a similarly impressionistic vein. Actually, the essays on Jews formed only a fraction of the book, a translation from the German which presented Einstein's views and opinions on such topics of universal interest as education, peace, war, and world politics. Of particular interest was the series of letters, now published for the first time, in which Einstein tendered his resignation to the Prussian Academy of Science and eloquently set forth his reasons for doing so.

Dr. Trude Weiss-Rosmarin attempted a more profound evaluation of Judaism and Jewish problems in her *Jewish Survival: Essays and Studies* than either Cohen or Einstein, in an effort to indicate the utter relevancy of Orthodox tenets and practices to modern conditions. The author ingeniously organized a variety of subjects in two sections. The first section discussed the possibilities of traditional Judaism in the Diaspora, and the second surveyed the ethical doctrines and practices of traditional Judaism.

In *As a Mighty Stream* Julian Morgenstern attempted to rediscover and redefine the meaning of peoplehood for Reform Judaism. His scholarship was considered unimpeachable and his interpretations original. (*Commentary*, May, 1950.)

Israel

Most writers on Israel continued to find the subject too new and the events too close in time to permit any but tentative reports and conclusions. The most ambitious volume on Israel yet to appear was Arthur Koestler's multi-faceted *Promise and Fulfilment*.

The first part of this book was a comprehensive philosophical and psychological history of the years between the Balfour Declaration and the end of the British mandate. The second part was a first-hand record of the first eight months of the state of Israel. Part three was composed of general observations on the language, religion, politics, culture, and contradictions in the development of the new nation. While its dramatic value and im-

passioned immediacy were readily apparent, many critics held *Promise and Fulfilment* to be an excessively involved and highly personal essay on an insufficiently understood period. While basically sympathetic to Zionism, Koestler gave offense to partisans on all sides. Some of his opponents dismissed the volume as Zionist propaganda; others thought it gave too much ammunition to pro-British and pro-Arab opponents of Israel.

A number of less-searching informal accounts of Palestine were published by individuals who had lived or traveled extensively in the new nation. *Israel Diary* described the land as it appeared to a young Canadian businessman. Bernard M. Bloomfield, its author, was a member of an ardently Zionist family, and the book, based on the letters he wrote home, seemed to offer an accurate and varied if somewhat sentimental and partisan series of impressions. *Going to Jerusalem*, by Mrs. M. F. Ethridge, was one of the more unusual works in this genre. Mrs. Ethridge arrived in Israel to join her husband who was a member of the United Nations Conciliation Commission. Starting out as an ardent though admittedly uninformed believer in Zionism, Mrs. Ethridge returned convinced that there were two sides to the Jewish-Arab problem. Although Mrs. Ethridge had palpably engaged in glaringly simple reductions of very complex problems and wrote somewhat coyly, the book would, some critics felt, help its readers get something of "the sight and sound, the feel and smell of the Palestine problem."

Report on Israel was the joint work of two observers, Irwin Shaw and Robert Capa, the former a writer, the latter a photographer. Similar to many volumes that appeared in 1948-49, *Report on Israel* was personal, straightforward "journalism." It was felt that too much of it was impressionistic and rambling. However, *Report on Israel* was considered a good deal superior in precision, penetration, and objectivity to the run-of-the-mine picture-and-text books on Israel.

Palestine Is Our Business was an unequivocal attack on Zionism by Millar Burrows, put forth under the conviction "that Zionism is tragically wrong." Though the author accused the Zionist leadership of being interested in the Jewish refugees from Europe chiefly to exploit its own political ends, he hoped to convince his opponents of his personal honesty and integrity. The volume's plea for the homeless and the destitute of the Holy Land, i.e., the Arabs, was attacked as quite patently written without much regard to actual facts or developments of the last seventy years. It was also remarked that the author's proposals for the future were utterly unrealistic.

More authentic and carefully compiled accounts of the technical processes and problems involved in building the new nation began to appear, frequently from the hands of men who had actually played some prominent role in Israel's affairs. On the whole such accounts as Moshe Pearlman's *The Army of Israel*, a report of the development of Haganah, and *Building Israel*, by Arthur Ruppin, a collection of speeches, essays, and reports on various economic and political problems, were deemed informative and calculated to give insight into varied aspects of the building of a nation.

The first Israeli novel translated into English, *Young Hearts*, by David Maletz, was read with considerable curiosity. It turned out to be an unsentimental, restrained account of life in a kibbutz that centered chiefly about

the lives of a young, married couple. Stripped bare of rhetoric and rarely indulging in emotion at the expense of factual description, *Young Hearts* was held to be a bitter and pessimistic description of the collective society in Israel.

Religion and the Bible

The reading public's recent upsurge of interest in religious and biblical subjects was responsible for the publication of a lengthy list of books for scholars, informed laymen, and the general public. More than thirty books in 1949-50 dealt with one or other aspects of these subjects. Of the books for the "informed laymen," outstanding for thoroughness and depth of presentation was Martin Buber's *The Prophetic Faith*.

The first half of the volume is an account of the relation between Israel and its God, as revealed in the Jewish Bible. The last half of the book was termed "'a turning to the future,' [to] the progressively developing messages of the outstanding prophets." *The Prophetic Faith* enhanced Martin Buber's stature among both Christians and Jews as a writer of timely works "in a time of crisis."

Sterling Power Lamprecht's *Our Religious Traditions*, an interpretation of the three religious traditions of the Western world, was also a dignified, thoughtful volume. Nevertheless, it was felt that the book dealt with much material in too brief a compass. By its omissions, too, it engendered great dissatisfactions among the adherents of each faith, and many of its points were subject to disagreement. But for the general reader *Our Religious Traditions* was viewed as "a helpful and enlightening book." (*Saturday Review of Literature*, February 18, 1950.)

Preface to Scripture by Solomon B. Freehof stemmed from the author's desire to bring modern man "to a conviction of the worthwhileness of the enterprise of reading the Bible regularly." Throughout the first part of his volume, Dr. Freehof was concerned with the continuous influence of the Bible in the cultural and literary history of man. The second part provided a general descriptive introduction to each biblical book, followed by a synopsis of important textual portions and a commentary designed to explain unusual phrases and relate them to their historical contexts. The author appeared to critics to have attained his aim demonstrating the significance of the Bible for modern man.

Edith Hamilton's *Spokesmen for God* and Houston Harte's *In Our Image* likewise tried in different ways to bring the Bible closer to modern man. Miss Hamilton tried to accomplish this by retelling the poems, sermons, and stories of the Old Testament through "mature, objective and considered interpretations" (*N. Y. Herald Tribune*, January 1, 1950); Houston Harte and an illustrator, Guy Rowe, attempted to achieve the same purpose by presenting "character studies" from the Old Testament, accompanied by thirty-two interpretive paintings.

Why Jesus Died by Pierre Van Paassen testified to a growing sense among Christians of the need of revising certain anti-Jewish elements of the Crucifixion story. The author explored the apocryphal gospels and other

sources for the formative years of Christ's life to indicate how the evangelists distorted the original gospel account of the Crucifixion.

An interpretation of this kind, as one would expect, provoked considerable controversy. These are typical of opposing opinions: "The book is, I am sorry to say anti-Christian in effect" (*Catholic World*, January, 1950). "This book glows with religious fervor" (*Saturday Review of Literature*, October 15, 1949).

Biography

An extraordinary variety and number of biographies continued to be published during the period under review. In great measure, most of the books, particularly the autobiographies, explored the interaction of the American environment and Jewish traditions. Others confined themselves merely to the rise of individuals in occupations—the law, social service, and entertainment—in which Jews have played a prominent role. In those autobiographies where the authors wrote of the confluent streams of Americanism and Judaism that influenced their lives, their autobiographies tended to a given pattern. Generally, these voyages of discovery seemed to follow similar routes, beginning with the impact of American life, then moving through an increasing realization of the meaning of the Jewish heritage to end on a note of triumphant resolution.

Joseph Proskauer's and Meyer Levin's respective autobiographies *A Segment of My Times* and *In Search* exemplified with varying emphases and commitments this dialectical drama of integration.

A Segment of My Times described the intellectual and spiritual progress of a distinguished jurist and Jewish leader from his childhood in Mobile, Ala., through his latter days of prominence in the legal and political life of America. Influenced by his early perceptions of Southern regionalism, he became convinced that "loyalty to a segment is not incompatible with loyalty to the whole," and that "interest in the welfare of the Jewish people and devotion to America were not mutually exclusive" (*Commentary*, June, 1950). A book written with dignity and understanding, *A Segment of My Times* was praised by reviewers, highly placed Americans, and Jewish leaders as "the autobiography of a representative American Jew."

Meyer Levin's *In Search* was a similar if more vehement description of a search for spiritual roots. It was the story of a boy from Chicago's "Bloody Nineteenth" ward who grew up to become an important modern novelist. Summing up his rich experience as a witness of various historical events in America, Europe, and Palestine, Levin described how he attempted in all his work "to touch the human spirit with my Jewish experience as the probe."

The posthumous autobiography of Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise, *Challenging Years* was much less introspective than *A Segment of My Times* and *In Search* and involved less of a search for meanings. It was, rather, a robust account of a famous American citizen of Jewish faith who was active on the civic, social, and political scene of the United States as well as in Jewish matters. "Vigorous" and "a valuable guide for all who are ready to challenge

the forces that stand in the way of extending and deepening democracy here and everywhere," were typical of the encomiums *Challenging Years* received from reviewers (*Chicago Sun*, November 23, 1949).

HERBERT POSTER

YIDDISH LITERATURE

THE NEEDS OF the Yiddish writers in the United States continued to be served by such Yiddish periodicals as *Zukunft*, and *Yiddishe Kultur*, and by occasional publications. In addition, the Yiddish daily press, despite its admittedly insecure economic situation, gave space to authors with established reputations.

Poetry

Poetry contained perhaps the most important branch of Yiddish literary creativity. A number of volumes of verse that appeared during 1949-50 deserve special mention. Chaim Grade's *Di Mames Tsavoeh* ("Mother's Testament") was, like most of the poet's work, intense, rhetorical, tender, and unmitigatedly sincere. This book won the Bimko prize of \$350 presented annually by the World Congress for Jewish Culture.

Menahem Boraisha's¹ posthumous *Durch Doyres* ("Through Generations") contained two long poems and was characteristic of the poet's brooding preoccupation with his people's destiny. L. Feinberg's *Yiddish* was a testimonial of the author's love for that language. Kadya Molodowsky, a well-known poetess, composed a drama *Nokhn Got fun Midbor* ("Following the God of the Wilderness"). Aleph Katz's book of verse for children, *Gut Morgen, Alef* ("Good Morning, Alpha"), was clever, adroit, and playful.

Two poets, Aaron Nissenson and I. L. Kalushiner, seemed to be returning to the traditional mainsprings of dogma for certitude: Nissenson with his *In Tzadiks Trit* ("In the Steps of the Zaddik"), and Kalushiner with his *Oyfn Veg fun Doyres* ("On the Ancient Path").

News of importance to Yiddish poetry was the announcement of an award named after Moshe Leib Halperin, to be presented to the best volume of Yiddish poetry to have appeared in the period 1947-50.

Fiction

A few volumes were deserving of mention in the field of fiction. These included the veteran David Pinsky's *Ven Vegen Tzegen Zikh* ("At the Parting of Roads"), Lamed Shapiro's² posthumous stories and miscellanea, though not up to his *Di Yiddische Melukhe* ("The Yiddish Kingdom"), and I. J. Singer's well-told volume of eight stories, which also appeared posthumously under the title of *Dertzeylungen* ("Tales").

S. Isban's *Familye Karp* ("The Family Karp") was a teeming two-volume

¹ For obituary of Boraisha, see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Volume 51, pp. 519-20.

² For obituary of Shapiro, see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, Volume 51, p. 524.

chronicle depicting the Jewish immigration from Poland to Israel during the period between World War I and World War II.

Memoirs

The formidable output of memoirs and personal histories dealing with the European Jewish community that was the victim of the Nazi catastrophe continued. In addition to J. J. Trunk, whose reminiscences, embodied in his work *Poynen* ("Poland"), had charm, quaintness, and humor, Dr. A. Mukdony, the literary and dramatic critic, published *Bagegenishen* ("Encounters"), a volume that contained a pointed, yet warm report of his associations with well-known Jewish literary figures. Kalman Marmor, a proven literary historian, presented an incisive portrayal of David Edelstadt, the famous Yiddish folk poet of the nineteenth century. Though not personal in a narrow sense, this volume had some of the characteristics generally ascribed to volumes of recollections. Hershel Weinreich's *Blut Oyf der Zun* ("Blood on the Sun"), written by a former officer in the Soviet Army, was documented evidence of the Soviet dictatorship.

Two large works, *Pinkas Byalistok* ("A Record of Bialystok") and *Pinkas Mlawa* ("A Record of Mlawa"), edited by A. S. Hershberg and Dr. Jacob Shatzky respectively, were representative of the monumental efforts to commemorate the life and death of Old Country Jewry.

HEBREW LITERATURE

HEBREW LITERATURE DURING 1949-50 was more active than it had been during the preceding period of 1948-49. The number of Hebrew books published in the United States was meager and the trend among Hebrew writers to publish in Israel had grown even stronger. But the true barometer of American Hebrew literature remained the periodical, and the weekly *Hadoar* and monthly *Bitzaron* gave ample space to poems, stories, essays, and treatises which would eventually be collected in book form.

'*Hatekufah*'

No single event could be better substantiate the relevance of the periodical to the development of Hebrew literature in the United States than the publication of volumes 34 and 35 of the *Hatekufah*, edited by Aaron Zeitlin. For more than thirty years this quarterly, subsidized by Abraham J. Stybel, had contained in addition to belles lettres some of the finest serious essays written in Hebrew in the fields of psychology, sociology, and philosophy.

Volumes 34-35 of the *Hatekufah* began with a discussion by Dr. N. Touroff, Nathan Rotenstreich, Professor M. Lazarson, Dr. Shimon Federbush, and Israel Cohen of some of the political, legal, literary, and religious aspects of the state of Israel.

Other contributors on subjects in the field of literary interest were Professor A. S. Yahudah, Dr. H. Z. Hirshberg, Dr. Zevi Rudi, Dr. P. Churgin, Dr. Gershon Churgin, Chaim Leaf, and A. R. Malachi.

A sprawling poetic drama by Yaakov Cahan, vibrant in a nineteenth-century style, followed. Then came a readable story by M. Lipson; a nostalgic tale of the period of the Hebrew Enlightenment by Yaakov Rabinowitz, the late essayist and short-story writer; Yohanan Twersky's interesting and perceptive chapter about Mordecai Emanuel Noah in England; and Reuben Wallenrod's warmly evocative story of youth in Russia during the pre-World War I days. This section devoted to fiction, though not new, was not only traditional. Conspicuous by their absence were some of the younger Israeli novelists and short-story writers, who might have added novelty to the miscellany.

Perhaps the most rewarding of the contents of these volumes of *Hatekufah* was the poetry section. It contained Yaakov Fichman's ten sonnets, which showed that poet's gift for the reticent image; Aaron Zeitlin's *Midrash Shelomo*, both a poem and a serious commentary on the Song of Songs; J. J. Schwartz's reworking into Hebrew of his Yiddish *Kentucky Idylls*; Israel Efros' *Mishekvor* ("From the Long Ago"), which possessed a quality of passionate resignation; Abraham Regelson's autobiographical poem, both heavy and delicate, prosy and interesting in imagery; Gabriel Preil's lyric series on Maine; and Meir Mohar's affecting lament on the destroyed European town where he was born. Though these poets were generally conservative, their poems in *Hatekufah* possessed freshness and a welcome diversity.

The translation section, always one of the more arresting features of *Hatekufah*, consisted of one entry: Hillel Bavli's excellent rendition of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

Hatekufah concluded with three articles describing the state of Hebrew letters since 1920, written by Isaiah Rabinovitz, Yaakov Rabinowitz and Eliezer Steinman. These articles were knowledgeable and provocative.¹ All in all, *Hatekufah* demonstrated its peculiar vitality and importance on the American Hebrew literary scene.

Books

Four American Hebrew authors had works published in Israel during 1949-50. The veteran poet Ephraim E. Lisitzki, one of the first American Hebrew authors to integrate Indian and Negro lore in their work, saw his autobiography *Ele Toledot Adam* ("This is the History of Man") come out under the imprint of Mosad Bialik. The outstanding quality of this volume was a rare pathos. A rambling, intimate chronicle of a man's development, Lisitzki's style was rhetorical, yet the simplicity and directness of the volume was disarming.

Aaron Zeitlin's *Shirim u-Poemot* ("Songs and Poems"), also published by Mosad Bialik, was the first time the author's Hebrew works were collected in one volume. A work of real merit, it contained antithetic elements, and was classic and modern in varying degrees. However, the underlying motif

¹ For the scholarly material in *Hatekufah*, see *Scholarship*, p. 180.

of the volume was the eternity of the people of Israel, and the ideological line was that of an undeviating Orthodox Jew.

Hillel Bavli issued a small volume of poems entitled *Shirim le-Rahelah* ("Songs to Rahelah") and again demonstrated the genuine undiluted lyricism which was his pronounced characteristic. Another small volume of poems published in Israel was Israel Efros' *Zakharti Lakh* ("I Remember for Thee"), the stirring story of an American Jewish girl caught in the vortex of the Arab-Israel war.

Habetulah mi-Ludmir ("The Virgin of Ludmir") by Yohanan Twersky, a resident of Israel, but considered an American from the literary point of view, was a manifestation of the same profound Jewish spirit conceived by Aaron Zeitlin; Twersky also laid great stress on the Hasidic way of life. A novelist of descriptive and narrative gifts, Twersky occasionally allowed verbosity and erudition to hamper the flow of the story.

A second edition of the selected works of Meyer Waxman was published by Bitzaron.

Innovations

Yisrael, a special volume edited by A. R. Malachi, made its appearance. Well-integrated and cogently organized, it dealt with and was dedicated to Israel. *Niv*, a magazine for youth edited by Reuben Bar-Levav, reappeared as a bi-monthly. The majority of its contributors were American-born young people.

GABRIEL PREIL

JEWISH SCHOLARSHIP

AN INCREASE IN Jewish scholarly activity was most noticeable during 1949-50 in Israel, in the United States, and in Great Britain. The results of productive research in the United States as in the other countries were to be found in a score of publications and books which appeared during 1949-50. [See under individual country for scholarship in Israel and Great Britain.] The more meritorious contributions were limited in scope, dealing chiefly with biblical and rabbinic literature and history. But the diverse subject matter and research techniques indicated that a new generation of scholars had already begun to leave its mark on the study of the history and the literature of the Jewish people. In addition, the appearance with greater regularity of a number of journals, and the publication of books and monographs by Jewish as well as Christian scholars, was additional evidence for a greater interest in biblical and post-biblical studies. This interest was reflected in more intensive research into the cultural and economic backgrounds of the Near East. In the United States particularly, the languages and cultures of the Near East again assumed an important place in the curricula of the leading universities. Courses in the Hebrew language were offered in many colleges at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Foundations for the Advancement of Scholarship

A number of foundations in the United States deserve mention and credit for the service they continued to render to Jewish scholars by enabling them to disseminate and publish the results of their researches. The work of the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation and the part it had played in the advancement of Jewish learning was described by Rebekah Kohut in her recent volume of memoirs *More Yesterdays*. The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation made substantial grants towards the publication of important works. Chief among these was the new edition of Jewish apocryphal literature edited under the auspices of Dropsie College by Solomon Zeitlin. The Littauer Foundation also subsidized the publication of Menahem ben Solomon Meiri's ethical work *Hibbur Hateshubah* edited by Abraham Schreiber. Louis M. Rabinowitz through his foundation made significant gifts of rare and valuable books to the libraries of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He also presented a large collection of incunabula to the Yale University Library. The late Louis M. Epstein,¹ Boston rabbi and scholar, bequeathed the major portion of his estate to the American Academy for Jewish Research, the income of which was to be used to promote Jewish scholarship and the publication of Jewish scholarly writings.

The American Jewish Committee was credited with sponsoring two comprehensive volumes, *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*, which were prepared by eminent authorities and edited by Louis Finkelstein.² A series of studies of the causes of anti-Semitism and race prejudice was also sponsored by the Committee. Five volumes of these "Studies in Prejudice" appeared during 1949-50.³

Journals and Annuals

The monographs and special contributions of Jewish scholarship were concentrated in a number of annuals and journals. The *Hebrew Union College Annual* and the *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* contained together a score of varied contributions to research. The twenty-second volume of the *HUC Annual* contained contributions by Abraham Cronbach, Franz Landsberger, Robert Gordis, Lou H. Silberman, David Daube, Raphael Loewe, Alexander Scheiber, O. Neugebauer, Julian Morgenstern, Moses A. Shulvass, and Isaiah Sonne.

The studies in Volume 18 of the *Proceedings of the AAJR* were authored by Salo W. Baron, Boaz Cohen, Walter J. Fischel, Philip Friedman, Solomon Gandz, Leon J. Liebreich, Moshe Perlmann, Moses A. Shulvass, Alexander Sperber, and Moshe Zucker.

The AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, volume 51, in addition to re-

¹ For obituary of Rabbi Epstein, see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, pp. 520-21.

² See Literature, p. 169.

³ See American Jewish Bibliography, section, "Contemporary Problems."

views by authorities on the civic, communal, cultural, and socio-economic life of world Jewry, featured a special article on American Jewish demography by Ben B. Seligman. The YEAR BOOK also contained carefully prepared directories of Jewish organizations and lists of Jewish periodicals both in the United States and abroad, as well as an American Jewish bibliography by Iva Cohen.

Hatekufah, Volume 34-35, published by the Stybel Foundation, was devoted chiefly to Hebrew literature, but also included a number of scholarly studies by A. S. Yahudah, Paltiel Dickstein, H. S. Hirschberg, and Benjamin Gottesman.

The *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Volume 40, published by Dropsie College, had a number of articles by its editor Solomon Zeitlin evaluating the Dead Sea Scrolls, together with articles by eminent scholars who debated Professor Zeitlin's conclusions about the origin and date of the scrolls. Other contributions were by Ellis Rivkin, Walter J. Fischel, Solomon Gandz, Robert Gordis, M. Liber, and Moshe Perlmann.

Articles by Earl A. Grollman, Irving A. Mandel, Jerome W. Grollman and Bertram W. Korn appeared in the *American Jewish Archives*. Individual studies by Abram Kanof and Abraham G. Duker, as well as papers on problems and methods of American Jewish history by Salo W. Baron, Hyman B. Grinstein, Harold J. Jonas, David de Sola Pool, Anita Libman Lebeson, and Louis Kraft; Abraham G. Duker's *Emerging Culture Patterns in American Jewish Life*, and Z. Szajkowski's *The Alliance Israelite Universelle in the United States* were published in the *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*. *Historia Judaica* contained an English translation of Gutmann Klemperer's *The Rabbis of Prague*, and articles by Rudolf Loewenthal and George LaPiane. Herbert Parzen made a study of the history of Conservative Judaism in *Conservative Judaism*, and Walter J. Fischel contributed a history of *The Jews of Persia 1795-1940 to Jewish Social Studies*. This periodical also contained contributions by Salo W. Baron and Philip Friedman, as well as studies of the Ghettos and concentration camps under Nazi rule. Chapters and notes on Menachem Hameiri's ethical works by Samuel K. Mirsky, Abraham Sofer, and others appeared in *Talpioth*, together with a contribution by M. A. Shulvass entitled *Books and Libraries of Italian Jews in the Period of the Renaissance*. *Sinai*, edited by Rabbi Judah L. Maimon, contained a series of articles by the editor on the renewal of the Sanhedrin in the state of Israel, as well as I. Z. Cahana's *Medicine in Halachic Literature*. *Harofé Haivri*, edited by Moses Einhorn in New York, also published some interesting articles on the contributions of the Jews to medicine, authored by A. S. Yahudah, Sussman Muntner, and Leon Nemoy. Cecil Roth outlined and summarized the accounts of the Disputation of Barcelona between Nachmanides and Fra Pablo in the *Harvard Theological Review*. The volume of *Oudtestamentische Studien* edited by de Boer in Holland included M. David's paper, *The Codex Hammurabi and its Relation to the Provisions of Law in Exodus*. E. Z. Melamed was progressing with the Hebrew translation of the *Onomastikon* of Eusebius which was being published in *Tarbiz*.

Anniversary Volumes

Significant contributions to Jewish scholarship were included in the anniversary and memorial volumes published in honor of Jewish scholars. The sixtieth anniversary volume for Ben Zion Dinaburg was devoted for the most part to studies in Jewish history and sociology. The seventieth anniversary volume for Jacob N. Epstein of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem contained important studies in rabbinic literature and Aramaic and Hebrew philology. The volume in memory of Johanan Hans Lewy was devoted chiefly to studies in Jewish Hellenistic literature. The friends of Judah Leib Zlotnick issued a volume of studies in Jewish folklore to celebrate his seventieth anniversary. In the United States the Jewish Theological Seminary of America published two large volumes in celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Alexander Marx which covered many areas of Jewish learning, in addition to containing important contributions to Jewish history and bibliography.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The ancient Hebrew Scrolls discovered at Ain Feshka, and now generally referred to as the Dead Sea Scrolls continued to engage the interest of biblical and Hebrew scholars all over the world.

A facsimile edition of one of the scrolls discovered which contained the Hebrew text of the Book of Isaiah was edited by Millar Burrows and published by the American Schools of Oriental Research in New Haven. Eliezer L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University also edited a second volume of a number of texts found among the scrolls, under the title *Megillot Genuzot*. English translations of the *Hymns of Thanksgiving* were published by Meir Wallenstein of Manchester, England, and Isaac Rabinowitz translated the Habakkuk Interpretation Scroll. H. L. Ginsberg, W. F. Albright, G. R. Driver, A. Parrot, Ernest R. Lachemann, S. M. Stern, David Diringer, Menahem M. Kasher, Tuvia Wechsler, Solomon Zeitlin, Harry M. Orlinsky, H. Yalon, and numerous other scholars in every center of learning made further evaluations of these scrolls and their relation to the study and understanding of the text of the Hebrew Bible.

History

The collection and preservation of communal records and documents and the story of the destruction of European Jewish communities was undertaken by a number of organizations in the United States, in Israel, and in Europe. In the United States the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) was active, as were the Wiener Library in London, the Centre du Documentation Juive in Paris, the Central Jewish Historical Commission in Warsaw, and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem which collected materials of which some were published. Among the memorial volumes published in the United States were the two volumes of *Pinkas Byalistok* by Abraham S. Hershberg which were edited by Yudel Mark; *Khurban Wolkowisk* edited

by Moses Einhorn, and the Grayevé memorial volume edited by G. Gorin. The outline of a bibliography about the European Jewish catastrophe by Philip Friedman was presented in *Jewish Social Studies*.

The Jews in Medieval Germany by Guido Kisch, an original study of the social and legal position of the Jews in that country, was awarded a prize by the Jewish Book Council of America for being the best Jewish work of scholarship. Guido Kisch was also the author of a volume on the history of Czechoslovakian Jews in America under the title *In Search of Freedom*,⁴ and another volume containing the *Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo Philo*, which was published by the University of Notre Dame.

The historical problems of the period of the Second Commonwealth continued to attract the attention of scholars. Joseph Klausner published a revised edition of his large work *Historiah Shel ha-Bayit ha-Sheni* ("A History of the Jews in the Times of the Second Temple"), and Pinkhos Churgin also treated some phases of the apocryphal literature in his volume *Mehkarim bi-Tekufat Bayit Sheni* ("Studies in the Times of the Second Temple"). Louis Finkelstein analyzed the origins of the Great Assembly and the Patriarchate in his work *Ha-Perushim ve-Anshe Keneset ha-Gedolah*, ("The Pharisees and the Men of the Great Synagogue"). A good introduction to this period with comprehensive bibliographical notes was given by Robert H. Pfeiffer in his book *History of the New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha*. The fourth volume of the late Chaim Tchernowitz's *Toledot ha-Halakhah* ("History of Talmudic Law") also appeared.

The history of the Jews in Persia and the rabbinate there was given by David Solomon Sassoon in his *A History of the Jews in Baghdad*.

Studies of the references to Jews in ancient Greek literature were made by R. Walzer in his *Galen on Jews*; and in Robert Wilde's *The Treatment of the Jews in the Greek Christian Writers of the First Three Centuries*.

For the modern period there was the new revised edition of Max Raisin's *History of the Jews in Modern Times*. A sociological study of acculturation among Jews in the midwestern city of Minneapolis was made by Albert I. Gordon in his book *Jews in Transition*, and a chronicle and study of Jewish unions was prepared by Melech Epstein in his first volume on *Jewish Labor in the United States*. Zvi Scharfstein published the fourth volume of his history of Jewish education, *Toledot ha-Hinukh be-Dorot ha-Aharonim*.

Biblical Literature

The product of scholarly research was voluminous and it is impossible to include many noteworthy titles due to the limits of this survey. It is important to note, however, the appearance of additional popular yet scholarly introductions to the Hebrew Bible. Solomon B. Freehof prepared a useful introduction in his volume *Preface to Scripture*,⁵ and Solomon Goldman made available the second volume in his series on the Bible, dealing with the Book of Genesis under the title *In the Beginning*. Another fine introduction

⁴ See Literature, pp. 169-70.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

in French to biblical and apocryphal literature by the late Adolphe Loda was published posthumously and entitled *Histoire de la littérature Hébraïque et Juive. The Growth of the Bible* by H. H. Rowley was a popular but scholarly treatment of the literary traditions.

Studies of the literary problems of the Bible were presented in Immanuel Lewy's *The Birth of the Bible; The Early Traditions of Genesis* by E. B. Redlich; and F. V. Winnett's *The Mosaic Tradition*.

The edition of the Hebrew Bible with a popular commentary in Hebrew by Moses H. Segal advanced considerably. John F. Stenning edited the text of the Targum to Isaiah which he published with an English translation.

Parallel texts of Near Eastern literature useful for the study of the Bible were studies and translations by Theodor H. Gaster in his volume *Thespis*, treating the drama and myth of ancient Near Eastern religions, and Cyrus H. Gordon's *Ugaritic Literature*, containing translations of the texts discovered at Ras Shamra.

Judaism

Bernard J. Bamberger edited a volume of essays on contemporary Judaism contributed by Hebrew Union College alumni and entitled *Reform Judaism*. The religious philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch was presented in *Fundamentals of Judaism* by Jacob Breuer. Abraham J. Heschel described the religious life of the Jews in Eastern Europe in his book *The Earth Is the Lord's*.⁶ The collected academic addresses and essays by Julian Morgenstern on Judaism and modern Jewish problems were published in the volume *As a Mighty Stream*.⁷ Hayyim Schauss prepared a study of Jewish customs from birth to death in his book *The Lifetime of a Jew*. Trude Weiss-Rosmarin made a study of certain problems affecting Jewish religious life in her book *Jewish Survival*.⁸ The religious philosophy of Rabbi Judah Loew, the Maharal of Prague, was prepared by Aaron Maukspf.

Literary Criticism and Bibliography

A penetrating study of the Haskalah and the place of modern Hebrew literature in the rebirth of Israel was made by Simon Halkin in his book *Modern Hebrew Literature*. The folklore of the Jews in Yiddish literature was utilized by Nahum Stutchkoff in his *Oytzer fun der Yiddisher Shprakh* ("Thesaurus of the Yiddish Language"), edited by Max Weinreich, and containing more than 175,000 words and idioms. Sol Liptzin wrote a literary biography of Eliakum Zunser. A new edition of Elia Bachur's poetical works was published by Judah A. Joffe.

In the anniversary volume in honor of Isaac Rivkind, librarian and bibliographer, Mordecai Kosover and Abraham G. Duker compiled a bibliography of Rivkind's studies and writings. Jacob I. Dienstag published a bibliography of Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Wilna.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

Translations

The first volume of the new edition of the texts of the Books of the Apocrypha which was being edited at Dropsie College by Solomon Zeitlin appeared. It contained Maccabees I with commentary by Solomon Zeitlin and an English translation by Sidney S. Tedesche.

The second volume of Moses Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, the Hebrew text edited, and with an English translation by the late Moses Hyamson was published. Abraham H. Hershman translated the fourteenth book of the Code of Maimonides, known as the Book of Judges, and published it in the Yale Judaica Series.

The new English translation of Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch by Abraham ben Isaiah and Benjamin Sharfman was completed.

Nathan N. Hanover's chronicle of the persecutions of 1648 *Yeven Metzulah* was translated into English by Abraham J. Mesch under the title *Abyss of Despair*.

I. EDWARD KIEV

MUSIC

IF ANY NEW trends distinguished the 1949-50 season in Jewish music from that of the previous year, they were trends of a practical rather than theoretical nature. A decline in the number of concerts gave an air of special importance to those that did take place. Thus, the traditional annual music festival sponsored by the National Jewish Music Council, a branch of the National Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), was even more prominent than it had been in previous years. Among the other recurrent annual events were concerts presented by the Jewish Music Forum, the Festival of Jewish Arts, and the Vinaver Chorus. The Vinaver Chorus was reduced to one concert during the 1949-50 season, as compared to three during the previous season.

A similar decline was to be observed in the issuance of recordings of Jewish music. This field, which had previously proved both lucrative for commercial enterprises and rewarding for lovers of Jewish music, was limited to a few releases.

But though there was an apparent diminution of Jewish musical activities in the United States, a new upsurge took place in musical life in Israel which affected the Jewish community in the United States. American Jewish musicians became acquainted with new Israeli composers and there was a definite mutual stimulation.

Increased activity was also noticeable in the field of musical publication and education. A large number of compositions were published during the 1949-50 season, (approximately twenty-five), and a more conscious effort was made to educate thoroughly a greater number of such Jewish professional musicians as cantors and choir directors. This attempt to educate wider groups musically may be the first indication that Jewish music in the United States

is coming to the recognition that a solid foundation of musical knowledge is necessary to its development.

Folk Music

Folk music had been playing an important role in Jewish music since the creation of Israel but was relegated to a secondary position during the 1949-50 season. While it remained the chief concern of many Jewish composers who used folk melodic material as the thematic basis of their works, there was very little preoccupation with folk material proper in concerts dedicated exclusively to it. Single events, and these mainly in the dance field, took place. A recital by Chaja Goldstein, the "Singing Mime," (in New York City on March 11, 1950), drew almost exclusively on folk material in molding the experience of the Russian-Polish Jews into an artistic projection that blended singing with declamation and dance. The Argentinian singer Gard Rosner gave a recital on January 28, 1950, in New York City that included a great many Sephardic, Yemenite, and Israeli folk songs, and the basso Sidor Belarsky toured the United States, the Union of South Africa, and Israel in numerous concerts that featured Jewish folk tunes. In some of the larger concerts [see below], several choral settings of folk songs were also to be heard. But by and large the folk tune was the domain of the virtuoso artist, singer, reciter, or dancer. It was more important for its influence than for its actual presence.

Concerts

The event which annually captures the most public attention is the National Jewish Music Festival sponsored by the Jewish Music Council. This festival is not restricted to concert activities; by propagandizing for the cause of Jewish music through publicity releases, public relations contacts, and a great deal of literature, it enlists aid and interest very widely, from Jewish and non-Jewish musical quarters alike. During the music season of 1949-50, the National Jewish Music Festival took place from February 4 to March 3, 1950, and featured concerts, radio broadcasts, television shows, and local programs all over the country. More than one thousand Jewish communities participated locally either by staging their own concerts or by arranging music not usually heard on such occasions for forum discussions or special synagogue services. The Jewish Music Council secured official endorsements from such musical notables as Bruno Walter, Serge Koussevitzky, Jenny Tourel, Nathan Milstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Ernest Bloch, and others. Several prominent radio and television shows incorporated the Jewish theme in their programs. Among these were *The Voice of Firestone*, *Treasury Bandstand*, *Tea and Crumpets*, *Sunday Morning Concert Hall*, and *Church of the Air*. The annual contemporary music festival over New York City's municipal radio station WNYC dedicated one whole program to Jewish music.

Among the programs arranged specifically by professional Jewish musicians, most attention was attracted by four broadcasts by the Central Synagogue Choir under the direction of Lazar Weiner (February 5, 12, 19, and 20, 1950);

two concerts by The Little Orchestra Society (January 29 and 30, 1950, Brooklyn Museum and Town Hall); a concert by The Jewish Music Forum (February 15, Ninety-Second Street YM-YWHA); one concert each by the Cantors' Assembly and Music Department of the United Synagogue of America (February 22, Juilliard School) and by the Kinor Sinfonietta (February 26, Brooklyn Museum); and a recital by Ruth Rubin of Yiddish and Palestinian folk songs (February 5, Station WNYC). (All these programs were presented in New York City.) In the majority of these concerts one observed a heavy representation of such Israeli composers as Nahum Nardi and Salomon Rosowski. Two types of American Jewish works were performed: those directly dealing with Jewish thematic material culled from either the Eastern-Slavic or the Palestinian tradition, as in the case of the works of Joseph Achron; and musical compositions more in the contemporary American vein. Although for the most part these latter works demonstrated great skill and inventiveness in writing, they tried less for a distinct Jewish idiom than the popular Israeli composition.

Other material produced for the National Jewish Music Festival included thirty program aids consisting of brochures, bibliographies, and posters; a special booklet called "An Oneg Shabbath Program"; and three albums of recordings. The albums were entitled *Jewish Holiday Dances and Song*, *Palestine Dances and Song* (both produced by Corinne Cochem in Los Angeles), and *Jewish Folk Dance*, produced by the Palestinian dancers Katya Delakova and Fred Berk. These albums were also available commercially. *The New Road* program by Robert Adler with music and arrangements by Leah M. Jaffa constituted a special effort by the Jewish Music Council to present in dramatic fashion well-known Jewish musical patterns (often represented in songs by Joel Engel or Moshe Milner). *The New Road* program had been the central feature of a festival program during the 1948-49 season, but was made available again during the 1949-50 season in a set of three non-commercial records.

In addition to its concert activities, the Jewish Music Council also inspired some specific music exhibits in music stores and record departments of department stores. Exhibitors included the Macy, Gimbel, and Bloomingdale department stores, and such well-known music stores as Schirmer, Steinway, Wurlitzer, and Dynamic, all in New York City.

FESTIVAL OF JEWISH ARTS

Other projects were not so far reaching in their effect. A time-honored event is the annual Festival of Jewish Arts which is sponsored by the American Jewish Congress. The past season's concert (March 4, 1950, Carnegie Hall, New York City) was dedicated to the memory of the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise [see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, pp. 515-18, 525-26]. The central piece on its program was an extended requiem in neo-Jewish style by Abraham W. Binder called *Requiem Yiskor*, written for chorus, baritone and contralto soli, and organ. The work combines melodies from the Eastern Jewish folk treasury with post-impressionistic devices. Other pieces given included the traditional organ concert *In Memoriam* and the dance suite *Purim* for orchestra, both by Jacob Weinberg, and both in a traditional nineteenth-

century idiom. Also heard were some choral arrangements of Israeli art songs, an *Organ Prelude* by Frederick Jacobi, and several instances of folk dance music.

The Zilbert Choral Society honored the memory of its deceased conductor Zavel Zilbert [see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950, p. 526] with a concert (March 12, 1950, Town Hall, New York City) that featured music by Zilbert. This concert afforded the listener the chance of evaluating Zilbert's work, which has enjoyed great reputation in Jewish circles. It is essentially music, suited for liturgical purposes. At the same concert an award for outstanding contributions during the year to the field of Jewish music was given to composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein. Plans were laid for both the concert and the award to become regular annual events.

A close affinity with contemporary music was displayed in the world premiere of Leo Kopf's choral epic for chorus and soli, *Eibig Folk*. This was performed by the Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus (May 29, 1950, Town Hall, New York City). Moving halfway between medieval modal textures and dissonant contemporary style, liberally borrowing from folk tunes of many varieties, Eastern, Jewish, and Israeli, and occasionally applying the textures of synagogue chant, *Eibig Folk* is a hybrid; but it is a colorful work, put together with skill and as slickly thought out as a first-rate movie score.

CHORAL PROGRAMS

Enthusiasm and genuine feeling were apparent in the performances at the Music Festival of the Congress for Jewish Culture (March 26, 1950, Hunter College, New York City). Most of the performances were of choral folk-settings by such specialists as Zavel Zilbert, Lazar Weiner, S. Bugach and Leo Low. In the majority of these settings there was a contrast between the simplicity of the original material and the elaborate harmony. Most accomplished were the offerings of the Workmen's Circle Chorus under Mr. Weiner.

A similar program was heard in the choral offerings of the Jewish National Workers' Alliance of America under Leo Low (October 30, 1949).

That amateur choruses can sound lively, clean, and vigorous, and that they can feature more complicated and interesting programs, was demonstrated once again in the concert of the Vinaver Chorus under the direction of Chemjo Vinaver (March 11, 1950, Town Hall, New York City). It was unfortunate that there was only one of these concerts in 1949-50 (there had been three in past seasons), for Dr. Vinaver offered a stimulating program of biblical, Israeli, folk, and synagogue music. Perhaps most rewarding were the choral settings of Jewish folk tunes in *Three Jewish Madrigals* by Erich Itor Kahn. The enormous competence of the composer and his extreme originality proved once more that the problem of folk and art music can be solved by truly first-rate composers who write out of esthetic concern.

For this reason, the outstanding Jewish events were performances given in the course of concerts of general interest. The New York premiere of the much-discussed *Survivor from Warsaw* by Arnold Schoenberg, for reciter, male chorus and orchestra, which was given by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York under Dimitri Mitropoulos (April 13, 1950, Carnegie Hall, New York City), and the premiere of Erich Itor Kahn's 'cello-piano

rhapsody *Naenie*, dedicated "Judaeis qui haec [sic] aetate perierunt," by the International Society for Contemporary Music (June 1, 1950, Dalcroze Auditorium, New York City), were the true highlights of the season. Both works showed a definite concern with the Jewish destiny in their choice of thematic material. At the same time, both works operated within an exclusively personal orbit of modern musical creation.

Nothing quite so gripping or moving was heard during the concerts of the Jewish Music Forum at the Ninety-Second Street YM-YWHA in New York City; but there was a wide variety of styles in these concerts. Of the works given, a group of songs and excerpts from a cantata by the Israeli composer Robert Starer (March 20, 1950), were done competently and with finish. Jacob Avshalomov's *Evocation* for clarinet and piano, given at the same concert, was next closest to professional music. Other performances included the songs by Leo Kraft and Hilda Pinson (April 17, 1950) and *From the World of My Father*, a suite for string quartet and Solovox by Herman Berlinski (May 23, 1950).

Israel

Israel's influence was the strongest single factor in Jewish musical life during the 1949-50 season. The stylistic influence of Israeli tunes and of several art compositions upon European and American Jewish composers was not novel. This had been a steady development whose inception went back as far as the early thirties. But the year 1950 did much more than that; it established a firm physical contact between American and Israeli musicians and worked out a mutual aid program the consequences of which may be even farther reaching in the future.

Above all, there was the material help which America had to offer Israeli musicians. Most notable were the benefit concert *Music Under the Stars* (June 3, 1950, Ebbets Field, Brooklyn, N. Y.), under the direction of Leonard Bernstein, and Serge Koussevitzky's donation of his European music collection to the Hebrew University. The library, which Koussevitzky had kept in Aix-les-Bains, France, during the war, contains numerous traditional and contemporary scores, including the complete works of Bach and Beethoven.

In addition to these individual efforts new organizations were set up to send more scores to Israel. American music publishers, among them Arrow Music Press, G. Schirmer, Inc., Mills Music Company and Hargail Music Press, donated a number of contemporary scores to be appended to the Koussevitzky donation. The American Friends of the Hebrew University started an extensive drive to make more scores available to the Israeli public. The United States State Department also contributed by sending Jewish music recorded by the Voice of America to radio stations in Israel where the programs were rebroadcast. Music in these programs included Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo* (with Leonard Rose as 'cello soloist and Leopold Stokowski conducting), *Concertino* by Abraham W. Binder (played by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Karl Krueger), Bruch's *E-minor Violin Concerto*, *Hebrew Songs* by Barini, *Hebrew Melody and Dance* by Joseph Achron,

and other Jewish compositions played by New York City's Kinor Sinfonietta.

But the relation between the United States and Israel was by no means one-sided. The World Zionist Organization awarded to Chemjo Vinaver a one-year fellowship for the compilation of an anthology of Jewish music. This anthology was to include synagogue litany, Hasidic music, and works by contemporary Israeli composers. Considering the lack of funds in this country for musicological research, this grant assumes heightened significance, especially since it was given to perhaps the outstanding expert in the field.

The increased interest in Israeli music also furthered the reputation of many contemporary Israeli composers. Names like Ben-Haim and Marc Lavry suddenly gained international reputation, attracting attention by the exotic flavor of their music. In the United States a special concert of the Jewish Music Forum (May 23, 1950, Ninety-Second Street YM-YWHA) acquainted audiences with chamber works by Aviasaf Bernstein, A. U. Boskowitz, Y. Gorochof, N. Nissimov, Yitschak Edel, and Joseph Kaminsky. Practically all of this music was characterized more by Eastern-European influences, and to some extent by contemporary Russian styles, than by the Arabic-Oriental melisma which is apparently the forte of a more recent group of composers who have immigrated to Israel.

New Works

Although concert activities in the United States declined, many new works achieved notice through publication. Among these were numerous works by Lazar Weiner, most of them liturgical choral compositions. They included *Va Anachnu*, *Odon-Olom*, *Borchu*, and *Shema Israel*, all written in a traditional melodic style with some modern quartal harmonies as backdrops. Other examples of synagogue music published were the *Hymn to Israel* for voice and piano and the *Prayer After Isaiah* by Cantor Pinchas Jazonowski. Additional compositions issued were A. W. Binder's oratorio *Israel Reborn*, and a number of songs, some of which were settings of Hebrew folk songs and others art songs with texts from the Bible, by Reuven Korsakoff. None of these works showed any departure from the composers' previous styles.

A significant work was Herbert Fromm's *Yigdal*, published in the *Menorah Journal* (Winter, 1950, issue). This work for mixed choir and organ attempted once more the integration of traditional synagogue melos with the lean contrapuntal style of Hindemith. In its own terms it was a highly successful work; while it was perhaps neither the ultimate nor the only solution to the problem of wedding tradition to contemporary music, it was a highly skillful and successful attempt.

Finally, two young composers came into the limelight through the offices of the B'nai B'rith Victory Lodge and the Hillel Foundations, which sponsor the annual George Gershwin Memorial Contest. Bryan Dority of Chicago won first prize for his *Allegro and Pastorale*, and Robert Kurka received honorable mention for his *Music for Orchestra*. Both works, written in a general contemporary idiom, were performed in New York (March 26, 1950, Carnegie Hall, New York City).

Records

There was a curtailment of Jewish records during the 1949-50 season. Of importance were four *Holiday Albums* produced by Dr. A. Artakov and released by the Los Angeles Bureau of Education. They featured competent singing of traditional synagogue chants for such occasions as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Simhat Torah, Purim, Lag B'Omer and Shevuot. Several single records produced by Judith K. Eisenstein and released as *Holiday Series* (Allegro) represented a similar attempt. Cantor Emanuel Rosenberg tried to impart genuine feeling to the traditional melodic line.

Most important were two releases of compositions by Ernest Bloch—the first recording of his *Avodath Hakodesh* under the composer's direction and a new long-playing recording of his *Schelomo* (London Records). While *Schelomo* was rather diffuse and allowed only an occasional glimpse of the composer's great gifts, Bloch's *Avodath Hakodesh*, a sacred service for Friday evening, was a magnificent presentation which evoked the sacred spirit without taking refuge in imitations of traditional melodies. Both works were excellently performed and produced.

Among other recordings was an album of *Four Hora Dances* (Alco) in which contemporary composers Ernst Toch, Leonard Bernstein, Darius Milhaud, and David Diamond arranged the traditional hora for orchestra and voices. The album, which was produced by Corinne Cochem and played by the Pacific Symphonette and Chorus under Victor Young, had the advantage of a good performance. The lack of such a performance was felt in two other albums, *Oneg Shabbath* and *Songs of Hope* (Israel Records). *Oneg Shabbath* was a tribute to the memory of the Hebrew poet Hayim Nahman Bialik and offered some songs for male quartet and solo singers, among whom only Miss Schocken and Cantor Leib Glatz gave professional performances. *Songs of Hope* contained samples of contemporary Israeli writing in the oriental vein.

Frankly amateurish was the Yiddish version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*, called *Der Shirtz* (Banner Records). This was originally a Brooklyn Hadassah performance which had enough success to find its way into recordings.

Synagogue Music

Synagogue music continued in its familiar patterns. Some new works (*q.v.*) were introduced, but by and large the melodic shape of the service remained as before. There was increasing awareness, however, of the needs for better musical education and a solution of various problems on the part of cantors, as evidenced by the Third Annual Conference Convention of the Cantors' Assembly (New York City, February 20 to 22, 1950).

Research

The most significant contribution to the field of research was Baruch Joseph Cohon's article "The Structure of the Synagogue Prayer-Chant,"

which appeared in the spring issue of the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. In it Mr. Cohon made a systematic attempt to analyze the factors that combine to make the prayer-chant a special musical unit. More general aspects of a much-discussed subject were explored pertinently, though briefly, in Joseph Yasser's article "On Jewishness in Music" (*Jewish Music Notes*, December, 1949).

Books published included Gdal Saleski's *Famous Musicians of Jewish Origin*, an enlarged and up-to-date edition of a "musical encyclopedia"; and *Living Music of the Americas* by Lazare Saminsky, in which the author, in surveying the total musical field of the Western hemisphere, shows his concern with Jewish music in dealing with such composers as Bloch and Gershwin.

Somewhat apart from the specific Jewish field were books on or by composers of Jewish descent. Rene Leibowitz reported on *Schoenberg and his School* in a well-written expose which stressed Schoenberg's traditional element. And Arnold Schoenberg published a collection of essays under the title *Style and Idea*.

Education

Much progress was made in the field of musical education. Above all it was the School of Jewish Sacred Music in New York City which set about earnestly to fulfill its task of training professional Jewish musicians. Its courses centered on sacred music, divided into such sections as cantillation, history of liturgy, *nusah* and *hazanut*, Eastern Jewish folk songs, and the theoretical fields. The faculty included A. W. Binder, Eric Werner, Lazare Saminsky, Gershon Ephros, and Jacob Weinberg, all prominent in the Jewish field.

There was also a movement to educate laymen to serve as musical leaders in the community. Leah M. Jaffa, music consultant to the JWB, initiated a "Pilot Music Project." In several workshops held at the Ninety-Second Street YM-YWHA in New York City, Miss Jaffa trained YMHA club leaders to work out techniques and methods for bringing Jewish music to the widest possible section of the Y's membership.

Perhaps the most significant fact in the field of musical education was the realization of the cantors that in order to continue Jewish tradition in the synagogue a cantors' school would have to be established. To this end, a fund was set up for the establishment of a cantors' school at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Although the fund was still far from its goal of \$25,000 at the time of writing (June, 1950), the earnestness with which the members of the Cantors' Assembly was going about collecting the money attested to the importance of the project and held great promise for the near future.

KURT LIST