

REVIEWS

The Jews and Judaism

Karl-Johan Illman, *Åbo Akademi*

A series of lectures held at the University of Oslo's 'Saturday Seminary' during Spring 1976 are published in this volume. The theme was broad indeed: "The Jews and Judaism through the times". Most of the lectures appear in the language they were held, namely eight in Norwegian, one in Danish and one in Swedish, whereas the introductory lecture by Elie Wiesel was translated from the original English into Norwegian. Apart from the last mentioned, the lectures are subsumed under three headings, namely 'Jews and Judaism', 'Judaism and Christianity' and 'Jews and Arabs'. In addition the editors have included two replies or commentaries by the listeners and a document. There is a foreword by both editors and a conclusion by one of them, Egil A. Wyller. Finally, the volume contains biographical notes about the contributors as well as a short bibliography.

The theme of *Wiesel's* lecture is "The Author and his Responsibilities". To the latter Wiesel counts first retelling what the author has experienced, heard or read from documents. But still more important is to "try to make man more human". Since authors have hitherto perhaps too much contributed to man's desperation, it is now time to correct this by meeting his deep longing for joy, righteousness, compassion and truth.

One of *Wiesel's* comrades in the concentration camps, the psychiatrist *Leo Eitinger*, writ-

es about what he regards as the basic ideas which have helped the Jewish people to endure in the face of all the persecutions. To these he counts monotheism, ethical action, return to Zion and the Messianic hope. *Bent Melchior*, Chief Rabbi of Denmark, explains how a traditional rabbi tries to cope with his near impossible task of applying an old and unchangeable 'law' to the requirements of ever changing life styles. He does so in a true rabbinical manner using anecdotes and pilpul. *Dagfinn Rian* gives a brief overview of the main types of Jewish mysticism (Zohar and Lurianic Cabbalah) and their influence on Hasidism, Judaism in general as well as Christianity. *Morton H. Narro*, Chief Rabbi of Sweden, surveys what he calls 'Jewish reactions against antisemitism'. One common way was to use *shtadlanim*, mediators, to intervene with the authorities. Another was of course counter-polemics, a third codification and fixation of the *halachah* in the High Middle Ages. In his opinion modern movements like Zionism, Jewish socialism and 'diaspora nationalism' are to be regarded not only as reactions against antisemitism but at the same time as secularized forms of traditional Jewish messianism. The first and largest section is concluded by *Oskar Mendelsohn's* comprised account of Norwegian Jewish history, a theme about which he has previously published one large volume and has

almost completed a second. During the Nazi occupation Norway lost 757, i.e. 43 % of its Jews. The majority of the 925 Jews that fled to Sweden returned after the war, although a considerable number of the younger generation went on *aliyah*. Today the Jewish population of Norway is between 1000 and 1100, the majority of which live in Oslo, though a smaller congregation has its center in Trondheim.

In the second section *Oskar Skarsaune* offers an interpretation of Justin's dialogue with Trypho regarding this early treatise as a congenial Jewish-Christian dialogue in its contents although not in its form. Justin and Trypho both belong to the same 'world of ideas' but they hold different opinions on whether they live in the Messianic epoch or not. Following Dr. Thorleif Boman's distinction between a characteristic Hebrew way and a Greek way of thinking, *Marian Eigeles* points out that the Churches, in different ways, have a double heritage. They should be aware of this in order to be able to respond accurately to the 'hebraic' element in their traditions, which he regards not only as the more fundamental but also binding. In a comment Boman himself underscores and explains this distinction between the Hebrew and Greek way of thinking.

In the section about 'Jews and Arabs' we find a forceful criticism against Israel's policy by *Håkon Strang* and a more balanced defense by *Jan Benjamin Rødner*. Both refer to the Khartoum declaration of 1967, which is published together with a commentary by Odd Bull, chief of the UN armistice commission in the Middle East 1963—1970. This section is con-

cluded by *Bjørn Dov Dworsky* who looks at the Arab representation in the Histadrut.

In his conclusion of the series of lectures and of this volume, professor *Wyller* compares the Jewish fight for survival to its biblical 'prototype' or 'miniature' — Jacob's wrestling with the 'angel' in Gen 32. Taking all together and all differences of opinion notwithstanding he thinks we should all be able to acknowledge, show respect and understanding of "the absolutely unique position of the Jews among the nations of the earth".

Estimating the value of this little book on such a huge theme, one has to consider that it by no means aims at giving more than a glimpse at various but important aspects of Jewish history. I suppose that everyone will find something new, illuminating or else worth contemplating. If I should single out one specimen, it is Mendelsohn's contribution. Based as it is on profound primary research it guides the reader toward the sources of Norwegian Jewish history. Conversely, Eigeles' reliance on Boman's hypothesis makes his case a rather weak one — the underlying assumptions are based on lexical and linguistic phenomena, which by no means can carry Boman's heavy construction. Generalizing and far-reaching hypotheses have always held fascination, which perhaps explains their persistence in the face of critical assaults — such as James Barr's in this case. However the in last analysis, every reader decides for himself what is and what is not convincing. In this respect, too, I find this book well balanced, since it offers the choice between different and indeed irreconcilable opinions about disputed questions.

The Right to Survival

Dagfinn Rian, Trondheim

The title of this book translated into English would be: "The right to survival. A book about Israel, Norway and anti-Semitism." It is edited by a Roman Catholic clergyman and a Jewish professor in psychiatry. The book consists of an introduction about the sad necessity to publish such a book, stating that anti-Semitism is not dead, and eleven essays

on different subjects.

The essays cover the following items: the history of anti-Semitism (by newspaper editor Alf Biem), Judaism and Zionism (Professor Leo Eitinger), Judaism and Christianity (Father Hallvard Rieber-Mohn, O.P.), Jews in Norway (Master Oskar Mendelsohn), facts and prejudices in relation to the general problem

Hallvard Rieber-Mohn and Leo Eitinger (Editors): *Retten til å overleve. En bok om Israel, Norge og antisemittismen*. Uglebøkene nr. 144, Oslo, J. W. Cappelens Forlag 1976. — 152 pp.

of "race" (Professor Johan Torgersen), the State of Israel (Director John Sanness, Norwegian Research Institute of Foreign Affairs), Israel and the Palestinians (newspaper editor Jahn Otto Johansen), the tragedy of the Palestinians (newspaper editor Karl Emil Hagelund), the attitude of Norwegian church members to Israel (Professor Magne Sæbø), "A living democracy" (former Prime Minister Einar Gerhardsen), and lastly Israel and the nations (Hagelund).

Generally, the essays are well written. They give good and balanced information. One cannot avoid some reflections about the contributors. There are editors of the liberal and social-democratic press, there are representatives of

Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity, there are Jews, a former social democratic prime minister, and others. This constellation, of (may be primarily older) Social Democrats, active Christians and Jews, together with *some* liberals, might be significant examples of groups in Norway who are more sympathetic to the existence of the State of Israel and more consciously opposed to every kind of tendencies towards modern forms of anti-Semitism, regardless whether they come from the right or the left.

This book is most useful for the aim of a balanced and pertinent view of Judaism in general and of the State of Israel in particular.

Theatre as Resistance

Freddie Rokem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This book by Willmar Sauter on the means and possibilities of action of the theatre in the struggle against fascism before and during World War II is an attempt to describe the reaction of the Swedish Theatre at a time of political and ideological crisis. The question Sauter asks is whether it is possible to regard the Swedish Theatre as an active force in this struggle. It is an important question which concerns the interaction between the theatre, political ideology and society. It is a challenge for any scholar or critic to give a clear-cut answer with regard to the possibilities of the theatre to wage a war against ideas which changed the course of history.

In his dissertation, Sauter shows that the Swedish theatre was an active force in the struggle against fascism. It is however impossible to measure the specific effects of the theatre on the climate of ideas and actions at the time in isolation from other forms of ideological criticism presented in the press or on the radio. But we must be aware of the strong effects a theatrical performance can have on the public during a period of great ideological and military tension. The performances (and they were relatively few) which took an active and strong stance against fascism and anti-

semitism must have had a strong psychological effect at the time and helped strengthen the beliefs of those who were in doubt about their opposition. However, they could hardly have changed the opinion of those who were convinced fascists or anti-semites. The importance of an active political theatre in opposition to an ideology of oppression lies mainly in its ability to raise political and ideological issues by other means than the debate itself.

In order to carry out his concrete analysis, Sauter has to clarify the methodological and theoretical issues which enable him to connect the theatrical performance and the ideological issues current in a certain society. On the basis of the theory developed by the German theoretician D. Steinbeck (*Einleitung in die Theorie und Systematik der Theaterwissenschaft*, Berlin 1970), Sauter sees the key to this connection in the conscious reaction on the part of the audience. The actor performing on the stage is first of all perceived by the audience as being within the conventions of the theatre itself. According to Steinbeck / Sauter, it is only when the audience makes a concrete connection with his own everyday reality that we can say that the theatrical performance has gained a political significance. This awareness

Willmar Sauter, *Theater als Widerstand; Wirkung und Wirkungsweise eines politischen Theaters. Faschismus und Judendarstellung auf der Schwedischen Bühne 1936—1941*. Stockholm 1979, 161 pp. (Dissertation, University of Stockholm)

is most easily achieved by presenting signs from political / social reality which are usually not presented on the stage. The more conventional signs usually belonging to the theatre will leave the ideological issues unnoticed. The awareness on the part of the critics with regard to the political significance of a certain production is Sauter's major criterion for the theatre of opposition. Of course this gives us the most clear-cut sample of such productions. But it seems that the retrospective point of view may also include a possibility of finding productions with anti-fascistic tendencies which did not at all lead the critics at the time of performance to that conclusion.

Sauter tries to tackle this problem when he takes up the productions with Jewish characters (see below). In general it could, however, be said that the great amount of the material has forced Sauter into an audience-centered research. A more performance-centered research practiced by scholars presenting a theory which could be termed "the semiotics of the performance" would be more adept in discovering certain undercurrents in the theatrical performances left unnoticed by the critics at the time.

This concept of undercurrents in the ideological climate in Sweden before and during World War II leads us to the very important question of what would have happened if Hitler's strategic considerations would have included an armed attack on Sweden. This is, of course, an hypothetical question which no historian would ask. But it is clear that beneath the surface of a "relatively harmless" fascist and anti-semitic public opinion a very strong explosive potential could probably be found which was mainly expressed in connection with "incidents" concerning the acceptance of Jewish refugees in Sweden. However, the political activist theatre turned against a phenomenon which had its strongest expressions outside of Sweden, while in neutral Sweden it mainly remained a potential situation throughout the war.

Sauter has checked the newspaper reviews of 388 theatrical productions between 1936 and 1941. He has found reactions on the part of the critics with regard to 57 productions interpreting what happens on stage in relation to fascism. The theme which received the greatest attention in the struggle on stage against fascism was war and violence in general. Sauter has observed a very interesting

change in attitude on the stage concerning violence during the period studied: before World War II a great contempt for violence was presented in various productions whereas after 1939 the relation to pacifistic ideals becomes more ambivalent and it is stated on the stage that violence can in fact only be answered by violence. After the beginning of the war, the press demanded that the theatre present a clear stance for the defence of the country against a possible invasion.

As mentioned above Sauter has tried to reach the undercurrents of political opposition not noted by the newspaper critics by examining all productions where Jewish characters appear on stage. Out of 17 such productions only 9 achieved a critical response in which the contemporary situation of the Jews was considered. Sauter asks why Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset* (2 productions), Sigfried Siwertz' *Game on the sea*, Irwin Shaw's *The Gentle People* (3 productions) and von Benatzky's musical play *My sister and I* did not provoke a debate on the contemporary Jewish question, whereas the production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Friedrich Wolf's *Professor Mamlock*, Kaj Munk's *He is sitting by the melting pot* (2 productions), Lessing's *The Jews*, Henry Nathansen's *Inside the walls*, Armand Salacón's *The earth is round*, Strindberg's *Gustav Wasa* and Verhoeven's and Impekoven's musical play *The small court concert* led the critics to take up this problem in various degrees.

The production presenting the contemporary political reality involving German Jews, just like the plays by Wolf and Munk, more or less demanded the critics to take up the problem. But how comes that the Jewish figures in Siwertz' play about the Kreuger-crash with anti-semitic undertones, or in the American plays by Anderson and Shaw showing the injustice done to Jews, do not initiate this response?

Sauter's general answer is that the traditional theatrical masque of the Jew (with regard to the nose, the eyebrows, the beard, the costume, the movements and intonation) does not really draw the attraction of the critics to the real-life situation of the Jews. This explains why some Jewish stage portrayals with anti-semitic undertones did not attract any attention at all. On the other hand, however, when signs from the political reality are used on stage, like in Per Lindberg's production of Wolf's *Professor*

Mamlock, the reaction with regard to the Jewish question is very pronounced. As a rule, the productions in which theatrical conventions are stressed make the audience less aware of the political situation and are thus less of a tool in the struggle against fascism and anti-semitism.

In spite of the limitations of an extremely audience/criticism-centered theory of the theat-

re, Sauter's dissertation succeeds in raising issues that are very exciting and stimulating. The struggle against fascism and the image of the Jew can be exchanged with many other important issues which can be presented by any theatre. But it is the presented material itself which convinces us that Sauter has made an important scholarly contribution.

The Ship of Death

Tapani Harviainen, University of Helsinki

The politics of Hitler in the 1930's forced thousands of Central Europeans to seek refuge in countries which at that time were beyond the reach of German control. A considerable proportion of the refugees consisted of Jews who had only reluctantly been admitted to other countries. Refugees were allowed to enter Finland without special permits until August 1938 when 53 Jews of Austrian origin who had arrived by boat from Stettin to Helsinki were not allowed to disembark. Nevertheless, in November 1938 Finland admitted entrance to 12 Jews who had passed from harbour to harbour on the Baltic Sea without securing entry into any country. Since the Soviet Union had attacked Finland at the end of November 1939, a number of volunteers, some of whom were Jews came to our country.

Most of the approximately 500 Jewish refugees who came to Finland intended to continue onwards, particularly to the United States, and by the summer 1941 some 350 of them had left Finland. The refugees were assisted by the Finnish Jewish community, consisting of about 2000 members at that time, as well as by voluntary relief associations. The community was supported by international Jewish organizations but their contributions diminished during the war.

In June 1941 the circumstances had changed dramatically. Germany invaded the Soviet Union and Finland soon became involved in the war — now "side by side" with Germany, even if it was not officially allied with it. In spite of the fact that in 1942 *Reichsführer*

Himmler had tried to pressure the Finnish Government into rendering all the Jews living in the country to Germany, no change took place in the legal status of the Jewish citizens of Finland. Occasionally, Jewish officers of the Finnish Army even had German soldiers in their command. This hardly occurred anywhere else during World War II. Nevertheless, the Finnish-German "brotherhood of arms" aroused much anxiety among all of the Jews in Finland.

The treatment of refuge affairs was assigned to the Security Police (*Valtiollinen poliisi*) which was under the Ministry of the Interior. The chief of the Security Police was given much discretion. From 1941 to 1944 this post was held by Arno Anthoni. The Minister of the Interior from 1941 to 1943 was Toivo Horelli. Both of them held clearly pro-German views. After the outbreak of war most of the Jewish refugees were moved to the countryside 100 km. north of Helsinki, and in March 1942, 43 men were sent to a labour camp which was first located in Lapland and subsequently moved to the island of Suursaari (Hogland) in the Gulf of Finland. Mr. Anthoni had visited Germany in April 1942 and during this visit he had obviously made a preparatory agreement concerning the extradition of the Jewish refugees. In October 1942, at the same time as similar measures were being taken in Norway, actions were initiated against Jews: nine men were sent from the Suursaari camp to Helsinki and ten Jews were arrested elsewhere in Finland. However, one of the men escorted from

Elina Suominen: *Kuolemanlaiva S/S Hohenhörn. Juutalaispakolaisten kohtalo Suomessa* (The Ship of Death SS Hohenhörn. The Fate of Jewish Refugees in Finland), Porvoo — Helsinki — Juva: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö 1979. 325 pp.

Suursaari succeeded in sending a postcard to a member of the Jewish community, Mr. Abraham Stiller, a brother of the famous stage-manager Mauritz Stiller. Stiller as well as his friends, both Jews and other Finns, made contact with various governmental and administrative organs including President Risto Ryti and Field Marshal Mannerheim. As a result of the governmental and public discussions the extradition was prevented. However, on the 6th of October Anthoni, probably with the consent of minister Horelli, had already had five Jewish men and four of their family members deported on board the SS Hohenhorn to the Gestapo in occupied Estonia. They were Elias Kopelowsky, a former citizen of Lithuania, Hans Szubilski, a former citizen of Germany, and Heinrich Huppert, Kurt Huppert, Georg Kollmann, Janko Kollmann, Frans Kollmann and Hans Korn, former citizens of Austria. Officially, the men were claimed to be guilty of espionage and other criminal activities but only two of them have entries in the criminal register. The Gestapo transported those eight from Tallinn to the Birkenau concentration camp, and Georg Kollman was the only one to survive. He is now living in Israel.

I have described the main contents of E. Suominen's book here in detail since the peculiar situation of the Jews in Finland during World War II, whether citizens or refugees, seems to be a rather uncommon knowledge outside of the Nordic countries. Stylistically the book is strictly documentary even if the authoress does not conceal her sympathies and antipathies. Mrs. Suominen has very carefully collected the factual information from various

archives in Finland, Poland, and Israel. Many documents have been reproduced in the book and numerous interviews give life to the written material and supplement it where the documents become silent. Besides the description of the destiny of refugees, she presents the events of the years 1943—44 including the granting of Finnish citizenship to the resignation of Horelli and Anthoni and the transportation of the last refugees to Sweden in the spring 1944. After this she describes the charge of war crimes brought against Anthoni, his imprisonment and the events of his trial (1944—49) in which he was exculpated with a reprimand for the prolonged error in the discharge of his official duties. The main reason behind the lenient sentence was undoubtedly the fact that the case of Anthoni was one of the war guilt trials demanded by the Soviet supervisory commission, the charges of which did not always coincide with the general sense of justice. Thus the current attitude unwarrantably was to Anthoni's benefit, a fact easily forgotten when reading the description. In a separate chapter Suominen deals with the quite short history of Jews in Finland focusing on the complicated question of citizenship which was not solved until 1918.

Mrs. Suominen has compiled her book with such thoroughness and skill that we have every reason to hope that she will also deal with other difficult refugee problems referred to here and there in her work; e.g. the story of those refugees which Finland handed over to the Soviet Union after the end of the war has not yet been written.

Impossible mission

Svante Hansson, University of Stockholm

In the course of the years, a substantial number of Swedes have been involved in attempts to solve or, at least, alleviate the conflict between Jews and Arabs over Palestine. In 1930, the lawyer and politician, Eliel Löfgren, led a commission which tried to find a solution to the question of the Western Wall, the conflict

that triggered the 1929 disturbances. Another lawyer, Emil Sandström, was chairman of UNSCOP, the commission that formulated the framework for the 1947 UN partition resolution. As secretary general of the UNO, Dag Hammarskjöld was deeply involved in the conflict, particularly in connection with the Suez

Sune O Persson, *Mediation & Assassination. Count Bernadotte's Mission to Palestine in 1948*. London: Ithaca Press, 1979.

war of 1956. In his capacity as special representative of the UN after the 1967 war, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring tried in vain to bring about negotiations between the parties. Many Swedish UN observers have supervised the armistice and demarcation lines; and in the years 1956—1967 and 1973—1979 Swedish UNEF battalions were stationed in the Sinai.

Yet, the most fateful contribution was Count Folke Bernadotte's mediation in 1948 which ended with the assassination of the mediator in Jerusalem on 17 September 1948. This is the subject of a dissertation by the political scientist, Sune O. Persson, University of Gothenburg, that was published in 1979.

In his study, the author was able to utilize material which was unavailable to earlier researchers. He had access to Count Bernadotte's rich collection as well as documents from the UN archives. A collection emanating from Paul Mohn, a Swedish diplomat who participated in both UNSCOP and the Bernadotte mission, should also be mentioned. Based on these sources, Sune Persson has been able to make a more detailed historical reconstruction of the events than previously had been possible. The emergence of the first Bernadotte plan is traced in rather minute detail. As regards the second Bernadotte plan, on the other hand, the sources fail. But here the author was able to use material from the archives of the US State Department. Unfortunately, the disparity of the sources render comparisons of the two stages difficult.

Historical reconstruction, however, was only one of the author's purposes. As a political scientist he was interested in applying and evaluating current theories of decision making and mediation in international relations. Heuristically, by drawing the author's attention to certain points, the theories seem to have been of some value. Systematically, as tools for analysis and explanation, it is doubtful if the results of the exercise were worth the effort; but that was probably due more to the theories than the author of the present work.

An important idea in the book is, that LEHY (or the Stern gang as it is also called), by assassinating Bernadotte, also killed his plan. The argument is as follows. The plan had been worked out in consultation with the British Foreign Office and the US State Department, who were trying to formulate a common policy at this particular point of time. They were pre-

pared to cooperate in enforcing a solution on Israel and the Arab states; but at the same time they wanted to avoid being identified as its originators. Bernadotte, on the other hand, had realized that only an enforced solution was possible. And since the UN in this period was controlled by the Western Powers, any solution had to be acceptable to them. In this situation, Bernadotte, as Sune Persson puts it, "to be able to operate at all, in an indirect way had to be an agent of the two Great Western Powers" (p. 324).

Now, the statement that LEHY killed the Bernadotte plan assumes that, if Bernadotte had still been alive, the USA and UK would have enforced his plan. This is easily said; but how can it be proved? When, after the death of the mediator, the plan was debated in the UN, it was killed by an *ad hoc* coalition consisting of the Arab States and their supporters as well as the supporters of Israel, i.e. the Soviet Union — it should be kept in mind that the Soviets in 1948 were Israel's staunchest supporters — some Latin American States, and some members of the British Commonwealth.

But at that time it did not even have the full support of the United States. President Truman, who in 1947—1948 and in rapid succession had taken up an impressive number of mutually incompatible positions on the Palestine question, now had repudiated the plan, although at an earlier stage he had apparently agreed to it. It is, of course, possible, that Bernadotte, if he had been alive, could have given the State Department and its allies, e.g. the great oil companies, the leverage they needed in their fight with the American Jewish organizations over the soul of the president. However, this is far from certain. The presidential election was to be held later in 1948. Truman was fighting an uphill battle for his political life, and badly needed the Jewish vote, which, then as now, was considered to be strategically important to the outcome of the election.

Let us assume, however, that the US and UK had been able to mobilize the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. Would that have led to the implementation of the Bernadotte plan? Strangely enough, Sune Persson seems to doubt that. He thinks that it is unlikely that the Israeli offensive, which from October 1948 to March 1949 resulted in

the establishment of the armistice lines that constituted the borders of the State of Israel until the June War of 1967, could have been prevented. He does not try to substantiate this opinion, and this is perhaps just as well. To argue the truth of so called counter-factual conditionals is always troublesome. To do it in such a complicated case as the Middle East conflict is almost impossible. Sune Persson's attempts are bold and interesting, but they leave, in my opinion, to many loose ends.

Normally, however, the author is on much

firmer ground in his detailed and well documented account. By focusing his work on one individual actor, he has been able to offer some fresh insights, and thereby make an important contribution to our understanding of the Middle East conflict and the emergence of the State of Israel. His book is also a major contribution to the rather insufficient scholarly literature on Count Folke Bernadotte, a fascinating personality whose rich life and tragic death should merit a full biography.