

# APPROBATIONS

***The Jews in Poland and Russia: Bibliographical Essays,***  
by Gershon David Hundert and Gershon C. Bacon. Bloomington:  
Indiana University Press, 1984. 276 p.

Reviewed by:

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## Scope

The volume consists of two bibliographical essays. Hundert's is on the Jews in Poland-Lithuania to the first Partition of Poland, and Bacon's essay covers the period from the first Partition to the present. The volume can serve as a point of departure for research in that it provides a listing of recent, significant, and indispensable works in Western languages. It is far from a comprehensive bibliography on the subject, as it employs great selectivity, particularly for pre-1945 materials and for Slavic and Jewish language materials. The authors did seek, however, to include everything of importance in English. The compilation of a comprehensive bibliography on the subject would have been a Herculean task requiring major institutional support.

## Critique

A lacuna exists in Bacon's essay on the modern period, in that there is no consideration given to the Jews in the three Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—during their period of independence. Properly speaking, the Baltic states were neither part of Poland, nor of the U.S.S.R., during the interwar years or the Nazi occupation, but as they were very much a part of the totality of Polish-Russian Jewry for most of this millennium, they should have been included. Some titles on the Jews of Lithuania and Latvia will be found scattered in Hundert's essay, but this does not suffice.

Neither essay has references to the works of "Judenforscher," Nazi researchers of the Jewish question. A number of them devoted their efforts to Eastern European Jewry. While their motivations were maniacally practical and offensive from our point of view, some of the works of Sommerfeldt, Seraphim and Guenzenhauser are useful, and have been cited in such works as Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*.

Bacon devotes more attention to the subject of Jewish historiography than does Hundert, but omits some useful books, includ-

ing Isaiah Trunk's *Geshtalt un gesheenishn* (Buenos Aires, 1962) and S.K. Mirsky's *Ishim u-demuyot be-hokhmat yisrael be-eropah ha-mizrahit lifne shekiatah* (New York, 1959). Inclusion of the bibliographies of the writings of the major historians of Eastern European Jewry such as Dubnow, Mahler, Ringelblum, Schipper, Shatzky, and Gelber would have been appropriate.

Despite the stated selectivity of this volume, several additional reference works should have been included. O. Schmelz's pioneering *Jewish Demography and Statistics: Bibliography for 1920-1960* (Jerusalem, 1961) is invaluable. Bibliographies of local history, such as Philip Friedman's on Lodz and Abraham Pekler's on Vilna, would have helped Bacon's relatively weak section on this subject. Hundert, having included Baron's *Bibliography of Jewish Social Studies, 1938-1939*, should have also included YIVO's attempt at a version of *Kirjath Sepher*, its *Bibliografishe yorbikher fun YIVO* (Warsaw, 1928) and the valiant, but unsuccessful, attempt by Edward Poznanski to start a Jewish bibliographical annual in Poland, *Sefer ha-shanah le-bibliografiyah yehudit be-polanyah* (Warsaw, 1936). Both Hundert and Bacon fail to mention the important supplement to Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies*, published in 1975.

Two important works on the Jewish press that should have been included are Abraham Kirzhnitz's *Di yidishe prese in der gevezener rusisher imperye (1823-1916)* (Moscow/Kharkov/Minsk, 1930) and Marian Fuks' "Z dziejow prasy zydowskiej w Polsce (1918-1939)," in *Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 75, 1970.

Bacon might also have offered a section on lexicons, where, among others, he could have described two interesting books on Poles of Jewish origin, Teodor Jeske-Choinski's *Neofici Polscy. Materialy historyczne* (Warsaw, 1904) and Mattheus Mieses' *Polacy Chrzescijanie pochodzenia zydowskiego* (Warsaw, 1938). The Zionist and Bundist lexicons, also not mentioned, contain much material on Eastern European Jews.

Certain bibliographic data of potential importance to the researcher were omitted. Neither Hundert nor Bacon indicate in their sections on journals that some of the titles have ceased publication. The one-time annual on Russian Jewry, *He-avar*, has not appeared since 1975; *Behinot*, a journal on Jews in Eastern Europe, has not been published since 1979. It would have been helpful for the authors to have mentioned the existence of indices to such journals as *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, *Bleter far Geshikhte*, and *Biuletyn Zydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*. Besides these omissions, there are several errors of commission in the book—mangled titles, incorrect bibliographic information, etc.

This volume would have benefited from the consolidation of the bibliographic sections of both essays, as this would have brought all of the entries for any given author together in one place, and would doubtlessly have made it possible to shorten the book somewhat. A secondary benefit would have been the forced standardization of transliterations.

The reader is advised to check the relevant parts of both essays for information on specific subjects. Gaps or weak points in one essay are often compensated for in the other.

## Conclusions

On the whole, Hundert's essay is the more successful of the two. This may be due in part to the greater complexity of the modern period which Bacon handled, and to the much greater number of primary and secondary works he had to analyze and describe.

All too often, authors fail to fulfill the goals they set in writing their books. In this case, two young scholars of Eastern European Jewish history, Gershon Hundert and Gershon Bacon set modest, practical goals and

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P. 44 Rosenthal, J. L. *Toledot Hevrat Marbei Ha-Haskalah be-Yisrael*. St. Petersburg, 1885, 1890.

Rosenthal is the editor of this collection of documents.

More information is needed for some of the more obscure and esoteric items listed by IDC.

For example:

P. 37 Pines, Y. M. *Shimu Harim Rivi*. Jerusalem, 1882.

This item is a two-page broadside published by Pines to defend himself against his detractors. No indication is given in the catalog as to the nature of this item.

P. 37 Schlesinger, A. J. *Kol Nehi mi-Ziyyon*. Jerusalem, 1872.

This item was published anonymously, and no clue to its authorship appears in it. For confirmation, see Malachi, 1971, pp. 287–89; Gat, 1973/4, p. 143. Proof of authorship would have been helpful.

At least one item reprinted by IDC is of questionable value. This is:

P. 69 *Sha'arei Berakhot*. By Samuel ben Hophni (Ed. I. Wiess [i.e., Weiss]). Vienna, 1882.

This item is an extract from the journal *Bet Talmud* 2 (1882): 377–386, a fact which should have been mentioned. The text was later edited and included by B. M. Lewin in his collection *Otsar ha-ge'onim* to Berakhot (Haifa, 1928), pp. 65–77. In his introduction, Lewin refers to Weiss' edition as containing a few corrections and many deficiencies, as well as extraneous material. In light of this assessment, I wonder how valuable Weiss' edition is to scholars, and whether it was worth reprinting.

Finally, there are many typographical errors and errors in transliteration in the catalog, which detract from its usefulness and can cause catalogers problems.

Some examples:

P. 69 *Sefer Rav Amram Gaon* (A. L. Framkin, Ed.)

This should read *Sidur tefilah . . . im Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (Ed. A. L. Framkin).

P. 68 *Re'umah* attributed to Nashhon Gaon.

The name should be Nahshon.

P. 36 Horowitz, H. *Hibbat Ziyyon*. Jerusalem, 1844.

The title actually is *Hibbat Yerushalayim*.

P. 37 *Mishpat l'Elokei Yaakov*.

This should read *Mishpat l'Elokei Yaakov*.

P. 42 Dubnow, S. (Ed.) *Pinkas Medinat Lita*. Berlin, 1928.

The title should read *Pinkas ha-medinah*. The title given is the running title.

P. 66 Loew, L. *Graphische Requisiten und Erzeugnisse bei den Juden*. Leipzig, 1869–1870, 1870–1871, v.1–2.

This item is part of the author's *Beiträge zur Jüdischen Alterthumskunde*, and is usually entered under the latter title. While the entry is not wrong, mention of the main title should have been made, since many libraries would not have an added entry under the above title, and unnecessary duplication may result.

### Conclusion

The aforesaid notwithstanding, I would not like to discourage libraries from purchasing material from IDC. IDC is providing an invaluable service to the scholarly community, and most of its publications are in good order. My purpose in this paper is to alert libraries to the problems they may encounter in cataloging some of the items IDC is marketing. I also hope to bring to IDC's attention the concerns of librarians who are involved in purchasing and cataloging these materials. IDC would be well advised to engage the services of a qualified Judaica librarian to help them correct the errors in their catalog and to prevent the occurrence of such errors in the future. Finally, Judaica librarians who come across major errors in IDC's catalog are urged to bring them to the attention of other librarians by publishing their findings in *Judaica Librarianship*.

### References

- [EJ] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971–72. 16 v.
- Gat, Ben-Zion. *Ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi be-Erets-Yisra'el bi-shenot 5600–5641 (1840–1881)*. Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 1973/4.<sup>1</sup>
- [IDC] Inter Documentation Co. *Jewish Studies: Research Collections on Microform*. Zug, Switzerland: IDC, [1983].
- Kressel, Getzel. *Leḥsiḥon ha-sifrut ha-ivrit ba-dorot ha-aharonim*. Merhavyah: Sifriyat po'aliim, 1965–67. 2 v.<sup>3</sup>
- Malachi, Eliezer; Raphael. *Perakim be-toldot ha-Yishuv ha-yashan*. Tel-Aviv: Universitat Tel-Aviv, 1971.<sup>2</sup>
- Malter, Henry. *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1921.
- Marmorstein, Arthur. *Studies in Jewish Theology: The Arthur Marmorstein Memorial Volume*. Edited by J. Rabbinowitz and M. S. Lew. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- [NUC] *National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints*. London: Mansell, 1968–1981. 754 v.

### Hebrew Bibliographic Data

1. גת, בן-ציון. הישוב היהודי בארץ-ישראל בשנות ה'ת"ר-ה'תרמ"א (1840-1881). ירושלים: יד יצחק בן-צבי, תשל"ד.
2. מלאכי, א.ר. פרקים בתולדות הישוב הישן. תל-אביב: אוניברסיטת תל-אביב, תשל"א.
3. קרסל, גצל. לקסיקון הספרות העברית בדורות האחרונים. מרחביה: ספרית פועלים, 1967-1965. 2 כר'.

### Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge the help of my assistant, Tamar Baxter, who cataloged most of the items from the IDC collection purchased by the University of Toronto Library and first brought to my attention many of the problems discussed in this paper.

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### Friedman (continued from p. 9)

have succeeded admirably. This volume is extremely useful for everyone but the serious specialist. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith should be applauded for supporting this project, although the book is not as handsomely produced as earlier ADL bibliographic guides on Jewish history and Judaism.

The above reservations notwithstanding, Professors Hundert and Bacon deserve our thanks for a book that will be useful for many, many years.

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