

APPROBATIONS

***Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography.* Edited by Susan Sarah Cohen.**

New York: Garland, 1987-1991. Vols. 1-2: 391; 559 pp. Biennial.

Vol. 1 covers 1984/85, vol. 2, 1986/87. Author and subject indexes. Vol. 1: \$47; vol. 2: \$70.

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Coverage

These volumes are the first fruits of a bibliographic project on antisemitism sponsored by the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, at the Hebrew University. The editor of the work under review is also co-editor of *Index of Articles on Jewish Studies (RaMBI)*, published by the Jewish National and University Library for over two decades; and the influence of *RaMBI*¹ can be seen in the new project.

There are differences, however, which should be pointed out at once: The new bibliography includes books and pamphlets as well as articles, the language of description is English, coverage is not restricted to materials of research value, and annotations are the norm rather than the exception. In this reviewer's opinion, the often extensive annotations, which by editorial policy reflect the author's rather than the annotator's point of view, lend the bibliography its distinction as a research tool. Beginning with vol. 2, the annotations are signed.

Scope

Certain types of materials are, however, excluded. In the first instance, this means antisemitica as such; the bibliography includes only materials *about* antisemitism. (Vol. 1 compromises this principle by appending a list of currently published antisemitic periodicals with addresses.) Secondly, "newspaper articles, reviews, and works of fiction" are excluded. Thirdly, certain borderline materials, e.g., those dealing with Soviet Jewry and the Arab-Israeli conflict, are covered only if the ideological element of antisemitism is stressed.

Coverage of the Holocaust presents a special problem. The editor, evidently

afraid of being swamped, decided to include only those works that deal with the "ideology and policy of the Nazis towards Jews" as well as the attitudes of other governments, groups, and individuals, while generally excluding the Holocaust as life experience. This distinction will no longer be maintained, *inter alia* because there is no current multilingual bibliography of Holocaust materials. Beginning with vol. 3, the selective criteria for Holocaust materials will be dropped. With that volume, the bibliography, biennial at present and running well behind the years of coverage, will become annual. As it is, the second volume is about one-third larger than the first, and even so could not hold all the information gathered for 1986/87 because of budgetary restrictions. The overflow material is being held for vol. 3 (coverage year: 1988). In addition to growth caused by the "information explosion," the project managed to extend its coverage presumably as its personnel gained experience.

The coverage is indeed impressive. Antisemitism is defined not only as the modern political phenomenon which bears the name, but also encompasses Jew-hatred in the ancient and medieval worlds as well as in theology. Philosemitism is included, presumably as the obverse of antisemitism. Jewish self-hate is included as well. The arts are surveyed, e.g., printed editions of the screenplay of Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, as well as reactions to it, are cited in the bibliography. Relatively obscure and ephemeral publications of an informational type are included, unless defined as newspapers.

Evaluation

There is not much to criticize in this valuable bibliography. One minor point is language identification. The entries

include publications in many European languages, in addition to Hebrew and Yiddish, with English translation of titles from lesser-known languages; the languages of the originals are, however, not indicated. There are times when this information, which could be abbreviated (e.g., P for Polish), would be useful. Russian, incidentally, is barely represented, because discussion of antisemitism was taboo in the Soviet Union in the years covered to date by the bibliography.

The classification is by period and area, not by country, with Germany in the modern period an exception. This is a weakness, because access by country is important. The generally good subject index is of little help in this regard, since under the names of countries we generally find lists – often long lists – of numbers with little or no breakdown. In the subject index, the term "Antisemitism" surprisingly appears, as does "Antisemitism, Against," apparently with the meaning "opposition to antisemitism by individuals or groups"; however, since the vast majority of writers on antisemitism oppose the phenomenon, the scope and usefulness of this entry are by no means apparent. As for tangential subjects, Jewish self-hatred is indexed as "Self-hatred, Jewish," but philosemitism is not indexed, presumably because it is harder to define.

Let us hope that in some distant future this age-old prejudice will be documented only as a historical phenomenon.

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—*CHOICE*



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of work. His earlier bibliographies run the gamut from *The Jews in Spain and Portugal* (New York: Garland, 1975) and *Jewish and Hebrew Onomastics* (New York: Garland, 1977), to *Antisemitic Propaganda* (New York: Garland, 1982) and *Jewish Serials of the World* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986). One wonders what subject he will tackle next. If nothing else, *Judaica Americana* has revealed a fearless, patient, and imaginative bibliographer at work. Of one thing we may be certain: whatever direction Singerman chooses to take for his next bibliographical expedition, he will not flinch at the length of the journey or at the convoluted roads that lead him to his destination.

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(Based on data provided by Singerman in his introduction.)

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Note

1. *RaMBI* was reviewed in my article, "Index of Articles on Jewish Studies and Index to Hebrew Periodicals: A Comparison." *Judaica Librarianship* vol. 1 no. 1 (Fall 1983), pp. 34-35.

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