approbations


Reviewed by: Mark Friedman
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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 'Judenforschers,' 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 Sefer ha-shanah le-bibliografía 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 Kirzhnit's Di yidishe prese in der gevezener rusisher imperye (1823-1916) (Moscow/Kharkov/Minsk, 1930) and Marian Fuku's "Z dziejow prasy yydowskiej 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, Materiały historyczne (Warsaw, 1904) and Matthieu Mieses' Polacy Chrzcisciani pochodzenia żydowskiego (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-tav, 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 doubtless 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

(continued on page 14, column 3)
Jerusalem, 1844.

This should read P.

Rav Amram Gaon

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and errors in transliteration in the catalog, which detract from its usefulness and can

edition is to scholars, and whether it was

assessments, I wonder how valuable Weiss'

Vienna, 1882.

This item is an extract from the journal

confirmation, see Malachi, 1971,

Bet

Pines, attributed to Nashhon

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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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