

masterly treatise on less familiar aspects of Jewish history and lore. Perhaps the most distinguished of such studies is his *Studien und Quellen zur Frankistischen Bewegung in Polen* (Warsaw 1927) embodying a wealth of new material on the history of the Frankist movement, that curious pseudo-messianic aberration of the eighteenth century. Hardly less remarkable and interesting, however, are Balaban's numerous essays on such a diversity of curious topics as, for example, the history of Jewish physicians, druggists and printing-houses in Poland. Of singular importance also is his *Zabytki historyczne Żydów w Polsce* (Warsaw 1929), a richly illustrated guide to old synagogues and monuments, cemeteries, sacred and secular *objets d'art* and on the furniture and jewelry to be found in ancient Jewish homes.

Hand in hand with such studies went an abiding interest in the bibliography of Polish Jewish historiography. Following earlier contributions to this subject in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, *Przegląd Polski* and *Yerreskaya Starina*, Balaban succeeded, in 1929, in publishing at Warsaw the first fascicule (comprising 2948 titles) of his monumental *Bibliografia Historii Żydów w Polsce i w krajach ościennych za lata 1900-1930*, a comprehensive bibliography of all works published between 1900 and 1930 relating to the history of the Jews in Poland and neighboring countries.

Balaban was a teacher by profession. He often complained that many of his scholarly plans could not materialize because he had to earn his living as a teacher. After serving in the Baron de Hirsch elementary school in Gliniany, Galicia, he became instructor in Jewish religion and general subjects in various high schools at Lwow, and after the first world war was appointed director of the Rabbinical seminary Tachkemoni in Warsaw. Since 1928 he was a lecturer at the Institute of Jewish Science in that city and also occupied the chair of Jewish history in the local university, the only chair of its kind in Polish universities.

Jewish scholars all over the world have lost a colleague of great gifts and remarkable achievements. Together with many of his friends, collaborators and pupils, the present writer mourns a true and helpful comrade.

New York City.

MARK WISCHNITZER.

SERGEY (ISRAEL) ZINBERG

(1873-1943)

Sergey (Israel) Zinberg, whose death in exile somewhere in the Soviet Union was reported early in 1943, was one of the foremost representatives of Jewish learning in Russia, a distinguished member of the so-called "St. Peters-

burg school" which was founded in the 'eighties by men like Dubnow and Harkavy and which flourished especially between 1907 and 1915.

Although his early work lay in the field of analytical chemistry—he was director of the chemical laboratory at the famous Putilov works—from his student days onwards Zinberg's main interest and passion was the history of Jewish literature. He first attracted attention in this field in 1900 with a public lecture on Shylock and Nathan the Wise, in which, while conceding the possible historicity of the former, he flatly denied that of the latter. To the criticism of assimilationist Jews who expressed indignation at this dethronement of their idol, and to the barbed comments of the chairman, M. I. Kulischer, who accused him of "fanatical Zionist tendencies," Zinberg replied with such warmth and fire as at once to impress a group of younger intellectuals present in the audience. Having recently acquired the periodical *Woskhod*, they immediately enlisted his services as a regular contributor. Ironically enough, however, when the text of his lecture was submitted for publication, editorial timidity blue-pencilled the entire section of Nathan the Wise!

Meanwhile Zinberg had embarked upon a formal literary career with an essay on Isaac Baer Levinsohn, and in 1903 he turned his attention to Yiddish letters in a study of "jargon" literature and its characteristics (*Shargonnaya literatura i yeya tchitateli*). Gradually broadening the scope of his interest and outlook, Zinberg followed this, two years later, with his *Dwa Tetchenya v Yevreykoy Shisni* (*Two Currents in Jewish Life*), a masterly analysis of the twin rational and mystical trends in Jewish culture and, incidentally, a trenchant critique of the historian Graetz's notorious antipathy towards the Kabbala and the Hasidic movement.

Following the abortive revolution of 1905, Zinberg took active part in those cultural projects whereby the Jewish intelligentsia sought compensation for their political despondency. Besides contributing regularly to such learned publications as *Yevreyskaya Starina*, the organ of the Jewish Historico-Ethnographic Society, and *Pereshitoye*, a series of volumes on the history of the Jews in Russia, he became a prominent collaborator in the Russian Jewish Encyclopedia (1908-13) and the cooperative *History of the Jewish People* (initiated in 1913). For the former, he directed the departments of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, himself contributing several hundred articles on these topics, besides covering a wide variety of other subjects ranging from Assimilation to Uriel Acosta. For the latter he wrote the chapters on rabbinical literature in Poland and Lithuania during the 16th-18th centuries, on popular Yiddish literature and on mystical currents. Embodying the quintessence of his researches into and general ideas on the spiritual evolution of Eastern European Jewry, these were later expanded into Zinberg's *magnum opus*, the eight-volume *History of Jewish Literature in Europe*, written in Russian

and translated by himself into Yiddish (Wilno, 1926-37).

Distinguished alike by breadth and depth of scholarship, this work traversed the entire field of Jewish letters from the medieval Spanish period to the beginnings of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* in nineteenth century Germany. The Italian Renaissance, the achievements of Spanish exiles in the Ottoman Empire, the development of distinctive cultural trends among Polish Jewry, the evolution of Yiddish popular literature in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of Hasidism on the one hand and the movement of Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) on the other—all of these were surveyed with remarkable erudition and astonishing penetration. It is, of course, impossible in this short space properly to evaluate Zinberg's achievement, but its major claim to distinction may be summarized in the statement that it presents what is perhaps the first attempt to study the literature of the Jewish people in the light of the social conditions which produced it. This emphasis upon social backgrounds is, in fact, its chief characteristic, and marks a notable advance on the standard works of such predecessors as Karpeles, Winter and Wünsche.

It has been assumed that Zinberg continued his *History* down to the first decades of the present century, but in 1938 his labors were abruptly halted by his sudden arrest and removal to an unknown destination. With his death there passes from the scene not only a fine scholar but also a charming and lovable personality, an ornament alike to Jewish and to Russian culture. An English version of his main work, duly revised in accordance with more recent research, would be a fitting tribute to his memory.

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