

ZAUSMER, JACOB. *Footprints of a Generation: Essays and Memoirs*. New York. Ogen Publication for the Histadruth Ivrit of America. 1957. Pp. viii, 375 (Hebrew).

This is a *rara avis* in American Hebrew literature: perhaps the first sociological-cultural study of Jewish life and personalities by a devoted and modern secular Hebraist, the beloved octogenarian, Jacob Zausmer. These essays and memoirs span more than sixty years of Jewish and Hebrew cultural life in Philadelphia and are a tribute *en passant* to the men and women in academic life and Zionist circles and to secular laymen who realized that to perpetuate Hebrew as a cultural interest was to deepen and strengthen Jewish life. The range of Zausmer's articles indicate the possibilities of Hebrew in social studies, and it is regrettable that historians tend to ignore similar Hebrew and Yiddish contributions. It also reveals the power of secularized Hebrew which, surprisingly, was not connected with religion or the synagogue until very late.

The thirty-four articles in this volume fall into four sections dealing with persons and movements in early Zionism and in Jewish cultural life, and with more personal memoirs of persons now forgotten but worthy of recall and remembrance. In his life-span of three generations and more, Jacob Zausmer has developed a direct, classical Hebrew, fluent and yet flexible. In themselves, these essays have advanced the cause of secular Hebrew.

But it is as source material for American Jewish life that Zausmer will be valued. Here are studies, comments, and notes on the lives of Philadelphian Pinchos (Phineas) ha-Kohen Mordell, American Hebrew grammarian; Cantor Pinchos Minkowsky; Joseph Isaac Blaustein, distinguished physician and Zionist leader; Z. Balaban, writer of Hebrew juvenilia. The portraits of early American Zionists include American delegates to the first Zionist Congress: Adam Rosenberg, Dr. Shabbethai Shaffer, David Trietsch, and that volatile Zionist feminist, Rose Sonnenschein, editor of the monthly *The American Jewess* which had a brief existence (1895-1899). There are also studies of Professor Chaim Tchernowitz, editor of *Bitzaron*, Menachem Ribalow, editor of *Ha-Doar*, and Moshe Kleinman, editor of

*Ha-Olam*. But even more effective are the studies of the men who made the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning a donjon of Hebrew learning. Zausmer chose such members of the faculty as President Abraham A. Neuman, Professor Solomon Zeitlin and the late Professors Max L. Margolis, Henry Malter, and Benzion Halper. He relates Dropsie to the rise of a strong Hebrew influence in Jewish cultural life.

Some of Zausmer's essays are personal tributes to friends. One of the warmest is an essay entitled "The Philadelphia Period in Dr. Mordecai (Max) Z. Raisin's Life," an account of Raisin's contributions as a Hebraist and a reform rabbi.

Long a member of Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, the author has a deep feeling for tradition which is reflected in his essays on the festivals and holidays.

The article on "Early Pioneers and Contemporaries in the Hebrew Movement in Philadelphia," one of the longest in this work (pp. 153-257), encompasses much historical material for the study of secular and cultural Hebrew in the United States. Great historical value is to be placed upon the essay entitled "The Cantonist Period in Russia" (pp. 231-242). Of sociological value are the pages of *Pakkim ketanim* (-small jars), charming essays of Zausmer's "green years" in Philadelphia.

*Philadelphia, Penna.*

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