

But while he elucidates Nixon's remarkable personal qualities—his unbreakable character and his uncanny aptitude for public life—Anson overlooks the connection between Nixon's resurgence and his political ideas. Those ideas can be summed up in a single word: *détente*.

In all of his writings since leaving the Presidency, and notwithstanding his often tough talk about the Soviet Union and the threat it poses to the free world, Nixon's belief in *détente* has never wavered. Indeed, as Anson reports, he has criticized the Reagan administration for not implementing *détente* as fully as he himself would have done: for not offering the Soviets enough carrots, for not negotiating with them, for acting too tough. He has also criticized Reagan for pushing for too large an increase in defense spending and thereby sowing dissension in Congress. The Soviets would have been far more impressed, in Nixon's view, by a smaller increase that commanded unified political support. "In a funny way," Anson quotes him as saying, "you can almost say he [Reagan] is bad for defense."

It is ideas like these that make Nixon so attractive nowadays to so many of his former antagonists. Today *détente* and its architect are held up—by Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times*, by John Lewis Gaddis in *Foreign Affairs*, among others—as the shining alternative to Ronald Reagan and his allegedly simplistic, ineffectual, and dangerous policy toward the Soviet Union. Those who thus elevate Nixon perforce misrepresent *détente*—which was supposed to contain Soviet expansionism but did not—as a sound, or even historically successful, strategy. In so doing, they are putting Richard Nixon to tactical use in their campaign for a painless accommodation to Soviet power and a retreat by the United States from its global responsibilities.

Because of Vietnam a number of these same people once considered Nixon a virtual war criminal; because of Watergate they once regarded him as the greatest threat to the survival of the Constitution since the Civil War. But these things

apparently no longer matter now that it has been found useful to draft him into service. Richard Nixon will continue to be assured a place in the hearts of those who once viewed him with loathing and contempt as long as he gives expression to ideas that are today the staple of our political culture. And as long as our political culture remains in thrall to the idea behind *détente*—that the Soviet Union is a power less to be resisted than bribed, cajoled, and assuaged—Richard Nixon will continue to haunt us, though not in the way his enemies once foresaw.

Alternative to New York

JEWISH LIFE IN PHILADELPHIA 1830-1940. Edited by MURRAY FRIEDMAN. *ISHI Publications*. 353 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by JONATHAN D. SARNA.

AMERICAN JEWISH communities of all sizes and in every region of the country now sport handsomely illustrated and often bulky tomes brimming with names and events from the past, all woven together into a rich narrative tapestry. Most of these volumes are frankly celebratory, bursting with civic pride and expressions of Jewish consciousness, and offering upbeat answers to those who scour the historical landscape searching for roots.

More recently, however, a few community studies of a different sort have appeared, written by scholars with training in secular universities and, in particular, in the discipline of quantitative history. These scholars treat communities as case studies, providing data on questions of class and mobility. Thus, William Toll's book on the Jews of Portland, Oregon bears the significant title, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class*, and eschews celebration altogether. Toll focuses not on individual achievements, but rather on "the process of change over generations." Portland Jews

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curious to know the names and events that shaped their community's past must look elsewhere.

In *Jewish Life in Philadelphia 1830-1940*, Murray Friedman seeks to steer a course between these two extremes. The volume's sixteen essays, four by Maxwell Whiteman, the foremost student of Philadelphia Jewish history, and the rest by a diverse group of scholars and writers, combine old-fashioned celebration—the volume, after all, was occasioned by Philadelphia's tercentenary in 1982—with a firm insistence that the significance of Philadelphia's role in American Jewish history merits serious attention. Whereas historians of early American Jewry have long been aware of the Quaker City's importance, those who focus on the period beginning with mass East European immigration in the late 19th century usually assume that New York's is all the history anybody needs to know, as if its experience somehow encapsulated that of American Jewry as a whole. Yet as this volume shows, Philadelphia continued to offer a real alternative to New York: a different vision of what America's Jewish community might become.

A central contrast between the Philadelphia and New York communities is to be seen at the level of leadership. What contemporaries called the "Philadelphia Group" included a remarkable array of turn-of-the-century figures, including Sabato Morais, rabbi of the Sephardi congregation Mikveh Israel; Cyrus Adler, American Jewry's greatest "scholar-doer"; Solomon Solis-Cohen, a distinguished medical doctor; Moses Dropsie, the businessman-lawyer whose bequest resulted in the creation of Dropsie College; Joseph Krauskopf, rabbi of the Reform congregation Keneseth Israel; Louis E. Levy, a pioneer in the development of photography; and most important of all, Judge Mayer Sulzberger, lawyer, scholar, a key personage in the development of the Jewish Publication Society and the American Jewish Committee, and one of the most undeservedly neglected of all American Jewish notables (his papers lie rotting in their original containers in Dropsie College).

Not one of these men was known primarily for his wealth. Rather, and in contrast to New York's Jewish leaders, they all prided themselves on being intellectuals and scholars; six of the seven used their spare time to write books of genuine Jewish worth. In addition, many traced their ancestry back several generations in America; most were related to one another; and almost all (Krauskopf being the obvious exception) adhered to traditional religious observance and belonged to Philadelphia's prestigious Sephardi congregation—which welcomed them as members even when, as in most cases, their Spanish heritage was largely imaginary. New York's Jewish leaders—the men of "Our Crowd"—may have entertained in grander style, and certainly succeeded more impressively in the world of business. But those in the Philadelphia Group displayed far more Jewish involvement, far more learning, and far greater interest in literature, music, and art. It was they who played a major role in shaping such cultural institutions as the Jewish Publication Society, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the American Jewish Historical Society, and Dropsie College during the great formative decades before World War I.

THIS basic difference between Philadelphia and New York—easily exaggerated, but nevertheless recognized by contemporaries—had its roots in an earlier era of Philadelphia's Jewish history, the era of Isaac Leeser. Leeser, the greatest American Jewish religious leader before the Civil War, single-handedly created the major works and institutions that culturally deprived American Jews needed to ward off the twin threats of conversion and assimilation. He produced the first Jewish translation of the Bible into English. He completed English translations of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi prayerbooks. He instituted regular weekly synagogue sermons. He wrote, translated, and published many of the first American Jewish school textbooks. He provided the impetus behind the first Jewish publication society in America. He edited the first successful Jewish

monthly periodical in America, known as the *Occident*.

The list could continue. More than anyone else, Isaac Leeser made Philadelphia the focal point of American Jewry's religious, cultural, and intellectual life. Those who succeeded him considered it their mission to carry on his work. They fought hard to keep Philadelphia both religiously traditional and culturally vibrant.

Other factors also worked to distinguish Philadelphia's Jewish community from that of New York. As an article here by the sociologist E. Digby Baltzell and two of his students points out, Philadelphia's tolerant Quaker tradition proved thoroughly hospitable to ethnic and religious heterogeneity (the writers somewhat anachronistically call this "laissez-faire cultural pluralism"). The city's social elite included people of diverse ancestry, making it easier for Jews to participate as equals. Furthermore, Philadelphia's Jewish community was one of families and neighborhoods, and to some extent remained so even

after East European Jews arrived in great numbers. People who disagreed politically and religiously were still expected to interact socially. By contrast, in New York, at least according to the Philadelphian Cyrus Adler, not even leading Jews had for a long time any social contacts with anyone outside of those they met "in the common business of life."

Jewish Life in Philadelphia naturally embraces a great many subjects. There are essays on Orthodox and Reform Judaism (the Conservative movement is curiously slighted); on German Jews and philanthropy, Jewish women and philanthropy, and German Jews vs. Russian Jews in philanthropy; on Jewish education, labor, and politics; on Jewish-Irish relations (though not Jewish-Christian relations); and on such local Jewish notables as the movie mogul Siegmund Lubin and the business tycoon Albert M. Greenfield.

Unfortunately, a few contributors fall prey to the temptation to

Isaac Bashevis Singer's exhilarating memoir

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—*Library Journal*.

Love and Exile

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sing Philadelphia's praises unduly. At the beginning of his otherwise illuminating introductory essay, Murray Friedman proudly informs us that "here the first sermon in English was preached and the first English-Jewish newspaper was published; here the author of *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, lived and here the hymn *Adon Olam* was composed." In fact, only one of these extravagant claims is even partly true: Naftali Herz Imber, the peripatetic and habitually inebriated Hebrew poet who composed *Hatikvah*, did live for a time in Philadelphia, but he lived in so many other places that it hardly matters. As for *Adon Olam*, it had secured a firm place in the Jewish liturgy long before William Penn was even in swaddling clothes.

But such boosterism, a staple of local Jewish community histories, is in this volume mercifully rare. Most of the contributors realize, as Friedman puts it, that by World War I "Philadelphia Jewry had ceased to play a leading role in the development of Jewish life in America. New York had simply overwhelmed it both in numbers and magnitude of influence." Yet if the death of Cyrus Adler in 1940 marked the formal end of an era, the memory still lingers of an earlier day when the cultured and well-knit Philadelphia Jewish community offered a recognizable alternative to New York. Reading this book, one cannot but wonder how things might have turned out had the Philadelphia Group's alternative prevailed.

Love and Work

POWERPLAY: WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT BENDIX. By MARY CUNNINGHAM. With FRAN SCHUMER. Linden/Simon & Schuster. 286 pp. \$15.95.

Reviewed by JULES COHN

IN JUNE 1979, Mary Cunningham, then twenty-seven years old, was graduated with high grades and

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first-rate recommendations from the Harvard Business School where she had been the beneficiary of the case-study approach to management-by-objectives, strategic planning, and human behavior in organizations. Naturally, she landed several lucrative job offers from prestigious firms. She chose a promising "mentorship" as executive assistant to William Agee, the youngish (in his early forties) chairman of the Bendix Corporation, a multi-billion dollar conglomerate.

Powerplay is her best-selling memoir—an account of her life, her career at Bendix, and her headline-grabbing association with Agee, written in a prose that combines the diction of management with the jargon of the helping professions, especially psychology, social work, and talk-show therapy. At first the style is merely amusing, but as her intense, very personal tale unfolds, the reliance of this high-achieving, "liberated" young woman on so many stillborn phrases takes on an interest, and a pathos, of its own.

Miss Cunningham was raised in a religious family, had a fairly typical small-town (New England) childhood and adolescence, majored in logic and philosophy and was named to Phi Beta Kappa at Wellesley, and, before she entered Harvard in the mid-1970's, married "Bo" Gray, a black alumnus of the Boston Latin School, Exeter, and Harvard College, and himself a student at the Harvard Business School. They were a thoroughly modern couple, "schooled," as she writes, "in careerism," for whom "there was no question that work came first." Sharing an interest in steep learning curves, inclined to see life as a matrix, they plotted the flow charts of their careers on a business-school model of rationality, confident that they could "handle" or "deal with" whatever challenges came their way.

Thus schooled, Miss Cunningham entered the complex world of big business, there to pursue her interests in divestiture and acquisition planning. Her decision to seek a mentor was probably influenced by the fairy tale promulgated by feminists, and popularized by sages in such institutions as the

School of Management at Yale, about how men make their way up the corporate ladder. Bill Agee was right for the role. He too had been raised in a small town (Meridian, Idaho), where he was a popular high-school athlete, a successful student, and a member of every club except Chorus and Future Farmers. He married his high-school sweetheart, and after college (University of Idaho, highest honors), he too prepared himself at the Harvard Business School. He was graduated in 1963, and found a high-level post at Boise Cascade, then a "hot" company, where his "open and innovative" style—highly valued as long as there was a bull market—was soon commended by the business press. After a few years at Boise, mindful of the time-event chart of his career, but probably mindful as well that the feedback loop indicated trouble ahead for Boise's balance sheets, Agee responded to the drumbeat of a headhunter and went to Bendix, where he quickly rose to the top, succeeding Michael Blumenthal as chairman when the latter became Secretary of the Treasury in the Carter administration.

In the mid-1970's, when Agee arrived at Bendix, the "corporate culture concept," a desperate but misguided attempt to explain the success of Japanese industry, was high fashion in the business schools. In due course, the *New York Times* reported that Agee had altered the corporate culture at Bendix. To wit: he eliminated reserved spaces in the parking lot, abolished the executive dining room, and even removed the conference table from the board room, so that directors could sit in a circle, "for better communication." He also wrote a "self-appraisal checklist" for an in-house managerial training program (inspired by organizational psychology courses at Harvard) and instituted periodic "mind-stretch sessions" for executives. Gloria Steinem was one guest speaker. "Nothing gave [Agee] greater pleasure," according to Miss Cunningham, "than presenting people with radically new ideas, particularly if he thought they could learn from them or become better people." During this period Agee's board was pay