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*Architects of Reform: Congregational and Community Leadership, Emanu-El of San Francisco, 1849-1980.* By FRED ROSENBAUM. (Berkeley: Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1980. xii, 241 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical note, index. Cloth, \$19.95; paper, \$9.95)

Most American synagogue histories are amateurish, filiopietistic volumes of no particular concern to the profession at large. Such, however, is not the case with Fred Rosenbaum's *Architects of Reform*, for it can profitably be read by anyone interested in San Francisco Jewry, the American rabbinate, or Reform Judaism. Rosenbaum realizes that the history of Congregation Emanu-El, the leading Reform temple in San Francisco, must be placed in proper context. His first chapter traces the origins of San Francisco Jewry and offers a convincing hypothesis about Jews' place in the "instant metropolis." While subsequent chapters focus more narrowly on synagogue leaders—seven rabbis and a cantor—they move easily from biography to broader issues. Among other things, Rosenbaum discusses synagogue architecture, liturgical music, Zionism, and Jewish education.

There are occasional lapses into one-sidedness, the most unfortunate being the rehearsal of Jacob Voorsanger's attack on Judah Magnes and Lee K. Frankel for recommending that "no aid at all" be given Bay Area Jews after the 1906 earthquake (p. 58). As Frankel elsewhere tells the story, perhaps with equal one-sidedness, no aid was given because the Eureka Benevolent Society's securities were found to be intact—a discovery that led the San Francisco Jewish community itself to realize that it "did not need any aid." Generally speaking, however, Rosenbaum is fair. His judgments on some Emanu-El rabbis, notably Voorsanger and Irving Reichert, may seem severe. I find them convincing.

Where *Architects of Reform* disappoints is in its narrow conceptual framework. Too much time is spent on spiritual leaders; not enough on followers or lay leaders. While Rosenbaum mentions congregational disputes and internal socioeconomic divisions, he never portrays Emanu-El politics in their full complexity. The rich dynamics of synagogue life have been submerged in an oversimplified rabbinical model of leadership; both factionalism and the ultimate interdependence of rabbis and

congregants are insufficiently explored. Thus, turnabouts on such issues as Zionism and performance of intermarriage seem, in *Architects of Reform*, merely to have depended on rabbinical whim. In fact, the same issues were being debated by congregants. They retained final say over hiring, firing, and salaries. They could have as much influence on their rabbis as their rabbis had upon them.

Notwithstanding this problem, *Architects of Reform* is a valuable book. Rosenbaum had few models to draw upon, and several diverse audiences to satisfy. He deserves to be congratulated on a lucidly written, deeply researched, and highly enlightening work: a valuable contribution to the history of Jews in the American West. □

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