

WHILE MESSIAH TARRIED: JEWISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS, 1871-1917. By *Nora Levin*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977. xii, 554 pp. + 10 pp. photographs. \$24.50.

To present a history of Jewish Socialist movements in a single volume is a formidable task, even when, as in Nora Levin's book, only the first half of the story is included and the time span is limited to less than fifty years, for the subject is both complex and controversial. The facts themselves are often a matter for dispute, having become enmeshed with a variety of political and ideological biases from which only the most dispassionate analyst might disentangle them. The sources, moreover, are in a multiplicity of languages, including Russian and Polish as well as Yiddish and Hebrew. And, apart from linguistic versatility, considerable powers of selection and synthesis would be required on the part of the author.

Attempting to overcome these difficulties, Professor Levin has avoided writing a comprehensive history of Jewish radicalism, which would have included such countries as England, France, Austria, Rumania, and Argentina. Instead, she has confined herself to the three largest and most important Jewish Socialist movements, those of the immigrant workers in the United States, the Bundists in Russia and Poland, and the Labor Zionists in Palestine, all of which had their origins in the tsarist empire during the 1870s and 1880s.

In discussing these three movements, Professor Levin does not tell us anything that was not readily available from other sources, nor does she give us a new interpretation of what was previously known. Basing her research largely on secondary materials, she leans heavily on a comparatively small number of works, nearly all of them in English and Yiddish. There are few references to the rich literature on the subject in Russian, Polish, and Hebrew, languages she apparently does not read, and even some of the most important works in English and Yiddish are neglected. Her citations from the Yiddish, moreover, are not always accurate. She refers, for example, to the May 10, 1890 issue of the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*, a journal which did not begin publication until July 4 of that year. A more fundamental criticism, perhaps, is that her book lacks intellectual focus, a problem compounded by the absence both of a proper introduction (for which the three-page foreword is an inadequate substitute) and of a concluding chapter with an overall evaluation of the three movements she describes.

In spite of these shortcomings, Professor Levin has written a useful book. Content to narrate, synthesize, and explain, she does not pretend to advance the frontiers of knowledge or to alter the familiar pattern of events. Only occasionally does her narrative falter, for she is a capable writer with an ability to elucidate complex political and social questions, so that the reader seldom loses the way. Indeed, one of the chief merits of the book is the clarity with which sharply differing temperaments and points of view emerge from Professor Levin's skillful treatment. The result, while not a work of original scholarship, is a sympathetic and readable history that will appeal to the student and the general reader, if not to the specialist in Jewish radicalism.

PAUL AVRICH  
*Queens College, CUNY*

THE JEWISH INTELLIGENTSIA AND RUSSIAN MARXISM: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF INTELLECTUAL RADICALISM AND IDEOLOGICAL DIVERGENCE. By *Robert J. Brym*. New York: Schocken Books, 1978. viii, 157 pp. Figures. \$16.95.

The central question this book addresses is: Why were members of the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drawn to one or another of four distinct but related radical organizations—the Poalei Zion, the Bund, the Menshevik Party, and the Bolshevik Party? Drawing his data mainly from