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Democratic Impulse, reviews, 1928-1931.

New Book From Pen of Rabbi A. H. Silver Deals With Democratic Impulse in Jewish History



RABBI ABBA H. SILVER

"The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History" is the title of a new work from the pen of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of the Temple, which has been issued in book

form. The new book traces in outline the manifestations of the dominant democratic impulse in Jewish history. Rabbi Silver regards the impulse as the essential characteristic of many of the great movements in Jewish thought through the ages.

Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are re-stated in Rabbi Silver's work, in terms of an invincible democratic urge which seems to determine the vital spiritual processes of the race. Rabbi Silver analyses and defends the ideal of the Mission of Israel and redefines Liberal Judaism as a renewed Pharisaism which he declares to be grounded in the democratic religious philosophy of Judaism, free from any anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic bias, in which the three major concepts of the Faith of Israel, the people of Israel and the Land of Israel are merged.

The new published work from the pen of Rabbi Silver is an elaboration of an essay which he

(Continued on Page 8)

HENRY

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THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY. By Abba Hillel Silver. 12mo. New York: Bloch Publishing Company. 75 cents.

Traced through prophecy, pharisaism, the synagogue, Jewish mysticism, Chasidism and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel.

Nov. 1928

to their times, merely to elaborate a social philosophy of his own, to point out a literary moral or establish a cause and effect connection. He rather views these men as emanations from, or exemplars of the spirit of life itself. He gives them to us, as soul-essences, worlds in conflict with chaos—the chaos that is without them and within. They became symbolical of us all. This is where he reaches his highest greatness. Here he is more than an analyst of fact as he is in his scientific studies. Here he is a true discernor, a psychologist of man's spirit, wherein there is flesh and more besides. In his science, Ellis borrowed liberally. There he was the compiler, a statistician, and not fully original even in his interpretations. Houston Peterson gives him too much credit as a scientist. For Ellis, it is now universally admitted leans too heavily on the Germans in his studies in sex. In literature Ellis is really much more original.

In his *Dance of Life*, we have a literature that is science, in a sense, and a science that is genuine literature. Perhaps the author's use of the symbol is given too wide a latitude in this book. To us, accustomed as we are, to think in specific, immediate things, this may indeed seem so. It is, nevertheless, a fit, poetic symbol for life, when the latter is seen functionally and rhythmically. The serenity of the author's mind, who approaches a perception of things *sub specie eternitatis*, the limpid transparency of his style, the illumination it gives to many of the obscure emotions, and associations of our mind, make his books a significant contribution to our essay literature. We have had no Montaigne or Rabelais nor even an Erasmus in English. We have only Bacon, Emerson, Carlyle, and such lesser men as Hazlitt, Coleridge, Arnold and Pater in this field. Somewhere among this hierarchy Ellis deserves a place. On the basis of three books alone

he merits it: by his "The New Spirit," "The Dance of Life," and by his "Impressions and Comments" series.

Ellis' name may come to be associated in the scientific world in time with such as Krafft-Ebbing's and Freud's, yet his place will be one inferior to theirs. In English literature, however, he is in our times, the first important essayist since Walter Pater, and as such he will have an honored position in the post-Victorian literature of his country and in all the others, which speak his native tongue.

Houston Peterson's biography though it is preoccupied too much with facts and too little with the ideas that matter in the case of a man like Ellis will, nevertheless, be an indispensable source book for the future historian of the man, because of its possession of many facts of Ellis' life, and its assurance of their authenticity. In this sense, it is without doubt, an important and an essential work.

S. P. Rudens.

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY

By Abba Hillel Silver,
D. D., Litt., D., New York Bloch Publishing
Company, 1928

This little booklet of but forty-two pages is a meritorious piece of writing because it sheds a new light upon the political fabric of ancient Judaism, and will surely be instrumental in doing away with many prejudices and hasty opinions entertained by Jewish as well as Gentile intellectuals about the political genius of ancient Judea.

In this booklet the learned author gives a new presentation of the political fabric of ancient Judaism. For the first time perhaps, we get a coherent picture of the political genius of the Jews of antiquity. Rabbi Silver, who is a first-rate Hebrew scholar, describes very vividly the democratic impulses of the ancient

Jews. We learn not only of the democratic motives that governed the ancient Jewish state, but also of the primary causes that led the ancient Jews to espouse the cause of democracy. "The hard, uncertain and migratory conditions of desert life made for a rude equality and a primitive freedom among the wandering tribes. There are no kings in the desert. The tribal head is only the first among equals. The desert knows of no military aristocracy, for all adult males are fighters. No family claims especial nobility of ancestry for all members of a clan are blood relations."

The author proceeds to point out the uniqueness of ancient Jewish democracy by comparing the political ideas of ancient Jews to those of other people of antiquity and cites illustration after illustration to show that among ancient Jews the will of the king was not the law of the people, and that at decisive moments the people asserted their authority against the will of the king. The kings were always under the surveillance of the prophets. Whatever the king was in Judea his will was not supreme for it was first limited by the law and then by the will of the people.

Rabbi Silver points out that the democratic impulses were not only evident in the political but also in the religious history of the Jewish people, for only the Jews succeeded in transforming theocracy from the plane of sacerdotalism unto the plane of moral idealism, and that just as the will of the king was limited by the law and the will of the people, so was the will of the priests limited by the moral resoluteness of the prophet.

In the protracted struggle between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, the author sees but another phase of the conflict between the autocratic and democratic principles in Jewish life. But the

author does not omit to stress the fact that the continued demand for more democracy was not motivated by mere secular but by spiritual desires.

This booklet will interest not only all Jewish intellectuals, who will want to know more about the Jewish past, but will also be of special interest to Jewish modernists, to Zionists and to the representatives of liberal Judaism alike. The author happens to be both a good Zionist and a representative of liberal Judaism, and what he has to say about the latter is very illuminating indeed and worthwhile quoting.

"Above all, they will proceed to re-educate the Jew. Herein Liberal Judaism has been most culpable. It has quite unconsciously but nevertheless quite effectively prepared the way for an appalling and devastating illiteracy in our ranks. Jewish learning is the rarest of phenomena among liberal Jews. We have relegated the priceless heritage of our people—of the *entire* people—to the ordained and the professional few. We are thereby in danger of destroying the democratic character of our faith. If Judaism is to remain a democratic religion, if it is not to degenerate into a Rabbinic hierarchy, it must be on the basis of Jewish learning broadly disseminated through all the classes of our people. There is one inexorable law in our history. Without learning and study Judaism cannot survive. Wherever a Jewish community failed to kindle the lamp of learning and relied solely upon worship, observance and philanthropy, it ultimately disappeared."

Rabbi Silver is not only a learned Rabbi but to my mind the most learned Reform Rabbi in America and a man of great moral courage, for no other representative of liberal Judaism would have dared to say what Rabbi Silver has to

say about its attitude to Jewish learning. I hope that especially the colleagues of the author will not fail to read this book- let from cover to cover. It will be to them a source of inspiration.

S. M. M.

FOUR WAVES

Out of the East a wave—
 Spreading, rolling,
 The spice of young fields on its breath,
 Joy and tears and swift laughter,
 Splashing about the feet of shouting
 boys.

Out of the North a wave—
 Tossing, foaming,
 A shout of power, a rush of sound;
 Spray blinds the eyes, the whitecaps
 dazzle.
 A red sun sink tumultuously.

Out of the South a wave—
 Swishing, gliding,
 Bearing sweet sleep, sunny days.
 It caresses, it lulls,
 Sliding softly down to a flat sea.

Out of the West a wave—
 Thundering, crashing.
 Danger is there, and glory;
 There is life and freedom and faith,
 There is love.
 Reaching far up the beach to the houses,
 It is music, it is madness, it is sanctuary.
 The deaf throb to its thunder.
 Its foam cuts the stars.
 Tremendous, the wave from the West.

Helen Faulkner.

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN
JEWISH HISTORY

By Abba Hillel Silver, *Reflex*
D. D., Litt., D., New York Bloch Publishing
Company, 1928

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THE DEMOCRATIC INFLUENCE IN JEWISH HISTORY

By ABBA HILLEL SILVER
Bloch Publishing Company

Not often are the two weapons of expression, the skilful pen and the "silver" tongue, found in one and the same person. To Abba Hillel Silver, however, such perfect dualism is a noteworthy, inherent trait; and one therefore is not at all surprised to see with how much dexterity his ability is transferred from the spoken word to the printed page. With astounding brevity and clarity, within the small space of forty pages, the development and effect of the anti-aristocratic motif in the existence of Judaism are traced; and, simultaneously, the adoption of the democratic impulse for the "modus vivendi" of Jewry is preached and advocated.

In analyzing the conflict of the democratic spirit against the aristocratic, the author shows how a monarchy has always been repulsive to the Hebrews. They have, on the contrary, always aimed to emphasize that "all Jews are sons of kings." Their frequent rebellions, as told in the Books of Samuel and Kings, emphatically attest to this attitude. Their economic messages, too, have been thorns in the side of the Jewish aristocracy and priesthood. Oppression and exploitation, to them, were more than violations of society—for not only do these mar the life of man but even deface the image of G—d. It is interesting to observe, also, that the rebellion of Korah is considered by Abba Hillel Silver as an expression of the democratic impulse against the overpowering influence of the sacerdotal tribe. We know sufficiently well, however, that such was not the case. Korah's revolt against the leaders was made through personal desires for aggrandizement rather than for popular benefit. The democratic spirit had surely been expressed before in the appointment of Korah as an influencing factor in the Levitical service of the Mishkan and in the creation of the seventy judges from members of the various tribes. To Dr. Silver, prophecy, especially in its broad liberal sense, is a democratic institution of the weak against the strong, and therefore highly supported by the Israelites. Priests have regarded ordinary Jews as "zarim," but prophecy elevated them to a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

As a guide to the understanding of the motivating influence in all the great movements of Israel—Pharisaism, Sadducism, Rabbinism, Mysticism and Chassidism—this book is indispensable. The author's profound explanation of the chief cornerstone of Achad Ha'am's philosophy of cultural Judaism, i. e. the mission ideal, and his strong condemnation of Liberal Judaism for its lack of adherence to the strict discipline of Pharisaism, are, above all, subjects very close to the heart of the modern Jew and are made absorbing reading matter for the interested.

S. B. H.

(Yeshiva) New York City
Dec 1928
Lederer

ABOUT MEN AND THINGS

The Mission of Israel and Jewish Nationalism

In a small brochure, recently published, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, one of the most eloquent and most thoughtful members of the Reform Jewish pulpit in this country, sets out to give a reinterpretation of the ideal of the Jewish Mission in the light of the modern theory of Jewish nationalism. The booklet, entitled "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History," is divided into two parts, the first tracing the democratic impulse in Biblical and post-Biblical times, and the second, probably the main thesis, showing that at the heart of this impulse stood the all-pervading ideal of a people dedicating itself to be the messengers of God to humanity. While the first part is open to some criticism and suffers from a lack of a more subtle discrimination between democracy as generally used in connection with the Government and its negative connotation as a distrust of rulers, the second part is of great interest and is almost revolutionary in character, in so far as it endeavors to uproot a point of view that dominated reform Jewish thinking for a century and a quarter. It is a boldly outspoken opinion of many of the younger adherents of reform in our midst who have been struggling for some time against the set ideology of the leaders of a former generation, but who were silenced by the cries of the older leaders, who saw in this movement a reversion to old standards, which they branded as "neo-orthodoxy."

The outstanding arraignment of Dr. Silver against what he designates as Liberal Judaism consists in the fact that liberal Judaism has made the mission ideal "anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic," and in the fact that "it has quite unconsciously but nevertheless quite effectively prepared the way for an appalling and devastating analphabetism in our ranks. Jewish learning is the rarest of phenomena among Liberal Jews." In the early stages of reform Judaism, the mission ideal had been made the pivotal point in its creed and with some of the early leaders the only reason for the preservation of the Jewish people. This was as it should have been, in perfect harmony with the thought that pervades Jewish history and literature from primitive times to our own days. They erred, however, in denuding this ideal of its nationalistic and nomistic attributes and in believing that the Messianic age was nigh at hand, so that there is no need of maintaining the national consciousness and the means of its preservation through a definite discipline of life as evolved by Pharisaic Judaism. The modern liberal, or as Dr. Silver prefers to call him, the modern Pharisee, "will hold fast to all the agencies which in the past preserved the integrity of the people—Israel's language, Israel's lore, Israel's hope of national rehabilitation, Israel's memory-laden customs and habits of life adjusted to modern needs." The modern Pharisees will also seek to dispel the clouds of ignorance that have overcast Israel's horizon and to re-educate the Jew in a fuller knowledge of his history and his literature. "There is one inexorable law in our history. Without learning and study Judaism cannot survive. Wherever a Jewish community failed to kindle the lamp of learning and relied solely upon worship, observance and philanthropy, it ultimately disappeared." The author (unsparingly condemns the tendency of secularizing Jewish life evinced by some of the modern literati, who speak glibly of Judaism as a culture or a civilization, making the religious element in it insignificant or entirely non-existent. "What other superlative contribution have we made to mankind?" exclaims our author. "Whatever of the magnificent and the eternal there is in our life and literature derives from that source. All else is a pale replica of alien thought and culture."

Jewish Exponent, Phila. 1/4/29

* * *

✓ This essay of Dr. Silver is a challenge not only to leaders of reform Judaism and to the secularists in our midst, whether adhering to the Zionist ideal or not, but also to the great masses of thinking Jews who are floundering in their thoughts and attitudes toward Jewish life and belief. ✓ The thesis set forth here is very simple and its novelty consists only in the source whence it comes and in the form in which it is put. The people of Israel had always conceived itself to be God's chosen people, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." It must continue its group life in order to fulfill the mission that it set for itself or that was divinely imposed upon it. From the experience gathered through an extensive period of history, under all kinds of circumstances, Israel has developed a large number of habits and customs, as an aid toward its preservation. These must not be wantonly overthrown without imperiling the future of the Jewish people and thereby the future of its mission, the main purpose of its existence. The tendency to safeguard Israel by means of a discipline of life, that should direct every act and movement of daily existence, has been known as the Pharisaic tendency and this should be renewed now and strengthened in order that Israel might be permitted to preserve itself also in our modern surroundings and in the changed conditions under which we live. ✓ It is simple. It is logical. It is revolutionary in reform Jewish ideology. It should help to clarify the thoughts of some of our younger friends who are groping for light in their search for a Jewish "modus vivendi" in present-day life. ✓

Dec 14/28

THE S. A. J. REVIEW

REFORM'S "REVERSION"

In a booklet of small compass,* Dr. Abba Hillel Silver traces a tendency which he identifies with Democracy. In reality, he has sailed rather nonchalantly through Jewish history, gathered here and there a manifestation of courage and gallant humanity, and has fused all his gems into one: "Democratic Impulse." The confusion persists throughout between democracy as system of government, democracy as the fallibility of monarchs, and democracy as an implication of the "mission" theory. One feels at the close that the "impulse," moreover, never matured beyond the desire to realize itself, that such a thesis perhaps deserves more careful and scholarly investigation, and that eloquence and historical truth are not synonymous.

The "distrust of royalty" was not, it would seem, a trust in democracy, but in God. Democracy raises each man to the level of potential ruler, subject to the will of the people. Theocracy renders man's most noble goal the possibility of obedience to God's Law; and if royalty was distrusted, it was Samuel's distrust that God's Law would be supplanted by the supreme law of the living, as among the gentiles.

It is surprising that Dr. Silver should assume that justice is interchangeable with democracy, injustice with autocracy. The wisdom of Solomon is undoubtedly associated with his keen perception of justice. Does not the eschatological conception of the "dynasty of David the anointed" indicate an association of eternal perfection with a philosophy of government alien to democracy?

In fact, the traditional categories of Kohen, Levite, and Israelite have perpetuated throughout Jewish history the concep-

"The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History" (Bloch).

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY. By Abba Hillel Silver. Bloch Publishing Co.

An interesting presentation of an interesting subject, but not written in a form that will meet the needs of the general reader.

Jewish
woman
Dec 18

THE Democratic Spirit in Jews.

BY RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

(Reprinted from the "Jewish Tribune".)

In this article, reprinted from his recent book, "The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History" (published by the Bloch Publishing Co., New York), Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver makes clear the strong democratic tendency that has always been distinctive in the history of the Jew.

Israel was marked by the democratic impulse from the very dawn of its history, Rabbi Silver points out. Its environment and its spiritual genius contributed to develop this condition. The generations of desert experience had wrought their effect. The democratic thread is woven throughout Israel's history, he says.

It is highly interesting to note how persistent and dominant has been the democratic impulse in Jewish history—alike in the political life of the people as in its economic and religious life.



When our nomadic forebears appeared on the frontiers of Canaan to begin their amazing career in the world, they had already been acted upon and determined by countless generations of desert experience and custom. The hard, uncertain and migratory conditions of desert life make for a rude equality and a primitive freedom among the wandering tribes. There are no kings in the desert. The tribal head is only the first among equals. The desert knows of no military aristocracy for all adult

males are fighters. No family claims especial nobility of ancestry, for all members of a clan are blood relations. The rule of the rich is unknown; for the disparity between rich and poor is slight, and many tribes are communistic in structure. No priestly hierarchy exists, and ritualistic functions are in most instances performed by the lay head of the family. The nomadic tribe is a rudimentary political, economic and

RELIGIOUS DEMOCRACY.

Numberless centuries stamped these features upon the character of our desert ancestors long before they entered the settled agricultural life of Canaan.

From their scattered entrance into Canaan until the establishment of the monarchy, centuries elapsed—turbulent and formative centuries, during which the tribes of Israel, in their various groupings, were led by war chieftains, summoned by the people to command whenever an emergency arose. These chieftains returned to civilian life when the emergency was past. The desert tradition strenuously resisted national consolidation under one sovereign ruler. Only the threat of foreign invasions, particularly that of the Philistines, forced the tribes to seek political unification under a monarch. A reading of the Biblical records shows how distinctly distasteful this compulsory monarchisation proved to the best spirits of the people. Constrained to yield to a necessity, they nevertheless refused to make any intellectual concessions to it. The prophet Samuel interpreted the demand for a king as rebellion against God, as evidence of the people's sinfulness and degradation and as a culpable mimicry of the heathen. Contrast this Judaic point of view with the Greek of Plato and Aristotle. The ideal polity, Plato maintained, was the monarchy, and the ideal ruler of his republic was the king who is also philosopher and warrior. Aristotle regarded kingship as "the primary or most divine form of government."

Among the peoples of antiquity, even among the most enlightened, kings were deified, sacrifices were offered to them, and the most extravagant titles and attributes were ascribed to them. Thus

THE KINGS OF EGYPT

were addressed as "Lord of heaven, lord of earth, sun, life of

the whole world, lord of time . . . creator of the harvest, maker and fashioner of mortals . . . giver of life to all the host of gods . . ." There was no king-worship in Israel, and a Hebrew king to whom a heathen ruler sought to attribute miraculous healing powers replied: "Am I a God, to kill and to make alive?" . . . The highest tribute which the Bible pays to a ruler is: "He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord . . ."

No revolutionary literature of mankind breathes a profounder distrust of royalty and indicts in harsher terms the way of kings, their despoliations and corruptions, than the eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel. Reflected in the Biblical account of the rise of the monarchy, one finds not only the struggle between the theocratic and monarchic systems of government—between priestcraft and kingcraft—but also, and more particularly, the unrelenting conflict between the democratic and the autocratic principles which raged throughout the political history of Israel, and, as we shall see in a moment, through its economic and religious history as well.

Hard was the road which royalty travelled in Israel. Its kings, with rare exceptions, never arrived at that absolutism possessed by the potentates of other ancient Oriental kingdoms. Straightway upon the selection of Saul, the prophet Samuel was quick to define and circumscribe the scope and powers of the king: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." The contents of this book may be gathered from the Deuteronomic code, where the king is forewarned not to multiply horses and wealth and wives, and, above all, not to permit his heart "to be lifted up above his brethren." Samuel loses no time in impressing upon the people that allegiance to the Lord must at all times be prior to allegiance to the king.

At decisive moments the people asserted their authority against the will of the king. Frequently, they rebelled. Hot upon the heels of Saul's election a revolution broke out, led by people whom the dynastic chronicler terms "base fellows"—but revolutionists have always been called "base fellows." . . . These "base fellows" despised Saul, and cried out: "How shall this man save us?" This revolution was seemingly of such proportions that the kingdom had to be "renewed" in Gilgal. Samuel himself anointed

THE REBEL DAVID

king during Saul's lifetime, not because he disliked Saul—for the Bible takes occasion to point out that Samuel loved Saul and mourned for him when misfortune overtook him—but because Saul had usurped powers not delegated to him, and because he did not follow rigidly the instructions of the prophet. David's reign was beset with revolutions, and upon the death of his son, Solomon, the empire was rent in twain by a popular revolution against royal oppression and arrogance. At times the people dethroned one ruler and elected another in his place. At least, in five instances the Bible clearly states that the populace elected the king.

The kings were constantly under the moral surveillance of the prophets—those stern monitors of the great democratic desert tradition of the race. In the name of a law higher than that of kings, Samuel faced Saul, Nathan denounced David, Shemaiah threatened Rehoboam, Jehu imprecated Baasa, Elijah anathematized Ahab, and Jeremiah pronounced doom upon Zedekiah, because "he humbled not himself before Jeremiah speaking in the name of the Lord."

The Babylonian exile put an end to the relatively brief era of kingship in Israel. Thereafter and for a period of almost half a millennium, our forefathers were governed by priest-leaders and by assemblies and councils of their representatives—Judean Areopagites—who directed whatever of political autonomy the people possessed. There followed a brief interlude of Hasmonean sovereignty, and then the great dispersion of the people took place. Since that time and for nearly nineteen centuries our people, scattered all over the world, existed without king, pope or potentate, and yet retained a fairly integrated and disciplined

NATIONAL LIFE.

In many countries they possessed large measures of autonomy, and everywhere they developed an adequate technique for communal administration and for self-government, democratically controlled. Thus the first revolutionists of history, who began their national life by an act of self-emancipation from the

yoke of Egyptian bondage, never quite lost throughout their colourful career the love of freedom and the pride of free men. Impressed with the dignity and the inalienable worth of the life of man, and aware of a noble ancestry, commonly shared by all Israelites, they boldly and proudly proclaimed: "All Jews are the sons of kings!"

The economic thought of ancient Israel was likewise surcharged with a democratic idealism. The elaborate system of Biblical social legislation, designed to shield the members of the community against exploitation, monopoly, loss of patrimony and enslavement, was the expression of a mighty faith in human equality and solidarity. Great and exalted are the implications of the doctrine: "For unto me are the children of Israel slaves; they are not slaves unto slaves."

The great social message of Israel

—ITS HEROIC CODE OF JUSTICE—

is incomprehensible without an understanding of the pervading democratic spirit of the race. Every individual life was conceived to be inviolable, a reflex of divinity and an end in the cosmic scheme. Every act of wrong and injustice which mars the life of a man defaces also the image of God. Oppression and exploitation are, therefore, more than violations of the laws of society. They are sacrilege and blasphemy. They thwart life—God's life in every man—they distort and mutilate that which is the end and goal of all being—the free, untrammelled unfoldment of every human personality.

And it was from the lips of men who had drunk deep of this democratic tradition of the race that the first great cry for justice and economic freedom leaped out upon the world. It was the intrepid spokesmen of the immemorial desert traditions of equality and mutuality who wielded the scorpion whip of their fury upon those who ground the faces of the poor and turned aside the way of the humble, and who pleaded the cause of the orphan and the widow, the beaten and the broken of life.

This democratic impulse is strongly in evidence also in the religious history of Israel. A bitter and determined war was waged through the ages upon ecclesiastical dictatorship. Among ancient peoples, theocracy was tantamount to priestly domination and assumed the form of an esoteric ritualism presided over by a privileged and exclusive hierarchy. The racial genius of Israel lifted theocracy from the plane of sacerdotalism unto the plane of moral idealism and proceeded to summon all men, regardless of birth or station, to share in a kingdom of moral values, to live as equals in the free domain of the spirit.

Here again the prophet was the protagonist of the democratic tradition. He was the pitiless enemy of priestly privilege. Prophecy was not only the protest against idolatry—against the theriomorphic polytheism and the anthropomorphic monotheism of the day. It was not only a denial of the primacy of cult and ritual in religion. It was not only the upreaching of the morally sensitised spirit of the race for a nobler and juster order of society. It was

AN IMPASSIONED CLAIM,

springing from the very depths of the people's essential self, for full lay participation in the spiritual heritage of the race and for unrestricted democratic leadership in religion.

The priest, to be sure, is privileged to teach the Law, and his lips may keep knowledge. But so also may the layman who qualifies himself for that service. And the word of God may come to all men, to the shepherd, the tradesman, the dresser of sycamore trees, to the humblest of the humble. The priest may perform the indispensable ritual of the sanctuary—but he is possessed of no occult powers, no inviolate office, no exclusive sanctity, no preferred moral status. He must submit to the same moral law which is binding alike upon king, priest, prophet or man of the people.

The prophet was as resolute in his denunciation of priests for moral delinquency as of kings, false prophets or common people. In a religious democracy there are no moral immunities for select groups. Jeremiah interprets his Divine call to mean that he must become "a fortified city and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." Jeremiah and his spiritual kinsmen dared to call the priests, bulwarked behind the spurious sanctity of their office, vile, profane, murderers, despisers of God's name, polluters of the sanctuary, violaters of the Law, teachers for hire . . . In

none of the religious literature of ancient people can one find such unsparing criticism of priestcraft.

The great rebellion of Korah and of the leaders of Israel against the hierarchic claims put forth by the priestly class recorded in the Book of Numbers is

THE CLASSIC INSTANCE

of the refusal of the Jewish laity to assign special sanctity and privilege to any group in Israel. The rebels were not non-script malcontents. They were the "princes of the congregation, the elect men of the assembly, men of renown." "And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron (whose names are here used by the priestly writer for his own end) and said unto them: ye take too much upon yourselves seeing *all the congregation are holy, every one of them*, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves before the assembly of the Lord?" It was, of course, no answer to have the earth conveniently swallow up these rebels alive. Korah's contention was echoed and re-echoed through all the succeeding generations, for the racial daimon, the essential genius of the people spoke through him.

The priestcraft sought to make of the Jewish laity in relation to the sanctities of their faith "zarim"—strangers. Prophecy sought to make of them "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Similarly the false prophets sought to restrict the privilege of prophecy to a few "concessionaires" or professionals. When Eldad and Medad began to prophesy in the camp, Joshua, who here acts as the spokesman of the older tradition of professional prophecy, cried unto Moses: "My Lord Moses shut them in!" But Moses, who represents the true genius of Israel, replied: "Art thou jealous for my sake? *Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them.*"

In post-exilic times the scribes and rabbis continued the democratic tradition of the prophets and extended it. With the destruction of the Temple, democratic Judaism scored a major victory. Thereafter a new institution began its ascendancy in Jewish life—the Synagogue—the creation of Jewish laymen and the noblest and most democratic achievement of Israel. This lay institution soon became the spiritual centre of Jewish life. Through the succeeding centuries it was the home of the democratic religious leaders in Israel, who frequently felt themselves called upon to challenge the ecclesiastic hierarchy which had entrenched itself in the Temple. The Bible was edited and canonised largely by lay leaders. The right of teaching the Law and of interpreting it both legally and homiletically, was steadily taken over by them. They simply repudiated the priestly monopoly of the *Torah*. They proceeded to ordain prayers and to fix the lay ritual. The ritual of the Synagogue was in itself

A TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT.

It depended upon no priest or Rabbi or other indispensable functionary. It called for no special "local," or shrine, or sanctuary. Its liturgy was completely dissociated from sacrifice and all forms of sacramentalism. Wherever ten Jewish laymen assembled for worship, there was a Synagogue. Lay leaders framed laws and regulations for the guidance of the people. In the course of time, they even prescribed laws for the priests and supervised the performance of the priestly duties within the Temple itself. The status of the priest was radically changed. He came to be merely a commissioned agent of the people, possessing only delegated authority. Thus even the High Priest on Atonement Day was reminded by the Elders of the Tribunal, the *Zikkene Bet Din*, composed largely of laymen: "we are the representatives of the Tribunal and thou art our representative and the Tribunal's; we adjure thee by Him who caused His name to dwell in this House not to deviate in a single instance from the instructions which we have given thee."

The protracted struggle between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was but another phase of the historic conflict between the autocratic and democratic principles in Jewish life. The Sadducees, clinging to a tradition common to all the priestly classes of antiquity, maintained that they were the sole monitors of the Law and the exclusive repository of legislative power in matters religious. They resented what they regarded as unsecular usurpation and the unholy intrusion of laymen into precincts sacred unto themselves.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, who were the spiritual

heirs of the prophets, declared that "God hath given unto all as an heritage—the kingdom, the priesthood and the sanctuary." "The *Torah* which Moses commanded us is the inheritance of the house of Israel." Hence every Israelite properly trained is qualified to share in the sovereign freedom of teaching and expounding the Law, of discovering its recondite meanings and of applying it to the problems and conditions of his time.

It is no accident of history that Israel was the first nation in the world to develop a universal system of popular education for both young and old, rich and poor. Among no other people was so much stress laid upon

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN,

of all children. The school took precedence over the Synagogue. The first charge upon a community was the maintenance of its schools and the support of its teachers. A city without a school was to be shunned as doomed. A scholar who studied the *Torah* but did not teach it to others was regarded as a contemner of God's word. On the other hand, he who taught a child *Torah* was assured of a portion in the world to come. Especially praiseworthy was he who taught the child of an "Am Ha-aretz"—the unlettered common man. The watch-word of the Men of the Great Community was "Raise up many disciples!" It was no idle boast of Josephus when he declared: "Our principal care is to educate our children well"; and one need but read Nathan Hannover's account of the remarkable system of education which was in operation in the Polish Jewish Communities seventeen centuries later, to realise how uninterrupted the tradition of democratic education continued in Israel throughout the ages.

The Pharisees took the Bible injunction "And ye shall be called the priests of the Lord" to be more than a figure of speech. They set about to train the children of Israel into a discipline and a mode of sanctified living, which would justify this appellation. Many of the regulations touching dress, conduct and food which they prescribed for the laymen were in the first instance intended for priests only. They wished to bridge the gap between priest and layman, to democratise the concept of sanctification.

Some of the extremists among the Pharisees, holding that sanctification was the prerogative of all Israelites and in an effort to outpriest the priest, organised

THE *Haburah*,

a fraternity which in matters of Levitical purity was even more exacting than the code binding upon priests. Members of such a *Haburah* regarded even the uninitiated High Priest as an "Am Ha-aretz." Back of this exotic fraternity was the thought that holiness, even in its ritualistic sense, belonged to no hereditary class but must be and can be acquired by anyone through a rigid discipline of self-purification.

There came a time, however, when Pharisaism itself became undemocratic. Post-exilic leaders early maintained that prophecy ceased with the exile. Thereafter religious truth could come only by way of the interpretation of Scriptures, not by way of revelation. In matters of Law even the "Bat Kol," the Voice echoed from Heaven—a species of attenuated revelation—is to be ignored. The method of interpretation became as a matter of course more and more involved and technical as time went on. Only the skilled and the carefully trained students who were acquainted with all the intricacies of Rabbinic hermeneutics, came to be regarded as qualified teachers. Religious leadership was again narrowly restricted. An ever-widening gulf set in between the Rabbinic scholars and the masses. When the legal system of the Rabbis was finally codified in the Talmud and assumed an authority second only to that of the Bible, Rabbinism became as strongly entrenched in it, as exclusive and domineering as the priests had been in the Temple. An aristocracy of learning—a dry, hard, exclusive learning, quite inaccessible to the common man, superseded the aristocracy of sacerdotalism. The masses were again excluded from their spiritual patrimony.

The people were bound to rebel; and they did rebel. In the popular Messianic movements during the two centuries following the compilation of the Talmud, we already find strong anti-Rabbinic tendencies. But the great rebellion expressed itself in two ways—

KARAISM AND MYSTICISM.

Karaism sought to break the domination of the Rabbis by

completely repudiating their authority to interpret the Bible and by appealing to a literal reading of the sacred text. It is true that Karaism was, in a sense, a throw-back to Sadduceeism but it was prompted by none of the older priestly presumptions of religious franchise and vested interests.

Jewish mysticism was an effort to re-discover a world in which the religious spirit of the race could again adventure free and undeterred, and where the souls of men, starved by Rabbinic formalism, could feed again upon the glories and glamour of new revelations. Like Karaism Jewish mysticism sought its freedom in the Bible, but unlike Karaism, it sought it not in a literal reading of Scriptures, nor in a "Halachic" or "Hagadic" interpretation such as Rabbinism adopted, but in an occult, mystic probing of its inner spiritual meaning. The Jewish mystic developed a technique quite as elaborate, as ingenious and as amazing as that of the Rabbis. Just as the Rabbis had employed Biblical phrases, words and letters in their dialectics to expound the law and the moral, so the mystics turned every phrase, word and letter of the Bible into a visible revelation of invisible truth. By means of this highly refined methodology the very letters of the *Torah* dissolved into a world of spirituality. And in that world, the Jewish mystic found that prophetic freedom which was denied him elsewhere.

Centuries later "Chassidism" expressed the same spirit of revolt. It was a popular democratic uprising, as evidenced by the astounding rapidity with which the movement swept through Eastern-European Jewries. It was a magnificent attempt to restore the treasures of the faith to the masses and to rescue Judaism from a cold, meagre, subtilised Talmudism and from a coterie of Rabbis who had become estranged from the people, exclusive and to a degree also exploiting. "Chassidism" declared: "The essence of Judaism is that a man should walk in wholesomeness and simplicity of spirit without any subtleties." "Chassidism" was a great yearning of simple men for the wider spaces of the spirit. It was a wish to tap anew the clear springs of religious inspiration and to bring on a new age of faith and miracles and wonderment and revelation.



Unorthodox Reform

The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History, by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver. New York: Bloch Publishing Co. 2-1-29

THE significance of this essay lies in articulating the new departure in reform Judaism. From the days of its origin until very recently reform Judaism has been a protest against nationalistic Judaism. For some time during the Palestinian period the Jewish people were a nation. But this

New Palestine
period, asserted the ideologists of the reform movement, was merely one of preparation and training for the priestly career as carrier of the idea of the unity, spirituality and ethical nature of God. Henceforward the Jews were no longer to be a national entity but a congregation of priests whose duty it is to usher in the Messianic Age through teaching the people among whom they reside the true nature of divinity. In conformity with this interpretation of Jewish history, reform-Judaism crystallized as universal Judaism, as contrasted with the nationalistic or political Judaism of the Rabbis. Judaism became, in the minds of the reform-rabbis, an entity distinct from the Jewish people. The logic of events destroyed the hope of the complete national and cultural absorption of the Jews, the complete destruction of the wall of prejudice built between Jews and non-Jews. Anti-Semitism was born as a reaction to Jewish assimilation and Zionism was making itself felt as a force in Jewish life. Most reform-rabbis were not affected by these developments. Some, however, realized that a new orientation is necessary.

Rabbi Silver's essay is the first at delineating this new departure whereby reform Judaism aims at adapting itself to the conditions of life. He re-asserts his faith in the Jewish Mission. Indeed, God has imposed upon the Jews—democratically upon all Jews—the task of being a light unto the nations. But in order that the Jews may be a pattern people they must safeguard their group identity. Jews must share in the Jewish aspirations and in Jewish culture, thus maintaining their separateness—all for the purpose of fulfilling their missionary destiny. In order that Judaism may be real it must again be integrated—through a new Phariseeism—with a living unique Jewish people.

Naturally, much can be said in criticism of Rabbi Silver's philosophy of Judaism—particularly about the Mission of Israel idea which seems to dominate it. It is, however, a much richer philosophy than the one of traditional reform which is still prevalent. The essay is lucid, stimulating and historically significant.

MORDECAI GROSSMAN.

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MORDECAI GROSSMAN.

New Palestine Feb, 1929

Israel Messenger
Shanghai
1ST MARCH, 1929

OUR BOOKSHELF



THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY, By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Published by Bloch Publishing Co. New York, price 75 cents (gold) cloth bound.

The foregoing is a work of great merit. Written by a scholar who knows the subject well, it should be read widely. Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Hassidism and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are restated here in terms of an invincible democratic urge which seems to determine the vital spiritual processes of the race. We have no hesitation in commending the work to our readers.

REVIEWS

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY.

By Abba Hillel Silver. The Bloch Publishing Co.

Dr. Silver's challenging and compact essay traces in careful and colorful analysis the continued democratic impulse in Jewish history. He depicts the working of this great equalizing leaven in learning, government, and in religious life. Chasidism, Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism—all stand clearly outlined in the rays of the searching light of Rabbi Silver's study. Here is an essay which will prove a valuable guide to the thinking modern Jew, who feels the need of a philosophy of Jewish life historically consistent and capable of enriching and motivating his life.

THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN

Jewish Morning Journal 2/10/29

מיט א קורצער צייט צוריק האב איך
אויף דיעזען פלאץ בעשפראכען א ביי
בעלע אין ענגליש פון מר. מאקסוועל
סילווער, א גראדואירטער פון היברו
יוניאן קאלעדזש וועלכער איז געווארען
א געשעפטסמאן. איצטער ליעגט פאר
מיר אן אויפזאץ פון עטליכע און פער-
ציג זייטען: "דער דעמאקראטיק איז
פאלס אין דזשואיש היסטארי" פון זיין
מעהר בעריהמטען ברודער, דר. אבא הלל
סילווער פון קליוולאנד, אהי"א. ארויס-
געגעבען פון די בלאד פאבלישינג קאמ-
פאניע (ניו יארק, 1928), אין וועלכען
ער בריינגט ארויס, מיט זיין בעוואוסטע
שעהן רעדנעריי, די נייגונג צו דעמאקרא-
טיע וואס מען זעהט קלאר אין די פא-
ליטיק אזוי גוט ווי אין די רעליגיאן פון
די אידען פון פערצייטען. דער ארגומענט
איז אנגענעהם און הינרייסענד, און
שטרענג קריטישע טענות מיט וועלכע
מען קען בעווייזען עטוואס אנדערעס זיי-
נען דא ניט אים פלאץ.

SILVER, DEMOCRATIC
IMPULSE IN JEW. HIST

2/10/29 JEW. MORNING JOUR.

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE
IN JEWISH HISTORY—By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.
Bloch Publishing Co., New
York.

Reviewed by M. Spack

In this brilliant study, Rabbi Silver gives an outline in a brief and concise manner, yet clear and vivid, of how dominant has been the democratic impulse in Jewish history in its political, economical and religious life. Living a nomadic life as a wandering tribe in the desert, the Jewish people recognized neither king nor ruler, for "there are no kings in the desert." The love for freedom and democracy is inherent and is an outstanding feature in the character of our people.

When our ancestors in time of national danger sought political unification under a monarch and urged the prophet Samuel to give them a king, the prophet rebuked them, for he considered it a rebellion against God. This was contrary to the conception other peoples of antiquity had regarding kingship.

The history of Jewish kings is a history of revolutions, of frequent rebellion. Samuel anointed the rebel David king during Saul's lifetime. David's reign was beset with revolutions, as was also the reign of his son, Solomon. Upon the death of Solomon the empire was rent in twain. These frequent rebellions and dethroning of kings is due "to the great democratic desert traditions of the race."

Since the Babylonian exile, the end of the kingship era in Israel, our people were governed by priest leaders. For nineteen centuries our people existed without a king and yet retained their national life. The economic and social life of our people was governed by such legislation designed for democracy and equality.

It is the desert traditions of freedom and equality that brought forth the great messengers of social justice—the prophets. The prophet was also the enemy of priestly privilege and an advocate of democracy in religion, "for ye are a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

The little book is well worth the reading. Rabbi Silver's clear and vivid style makes the reading delightful and his knowledge of the subject renders the perusal profitable.

*Baptist Evangelist
Potter, Texas
March 1929*

"The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History," by Abba Hillel Silver, D. D., Litt. D., .75, Bloch Publishing Co., 31 West 31 St. New York, N. Y.

The author, Dr. Silver, is the Rabbi of the Temple, Cleveland, Ohio. He is a democrat by principle and character of life-work. The religious philosophy of Judaism is a merged concept of the faith of Israel, the people of Israel and the land of Israel. The religious philosophy of Judaism is a democratic foundation of the renewed Pharisaism representing a liberal Judaism. This democratic foundation is free from any anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic bias. Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism, and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are stated in this little volume of forty-three pages.

The Urge of Demos

DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY, by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. New York: Bloch Publishing Company. \$.75

In this small volume Rabbi Silver, of The Temple, Cleveland, traces the democratic motif in many of the larger movements of Jewish thought through the centuries. He perceives an invincible democratic urge in the spiritual processes of the Jewish people whether in Prophecy, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism, or the Synagogue. It is a thoughtful essay and those who are concerned with the philosophy of Jewish life will find it a provocative piece of writing.

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY

By Abba Hillel Silver, D.D., LITT.D.

In this compact, attractively printed volume, Dr. Silver, Rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, traces in luminous outline the manifestations of a dominant democratic impulse in Jewish history. He regards this democratic motif as the essential characteristic of many of the great movements in Jewish thought through the ages.

Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are re-stated here in terms of an invincible democratic urge which seems to determine the vital spiritual processes of the race.

Very challenging indeed is Dr. Silver's analysis and defense of the ideal

of the Mission of Israel and his re-definition of Liberal Judaism as a renewed Pharisaism which he declares to be grounded in the democratic religious philosophy of Judaism, free from any anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic bias, in which the three major concepts of the Faith of Israel, the People of Israel and the Land of Israel are merged.

Dr. Silver's essay will prove a valuable guide to many modern Jews who are in quest of a philosophy of Jewish life consistent with Jewish experience and capable of motivating and enriching their lives.

It is published by the Bloch Publishing Company, "The Jewish Book Concern," 31 W. Thirty-first street, New York.

Silver Book Goes to
Core of Religious Problems

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD.
By Abba Hillel Silver. (Richard R. Smith, Inc.)

Rabbi Silver's newest book is one of the most important in the religious field to be published in recent months. The spiritual head of the Temple goes straight to the center of fundamental religious problems and discusses them in a straightforward scholarly manner which has won for him the admiration of the religious leaders of the country.

The Religious Book Club made a wise selection when it picked this volume. It could hardly have done otherwise in view of its outstanding merit in every respect. The religious problems of the day are clearly analyzed and fearlessly presented in a forceful and arresting style. Dr. Silver never dodges issues because they are difficult when he is in the pulpit. This same characteristic is carried over into his writing and is more noticeable in this volume than in any that have come from his pen. Throughout, the discussion is constructive and its general conclusions as vital to Christianity as to Judaism, of which Dr. Silver is one of America's recognized leaders.

The contents of the first chapter, "The Role of Religion in a Changing World," has been presented in lectures by Dr. Silver on several occasions. His chapter on "What Is Happening to the American Home" is an outstanding appraisal of American home life. No sincere student of religious and social problems can afford to neglect this book.

Cleveland R. D. 2-8-31

Jewish Monitor, St. North, Texas 3/8/29

*Boston
Eve. Trans.*

SILVER, ABBA HILLEL. The Democratic Impulse in Jewish History. New York: Bloch. 1928. 75 cents.

In an essay of forty-two pages, Rabbi Silver presents in a condensed but powerful form some very serious thoughts on a subject which should appeal to both Jewish and Gentile intellectuals.

"THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY," by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (Bloch, New York. 75 cents.), traces in luminous outline the manifestations of a dominant democratic impulse in Jewish history. The author regards this democratic tendency as the essential characteristic of many of the great movements in Jewish thought through the ages. Prophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism, and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are here re-stated in terms of an invincible democratic urge which seems to determine the vital spiritual processes of the race. Dr. Silver's analysis and defence of the ideal of the Mission of Israel are very challenging. His individual interpretation of Liberal Judaism is unfolded as a renewed Pharisaism, which he declares to be grounded in the democratic religious philosophy of Judaism, free from any anti-nationalism and anti-nomistic bias, in which the three major concepts of the Faith of Israel, the People of Israel and the Land of Israel are merged.

**THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE
IN JEWISH HISTORY**
By Abba Hillel Silver
(Bloch Publishing Co., New York)

The democratic impulse in Jewish history, which has been a persistent note in the religious and economic as well as in the political progress of the Jews, is made the subject of an interesting thesis by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver. From the time that our nomadic ancestors appeared in Canaan and shared the hardships of desert life, there has always been a common bond. Forced by necessity to chose a monarch, there never was any king-worship in Israel. Rather was the king warned "not to permit his heart to be lifted up above his brethren." In five instances in the Bible, the people elected the kings who were constantly under the moral surveillance of the prophets. The synagogue, which became the center of Jewish life, was created by Jewish laymen. Wherever ten Jews congregated for worship, they formed a synagogue. The laymen founded the laws for the priests as well as for the people. The covenant which God had made with Israel as a people consecrated them every one as a priest. Dr. Silver feels as this ideal mission has been fulfilled throughout the ages, that there is still enough power and beauty in modern Judaism to kindle enthusiasm. "A people need not expatriate itself or continue as an expatriated people in order to be an apostle to mankind." The passion of Israel for righteousness may be filled universally as well as nationally when the ideal is rightly conceived and consistently lived. This Dr. Silver has brought out very forcibly. *John R. ...*

DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY"

THIS little volume is an essay, or rather two essays, on Judaism and Democracy. The subject is interesting, so too is the presentation of it. One is disappointed, however, that the author did not accept the generally accepted interpretation of the term Democracy as government by the people, and equality of opportunity, and then go on to present a more convincing proof that such attitudes existed among the ancient Hebrews and among the Jews of the Middle Ages.

The second part of the essay is connected with the first only by a mental thread. In reality it is a presentation of Reform Judaism, or rather Reform Judaism as the author would like to have it, not as it is. The basis of his theory is the idea of Israel's Mission. In a sense, it contradicts the author's attitude in the first part; since the idea of a Mission implies that Israel considers itself the aristocrat among the Peoples, or at any rate, the spiritual superior. What is more, the author stops at the most interesting point. One would want to hear more, and find out just what he means by identifying himself with the Pharisees. He certainly leaves the impression that he wants the Reform Movement to declare itself a failure, and go back to Orthodoxy.

Democracy of the Jew.

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY, by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, published by Bloch Publishing Co., 31 West Thirty-first street, New York, (75c.)

The publishers have the following to say in recommending Dr. Silver's essay:

"In this compact, attractively printed volume, Dr. Silver, Rabbi of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, traces in luminous outline the manifestations of a dominant democratic motif as the essential characteristic of many of the great movements in Jewish thought through the ages.

"Phophecy, Pharisaism, the Synagogue, Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism and other significant expressions of the genius of Israel are re-stated here in terms of an invincible democratic urge which seems to determine the vital spiritual processes of the race.

"Very challenging indeed is Dr. Silver's analysis and defense of the ideal of the Mission of Israel and his redefinition of Liberal Judaism as a renewed Pharisaism which he declares to be grounded in the democratic religious philosophy of Judaism, free from any anti-nationalistic and anti-nomistic bias, in which the three major concepts of the Faith of Israel, the People of Israel and the Land of Israel are merged."

THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY. By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Bloch Publishing Co., New York. 1928, 43 pp., 75 cents.

That the mission ideal, as expounded by Reform rabbis, and Jewish nationalism are not conflicting may appear startlingly new to the Jewish world, but we have the word of no less a person than Rabbi Silver that there is no essential conflict between the two concepts. He assures us that prophets in Israel who were most ardent advocates of the mission ideas were also most fervent nationalists.

In spite of the Messianic days ushered in by the Jewish Agency, this reviewer still doubts whether all leaders of Reform Judaism agree with Rabbi Silver. One would like to hear how the dean of Reform rabbis feels about it, and does Rabbi Schulman, for instance, subscribe to this statement? One wishes the entire Reform

"THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE IN JEWISH HISTORY" by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. Publishers, Bloch Publishing Co., New York. Price 75 cents.

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Dr. Silver's essay will prove a valuable guide to many modern Jews who are in quest of a philosophy of Jewish life consistent with Jewish experience and capable of motivating and enriching their lives. *David ...*

movement were in agreement with Rabbi Silver, but alas, the time is not yet. In Germany there are Jews who even in this day and age buy space in daily papers to notify the Gentile world that they are not Zionists.

Rabbi Silver is a devoted Jewish nationalist and a leader in the Reform movement. He would like to see his people follow him in his national Jewish ideals. His little book is a brave attempt to win them over. Maybe he will succeed, but one rather doubts whether those he wishes to reach are much interested in the democratic impulse. Million dollar temples are not particularly conducive to democracy. Mortgages must be paid. Pews must be sold. Overhead is large. The budget is staggering and he who pays the fiddler has a habit of dictating the tune. Under such conditions democracy does not thrive.

Sometimes one thinks of men like Dr. Silver as birds wasting their beautiful songs in their gilded cages. One wonders how much more influence the poor *Magidim*, those itinerant preachers, wielded as they spoke to the hearts of men and women, whose thoughts were not busy wondering about the stock market while the word of God was being interpreted to them.

But all this does not keep Rabbi Silver's little book from being stimulating.

OSCAR LEONARD.