

time and again, their repetition serving both to summarize and to anticipate.

Most fascinating are the conclusions reached in the brief last chapter and their implications. Parasitically feeding on the older Covenant Code, Deuteronomy presents startling innovation as simple reiteration. By means of literary strategies such as pseudigraphy (the voice of Moses), exegesis, and resequencing, Deuteronomy revises the past to legitimate a new vision, a homogeneous public orthodoxy that simultaneously delegitimated competing forms of Israelite religion. Ironically, although Deuteronomy subverted and was likely intended to displace the Covenant Code, it was incorporated with the older text into the Pentateuch, thus making possible Levinson's exposure of the Deuteronomist's revisionist scheme. Focusing on hermeneutics, Levinson pays less attention to the relationship between Deuteronomy and the social and political movement which either spawned or supported it. But in the future no one who studies that relationship will be able to do so without considering this seminal work of scholarship.

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No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry 1935-1939, by Emanuel Melzer, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1997.

Reviewed by Allan Nadler, Drew University

Emanuel Melzer's important study deals primarily with the political responses by the leadership of Polish Jewry to its mounting problems in the years between the death in 1935 of Marshal Josef Pilsudski — who was legendarily protective of Jewish rights in the face of rising Polish anti-Semitism — and the Nazi onslaught. This publication — an updated English translation of Melzer's 1982 Hebrew work, *Ma'avak Medini be-Malkodet* — is particularly valuable at a time when there is a tendency to downplay the extent of modern Polish anti-Semitism and exaggerate the propitious nature of Polish-Jewish relations before and after the Holocaust. Eva Hoffman's *Shtetl* and Michael Steinlauf's *Bondage to the Dead* are but two recent examples of this sanguine but fundamentally misleading approach to modern Polish-Jewish history.

As Melzer demonstrates in his learned account of the last years of Polish Jewry, anti-Semitism increasingly became a major political force in Poland throughout the 1930s. Economic sanctions against the Jews, exclusion of Jews from professional guilds, quotas on Jewish productivity, and finally a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses,

were all the consequence of a deeply ingrained conviction that the Jews were primarily to blame for all of Poland's national and economic woes.

Remarkably, despite the obvious, growing threat to Polish sovereignty posed by Nazi Germany, Polish nationalists of the Endecja party openly admired the Nazis and even sought to emulate the Nuremberg Laws. As the decade wore on, Jew-hatred became bolder and more public, leading ultimately to a wave of pogroms, orchestrated by the Endecja youth, that reached its height in 1936-37. Not only did the government do virtually nothing to stop the anti-Jewish violence, the attacks upon Polish Jews were widely applauded in the Polish daily press. To take one example from the many cited by Melzer, a chilling editorial from October 10, 1936, in the leading Lodz daily newspaper, *Republika*, had this to say about the pogroms:

Blood has been spilled and will continue to be spilled in the future.... Today there is no way to confront the Jew, who wishes to take over Poland, other than to strike him with sword or bullet. These are correct and useful arguments (sic). There can be no verbal arguments or attempts to persuade; we are at war, and we must wage a war that is continuous and all-encompassing. He who seeks to dissuade us is a traitor.

Melzer devotes an entire chapter to the rapid increase in anti-Semitic agitation on university campuses across Poland. He documents the radical drop in Jewish university student enrollment due to quotas, as well as the growing influence of the Endecja's nationalist anti-Semitic ideology in Polish academic circles. In 1935, following a spate of violent attacks against them, Jewish students were officially consigned to "ghetto benches" in the back of the class at many Polish universities, ostensibly for their own protection. Campus violence against Jewish students continued to mount in subsequent years, often leading to a suspension of classes altogether. Despite the chaos created by almost daily attacks on Jewish students in Wilno, Lwow, Krakow, Lodz and Warsaw universities, Melzer reports that "no non-Jewish Sejm (parliamentary) deputy explicitly condemned what had happened."

Much of this book is devoted to a detailed chronology of the ways in which the various Jewish political parties responded to the mounting hatred and violence against their constituents. Melzer meticulously demonstrates that, despite the obvious threat to their very existence, the Jews' political representatives were unable to let go of ideological differences and historic internecine grievances in order to mount an effective united front in defense of their people.

The most important and original chapter in the book ("The Failure of Jewish Leadership in Poland") documents the inability of the Jewish parties to find a formula to create a proposed, united "Congress for Jewish Self-Help." Ultimately, the socialist Jewish workers' party, Bund, undermined all attempts at achieving unity, preferring to maintain ties with non-Jewish labor parties rather than align itself with the "reactionary, nationalist" Zionists or with the Orthodox Agudath Israel.

The question of mass Jewish emigration from Poland in the wake of the increasingly widespread hatred for them revealed the most pronounced differences among the various political factions of Polish Jewry. Emigration was the Polish government's preferred "solution" to its Jewish problem. Consequently, a bizarre alliance developed between anti-Semitic government officials and Zionist leaders who agreed, for very different reasons, that it would be best if the Jews left Poland altogether. The idea of Jewish emigration was, however, vigorously attacked by the assimilationists, as well as by the Bund and Agudath Israel parties. Even within Polish Zionist circles there were many different approaches to Jewish emigration, ranging from Jabotinsky's advocacy of mass "evacuation" to the more guarded stance of the socialist Poalei Zion.

In its desperate desire to rid Poland of its Jews, Polish government officials travelled to England in order to encourage the British to abandon their quota on Jews allowed into Mandatory Palestine. When that failed, they incredibly turned to Nazi Germany for help. Melzer reports that "Polish Ambassador Lipski in Berlin was encouraged by Hitler's promise that, after the disposition of the Sudeten issue, the Third Reich would demand overseas colonies, which could be used to solve the Jewish problem not only in Germany, but in Poland, Hungary, and Romania as well. Lipski told Hitler that 'if he can find such a solution, we shall build him a beautiful monument in Warsaw.'"

The most depressing aspect of this book's tragic story is the stubborn divisiveness of the Jews' political and communal leadership. As late as June 1939, with Polish anti-Semitism at a record level, and the Nazi threat looming, the Jews' leaders could not find a formula for a unified defense strategy that arguably would have saved countless lives. After the May-June 1939 municipal elections, the victorious Bund continued vigorously to attack the Zionists and the Orthodox. In Melzer's words: "Ironically, the victorious Bund appears to have been the principal force opposing internal unification."

The book's principal deficiency is its failure to explain the politics of Agudath Israel and the other religious forces in Polish Jewry. While Melzer devotes great attention to the careful analysis of the

politics of the Zionists and the Bund, other than a chapter on Jewish reactions to the government's attempt to ban *shekhita*, the Orthodox ideologies are almost completely ignored. This significant weakness notwithstanding, Melzer's book is required reading for anyone wanting to understand the true and full nature of modern Polish anti-Semitism, as well as the tragedy of Jewish politics on the eve of the Holocaust.

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Political Satire in the Bible, by Jeev Weisman, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute, 1996 (Hebrew), 287 pp.

Reviewed by Itzhak Galnoor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

I have read this original and thoughtful book with great pleasure and puzzlement. Weisman found not only satire in the Bible, but indeed — political satire! Moreover, he asks if it is possible that the Bible served as a source of political satire for literature all over the world without itself containing this genre.

The author, always careful to define his terms and to research his subject thoroughly, presents most of his findings under the title "elements" or even "glints" of satire and I, for one, can live with this definition. Perhaps, as the author suggests at the end, irony would better capture the essence of many of his examples, but this distinction is not very important for two reasons. First, categories of humor in general and the whole family of parody, allegory, mockery, etc., do not subject themselves easily to strict definitions. Second, never mind the title, let us focus on the question of whether Weisman is guiding us to new insights on the Bible.

Of all the definitions, I like the one by Arthur Koestler: "satire is a 'verbal caricature,'" distorting reality through the literary means of simplification and exaggeration to mock and (this is my addition) to criticize, and hopefully improve the very same reality that is thus portrayed. It must be, therefore, a very sharp weapon, well concealed by wit, but capable of cutting and hurting nevertheless.

As for the "political" ingredient, suffice it to say that the flawed reality attacked by satire must have a collective element — either internal (tribal, social, governmental) or external (enemies, war, exile) to deserve this title.

The best example of political satire in the Bible is, in my opinion, Jotham's parable (Judges 9:7-20) because, despite all the conflicting explanations, it is clearly a devastating attack on power, or more precisely on the emptiness of power, mockingly portrayed as trust in the shadow of the bramble.