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SAUL STAMPFER, *The Lithuanian Yeshiva* (in Hebrew). Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, Jerusalem, 1995. 346 pp.

Beginning with the pioneering studies of Shimon Dubnow, Gershom Scholem, Isaiah Tishby, Joseph Weiss and Rivka Shatz, and continuing to this day, a large and impressive scholarly literature has appeared in this century on the history and theology of the hasidic movement. But while scores of books, monographs and articles on various aspects of Hasidism continue to surface each year, precious little has been written about the 'other half' of the traditional society of Jewish eastern Europe—the world of the *mithnagdim* and its culture of talmudic learning.

It is for this reason that Shaul Stampfer's impressive and erudite history of the primary Lithuanian yeshivah of the nineteenth century is such a welcome and important contribution to Jewish scholarship.

Stampfer's study, roughly spanning the period 1800–1914, traces the institutional histories, profiles the educational philosophies and evaluates the intellectual legacies of three of the most important Lithuanian yeshivah of the previous century: Volozhin, Slobodka and Telz. Although, as Stampfer himself admits, there were other major Lithuanian yeshivah that merit scholarly attention—most notably Mir, which remains the oldest continually functioning yeshiva—this pioneering work, by providing rich portraits of these three institutions, firmly establishes the historical, social and religious contexts in which the institutions emerged and flourished. The book thus prepares fertile ground for further research into this large, hitherto neglected discipline.

Stampfer devotes almost two-thirds of his book to the first 'modern' Lithuanian yeshiva and the progenitor of the network of *mithnagdic* rabbinical academies, Yeshiva Etz Hayyim of Volozhin. Relying heavily, though critically, on the testimonies and memoirs of its Rabbinic leaders, as well as its many celebrated alumni and notorious dropouts, Stampfer traces the history of Volozhin from its inception during the years of the rapid spread of hasidism until its closing when the *Haskalah* and modernity had become major threats to traditional rabbinic Judaism.

Among the significant themes dealt with by Stampfer are the educational improvements and social innovations introduced by Volozhin and the other yeshivah of its type to traditional Jewish culture in eastern Europe. Aside from raising the prestige of talmudic study in Ashkenazic Jewish life at a time of rapid change and serious threats to the traditional society, the Lithuanian yeshivah—particularly in their organization and curriculum—were themselves influenced by modernity. Among the innovations of Volozhin and its heirs were the introduction of an organized faculty, academic calendar, study curricula, regular *shiurim* (lectures), letters of application and examinations—all previously unknown in the earlier yeshivah and *batei midrash* of eastern Europe. The financial and jurisdictional autonomy of the yeshiva from the control of the local community and the pecuniary independence and augmented prestige of its students (reflected in such changes as the abolition of 'essen teg'—the custom of yeshiva students eating each of their daily meals in different homes of Jewish families in the vicinity of the yeshiva), had the net effect of transforming and invigorating traditional Jewish learning, while simultaneously providing an intellectually plausible and socially respectable alternative to the *Haskalah*, Zionism and Jewish socialism which were attracting ever larger numbers of Jewish youth at the turn of the last century.

From Volozhin, whose major focus was training Talmudic scholars, Stampfer moves on to shorter treatments of the yeshivah of Slobodka and Telz, demonstrating the increasingly social and political roles assumed by these institutions as bulwarks against modernity. Through a lively and learned institutional history of these schools,

Stampfer both presents much new information about the leading Rabbinic scholars of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Lithuania, and outlines the major, often competing, schools of rabbinic thought that vied for prominence in the world of the yeshiva.

Probably the most important contribution of this book for Jewish intellectual history is Stampfer's superb description of the extensive disputes which arose around the role of the study of *musar* (pietistic literature) in the yeshivah. Stampfer's narration of the stormy relationship, within the yeshiva world, between the proponents of the *musar* movement and the unadulterated Talmudists adds intriguing new complexities to our understanding of *mithnagdic* Judaism that has hitherto been widely assumed to represent an Orthodox monolith. Among the most fascinating accounts in Stampfer's book is his depiction of the 1897 dissensions that took place in both Slobodka and Telz, as a result of the intrusions of the proponents of *musar* into the faculty and curricula of those yeshivah. The fierce resistance to *musar* on the part of the Talmudic purists in Slobodka led to the establishment of a dissenting yeshiva, while in Telz there was a series of remarkable student strikes which brought learning there to a virtual standstill. Unfortunately, Stampfer does not expand on the fact that both of these extraordinary events occurred in 1897—the landmark year that witnessed, among many other novel developments in Jewish life, the birth of both the Jewish Labor Bund and the Zionist movement. Still, his fascinating account of these radical revolts within the most traditional sector of Jewish society will no doubt entice scholars to delve further into the external influences that managed to reach and rouse the students of these yeshivah.

One of the book's very few significant shortcomings is its failure to explicate more deeply the competing systems of rabbinic learning and ethics to which it so often refers. Stampfer does concede, however, that a proper analysis and differentiation of the methods of rabbinic learning that were used in the various yeshivah lies beyond the scope of both his study and his own scholarly expertise.

One can only hope that the appearance of this fine, trailblazing study will inspire others to delve further into this uncharted territory.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

ALLAN NADLER

MATTHIAS MORGENSTERN, *Von Frankfurt nach Jerusalem: Isaac Breuer und die Geschichte des 'Austrittsstreits' in der deutsch-jüdischen Orthodoxie*. J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1995. xvi, 388 pp. DM 178.00.

The title of this book is somewhat strange, since the first two-thirds of the work have nothing to do with Isaac Breuer but are an in-depth study of various aspects of German Orthodoxy. The first section discusses Mizrahi and Agudat Israel, and the second examines Samson Raphael Hirsch and Frankfurt Orthodoxy. Morgenstern believes that in order to understand Breuer properly, both of these lengthy sections are necessary. While that may be true, since so much of the material in the first two sections has been dealt with at length by other scholars, it would seem that there was no need for it to be repeated in such detail here. Having said this, I have no doubt that Morgenstern's many references will be of great bibliographical assistance to scholars in the field.

Only in the third section of the book, devoted to Breuer, do we find a detailed study of this fascinating man's writings. Much research remains to be done on Breuer, and, as Morgenstern shows, those aspects of his writings which have received attention are often subject to dispute. It is the third part of this book that constitutes the author's