

Simon Schwarzfuchs — *Du Juif à l'israélite : Histoire d'une mutation, 1770-1870*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989. Pp. 351.

It has often been said that one can tell a lot about the nature of a society by observing how minority groups within that society fare. Thus, an exploration of the history of French Jewry over the last two centuries can be useful not only to those who are concerned about modern Jewish experience, but also to those who wish to understand French society in modern times. For anyone wishing to explore the history of the Jews in France from the era of the French Revolution to the late nineteenth century, Simon Schwarzfuchs' recent survey is an excellent resource.

Swarzfuchs, a professor of history at Israel's Bar Ilan University, touches upon a great many important aspects of Franco-Jewish history in the period between the fall of the Old Regime and the collapse of the Second Empire. His book covers the geography and the organization of Jewish life in France before the Revolution, the impact of the Enlightenment on Jewish affairs, the debate over Jewish emancipation, Napoleonic policy toward the Jews (including the convening of an Assembly of Notables and its successor body, the Sanhedrin), the development of consistorial leadership, the continuity of anti-Jewish sentiments in France, and the adaptation of Jewish religious practices to the new realities of modern society. Along the way, Schwarzfuchs reports upon some previously untapped primary sources (especially from the period 1789-91) and occasionally, he offers new insights into historical developments he recounts. Schwarzfuchs suggests that French Jewry in the Revolutionary era can only be understood in terms of its internal diversity, for example, and he comments on how the Napoleonic administration conceived of the Jews (usually in Christian terms, or perhaps as ancient Hebrews). More often, however, Schwarzfuchs's book reiterates and expands upon previously articulated interpretations of developments in Franco-Jewish history, including those presented in his own 1979 volume, *Napoleon, the Jews and the Sanhedrin*.

Readers of *Du Juif à l'israélite* will be reminded, for example, that there was a great deal of ambivalence among French Jews about the loss of their communal autonomy; that the French Jews (in contrast to those of Germany) were granted citizenship before rather than after they altered much of their distinctive behavior; that conversion to Christianity never became a significant factor in Franco-Jewish life; and that French Jews like to emphasize the similarity between Jewish values and those of the French Revolution. Some of the standard interpretations the author incorporates into his discussion have recently been challenged, including the notion that gradual substitution of the term *israélite* for the word *Juif* reflected a disavowal of the ethnic and national aspects of Judaism, but one would not expect a general survey to acknowledge every instance of scholarly debate.

Although Schwarzfuchs' book improves on some of the earlier surveys of French Jewry in the modern era by offering additional information on a number of subjects and occasional new insights, it also reflects some of the shortcomings of the existing literature on French Jewry. Like much of the existing work on Franco-Jewish history, for example, Schwarzfuchs' book places most of its emphasis on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras; two-thirds of the volume is devoted to this period 1770-1815, while only one-third deals with the period 1814-1870. To some extent, this is understandable, for the eras of the Revolution and the Empire were crucial ones for the integration of the Jews into French society, but the emphasis placed on these early periods, and the fact that the author's own primary research focuses on them, does lend a certain sense

of imbalance to Schwarzfusch's book. In its early chapters, there are a few places where the reader may feel overwhelmed by minute detail (as in the description on how Jewish representatives were selected in the communities of eastern France to prepare *cahiers de doléances* in 1789). In the later chapters of the book, however, one is sometimes left hungry for more information. There is little in Schwarzfuchs' book concerning the demographic history of French Jewry, for example, nor is there much discussion of the lives of ordinary French Jews.

Of course, Schwarzfuchs' book is essentially a survey text and, as such, it is heavily dependent on the previous work of other historians. The literature of Franco-Jewish history in general has slighted the post-Napoleonic era and the social history of nineteenth-century French Jewry, and there is little that the author of a comprehensive survey can do to fill all the gaps that this has left. It is to be hoped that in the future, scholars interested in the modern Jewish experience will pay more attention to those dimensions of Franco-Jewish history that have previously been ignored, but in the meantime, *Du Juif à l'israélite* will remain one of the very best accounts available of French Jewry in the era of the Revolution and in the century that followed.

Lee Shai Weissbach
University of Louisville

Gershon Shafir — *Land, labor and the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 1882-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Pp. 288.

Gershon Shafir has made a useful addition to the recent series of revisionary works on the history of Zionism and Israel. As with the works of such authors as Benny Morris and Joe Palumbo, he emphasizes material factors in Palestine as a basis for his analysis eschewing the Zionist ideals and intentions-type literature that dominated the explanations of events previously.

Shafir takes up in point of detail — six separate phases — the problem of how the Zionist settlers dealt with the Palestinians and the Yemeni Jews before World War One.

He characterizes the solution of the First Aliya as that of a bifurcated economy, following at this point the line of a political economy debate adopted some years ago by Nathan Weinstock and before that by Labor Zionists.

Limited opportunities to expand and limited finances from abroad turned the Yishuv in on itself during the Second Aliya, the decade before World War One, giving it its dual character-laborist and exclusivist. Its working class was historically ready to compromise with the Palestinians over land and nationality, but the radical rightwing nationalists created by the same environment were not. The Jewish working class was in essence pushed into nationalism as part of its economic struggle to survive; Shamir finds this to be a case of "failed conquest of labor". He develops this point by making a comparison of the Israeli and the Australian working classes, the latter succeeding in blocking the introduction of coolie labor to Australia and remaining immune politically to expansionist ideology. One can not help but wondering if this line of thought has some utility for explaining the popularity of the recent US invasions of Panama and