

The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History. By W. D. Rubinstein, M. A. Jolles and H. L. Rubinstein. Pp. xxi+1061. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. £125. ISBN 9781403939104. Hardback.

The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History (PDAJH) has been praised by twentieth-century historian and Holocaust scholar, Sir Martin Gilbert, as a 'major achievement',¹ and Rabbi and author of *The Jews of England* (1988), Jonathan Romain, has described this epic archaeology of Anglo-Jewish accomplishment as 'an extraordinarily important historical tool'.²

The book is presented as a 'companion' piece to Hillaby's book on medieval Anglo-Jewry, and the broad criteria for inclusion include: 'anyone who was or is Jewish or regarded themselves as Jewish';³ famous figures with one Jewish parent; important converts to Judaism; and significant philosemites.⁴ Moreover, alongside these efforts to collate a vast range of life stories, *PDAJH's* editors have also sought to carefully catalogue 'the main institutions, local communities, and events in the history of the Jewish people since their readmission in 1656'.⁵

Satisfyingly, this volume lives up to the scholarly praise, and achieves its bold aims admirably with a kaleidoscopic range of events, personalities, places and themes that are successfully summarized. For example, alongside descriptions of Jewish communities in Britain's metropolises such as London, there are also extended descriptions of dates, events and themes such as: the 'Jew Bill' controversy of 1753; the development of the Jewish press in Britain; the Battle of Cable Street; and Anglo-Jewish efforts towards the development of Israel. Equally diverse are the personalities described, from significant religious figures such as the nineteenth-century Rabbi Nathan Adler, to politicians such as 1837's first Jewish-born mayor, Simon Barrow, and current Labour leader, Ed Milliband. Philosophers such as the atheist socialist Karl Marx and the logician Ludwig Wittgenstein, as well as artists Lucian Freud and Sir Anthony Caro, are also included. Even contemporary popular culture is catered for, with profiles of David Baddiel and Ruby Wax, as well as modern rock and pop musicians such as Mick Jones (The Clash), Mark Ronson, and Amy Winehouse.⁶

However, with such a wide-ranging reference work, the question of omissions must also be tackled, although this issue is difficult to quantify unless one particular theme is examined in depth. As a Holocaust memorialization scholar, I found it interesting to see how *PDAJH* examined the Jewish Catastrophe, especially given the fact that the editor, William Rubinstein, has been both popularly praised and academically criticized for 1997's *The Myth of Rescue*, his controversial account of British responses to Nazi anti-Semitism and genocide during World War II.⁷ In documenting the impact of the Holocaust on Anglo-Jewry, *PDAJH* is excellent in its inclusion of sections on co-founders of the wartime National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, Eleanor Rathbone and Sir Victor Gollancz, as well as the opponent of Nazism, the Reverend James Parkes, and the rescuer of Jews in the Czech Republic, Sir Nicholas Winton. *PDAJH* also includes entries on high-profile Holocaust survivors who settled in Britain, such as weight-lifting champion Ben Helfgott, the Reform Rabbi Hugo Gryn, the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, and Natalia Karp and her daughter, Anne Karpf, author of *The War After* (1996).

Furthermore, Holocaust scholarship is tackled with sections on the divisive historiographical debates on Anglo-Jewry and the Holocaust, entries on the founding of key research institutions such as the Wiener Library (1934), and biographies of important scholars such as the aforementioned Gilbert as well as Hans Günter Adler, David Cesarani, Gerald Fleming, Tony Kushner, Antony Polonsky, Bernard Wasserstein, and Jonathan Webber. Finally, issues of representation and the Holocaust are touched upon, from George Steiner's elegiac silence to R. B. Kitaj's recurring and sinister smoking chimney-stacks. However, there are

also problematic omissions. The rescuer of Jews in Berlin's British embassy, Frank Foley, is not profiled; equally, although they are mentioned, there is no extended history of the Kindertransport, or an entry on Auschwitz survivor Kitty Hart-Moxon, or a biography of Gerald Reitlinger, an early London-born Jewish historian of the 'Final Solution'. Finally, although research centres such as Southampton's Parkes Library and Oxford's Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies are registered under their respective cities, other significant educational institutions, such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, and the Royal Holloway Holocaust Research Centre, are not given specific entries.

However, despite these issues of inclusivity, which would have troubled the publication of any academic work of such breadth and ambition, *PDAJH* is not only a useful research tool for scholars and students, but also testifies to Anglo-Jewish resilience, diversity and creativity across modern politics, arts, and sciences.

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¹ Gilbert quoted on *PDAJH*.

² J. Romain, 'Good Works Make the World Go Round', *Guardian* (20 Nov 2010).

³ W. Rubinstein, 'Introduction', vi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁶ Since the writing of this review, Lucian Freud and Amy Winehouse have sadly passed away.

⁷ W. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (1999), 1.