

## English Summaries - Vol. 2/1993

**Morten Thing**

**ALEF, Beth - RAMBAM**

The question as to whether there is room for two Jewish cultural periodicals in Denmark, ALEF and RAMBAM, is raised and the author focuses on Danish Jewish identity of to-day. Traditionally (i.e. religiously) Jewish identity is a metaphysical concept, viz. The Jews as God's chosen people. This concept is also the point of departure for Zionism, which, however, bases its historic right to Erets Israel on metahistory. The Jewish socialist party Bund broke with this spiritual foundation, claiming cultural autonomy for the Jews in Russia. Thus denouncing the established concept - The Jewish people. The paper argues that there are many "Jewish people", due to the fact that Jewish identity, like other cultural identities, is symbiotically bound to "real history". It is here modern, non-sectarian, Jewish identity manifests itself. Danish Jewish identity is to be found in an open-minded non-biased discussion, based on conflicting viewpoints. And a Jewish journal should be the mouthpiece for this debate.

**Julius Tschertok**

**Psychoanalysis and the Jews of Vienna - A Symbiosis**

The article places the background for Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis in a general Jewish cultural framework. As a cultural mobilization, a Jewish variant of the "Jiddischkeit", which characterized many intellectual Jews of Central Europe who a generation or two ago had ancestors in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. Focus is on the Jewish presence in the Vienna milieu, which not only promoted but also influenced the psychoanalysis, which developed at the turn of the century. Furthermore on the impact of anti-Semitism on Freud's career and orientation towards secular Jewish circles and institutions. Sigmund Freud's ambivalence as to the dominating position in psychoanalysis of the Jews, a position which first and foremost was initiated by Freud himself and subsequently approved by scientists, is discussed.

**Daniel Nathan**

**The Icelandic Jewish Saga**

It is hard to fathom that a Jewish businessman would settle in a cold and deserted country like Iceland. It was nevertheless the case. 14-year old Daniel Nathan, pupil at the Jewish School in Copenhagen, Carolineskolen, tells the story of his great-grandfather, Frits Heyman Nathan, born in Stockholm 1883 who settled as a young man in Iceland and established an export-import business. During the first two decades of the 20th century the firm expanded steadily and took the name of Nathan & Olsen, after the latter had joined the company. The business continued to flourish but toward 1930 Frits Nathan decided to move to Copenhagen for personal reasons, one of which being the fact there was no Jewish school in Iceland. In Copenhagen Frits Nathan bought the factory Rønning & Co., that produced cream puffs (flødeboller), a very popular kind of sweets enjoyed by Danish children and grown ups alike. But the 2nd World War, the Nazi occupation and the import restrictions was too much of a strain for Frits Nathan who suffered from a weak heart. He died aged 59. The thermometer, Daniel writes, showed symbolically minus 10 degrees the day of the burial. Thanks to Frits Nathan's enormous effort the cream puff enterprise, however, developed and expanded with great success after the war and to the present day.

**Jørgen Smith**

**Concerning "As If They Did Not Exist"**

Bent Blüdnikow's book "As If They Did Not Exist", (Reviewed in RAMBAM 31 [1/1991-1992]) is essentially about the admirable effort of Hugo Rothenberg to save German Jews from the Nazi occupation and horrors. But it also tells about his cooperation during the 1st World War with the prominent manufacturer Max Ballin, who contributed to the fateful economic downfall of Landmandsbanken in the thirties. In this chapter of the book, national economist L.V. Birck (1871-1933) is accused of an alleged anti-Semitic attitude towards Max Ballin. Whereas the present writer is of the opinion that Birck, in spite of his rather rude behaviour, argued objectively. (See also Bent Blüdnikow's response to Jørgen Smith in this issue of RAMBAM, where he maintains that L.V. Birck's criticism of Max Ballin's economic dispositions were unmistakably anti-Semitic in substance).

**Lotte Melchior**

### **Sephardic Music and Song**

When the Jews 500 years ago were expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella they carried the Spanish music and song with them. The songs, ever since referred to as "Sephardic Songs", were quite naturally deeply influenced by Arabic music from the coexistence ("con vivencia") which lasted approximately 800 years. Sephardic singing is, stylistically, divided into Moroccan and Turkish song. The latter was "orientalised" rather quickly, whereas the first mentioned did not change significantly due to the proximity to Spain. Common to both styles is the fact that they have been transmitted orally from generation to generation during 500 years. Not until this century, did musicologists begin to submit the songs to musical notation. Today the Sephardic song is accompanied by either a single musical instrument or by a small band or an orchestra. Sephardic music is very popular in present day Spain, where the population is beginning to realize the cultural loss caused by the expulsion of the Jews in 1492.

**Clara Selborn**

### **The Alleged Jewish Roots of Columbus**

With reference to Simon Wiesenthal's "Sails of Hope", the author pleads for a reconsideration of the question as to the Jewish descent of Christopher Columbus. An article in "Commentary", November, 1992, by J.D. Sarna, who disclaims Wiesenthal's theory altogether quoting the statement: "Who cares?" (whether Columbus is Jewish or not) is discussed. The author deplores the fact that Simon Wiesenthal was denied access to the archival material of The Vatican pertaining to Columbus, and concludes that 500 years is a long time to wait for access to the Vatican archives.

**Vibeke Boolsen**

### **One, Two - Many**

The demographic pattern of the Jewish settlers of the small Danish provincial town Faaborg is found to be rather untypical in comparison to other Jewish settlements in Denmark. The first generation arrived during the last decade of the 17th century, mostly tradesmen from Northern Germany (then part of the Danish kingdom). They stayed and bred a second generation of traders and skilled craftsmen, who bred a third generation - which disappeared. Some went to Copenhagen. But of the majority (about fifty people) no trace has been found in available Danish sources. The author posits the hypothesis they returned to "the land of their ancestors", viz. Germany, due to the decline in their main source of livelihood, mainly trade. The hypothesis, however, has not been tested so far, and still awaits further studies.

**Tatiana Berenstein**

### **The abortive Attempt to Deport the Danish Jews during the German Occupation of Denmark**

The story of the rescue of the Danish Jews during the 2nd World War is widely known. It was made possible by the German, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, who has given his own written account of the achievement, portraying himself as the central heroic figure. This account, however, which by and large has been taken at face value, does not seem to

withstand a critical historical analysis. A study of contemporary documents reveals details about the activities of Duckwitz and other central characters in the period prior to the action against the Danish Jews in October 1943 - details which do not agree with accounts given by Duckwitz. Specifically Duckwitz seems to have tampered with certain important dates to lend credibility to the story that he saved the Jews on his own initiative, even risking his life. The evidence seems to indicate that the German authorities wanted the operation to be abortive because they feared the reaction of the Danish people which, due to a serious shortage of police forces, could easily get out of hand.

## **Richard Raskin**

### **Jewish Jokes**

In a recent book, Alan M. Dershowitz cites an "old" refugee joke as expressive of the rootlessness and eternal wandering of the Jewish people. In the present article, an alternate interpretation of the joke is proposed, as a historically specific indictment of those countries which failed to protect their Jewish population from the Nazis. In its openness to two different interpretive options, this joke exhibits a property found in the very best classic Jewish jokes.

## **Rudolf Klein**

### **The Hungarian Secession**

The article deals with a peculiar phenomenon of modern history of architecture, the so-called Hungarian Secession, a genuine and specific style cultivated mostly by Jewish architects in the Austro-Hungarian Empire round the turn of the century. The article analyses the Jewishness of Hungarian Secession, so far only analysed as an issue of the Hungarian cultural heritage. The writer focuses on five buildings erected in a middle-sized town in the South Eastern part of Austria-Hungary, designed by two Jewish architects about 1900, and their spiritual and social background. Apart from the description and analysis of specific buildings, a general view of the Zeitgeist, about the position of the Jewish community and Jewish investors as well as Jewish architects is given. And towards the end of the article the author analyses the Jewish particularities of the investigated stylistic expression.

## **Joshua Blau**

### **The Responsa by Maimonides**

**(A Lecture given at the 100 Anniversary of The Jewish Language Academy, Va'ad ha-lashon ha-ivrit, at The Royal Library, Copenhagen, October, 30, 1989)**

The paper deals with two legal questions in medieval Judeo-Arabic, addressed to Rambam (nos. 45 and 34), which have the unique advantage of being asked by both sides, the husband and the wife. The wife is the first woman teacher known to us, so that the events described are of particular interest. The sad story of her marriage to her good-for-nothing husband, not in the least, pivots upon whether or not her husband may restrain her from pursuing her profession. Maimonides' wisdom is reflected even in these ephemeral responses, since in the second, when realizing the predicament of the unhappy wife, he cautiously stated that, if indeed her claims are true, she may be advised to resort to a legal evasion and get rid of her husband.

## **Herman Prins Salomon**

### **Uriel da Costa's "Exame das Tradições Phariseas"**

Uriel da Costa's "Exame das Tradições Phariseas" was discovered in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. Herman Prins Salomon's article was published in *Studia Rosenthaliana*, Volume XXIV, Number 2, Fall 1990.

We thank the editors and the author for the permission to reprint the article in Danish.

