

**BOOK REVIEW:**

*Portrait of a  
Community Professional*

BY LAWRENCE J. EPSTEIN

The autobiography has been a form frequently favored by Jewish political and communal leaders. These volumes are among the most fascinating in Jewish literature, for they reveal Jewish life at a certain time and place and remind readers how closely an individual Jew's personal identity can be entwined with the fate of the entire Jewish people.

Of course not all who compose their memoirs are good writers, but the writing is surprisingly often good. Once in a while a truly gifted writer treats us to his remembrances. Sidney Z. Vincent is such a writer.

On the surface, Personal and Professional, would seem to be a parochial book, limited in

interest to those in Cleveland where Mr. Vincent -- executive director emeritus of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland -- grew up and worked, or those involved in Jewish community service. From the very first page, however, Sidney Vincent's engaging writing style sweeps the reader up in a fascinating story.

The first part of the book, "Mostly Personal," covers the years 1920 - 1951. The writer concentrates on memories of school, friendships, discovery of what it means to be Jewish, and occupational and marital decisions. Such a cataloging of material, however, fails to do justice to the warm, self-effacing prose. The nostalgic stories will resonate in the memory of every reader who will recall similar childhood incidents. Vincent seems to remember the name of every person he has ever met, and they all come up for judgments most fairly and humorously rendered.

Reading about the cohesiveness and closeness of the community, though, can also serve as a reminder, indeed a warning, of how far we have gone away from such communities.

The second part of the book, "Mostly Professional," covers the years 1951 - 81. In this section the author discusses his work, first performing local tasks in Cleveland and increas-

ingly performing national and international tasks, culminating in helping to organize the Conference on Human Needs in Israel.

In Cleveland, Vincent was at the center of communal reaction to the post - War shifts in

Jewish life -- an exodus to the suburbs and the emerging civil rights movement, with its impact on fair housing, employment, and education. While describing how Cleveland reacted to these and other changes -- most notably the birth of Israel -- Vincent also provides a microcosm of the changes in all American Jewish life during this era. Indeed, Cleveland is a particularly interesting city to analyze, for it was big enough to be representative but not too big to be beyond analysis.

Vincent's recounting of his broader experiences provides a useful background to Jewish communal history. Especially interesting here is a forthright account of the study from which came the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

The book ends with a selection of speeches. Most of these speeches would be interesting reading for everyone in the community; they all should be required reading for our community professionals. The emphasis on the lack of Jewish cultural and educational institutions is particularly thought-provoking.

This book is the first publishing venture of The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland. The Federation deserves commendation for such an undertaking.

The book, which costs \$14.95 (plus \$1.00 for postage and handling and a \$.98 sales tax for Ohio residents), may be ordered from the Jewish Community Federation Publications Department, 1750 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, 44115.

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**GALLUP POLL  
ON LEBANON**

NEW YORK -- American attitudes toward Israel have changed very little in the past year despite the misgivings Americans have expressed on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

This is a major conclusion of an analysis by the American Jewish Committee of a poll conducted for Newsweek Magazine by the Gallup Organization and reported in the current issue of Newsweek. The analysis was done by Ger-

aldine Rosenfield of AJC's Information and Research Department.

The poll, which was based on telephone interviews with 752 adults on August 4 and 5, contained three questions whose answers were compared with answers to the same questions in a survey conducted a year ago.

When asked if they had become more sympathetic or less

sympathetic to Israel in the past year, 32 per cent of the respondents in the current poll said they were more sympathetic, an increase of 3 percent over the 1981 poll. Those who said they were less sympathetic to Israel totaled 41 per cent in the current poll, an increase of 4 per cent over 1981.

Commenting on these figures, Ms. Rosenfield noted that "the small percentages who moved from one attitude to another would seem to cancel each other out, indicating that actually very little change in people's sympathies had occurred, notwithstanding the Lebanese action."

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