

PREFACE

As this issue of *Immanuel* is going to press, the Middle East is once again being laid waste by war — an explosion which reflects, in a violent way, those tensions which, for centuries, have torn this region among different religious, cultural and national communities.

The family of one of those involved in the preparation of our bulletin has itself been sadly confronted with this present tragedy. Yair Landau, aged 23, the son of *Immanuel's* printing manager, fell in combat in Lebanon. He had been a student at Yeshivat Ha-Kotel, where his fellow-students mourn the loss of this friend, so full of enthusiasm and courage in his religious search. The editors of *Immanuel* extend their condolences to the family, together with the many other bereaved families.

Some will probably feel that to continue ones scholarly work in such a situation is to manifest an exaggeratedly irenic detachment from the suffering and cruelty of reality. And yet, is not the best way of building peace to continue one's humble, daily labor, wherever possible, especially when this consists, as is the case with *Immanuel*, in discovering and respecting the identity, tradition, vocation and destiny of oneself and of others?

In this respect, the surest sign of progress made over the years in the Jewish-Christian encounter is the fact that each side is now capable of both respecting and recognizing the identity of the other and rendering account of its own.

The present issue of *Immanuel* bears particularly interesting witness to this progress. Across the diversity of the various sections, one may see the papers gathered here as presenting a certain balance of mutual discovery and at the same time bringing a wealth of real information about progress made.

One might group under one rubric the various articles describing the manner in which, under different circumstances and in different periods, the Jews felt themselves defined, confronting themselves and others. B. Uffenheimer shows the uniqueness of Biblical myth compared with other religious myths; Y. Amir explains how the term *Ioudaismos* expressed the self-identification of Hellenistic Jewry; there is a similar point in the presentation by D. Flusser and S. Safrai of the Essene singularity within the Jewish plurality, and in the article by A. Oppenheimer on the significance of the Bar-Kokhba revolt against the Roman enemy. One may also understand R. Schatz' discussion of Maharal's theory of Jewish existence and Z. Falk's reflections upon Talmudic laws concerning Gentiles in this same perspective. Two articles here deal with Jewish self-identification in a European context: W. Harvey analyzes H. Wolfson's work on the meeting between Jewish thought and Western philosophy, while M. Idel reviews Bonfil's book on Italian

Jewry during the Renaissance. Closer to our time, we find various great Jewish personalities who have proven the uniqueness of some dimension of traditional Jewish identity. Thus, S. Moses' article examines the relevance of Rosenzweig's thought for the Jewish consciousness of our time, while E. Schweid's study shows how the scholarly work of Gershom Scholem was both an expression of an individual search for identity and a contribution to the rediscovery of a certain view of the Jewish world.

It is possible to make a similar balance on the Christian side. B. Mevorah shows how certain Christian thinkers of the classical period were open to "Hebraism," while D. Burrell's review of the book which emerged from the Tantur Symposium accounts for the manner in which Christians of the Holy Land today deal with the presence in this region of their different communities.

Progress in authentic self-consciousness and in mutual recognition of the testimony of the different works is without doubt the most important element of the openness to the other, to his vocation and to his destiny, which is the first condition of peace.

Marcel J. Dubois, O.P.