

## BOOK REVIEW

### The Jewish Question

*A Marxist Interpretation*

BY ABRAM LEON

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**Reviewed by:** F. Krome, University of Cincinnati – Clermont College

Abram Leon was a Belgian Jew active in both a socialist Zionist youth group and an anti-Stalinist faction within the Fourth International. Murdered by the Nazis in 1944, he left behind this manuscript on the history of anti-Semitism. In classic Marxist fashion, Leon traced the origins of anti-Semitism to the premodern and proto-capitalist worlds in which Jews were involved in usury and then analyzed its continuity in the modern capitalist world dominated by bourgeois notions of wealth. Leon's work is firmly rooted in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the scientific study of Jewish history, a movement first developed among German scholars in the 19th century that dominated the study of Jewish history for several generations. Today, however, Leon's history is no longer plausible. This is not to say that the manuscript has no value.

Although the historiography of anti-Semitism is robust, the history of the fight against anti-Semitism is still developing. As such, Leon's work is a valuable document to students in that subfield. The editor's introduction and later biographical profile of Leon are of only limited use as they are situated in the polemical tradition of Marxist propaganda.

Summing Up: Recommended. With reservations. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.