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**PAPERBOUNDS**
**A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.**

By A. Malamat, H. Tadmor, M. Stern, S. Safrai, H. H. Ben-Sasson, S. Ettinger. Harvard, 1985. 1,170 pp. \$18.95

In the last quarter of the second millennium B.C., "with the collapse of the Hittite Empire to the north and the decline of Egyptian power to the south," conditions were ripe for the peoples of Syria and Palestine to rise up and establish themselves as nations. The Arameans did so in the north; in Palestine, the Israelites emerged victorious, taking over all lands "from Dan to Beersheba." The story of how the Israelites came to this land, founded a nation only to lose and regain it repeatedly, is just part of the tale told by six Hebrew University scholars in this massive, one-volume chronicle. They also hold forth on Jewish religion, laws, social ideals, the diasporas that forced Jews abroad (and how they fared in various countries at different times), and the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Histories are never definitive, but this is the history that future scholars of the subject will have to match.

**WAR, PRESIDENTS, AND PUBLIC OPINION.** By John E. Mueller. Univ. Press of America, 1985. 300 pp. \$12.75

When Mueller's careful study first appeared in 1973, as America was withdrawing from Indochina, it drew little attention. For one thing, the University of Rochester political scientist challenged a number of widespread notions—that, for instance, TV coverage of combat undermined domestic support for the Vietnam War. His book is now a minor classic. Examining public opinion poll data for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, he comes up with some surprises: the con-

flicts in Korea and Vietnam produced roughly the same decline in domestic support over time; both wars were more popular with the young and the educated than with the old or unschooled; Korea hurt Harry Truman's popularity more than Vietnam hurt Lyndon Johnson's (LBJ was also blamed for racial turmoil and other ills). Mueller makes clear that public opinion is volatile. Two years after allied victory in World War II, 24 percent of the respondents in one Gallup poll thought it had been a mistake for America to enter the war.

**LECTURES IN AMERICA.** By Gertrude Stein. Beacon, 1985. 246 pp. \$10.95

Scholars will forever argue about whether she was a genius or a charlatan, but Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) unquestionably helped to chart the course of 20th-century literature, influencing writers as dissimilar as Ernest Hemingway and the contemporary poet John Ashbery. Her legacy is complex. Just as the late 19th- and early 20th-century French painters (whose works Stein studied and collected) drew attention to the formal elements of their pictures—light, color, texture—so Stein made the elements of the literary medium—paragraphs, sentences, periods—a focus of her books. Forging an aesthetic of repetition ("A rose is a rose is a rose . . ."), she wrote an incantatory, borderline-nonsensical prose that repeatedly circled its subject, teasing it the way a cat teases a ball of yarn. To the extent that Stein ever explained herself, her opinions about literature, painting, her own techniques, and her own writing, she did so in these six lectures, delivered to American audiences in 1934 on one of her rare visits to her native land.