



Avraham Harman

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Foreword to Dov Noy and Issachar Ben-Ami (eds), *Studies in the Cultural Life of the Jews in England*, presented to Avraham Harman on his sixtieth birthday (Jerusalem, 1975: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University), 7



Allyn Baum/*New York Times*/Redux/eyevine

IB and Avraham Harman after receiving honorary degrees at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 20 December 1959

I FIRST MET Avraham Harman at Oxford, when he was an undergraduate at Wadham College, which has, a day or two ago, voted to offer to him an Honorary Fellowship, the highest distinction that a College has in its gift. He was then, as he is now, a man of unusual goodness: kind, modest, generous, just, and with what I can describe only as great moral charm, which causes others to be more sincere, benevolent, honest than they may at other times be inclined to be. I stress these aspects of his character because his other qualities are better known: everyone who has followed his career is aware that he has been one of the most admirable and effective public servants of his nation and his country, particularly as ambassador in Washington, where his quiet efficiency and integrity were held in great personal regard by officials and politicians, some of whom were critical of the policies of Israel. What is exceptional is the fact that his intellectual capacity and diplomatic skills went with transparent sincerity and warmth of heart – attributes not often found together. It is this rare combination that created confidence and good feeling in the institutions that he headed – consulates,

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embassies, the university in which, as I can testify from personal knowledge, he is trusted, respected and indeed loved by students and teachers alike, as an upright, disinterested, profoundly sensible and, above all, understanding human being. Institutions cannot help reflecting the tone of those who preside over them, and the Hebrew University is fortunate in having at its head a man of rock-like principle and common sense, and one so free from vanity, self-seeking, pettiness or bias.

He is a patriot without being a nationalist, and a man of honour without being self-righteous or intolerant of people less dedicated or less disinterested than himself. I am glad of this opportunity of testifying to the admiration and affection which I have felt for Abe Harman for more than forty years, and, at the same time, of saluting the university to which he has given, and is giving, so much of what he has and is.

Oxford, 6 November 1974

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