

Reviews of Books

BINGHAM, JUNE. *Courage to Change*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1961. 414 pp. \$7.50

Courage to Change is exactly what its author, June Rossbach (Mrs. Jonathan) Bingham, calls it: "An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr." Mrs. Bingham alternates the chapters in contrapuntal fashion so that they deal *seriatim* with biographical facts and theological exposition. The biographical parts are perhaps superior to the theological explanations, but both will help persons who are confused by Niebuhr's legion interests in his hyperactive seven decades and are bewildered by his multifaceted thought in a half dozen disciplines.

The title, *Courage to Change*, was suggested by the prayer written one Sunday morning in 1934 just before Niebuhr entered the pulpit of the little church near his summer home in Heath, Massachusetts:

O God, give us

Serenity to accept what cannot be changed,

Courage to change what should be changed,

And wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

A "Courage to Change" is characteristic of Niebuhr's life and thought, for he does not hesitate to shift his position when facts impel him to do so. That is surely one of the reasons why Niebuhr's thought cannot fail to interest Roman Catholics and Jews, as well as Protestants.

To Protestants, Niebuhr is, along with Karl Barth and Paul Tillich, the most powerful figure in the Reformation tradition since John Calvin and Martin Luther. Primarily he focuses attention on the centrality of Christ, reaffirms the validity of biblical theology, rediscovers the reality of sin, emphasizes anew the necessity for grace and forgiveness, and undergirds his entire system with a classical emphasis on the omnipotence of God. At the same time, he corrects the illusions of the Social Gospel that man is perfectible and that the Kingdom of God may be achieved here on earth. He is critical of the efficacy of organized religion in the social crisis, yet gives impetus to the church and to churchmen by illuminating afresh the prophetic insights of both the Old and the New Testaments.

Roman Catholics, whether friendly or hostile, recognize in him the most trenchant critic of Thomism in our day. He exposes the pretensions of the Catholic concept of The Church which lifts "a historic institution into a transhistoric reality, making the claim of speaking for God, or being a privy to the divine will, and of dispensing divine grace." He has

great regard for Catholic thinkers like Jacques Maritain, John Courtney Murray, and Gustave Weigel. They, in turn, accord him profound respect and hold him and his critical thought in high esteem, knowing that the wounds of a friend are faithful.

Observant, professing Jews have found Niebuhr to be unique among Christians, for he has made it clear on several occasions — notably in *Pious and Secular America* (1957) — that Christianity errs in trying to convert Jews because it is virtually impossible to do so and fails to do justice to distinctive ethnic and religious factors in Jewry and Judaism. He echoes his friend Martin Buber by saying: “To the Christian, the Jew is the stubborn fellow who is still waiting for the Messiah; to the Jew, the Christian is the heedless fellow who in an unredeemed world declared that redemption has somehow or other taken place.”

Leading rabbis and laymen in Judaism agree with Abraham Joshua Heschel: “Niebuhr’s spirituality combines heaven and earth, as it were. His way is an example of one who does justly, loves mercy and walks humbly with his God, an example of the unity of worship and living. He reminds us that evil will be conquered by the One, while he stirs us to help conquer evils one by one.”

Jewish leaders are equally aware — some with gratitude and some with regret! — that Niebuhr profoundly influenced Will Herberg and encouraged Herberg to embrace Judaism rather than Christianity after recanting Marxism.

There is, however, another aspect of Niebuhr’s relation to the Jewish community which has not been fully recognized. I refer to his deep interest in Zionism. He gave leadership to the American Christian Palestine Committee, and has shown a profound understanding of the national aspirations of the Jewish people while at the same time remaining acutely aware of the universal, nonnationalistic implications of Judaism as a faith.

To secular-minded Jews, Niebuhr is an apostle of religion. Witness the tremendous influence which he has on Felix Frankfurter, James Loeb, and James Wechsler, and on a host of men and women in an organization like the Americans for Democratic Action (which he helped found in 1946). A thoughtful but nonpracticing Jew, now the United States ambassador in a South American country, says in all seriousness, “Reinie is my rabbi.”

Saratoga Springs, New York

CARL HERMANN VOSS

Dr. Voss, a former Chairman of the Executive Council of the American Christian Palestine Committee, recently edited *The Universal God*, an interfaith anthology.

KRANZLER, GEORGE. *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition*. New York: Philipp Feldheim, Inc. 1961. 310 pp. \$6.95

George Kranzler has brought to his study of the Jewish community of Williamsburg an unusual combination of academic background and personal experience. A professional sociologist and educator, he is a leading figure in the Jewish Day School movement. Dr. Kranzler tells us that the data on which his study is based were gathered "in fifteen years of intensive and systematic participative observation" of the community itself. The result is an incisive and provocative analysis that poses a challenge to all concerned with the future of American Judaism.

The phenomenon warranting this study is the flourishing Hasidic life of a segment of Brooklyn that seems to defy the usual social and economic trends in urban — and Jewish — life. Dr. Kranzler's hypothesis is that "the basic changes that took place in the major phases of the community life of Jewish Williamsburg were primarily due to changes in the religio-cultural values of its population." According to studies which assumed that the fate of the neighborhood would be determined by the broad economic and ecological trends evident in New York urban and suburban life, Williamsburg was, in the mid-1930's, doomed to deteriorate into a blighted and, eventually, a slum area. In the late 1940's, however, a colony of more than 1,500 Hungarian Hasidim moved into the neighborhood and established a religio-cultural life that converted the "natives" from normative Orthodoxy to dedicated Hasidism, reversed the socio-economic decline of the community, and created a flourishing center of Jewish religious life.

Dr. Kranzler demonstrates his thesis by comparing three phases of Williamsburg's development. Prior to 1938 (Phase I), the Polish and Galician Jews who had remained in Williamsburg after the Depression were officially Orthodox. The rabbi, however, had a very low social status, and the successful businessmen directed community life. Phase II (1939-1948) saw the "war prosperity," a diamond trade introduced by Belgian refugees, and the influx of Hasidim led by their world-famous *rebbe*s. Despite the recession at the beginning of Phase III (1948-1954), the new valuational pattern resulted in an improvement of real estate values and economic life as well as in changes in the social status scale, the family, the synagogue, and educational institutions. The *rebbe*s became the communal leaders. The older kosher butcher stores were forced out of business, as the Hasidim insisted on *glatt kosher* (strictly kosher), and even

the older residents were willing to "spend more and have a clear conscience." The manufacture of *tallesim* (prayer shawls) and *tefillin* (phylacteries) and Hebrew book publishing became significant. The amounts of money donated for religious and educational institutions represented real sacrifice motivated by religious commitment. The community provided not only its own business and professional men, but also an adequate number of skilled and semiskilled workers. Above all, Dr. Kranzler portrays an intense communal spirit and a feeling of pride in a remarkable achievement: preserving what the residents considered the authentic Jewish way of life in the heart of Brooklyn.

The description and analysis of social change are fascinating, even though Dr. Kranzler's basic thesis — that the change in values *primarily* caused the change in the major phases of community life — may still be open to question. Certainly, the values of the Hasidim had great impact. This impact, however, was *dependent* on a variety of material conditions. A social theorist might ask: What conditions gave rise to the values of the emigrants, and what social forces brought them to Brooklyn? What kind of socio-economic conditions "allowed" Hasidism to take root and flourish in Williamsburg? It would not have happened in Scarsdale! Perhaps it is not so startling that a well-organized and dedicated minority whose way of life raised their spirit above the drabness of urban monotony could attract members of a larger community who already, because of their life conditions, accepted in theory the values that were being lived by the newcomers. It could even be that *the very social decline* which was predicted for the neighborhood could have contributed to the atmosphere that helped the Hasidic way of life to flourish. One might wonder about the prerequisites for such a total Jewish life: What portion of the neighborhood should be Jewish? How much social, economic, and intellectual contact with non-Jews could be tolerated? Dr. Kranzler does, of course, recognize other causative factors. Still, it would seem that the Williamsburg phenomenon raises more questions in the field of social theory than it answers.

Less academic is the normative question of the value of such a "total Jewish life" (not necessarily Hasidic) as a pattern for American Jews. Dr. Kranzler hints at his own view when he writes of the older residents "who did not appreciate" the new Jewish atmosphere, and he sees in the "intense educational efforts" of the *yeshivot* and all-day schools "the hope of the Orthodox Jewish community to perpetuate such total environments."

One gathers that the in-group feeling of the community must be warm and security-producing. Of particular interest would have been an analysis of attitudes towards, and images of, the various out-groups: Reform

and Conservative Jews; Christians; Negroes, etc. It is conceivable that false stereotypes and hostility might be almost "needed" to preserve such a close-knit community. One also wonders to what degree the Williamsburg residents are concerned with the great humanitarian issues that face the larger society. Finally, this reader would have welcomed a deeper discussion of the *reasons given* for the preservation of Hasidic life. To what extent is this life dependent on the conviction that the *Halachah* is the word of God? Many Jews today envy the Hasidim their commitment, but place a higher value on the critical thinking that may destroy the basis of that commitment.

Such thoughts lead us to the crucial question of the relation between higher learning and group loyalty. Is it possible that a way of life which so exalts religious study is dependent for its survival on a high degree of isolation from the major intellectual currents of our time? Specifically, what portion of the children of Williamsburg receive a college education which includes exposure to science or the liberal arts? Of these, what portion return to Williamsburg's way of life? Dr. Kranzler's discussion of such questions seems most impressionistic. He admits that "an important result of the influence of the new (Chassidic) *yeshivot* is the negative attitude towards college and secular education in general." He adds that a large proportion of the students of the older Orthodox Mesifita Torah Vodaath do attend evening college and that it is "not unusual" for them to "become instructors in the various New York colleges and universities." Unfortunately, this kind of reporting is no substitute for more precise data regarding the relation between higher learning and loyalty to Williamsburg's way of life.

Still, it is easier to question particular values of the Williamsburg community than to face the challenge that it poses to suburban Judaism: Can our faith do something more than reinforce particular aspects of suburban culture (*e. g.*, togetherness, higher education, child-centered living)? Can a prosperous Judaism remain spiritually somewhat apart from the world and ask the critical questions? We leave Williamsburg — wondering how our kind of Judaism, whatever it might be, can give us a perspective that is not quite of this world.

The questions that Dr. Kranzler has provoked are a tribute to the importance of his work. *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition*, is a major contribution to the field of American Jewish sociology.

Champaign, Ill.

HENRY COHEN

Rabbi Henry Cohen is the spiritual leader of Sinai Temple, in Champaign, Ill. His last contribution to the *American Jewish Archives* appeared in the November, 1962, issue.

LURIE, HARRY L. *A Heritage Affirmed: The Jewish Federation Movement in America*. Philadelphia, Pa.: The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1961. xi, 481 pp. \$6.00

In 1895 the first formally established Jewish federation in the United States, the Federated Jewish Charities of Boston, raised \$11,909. By 1960 more than 250 communities had federations; in that year they collectively raised \$128,000,000.

In 1895 and the next several years the fledgling federations were the fund raising agents for the charitable societies which had been established essentially by the German Jewish groups for the relief of East European immigrants, arriving in ever-increasing numbers on the shores of America. By 1960 the federations (used as a generic term for the central community fund raising and planning agencies) encompassed a network of hospitals, homes for the aged, family counseling, child care and guidance agencies, community centers, educational bureaus and institutions, and community relations agencies, as well as the support of national agencies and of the massive overseas rescue and rehabilitation programs. Paralleling the dramatic rise of the Jewish Community in America since the turn of the century and especially in the postwar years, the federation movement represents an exciting and significant aspect of the history of American Jewry.

Harry L. Lurie has been very much a part of this history as social worker, teacher, researcher, and executive head of the national association of federations, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. In *A Heritage Affirmed*, he plots the growth of federations and their development as perhaps the most potent expression of voluntary community organization involving all major segments of the Jewish community.

The book is organized in three sections. The first treats the emergence of federations from roots in Jewish tradition and their accommodation to their American environment. The second part brings the history of federations through the post World War II years to the present. It was in this period that federations reached their high plateaus in fund raising as well as in community planning and coordination. But the very strength of federations and their involvement in all aspects of Jewish communal services created new problems with respect to their relationship to the other social forces in the Jewish and the general community. The third part of *A Heritage Affirmed* deals extensively with these problems. The author analyzes the structure and scope of federations and the function of

agencies which look to federations for support. But special attention is given to problems of the future in the face of rapidly changing conditions on the national scene as well as within the social structure of the Jewish group itself. Related to this is the impact of the locally oriented federations on the programs and objectives of major national Jewish organizations. Recurrent through the latter part of the book is the theme of national-local relationships. This finds its expression, on the one hand, in the effective cooperation toward astounding philanthropic achievements (i. e., the partnership of the United Jewish Appeal's agencies and the local federations in helping to bring more than one million immigrants to Israel). On the other hand, national-local relations focus on the conflict around overlapping of national services, or lack of coordination in planning and fund raising, or attempts to create a central national organization for American Jewry along quasi political lines.

Avoiding personal references to his own significant contribution to the federation movement in both its local and national aspects, Harry L. Lurie treats these developments with reportorial objectivity. Throughout the book there is a refreshing absence of polemics, of subjective interpretation, and of prophecy of gloom or glory. In tones of understatement so characteristic of all his writings, he assesses the role of federations and their future: "... federations have had an eventful and on the whole satisfactory history. They have grown more rather than less important with the years."

It is this measured approach that contributes to making *A Heritage Affirmed* a most valuable and interesting documentation of American Jewry's affirmation of its heritage of social and communal responsibility through voluntary association in the cooperative enterprise of the federation movement.

Boston, Mass.

BENJAMIN B. ROSENBERG

Dr. Rosenberg is the Executive Director of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston.

Brief Notices

ALLEN, FREDERICK LEWIS. *Since Yesterday*. New York: Bantam Books. 1961. xii, 292 pp. 60¢

Subtitled "The Nineteen-Thirties in America, September 3, 1929-September 3, 1939," this sequel to the author's celebrated *Only Yesterday* first appeared in 1940. It has been republished as a "Bantam Classic."

ARONOW, SARA SNYDER. *Havah Nagilah: Classroom Games in Rhyme*. New York: Jewish Education Committee Press. 1963. 82 pp. \$1.50

Pleasantly illustrated by Cecilia G. Waletzky, *Havah Nagilah* offers fifteen games and rhymes designed to develop oral and reading skills in the teaching of the Hebrew language.

CAMBON, GLAUCO. *Recent American Poetry*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1962. 48 pp. 65¢

As Professor Glauco Cambon, of Rutgers University, confesses, "the available harvest" of post-World War II American poetry "is so rich that one cannot avoid grievous omissions." Among the poets to escape omission in this essay — Number 16 in the "University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers" series — are Stanley Kunitz, Howard Nemerov, Anthony Hecht, and Jack Hirschman. A selected bibliography supplements the essay.

CRONBACH, ABRAHAM. *Reform Movements in Judaism*. New York: Bookman Associates, Inc. 1963. 138 pp. \$3.00

"The only unchanging constant is change itself," writes Jacob Rader Marcus in a preface to Dr. Abraham Cronbach's most recent work. Dr. Cronbach himself tells us that he has designed his book "for people whose lives are actuated by wishes other than that of conformity with the past." He focusses on five past reformations — the Deuteronomic, Pentateuchal, Pharisaic, Karaite, and Hasidic — and includes also a chapter on contemporary Reform Judaism and one on "The Next Reformation," a Judaism whose "dominant emphasis" would rest "not on rituals and not on doctrines but on felicitous human relationships." The book includes an index.

FREEMAN, GRACE R., and JOAN G. SUGARMAN. *Inside the Synagogue*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations. 1963. Unpaginated.

In an editorial introduction, Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz rightly calls *Inside the Synagogue* a "beautiful and informed volume." It is designed "to help the young child appreciate what the synagogue is and has been, what it means and what it evokes." Its text elaborated photographically by Justin E. Kerr and others, with illustrations by Judith Oren, the book should achieve its purpose.

GAMORAN, MAMIE G. *Samson Benderly*. New York: Jewish Education Committee Press. 1963. 44 pp. \$1.00

The life and career of the man whose work with the New York Kehillah's Bureau of Jewish Education a half-century ago sparked a revolution in American Jewish education are reviewed in this Hebrew book, part of the "Lador Junior Hebrew Library Series." Mrs. Mamie G. Gamoran's English text has been translated and adapted by Elhanan Indelman and illustrated by Siegmund Forst.

GELBART, GERSHON I. *Jewish Education in America*. New York: Jewish Education Committee Press. 1963. x, 132 pp. \$3.00

Subtitled "A Manual for Parents and School Board Members," the late Dr. Gershon I. Gelbart's work is "an explanatory and interpretive statement on American Jewish Education." It includes a foreword by Judah Pilch and a biographical sketch of Dr. Gelbart by Sylvan H. Kohn.

GLENN, JACOB B. *The Bible and Modern Medicine*. New York: Bloch Publishing Company. 1963. 222 pp. \$5.00

Swiss- and Austrian-trained Dr. Jacob B. Glenn, of Brooklyn, offers "an interpretation of the basic principles of the Bible in the light of present day medical thought" and calls for "a return to the God-given precepts of the Torah in the fields of health, hygiene and preventive medicine." His book includes an index and a bibliography, as well as an introduction by Dr. Isaac Rosengarten, late editor of *The Jewish Forum*.

GOLDEN, HARRY. *Forgotten Pioneer*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company. 1963. 157 pp. \$4.00

The "forgotten pioneer" is "the old-time pack peddler," who "walked the countryside from the earliest beginnings of our country until the mid-1920s; and walking, . . . made some of the history of

America." Those familiar with Harry Golden's previous books will expect no scholarly tract; they will expect — and in *Forgotten Pioneer* will find — a colorfully written, popular account. Three peddlers are presented in this book, two of them typical, but imaginary (one is a "Connecticut Yankee," the other a Russian Jewish immigrant in the South), and the third quite genuine: Levi Strauss of denim jeans fame. *Forgotten Pioneer* also features a bibliography, and attractive illustrations by Leonard Vosburgh.

HECHT, BEN. *Gaily, Gaily*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1963. 227 pp. \$3.95

"When you come to a certain age," Ben Hecht ruminates, "the sun begins to travel backward. It lights the past." Here the author, who came to Chicago in 1910 at the age of sixteen and a half and worked as a reporter for the *Chicago Journal*, writes of "the five merry years that followed." He himself is the hero of this book.

HERTZ, RICHARD C. *What Counts Most in Life?* New York: Bloch Publishing Company. 1963. x, 72 pp. \$2.25

Rabbi of Detroit's Temple Beth El, Dr. Richard C. Hertz offers in this little book "one continuous sermon delivered at the High Holy Days of 5723 (1962)."

HOFFMAN, FREDERICK J. *Gertrude Stein*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1961. 48 pp. 65¢

In his study of Gertrude Stein — Number 10 in the "University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers" series — Professor Frederick J. Hoffman, of the University of California at Riverside, says of her that she had "the undoubted strength of the creative person who is able to call upon her powers of imagination to prove what literature might be." Her work, he suggests, "often stands by and for itself. . . . It is tendentious in the most useful and illuminating sense that word might have." A useful bibliography is included.

KAHN, ROBERT I. *Lessons for Life*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1963. 240 pp. \$3.95

Rabbi of Houston's Congregation Emanu El, Iowa-born Dr. Robert I. Kahn avows his belief that, "even in a world in which technology is racing into the future with supersonic speed, morality should still be expressed in Biblical formulations. . . . we have yet to catch up with the Bible's ideals." *Lessons for Life* is based, to a large extent, on Dr.

Kahn's sermonettes broadcast by Station KPRC in Houston and on his weekly column for the *Houston Chronicle*.

KANIUK, YORAM. *Mim-metulah li-neyu-york* ["From Metulla to New York"]. New York: Jewish Education Committee Press. 1963. 43 pp. \$1.00

The author has written an appealing fable about an Israeli Ulysses — Dani, a *bar mitsvah* who finds his way from Israel to Lebanon to New York and back again to Israel. Yoram Kaniuk himself has illustrated the book very handsomely. Dani's story is part of the "Lador Junior Hebrew Library Series."

KATZ, ROBERT L. *Empathy: Its Nature and Uses*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe. 1963. xii, 210 pp. \$4.95

Dr. Robert L. Katz's "goal in this book is to select, focus, and interpret insights from such apparently divergent fields as aesthetics, biology, sociology, and psychoanalysis. . . . My exposition of the role of empathy is occasionally punctuated with judgmental asides, which represent my own suggestions, as a nonspecialist, concerning the more creative use of empathy." Dr. Katz, Professor of Human Relations at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, has also included references, a bibliography, and an index.

KERTZER, MORRIS N. *The Art of Being a Jew*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company. 1962. 247 pp. \$3.95

Dr. Morris N. Kertzer, rabbi of Larchmont Temple in New York, sees "the art of being a Jew" as "the ability to perceive in this universe an inherent force that makes for righteousness, an acute awareness that within the very fabric of our being is a moral force which breathes truth and goodness and beauty into man's experience."

LISTER, LOUIS, Compiled and Edited by. *The Religious School Assembly Handbook*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations. 1963. v, 258 pp. \$3.50

Louis Lister, a member of the staff at Temple Sinai in Washington, D. C., has prepared this work to indicate the values and possibilities of religious school assembly programs.

LONGWELL, MARJORIE R. *America and Women*. Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company. 1962. ix, 205 pp. \$3.00

Mrs. Marjorie R. Longwell, of Malibu, California, sets out "to give

the sweep of American History as seen through the eyes of seven women who helped create for us our today." Emma Lazarus, author of the poem engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty, is one of the seven. Subtitled "Fictionized Biography," the book ranges from a seventeenth-century Marylander to a twentieth-century Negro bank president.

MANNIX, DANIEL P., with MALCOLM COWLEY. *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518-1865*. New York: Viking Press. 1962. xiii, 306 pp. \$6.95

Illustrated, indexed, and supplied with a useful bibliography, this book tells the story of "the victims of a forced migration that was more callous, more colorful, and immensely larger, in the end, than any such movement of modern or ancient times." Aaron Lopez, "a great merchant renowned for his benevolence," is duly listed among the Rhode Islanders involved in the trade on the eve of the Revolutionary War.

MARTIN, BERNARD. *The Existentialist Theology of Paul Tillich*. New York: Bookman Associates. 1963. 221 pp. \$5.00

One of contemporary Protestantism's leading theologians, Paul Tillich has also developed anthropological concepts of theological and philosophical distinction. Dr. Bernard Martin, rabbi of St. Paul's Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation, undertakes in this volume to "approach his anthropology primarily from a philosophical point of view and . . . to evaluate its general validity and significance from that perspective." This unusual and valuable study of a Protestant thinker by a Jewish scholar is carefully documented, and includes a bibliography and an index.

MAZAR, BENJAMIN, MOSHE DAVIS, *et al.*, Edited by. *The Illustrated History of the Jews*. Jerusalem and New York: The Israeli Publishing Institute and Harper & Row. 1963. 414 pp. \$30.00

Some two dozen Israeli and American scholars have produced this panoramic volume on Jewish history. Magnificently illustrated — 200 of its 500 illustrations have been reproduced in color — the book includes a sixteen-page chapter on American Jewry by Rabbi Jack Cohen. The editors have also provided an index.