

The structure of this large volume becomes part of the response. The history has been divided into three periods: 1932-September 1939; September 1939-1941; and 1941-1945. In each section there is an introductory chapter in which general historical trends and events serve as a background against which Jewish response is analytically presented in the context of preexisting Jewish community structure, values, experience, political and religious institutions. In addition, the author has included in each section several in-depth studies of particular issues. The reader can then trace the responses of certain communities in the context of the larger picture and follow these responses as events unfold in succeeding sections.

Jewish communities in other parts of Europe are not treated in as much detail, but important events and personalities are not neglected, particularly as they relate to defense, rescue and methods of survival. These priorities often yield important insights. In discussing the delays in the German plans to quickly make the annexed areas of Poland *Judenrein*, Yahil points out that the delays were caused not only by “objective problems” of supply, transportation and economics, but also by the active Jewish response in organizing and creating “means of livelihood and instruments of mutual

The author constructs a solid response to the accusations of Jewish passivity. Not only were European Jews actively responding to the German plan, but international Jewish organizations did what they saw as feasible in the context of what they then understood. Special attention is paid to the response of the Yishuv, to the involvement of the illegal immigration movement in rescue activities, and to the activities of the Zionist youth in the ghettos and in organized resistance.

Little attention is given to the American Jewish response, however, and women are not accorded the attention they deserve, particularly in the description of the resistance movements.

The American reader will be as stimulated as the Israeli by the insights into Jewish active response. The myth of Jewish passivity is thoroughly shattered in this book, but the reader may be misled into believing the American response was superficial. The same care that was taken to provide a fine translation from the original Hebrew should have been taken with an in-depth study of the American response for the American edition of this important work.

Brana Gurewitsch was archivist/librarian at the Center for Holocaust Studies until its merger with The Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, where she is now working on a catalog of the Center's archives for publication.

David Roskies, coeditor of *Prooftexts*, a journal of Jewish literary history, and a professor of Jewish literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary, has produced two magnificent books on Jewish literary responses to catastrophe. The first, *Against the Apocalypse* (Harvard University Press) presented the historical background to the writing and art that emerged as a twentieth-century response to traumas inflicted on the Jewish people. What

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propelled its research and writing as well as that of its companion volume, *The Literature of Destruction*, was Roskies' belief that the Holocaust has been perceived wrongly as an apocalyptic event which somehow stood "outside of history," an event that lacked a precedent or analogy, which had no links to past traumas. This, Roskies feels, has been partly caused by "emancipation and the loss of Yiddish and Hebrew everywhere but in Israel, [so that] Jews have let slip the cultural strand that always tied each catastrophe to the one before."

Roskies presents over a hundred examples supporting his thesis that martyrdom, exile and protest poetry have flourished in Jewish literature from the Bible through recent times. Jewish writers, it seems, have somehow managed to chronicle their hopes and despair along with their difficult history.

It is paradoxical, the author notes, that his two books which deal with "finalities, endings, disruption and desecration" are in fact "studies in continuities and internal transformations."

... It leaves no doubt in my mind that of all Jewish traditions, the response to catastrophe remains the most viable, coherent and covenantal." Issuing a caveat, Roskies declares that this anthology is meant "to revive the dialogue between history and literature and to present the Holocaust within the ongoing saga of a living people," not as something to which the traditional methods of Jewish response do not apply.

A common thread in these literary selections is the use of archetypes

Roskies' incisive thinking and writing make this collection truly superb.

through which destruction was made to fit into a covenantal scheme of sin-retribution-restoration originally laid out by Moses and the Prophets. The traditional exile-destruction-martyrdom-redemption, so deeply embedded in Jewish historical memory, have been reenacted throughout the 2,500 years covered in this volume. Even in modern-day Israel, Roskies notes, "beneath the public image of bravado and belligerence there exists an ever-burgeoning literature of diaries, memoirs and anthologies which exists quietly as *seforim*, sacred tomes, in which once again the *Akeda* motif is used to portray the grief of parents sending their children off to war."

It is near-impossible to review such a sublime, comprehensive anthology which begins with the Mosaic curses from Deuteronomy and continues with rabbinic *midrashim* on martyrdom (and to history in general as viewed through Lamentations, chronicles of the Spanish Inquisition, literature of the golden age of Polish Jewry and the not-at-all-golden years of pogroms in Russia, and witnesses' reports of life and death in the ghetto and in concentration camps). Short stories, poems, sermons and messianic omens abound in this extraordinary book, along with Roskies' sensitive and scholarly notations along the sides of the texts. His incisive thinking and writing make this collection truly superb; like a master teacher whispering short commentaries on each passage, Roskies re-

mains unobtrusive yet always there when needed. —SUSAN MIRON

FICTION

ZACHARY. BY ERNEST PINTOFF. PAUL S. ERIKSSON. 256 PP. \$17.95.

Zachary Silver is your run-of-the-mill Jewish adolescent growing up in rural Connecticut just after the end of World War II. Like many kids his age he dreams of being a detective and basketball star and running off with his sultry art teacher, Miss Porter.

What's not average about Zachary is that one of his fantasies is actually fulfilled. After witnessing a murder while spying on a tryst between two of his teachers, he becomes the sidekick of Lieutenant Harry Roth, a detective assigned to the case. Zachary is soon participating in stakeouts and tailing suspects—sometimes with Roth and sometimes on his own—but the thrill of being a real detective quickly fades when Zachary finds out real bad guys play for keeps. His best friend is run over, he himself is chased and shot at and he learns that his family and many other town residents have been extorted by the local police chief, a suspect in the murder.

Only months away from his bar mitzva, which he has come to view in ambivalent terms (his perfunctory Hebrew school lessons are taking a toll on his basketball practice), Zachary is ushered into the age of responsibility through a trial of fire, so much so that when he finally stands in the temple to speak the immortal words "Today I am a man" he has suffered more tribulations than most of the adults present. In short order Zachary has his first encounters with love and the discovery of lust, jealousy and rivalry, trust and mortal danger, the revelation of evil and a devastating personal loss.

In this his first novel, Ernest Pintoff skillfully accomplishes a number of tricky novelistic feats. First and foremost he brings to life the quickly fading naivete and innocence of a child's world through mature, adult narration.

Equally noteworthy, Pintoff manages to involve a topic no less sobering than the Holocaust without sacrificing the work's overall good humor.

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**ADVANCE NOTICE
1992**

In 1992, Spain celebrates the 500th Anniversary of the discovery of America as well as hosting the World Expo. To take advantage of these events plus the 500th year since Jews were expelled from Spain, Hadassah is planning itineraries featuring the history of Spanish Jewry plus general sightseeing. 2 weeks in Spain; 2 weeks in Spain and Israel; 2 weeks in Spain and Turkey. Details to be announced soon.

*Rates subject to change

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