

enriched by the authority of Cox's stature as a Protestant theologian, *Common Prayers* offers a fresh view of both Judaism and Christianity, as well as a kind of guide for promoting understanding between the two faiths. Discovering early in his marriage that Judaism "is not about creed, it is about calendar" (not to mention home, family, community—and eating), he takes readers on a tour through the Jewish year, and in the process provides a glimpse into the Jewish way of reflecting, rejoicing, and remembering. Of particular interest is his chapter on Israel Independence Day (Yom ha-Atzma'ut), with a fascinating analysis of how Christian Zionism fostered support of the Jewish state by American presidents from Woodrow Wilson, a Presbyterian minister's son, to Harry Truman, a Southern Baptist, to Ronald Reagan, who, according to biographer Lou Cannon, as a child listened spellbound to end-of-days scenarios spun out by evangelical ministers.

Cox amiably recognizes that the irregularity of his situation and the singularity of some of his views and practices will annoy people on both sides—literalists among the Christians and "the classical rabbis" among the Jews. Jewish traditionalists might be suspicious of the depth of Cox's commitment. He omits, for example, Shavuot (Pentecost), the

festival that commemorates the giving of the Torah, which, along with Succot (Tabernacles) and Passover, is one of the three major holidays on which Jews were obliged to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Some Christians, for their part, will not be thrilled to read Cox's indictment of Christian anti-Semitism and the role of "more than a thousand years of Christian derogation of Jews and Judaism" in preparing the ground for the Nazi genocide.

Both sides should relax. Cox is not only a good Christian, he is also a good Jew. He is a good Christian because he passionately demands the best from his fellow believers. He calls for "both Catholics and Protestants to emerge from the present period of breast-beating and begin to change their actual practices with regard to Jews." And he is a good Jew because of his bottom-line commitment to Jewish survival, to "respecting one of the most basic of all Jewish beliefs—that the child of a Jewish mother is a child of the covenant, a Jew, and should be recognized as such." This commitment is reflected through his words as well as through the events he chronicles—above all, the Jewish rite of passage: the day his son became a bar mitzvah, a Jewish "son of the commandment."

—TOVA REICH

## HISTORY

### *IN THERAPY WE TRUST: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment.*

By Eva S. Moskowitz. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. 358 pp. \$34.95

To confess in public to personal weakness was once regarded as rather indiscreet, vulgar, or reprehensible. Nowadays, parading one's vices is regarded as a sign of sincerity, maturity, willingness to change for the better, and fundamental goodness of heart. This is the natural culmination of an outlook that treats human existence as an elaborate form of psychotherapy, whose object is to procure for men and women the self-esteem and self-fulfillment to which they believe themselves by birthright entitled. *In Therapy We Trust*,

written in admirably plain prose uncluttered by academic jargon, traces the gradual rise of the therapeutic conception to our current apotheosis of self-centered triviality.

Moskowitz, a historian now serving on the New York City Council, does this by describing an apostolic succession of movements and ideas. She starts with the work of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, the New England quack who regarded all illness as the consequence of mistaken ideas, and who is remembered now principally as a formative influence on Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. From Quimby we pass on to the reformers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who saw antisocial acts as manifestations of psychological problems arising from

a defective upbringing, and who therefore sought to have juvenile delinquents treated as ill rather than punished as wicked. In the 1930s, the psychological approach spread to the middle classes with the marriage counseling movement. During World War II, millions of soldiers were psychologically tested for combatworthiness and bombarded with professional advice about how to stay sane and happy while walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

After the war, the supposedly bored and dissatisfied American housewife was deemed to need psychological support to cope with the neuroses consequent upon suburban prosperity; then came the social unrest of the 1960s, which sought "liberation" not only from oppression but from all personal inhibition. With the Me Decade of the 1970s, it seemed as if some kind of nadir had been reached, but in the following decades millions of people discovered that they were "survivors" of trauma or addicted to something or other, from car theft to sex to shopping. Everyone is now a victim, for lack of self-control is considered a bona fide illness, and thus the search for psychological self-fulfillment has come full circle: We are all, by virtue of drawing breath, in need of therapy. Whether this coherent story wholly corresponds to reality, it makes for a plausible and interesting read.

Moskowitz, who is generally hostile to these developments, does not dig very deeply into the reasons why American society should prove so susceptible to the therapeutic idea. Could it have something to do with the concept of inalienable human rights upon which the Republic was founded? The belief in such rights renders everyone equally important, and therefore raises expectations—which inevitably founder on the existential rock of human limitation. Many Americans are therefore beset by an unease at the contrast between life as they think it ought to be and life as it actually is, an unease that the therapeutic outlook falsely promises to assuage.

Likewise, the author does not explore very deeply the modern taste for victimhood, which is surely connected with the political cataclysms of the 20th century. Few people like to admit that they have led sheltered,

privileged, or fortunate lives. They envy suffering, or rather the moral authority that suffering has given such figures as Primo Levi and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Consequently, they inflate the miseries of their own past.

This book is a suggestive rather than a definitive exploration of its theme, but it is a highly worthwhile contribution nevertheless.

—THEODORE DALRYMPLE

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**BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS:  
*The Evolution of Work.***

By Richard Donkin. Texere. 374 pp.  
\$27.95

The state of nature may have been nasty, brutish, and short, but was it also leisurely? The bushmen of the Kalahari devote no more than three days a week to gathering food. The Hadza, also of Africa, limit hunting to two hours a day, Donkin reports, "preferring to spend more time in diversionary pursuits such as gambling." In the developed world, meanwhile, "work has come to dominate the lives of the salaried masses, so much so that they are losing the ability to play." Is this progress?

"All true work is religion," wrote Thomas Carlyle. Donkin, a columnist for the *Financial Times*, aims to expose the shaky foundations of our most essential faith. The narrative is lively and larded with savory facts. We hear of Ned Ludd, the apprentice in a hosiery factory in late-18th-century England who, when threatened with a whipping for working too slowly, took a hammer to the machinery. His 19th-century followers, the Luddites, tried to destroy the technology that would throw them out of jobs. The movement failed, but its name has endured.

Schemes to put workers in a hammerlock have been as constant as their attempts to wriggle free. George Pullman created a town of 12,000 just south of Chicago for the people who built his luxury railroad cars. While the initial expenses were his own, he instituted a system designed for profit at every turn. He marked up the water and gas. He even made money from the vegetables fertilized with worker sewage. One worker said, "We are born in a Pullman house, fed from the Pullman shops, taught in the Pullman school, catechized in the Pullman church, and when