happening. Kranzler admits that various calls for help had reached allied and neutral governments independently of Mantello and before his own campaign got going.

In Kranzler’s narrative, Mantello’s undoubted activism becomes the hammer that falls on the anvil of international indifference. He repeats the well-worn criticism that American Jewish leaders failed to use their ‘political power’ to get President Roosevelt to order the bombing of Auschwitz. According to Kranzler this would have been a ‘relatively minor military intervention [that] could easily have been carried out had the president so desired’. Yet Henry Feingold and several other scholars have demolished the notion that American Jews formed a coherent body and that they could have bossed Roosevelt around even if they had acted collectively. Anyway, Mantello’s press campaign came too late in the day to cause the Nazis to abort their anti-Jewish measures in Hungary. Kranzler over-states his case by claiming that Papal protests stemmed from information supplied by Mantello’s people or that the Hungarian decision to end the deportations had a similar cause.

Most curiously, Kranzler argues that at this juncture the Swiss came up trumps. He certainly shows that Martello inspired Swiss church leaders and theologians to issue poignant condemnations of the atrocities, and provides evidence of an impressive outpouring of protest and concern in the Swiss press. He claims that this obliged the Swiss federal authorities to rescind Rothmund’s restriction on the entry of Jewish refugees (in place since mid-1942) and even maintains that it helped face down Swiss antisemitism. But it is hard to square this with the stony-faced attitude of Swiss bankers after the war when confronted by the heirs of murdered Jews seeking to claim their relatives’ assets. How can we reconcile the apparent realisation that genocide against the Jews happened all around them with the resistance against restitution for the heirs of murdered Jews? And how can we explain the fact that in 1950 Martello set up the Swiss-Israel Bank to conduct business between the two countries?

Martello was a complex character who does not emerge clearly from Kranzler’s narrative. He was a right-wing Zionist who may have displayed a willingness to work across sectarian lines, but who annoyed so many different groups that after 1945 there were as many willing to demean as to praise his achievements. While Kranzler provides a lot of useful detail about the background to the fate of Hungarian Jewry and rescue work, his account is rendered less than helpful by the implicit attribution of all positive rescue efforts to this one man.

Royal Holloway, University of London


Holocaust Theology is an ambitious project. Whilst conceding that it is not ‘exhaustive’, the editor claims it provides ‘a panoramic survey of Holocaust theology’ (p. 1). After an introduction and a historical survey (pp. 26–37), the readings themselves are arranged in four parts: the Challenge; Faith in the Death Camps; Wrestling with the Holocaust; and Jews, Christians and the Holocaust.
Well produced though this volume is, I would be reluctant to use it as a textbook. Firstly, the title of the book is misleading, an issue that could have been addressed in the introduction. ‘Holocaust theology’ is generally used to describe the views of those who see the Holocaust as unique, a rupture posing some new and distinct theological challenge to Jews and Christians. This assumption underpins the essays in ‘Good News’ after Auschwitz, hence its subtitle ‘Christian Faith within a Post-Holocaust World’. Whilst it is good to see a range of Orthodox contributions included in a reader of this kind, it is misleading to suggest they constitute ‘Holocaust theology’. Orthodox writers would share Buber’s view—discussed by Pinnock—that ‘it underestimates the suffering of the past to claim that the questions that Auschwitz raises about God have never been faced before’ (Beyond Theodicy, p. 53). Similarly, Elie Wiesel repeatedly questions the very possibility of doing theology, and is adamant that he is not a theologian, yet he is included, without editorial comment, in a Reader on ‘Holocaust theology’. Secondly, the inclusion of such a wide range of perspectives means that there is breadth but little depth. To accommodate such variety, many extracts are short, sometimes no more than a paragraph or two, and some have been edited. As a consequence, they give little sense of a particular writer’s style or major concerns. For example, reading the extracts from the first edition of After Auschwitz (1966) gives little indication of the context in which Richard L. Rubenstein was writing, his influences, or how his thought developed over time. There is no editorial acknowledgement that he has developed or modified his views, let alone published a second edition of the text (1992) which is very different from the first. Indeed, the second edition is not mentioned in the bibliography. Such short, decontextualised extracts can be superficial and misleading. Personally, I would prefer students read the original texts, or at least engage with whole essays, so as to get more of a feel for a writer’s approach and argument. Whilst I might advise students to use this collection as pre-course reading, to give them a sense of the possible spectrum of responses, I am not sure what purpose it serves beyond this.

Despite being narrower in focus in limiting itself to post-Holocaust Christian theology, ‘Good News’ after Auschwitz contains a wide variety of approaches and perspectives. The book is in three parts: Persecutions (‘cautionary essays’, designed ‘to chas- ten, recover, and restore what can and should be practiced and proclaimed by post-Holocaust Christians’, p. 1), Practices (identifying those practices within Christianity that remain problematic, and suggesting ‘what Christians need to do to make credible that Christianity does possess ‘good news’ in spite of the Holocaust’, p. 43), and Proclamations (attempts to identify and state key elements of post-Holocaust Christianity, presenting it as ‘an option that can make a positive difference’, p. 129).

The editors insist that it is now time to go beyond apologies and critiques of Christian anti-Judaism (the preoccupation of Part One) and ‘express a more affirmative Christian vision . . . by showing how Christianity has crucial affirmations to make after Auschwitz’ (p. xi), hence the inclusion of Part Three. Yet, arguably, the strongest essays in the collections are those warning against ‘premature self-congratulation’ (Haynes, p. 3), ‘spiritual self-flagellation’ (Locke, p. 38), or unjustified condemnation based on simplified readings of what is a complex history. Stephen R. Haynes’s essay, ‘Beware Good News: Faith and Fallacy in Post-Holocaust Christianity’ is a hard-hitting critique of ‘the temptations that can seduce Christians who want desperately to hear good news in the wake of Auschwitz’ (p. 3); one that should be essential reading for all those seeking to grapple with the complex relationship between Christian anti-Judaism, anti-semitism and the Holocaust. By placing this essay first, the editors implicitly encourage readers to evaluate subsequent essays in the light of Haynes’s critique and to question whether other authors rely on the ‘fallacies of continuity, discontinuity, and authenticity’ he identifies. Victoria Barnett and Hubert Locke also offer
warnings to Christians attempting to study and articulate theological responses to the Holocaust. Barnett advises: ‘some scholarly caution is called for when we look for the lessons this history holds for Christians and their churches. To view the Holocaust as primarily an act of Christians against Jews or as a “holy war”, as some scholars have argued, is untenable historically’ (p. 136). Locke stresses that ‘Christians need to decide whether these are historical or theological or ethical or practical inquiries we are undertaking’ (p. 37), and warns that ‘some post-Shoah reflection, accusation, and recrimination simply cuts too wide and undiscriminating a swathe to be either analytically or morally useful.’ He issues a heartfelt plea for ‘a more accurate and temperate’ approach, where Christian scholars ‘search for the harsh facts and let them speak for themselves’ (p. 38). A good example of the approach Locke has in mind could be Carol Rittner’s exploration of the differences in Catholic and Jewish views on forgiveness, paying particular attention to Wiesel’s prayer that God should not forgive those who murdered Jewish children in Auschwitz. She concludes, ‘I want to make sense of his prayer at Auschwitz-Birkenau in January 1995, and I want to do so in a way that it is faithful to my own religious tradition, but that challenges me to think again about what I believe’ (p. 126).

Sarah K. Pinnock’s thoughtful approach in Beyond Theodicy is another example of the detailed, precise, committed scholarship advocated by Locke. Her aim is to map ‘an intellectual history of selected continental figures, who respond to the Holocaust without theodicy comfort’ (p. 144). Many post-Holocaust Jewish and Christian responses share Pinnock’s concerns about theodicy. Yet her approach is distinctive in focusing on Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), Martin Buber (1878–1963), Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) and Johann Baptist Metz (b. 1928), four philosophers/theologians whose work is rarely considered (with the exception of Metz) in discussions of Jewish and Christian religious responses to the Holocaust (significantly Metz is the only one of the four to feature in Cohn-Sherbok’s Reader, although a number of extracts make passing reference to Buber). Pinnock deliberately chose two Jewish (Buber, Bloch) and two Roman Catholic thinkers (Marcel, Metz). In her analysis, she identifies ‘strategic points of similarity’, whilst noting that ‘the differences between the authors from the same religious tradition are … pronounced and far-reaching’ (pp. 7–8).

Pinnock contrasts the approaches of existentialist and Marxian philosophy. She argues that existentialist responses locate ‘the roots of evil and suffering in the absence of I–Thou relation’ (p. 103), but fail ‘to consider whether or not I–Thou relation can effectively bridge economic and social group divisions’ (p. 106). She concludes that the more political responses of Bloch and Metz are ‘superior’ because of their ‘critical awareness of the socio-economic causes of suffering for different groups’ (p. 108) and their ‘effective recognition of situation or context as formative’ (p. 98). Pinnock suggests that, unlike those who appeal to theodicy and are concerned with exploring the nature of human freedom or identifying ‘actual or possible divine reasons for evil’ (p. 134), more practical or political approaches ‘tend to be conceptually reticent, even agnostic, about God’s nature and attributes’ (p. 132). Yet despite such reticence or agnosticism, the writers she considers ‘clearly assume God’s attributes of love and moral justice’ (p. 132). They never contemplate the possibility of questioning such attributes, as do Holocaust theologians such as Richard Rubenstein or David Blumenthal.

Reviewing these three books together served to highlight the similarities and differences in their approach to their subject-matter. Dan Cohn-Sherbok is clearly targeting the textbook market, providing an anthology of brief extracts from a wide range of Jewish and Christian responses to the Holocaust. Each extract (or group of extracts from a particular author) is followed by questions, presumably intended to facilitate classroom/group discussion. Sarah Pinnock states that her book is written with students, academics and the interested general reader in mind. Based on her doctoral dis-
Beyond Theodicy is a monograph, probably best suited to third-year undergraduates or postgraduates, and specialists in the field. It would be hard going for anyone without a basic familiarity with contemporary philosophy of religion, twentieth-century existentialist philosophy and Marxist political thought. The essays in ‘Good News’ after Auschwitz are eclectic, offering a variety of reflections on the challenges facing ‘post-Holocaust’ Christianity. The editors state: ‘the contributors have had free rein in putting together their essays, which vary in style, substance, and form, but in every case they clarify and focus that central theme’ (p. xii). The editors provide an introduction and postscript, and brief introductions to each of the three sections. Yet, despite the volume having its roots in a colloquium, there is little sense of the essayists engaging directly with each other’s arguments (although occasionally there are some hints of this). Rather, this is a collection of individual pieces which work, to a greater or lesser extent, on their own terms as stand-alone essays, but do not particularly gain anything from being presented as a collection. It is likely that most lecturers would recommend particular essays to students, rather than use the book as a whole.

University of Birmingham

Isabel Wollaston


This bulky volume emerged from a large-scale conference that took place at the University of Ulster in September 1999. If the question mark of the title to this compendium suggests a cautious approach, the editor Pól O’Dochartaigh’s introduction more forcefully argues for the existence of a distinct German-Jewish literature after 1945. To substantiate this interpretation he proposes a content criterion to delineate the ins and outs of German-Jewish literature. The literature’s relation to a German-Jewish dialogue functions here as a tell-tale sign.

It is easy to quibble with this definition as there are no easy answers to the questions of how to define German-Jewish literature. Jews and other Germans have grappled with this issue since the nineteenth century, most notably in response to Heinrich Heine. Instead of a more detailed discussion of this long-standing debate, O’Dochartaigh acknowledges the dangers of defining German-Jewish literature. Cognisant of the inherent difficulties and the ideologically ridden nature of any definitions, he nevertheless emphatically argues that this volume provides ‘evidence of a continuing German–Jewish dialogue in literature’ in the post-war period (p. ix).

Without debating the centrality of the German–Jewish dialogue in many of the discussed texts, O’Dochartaigh’s German prism might here illuminate as much as cloud the issue. Articles by Julian Preece on the depiction of Jewish figures in Gunter Grass’s work and the debates they engendered, and an essay by Petra Gunther on Barbara Honigman, for example, underpin a trans-national geography from which this literature emerges. Equally, it seems wanting to define German-Jewish literature solely from the perspective of literary studies, as also an engagement with literature on the nature of texts, the role of authors and readers, is absent. To be sure, these are difficult questions, but one would have liked to have seen some acknowledgement of the more wide-ranging debates on the nature of Jewish literature.

The actual context of the over 600-page volume roams far and wide and comprises much in its 46 individual essays on Jewish and non-Jewish authors and their representations of Jews. Individual short contributions, for example, entail several pieces