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Book Review for Kodimoh Sisterhood
 "ADVENTURE IN FREEDOM", by Prof. Oscar Handlin

1. I've given book-reviews before....Spoken this, other Sisterhoods before...
 But this 1st time bk-review to a Sisterhood...full expression and highest function
 American Rabbinate...Today I am a Rabbi
2. This book heralded as the finest work to appear on Am. J. History in honor of 100th.
 Is it true, or is it only a publisher's blurb?
3. *well-written; good, interesting style*
 The best chapter - on anti-semitism: causes, change in character, development...
 But can be found in other sources, though it is truly lucid.
4. The one sentence which sets the tone of the book's philosophy: "
 "Here no man was a Jew because he had to be."
 *A happy, gay, funeral eulogy.
 *Jews in America not only different but superior to all other Jews.
 *"Adventure in Freedom" is adventure in freedom not to be a Jew.
 *Minimizes Jewish character, destiny, differentness.
 *detect anxiety on author's part slur over time Jew wanted to be self, to part where
 he's no longer treated as a Jew, but as any American, with Jewish name. German analogy.
 *he pays tribute to diversity, & in next page revels in that "Americanization" of Jews
 means they adopt average American standards even in religion; make religion mere
 matter listening book-reviews, card-parties, rather than prayer & good deeds.
 *Speaks of "cultural pluralism" as opposed to "melting pot", yet sounds as if he
 espouses total assimilation, i.e. one-way pluralism - that we should adopt common
 standards. Doesn't understand it.
5. Regards MITZVOS as "a yoke thrust from without",... "laws and customs from ghetto walls",
Jewish accommodation to American life meant "radically to revise their own
 conceptions of themselves & of the nature of their culture."
6. His point of view more evident by what he doesn't say. While waxing eloquent over
 certain relatively unimportant things, he neglects following:
 - a) 200 Hillel foundations
 - b) intensity & extent Amer. Zionism - which he regards as charitable benevolence.
 Abba Hillel Silver not one mention - though does Macy's and Hank Greenberg.
 - c) Young Israel
 - d) growth congregations - in last decade - Reform, 300 to 461; Conservative,
 265 - 473; orthodox, over 3,000.
 * what does he mention re: religion? - read page 250
 - e) Yiddish poets, journalists, literature.
 - f) Hebrew culture - Histadruth Ivrit, Hadoar
 - g) Day School growth. He sounds death-bell for J. Education - read page 234. (stress
 year 1935, this in chapter "sources of Stability" which supposed to take reader
 up to 1954). Fact: Torah Umesorah movement ALONE: 17 in 1935, 156 in 1953.
 - h) absolutely no mention of greatest, & most successful, experiment in fusing or
 synthesizing American secularism & Jewish religion.
 * read page 117 - imagine that dream never realized, not till this very day.
 * read page 120 - imagine it to be old-type yeshiva, no secular ed at all.
 * fact: that "Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva" became the Jewish University of p. 117.
 -its religious achievements: 5-600 Rabbis. Teacher training. Community Service.
 -secular: thousands college alumni. brilliant scientists, inventors. Professors.
 successful businessmen. educated laity. Scripta. Medical Schhol.e...

girls schools.

*but evidently Roger Hammerstein and Al Jolson are more important as Jews than Bernard Revel, Samuel Belkin, Jekuthiel Ginsburg, Bruno Kish....
- Main fact: their fusion, elimination of tension w-o diluting Judaism.

7. Well, what does he remember? *what is imp?*

* read pages 255-6

* Jews People Book, & that Book not comic-book!

* Jews qua Jews - study hall, lecture, UJA, Zionist meeting, Synagogue, not in Milton Berle,

8. Summary: Prejudiced against Jewishness; assimilationist in tone. Ashamed of his own Jewishness. *expert pen but* Obsequious spine, afraid his own shadow.

9. Final suggestion, concluding advice after having read & reviewed for you ~~as~~
"Adventure in Freedom" by Oscar Handlin, is that for a brilliant, intelligible, proud, and truly great book on American Jewish history of last 300 years, is to get "The Jews in America", by Rufus Lears.

not - really terrific.