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Indiana University Press
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Bloomington, IN 47404

The following review appeared in the March '00 issue of CHOICE:

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Roskies, David G. **The Jewish search for a usable past.** Indiana, 1999.
217p index afp ISBN 0-253-33505-1, \$24.95

Roskies (Jewish Theol. Seminary) shows that the Jewish present is not evolving as a simple continuation of the past nor, contrary to what is often claimed, is it emerging from a radical break with the past. It sits, rather, upon what Roskies calls "memory sites," images of the past recreated from the ashes of destruction and the potentially debilitating sense of Jewish loss these catastrophes create. How are such memory sites created? Roskies illustrates the process through careful and engaging examinations of, among other topics, Jewish chronicles of the Warsaw Ghetto, of Jewish rethinking of Jewish participation in the early socialist and Zionist movements, and of the function of the concept of holy space for secular Israelis. These studies, each a gem unto itself, together reveal how Jews cope with loss and catastrophe and illustrate that it is exactly by coping with loss and tragedy that Jews create a usable past and, in the process, define their present and shape their future. Recommended for general readers and for faculty and researchers.
- A. J. Avery-Peck, College of the Holy Cross