

## Center City School

University of Minnesota. Also, she was on the faculty of Wright State during her eight years in Dayton. Mrs. Hyman is the co-author of "Mind," a book on memory improvement. She has visited, "at least 100 classrooms, kindergarten through high school." She states assuredly that she uses, "what works, not what is popular. Common sense education."

Her husband, Bernard Hyman, is an administrator of Health, Education and Welfare here. They have two children, ages 12 and 14, in public school.

Outside her office at Center City school is a poster that proclaims, "Meet someone halfway. To communicate is the beginning of understanding." Lois Hyman applies this theory to the children at Center City school.

## Book Review

THE SHTETL BOOK by Diane and David Roskies, Ktav Pub. Co. N.Y. N.Y. 1975, 327 pages, \$10.00 cloth bound, \$5.95 paperback

BY JACK RIEMER, RABBI  
BETH ABRAHAM  
SYNAGOGUE

The Jews of the shtetl would have made a brocho over this book if they could have seen it for it is indeed a wonder. For this is a work written by two young people who were born and raised on this continent, who never saw a shtetl in their lives, and yet who are devoting their lives to the study and the appreciation and the continuation of that part of the Jewish heritage. And they are not alone, they are part of a whole circle of young people, raised in this land, who are now into Yiddish language and literature, who study it in college and in graduate school, and who by their existence demonstrate that Hitler did not win a complete victory over the Jews of Eastern Europe and that something of their spirit still goes on. The existence of this book and of the young people who did it is something remarkable that no one could have predicted would take place in this land.

Diane and David Roskies have made an important contribution to Jewish education by creating this book for it is a useful teaching resource that will give the reader some sense of what the world of the shtetl was like. What they have done is choose one particular townlet in Eastern Europe, the town of Tishevitz in the Lublin province, and make it a case study and an archetype of all the others that are no more. They deal with the whole of this shtetl, not just with its pretty parts. They provide a map and they talk about the mill and the

numbers game that made use of pages of the Bible or the spelling game that was based on the name of Noah.

It was a kingdom, this world of the shtetl, a kingdom of the spirit that lasted nearly a thousand years. It was a kingdom without police and yet with so much discipline, a kingdom without an army and yet with so much loyalty, a kingdom without weapons and yet with so much courage and strength, a kingdom without flags and yet with so much devotion, a kingdom without power and yet with so much holiness. It was a kingdom with so many subdivisions: Hasidim and Mitnagdim and Maskilim, a kingdom with so many capital cities: Mir and Berditchev and Slobodka and Vilna and Polnoye, a kingdom that was a confederation of so many different life styles, so many different accents and customs and emphases, a kingdom that has so many different groups within it and yet that was held together by such a deep inner unity. The Roskies have tried to capture and to convey to us something of the variety and the spirit of this world without yielding to the temptations of sentimentalization or glorification or nostalgia and to a large extent they have succeeded. What they have done is gather and let the sources speak for themselves and they do with a power that will stay with the reader for a long time.

To this reader, one of the most moving passages in the book is the lullaby near the end of the book that a mother sings to her child. They are waiting patiently for their husband and father who has gone ahead to the new world, to America, to earn enough so that he can send them tickets to come and join him. And while they wait the mother sings to her child about what America will be

a work written by two young people who were born and raised on this continent, who never saw a shtetl in their lives, and yet who are devoting their lives to the study and the appreciation and the continuation of that part of the Jewish heritage. And they are not alone, they are part of a whole circle of young people, raised in this land, who are now into Yiddish language and literature, who study it in college and in graduate school, and who by their existence demonstrate that Hitler did not win a complete victory over the Jews of Eastern Europe and that something of their spirit still goes on. The existence of this book and of the young people who did it is something remarkable that no one could have predicted would take place in this land.

Diane and David Roskies have made an important contribution to Jewish education by creating this book for it is a useful teaching resource that will give the reader some sense of what the world of the shtetl was like. What they have done is choose one particular townlet in Eastern Europe, the town of Tishevitz in the Lublin province, and make it a case study and an archetype of all the others that are no more. They deal with the whole of this shtetl, not just with its pretty parts. They provide a map and they talk about the mill and the bridges and the cemeteries and not just about the synagogues and the study houses. They describe the folklore and the superstitions of the community as well as the many noble things that were there. They draw extensively on memoirs and they make use of folksongs, proverbs, and documents from the community's records. There are photographs here -- of children and of old men, of rabbis and of plain ordinary Jews, of the first Jewish strike and of the first Jewish woman dentist, of a Jewish orchestra and of the market place. They show what the shtetl was like in its pristine innocence, and then what it was like when modernity first entered, and then what it was like when the Nazis came. They have even managed to find some examples of the games and the riddles that the school children played there, such as the

without flags and yet with so much devotion, a kingdom without power and yet with so much holiness. It was a kingdom with so many subdivisions: Hasidim and Mitnagdim and Maskilim, a kingdom with so many capital cities: Mir and Berdichev and Slobodka and Vilna and Polnoye, a kingdom that was a confederation of so many different life styles, so many different accents and customs and emphases, a kingdom that has so many different groups within it and yet that was held together by such a deep inner unity. The Roskies have tried to capture and to convey to us something of the variety and the spirit of this world without yielding to the temptations of sentimentalization or glorification or nostalgia and to a large extent they have succeeded. What they have done is gather and let the sources speak for themselves and they do with a power that will stay with the reader for a long time.

To this reader, one of the most moving passages in the book is the lullaby near the end of the book that a mother sings to her child. They are waiting patiently for their husband and father who has gone ahead to the new world, to America, to earn enough so that he can send them tickets to come and join him. And while they wait the mother sings to her child about what America will be like. We live at a time when America has been dishonored in the minds of many of its young people, when it seems to have been morally stained by its experiences overseas and by the corruption of its government leaders here at home, and so it is very hard for us to conceive of what a "goldene medeine," what a golden country America once seemed to those who crossed the ocean with so much difficulty in order to come here. We take America for granted now, we simply assume its prosperity and its freedom for we have never known anything else, but listen to this lullaby and you get some sense of what a wonder and a gift and a blessing America once was. Perhaps as the bicentennial draws near we ought to read documents like this lullaby in order to recapture once again

(Continued on page 9)

Thursday, July 3, 1975

BOOK REVIEW - - -

(Continued from page 8)

some awareness of how precious  
America once was:

Sleep my child, my comfort, my  
beauty  
Hush and go to sleep,  
Sleep my son, my only Kadesh,  
Sleep, my infant son.

By your cradle sits your mama,  
Sings a song and weeps,  
Someday you will know the  
reason,  
What was on her mind.

Your daddy's in America,  
Little son of mine,  
But you are just a child now,  
So hush and go to sleep.

This America is for everyone,  
They say, a great piece of luck,  
And for Jews a garden of Eden,  
A rare and precious place.

There people eat chollah in the  
middle of the week,  
Little son of mine,  
I'll cook chicken broth for you  
So hush and go to sleep.

He will send us twenty dollars,  
And his picture too,  
And he'll send for us, God bless  
him,  
And bring us there to him.

But till it comes, that blessed  
letter,  
Hush and go to sleep,  
Sleep is a precious healer,  
So hush and go to sleep.

If a  
wha  
wor  
lulla  
Th  
now  
sma  
Jew  
the  
that  
daug  
Amer  
under  
the  
compl  
of its  
steera  
Ameri  
spirit  
knapsa  
settle  
ancient  
redeem  
of the s  
study  
re-esta  
Israel.  
have b  
differe  
there.  
Dr. I  
marve  
Easte  
the I  
revel  
Israe  
Eas  
tior  
Wit  
the  
pro  
Eas  
the  
anc  
are

Rest...