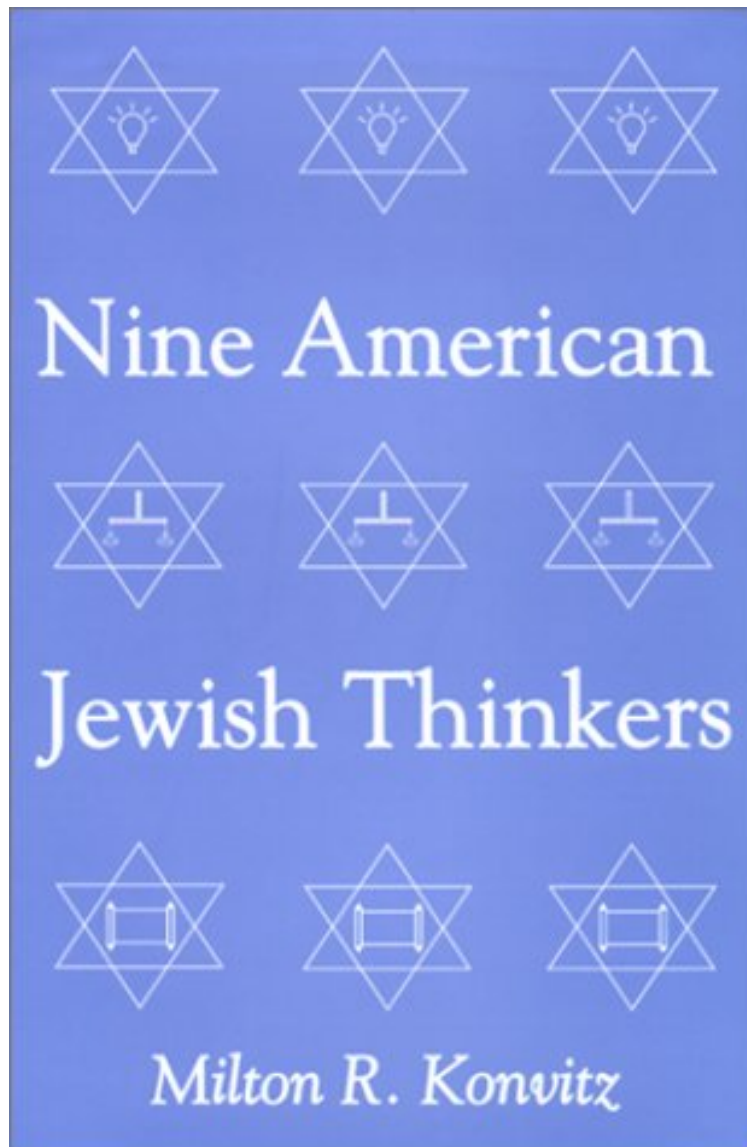


(Free pdf) Nine American Jewish Thinkers

## Nine American Jewish Thinkers

*Milton Konvitz*

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**Milton Konvitz : Nine American Jewish Thinkers** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nine American Jewish Thinkers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Jewish and American values of social justiceBy Shalom FreedmanMilton Konvitz was for many years one of the most respected, and well- known teachers at Cornell University. His teaching emphasized the values of social justice and respect for Law. His deep connection with the Jewish tradition and his great love for American society combined to make him an advocate for what is best in both

traditions. In these essays he writes of philosophers, and jurists, who contributed much to American life in promoting social justice. This is an exemplary work by an exemplary teacher of great moral integrity. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nine essays offering concise intellectual biographies By Midwest Book Review Divided into three parts reflecting Milton Konvitz's range of intellectual interests, *Nine American Jewish Thinkers* comprises nine essays offering concise intellectual biographies of three philosophers (Horace M. Kallen, Morris Raphael Cohen, Sidney Hook), three American Court Justices (Louis D. Brandeis, Benjamin N. Cardozo, Felix Frankfurter), and three rabbis (Leo Jung, Robert Goris, Jacob Agus). The author brings a special value to his commentaries in that he enjoyed a friendship with six of the persons whose lives and work he examines. *Nine American Jewish Thinkers* is so well written and presented that it can be readily recommended to both scholarship and the non-specialist general reader with an interest in Judaic studies, biographies, and intellectual life.

The nine American Jews of whom Milton Konvitz writes are philosophers, jurists, or rabbis, widely known and readily accepted as American Jewish thinkers. Their work reflects all essential Jewish values. Each person in his own way has dedicated his work to the betterment of life and the advancement of human ideals. In this sense, their Jewishness is not defined by religion alone. Americanism permeated all they thought and all they did. Konvitz argues that in the complex modern world, secularists often serve God more handsomely than do members of synagogues or churches. For example, when the Supreme Court in 1954 (with Felix Frankfurter playing a key role behind the scenes) agreed to outlaw segregation of the races in public schools, was the Court's action secular or religious? When Congress passed the statute known as the Americans with Disabilities Act, requiring equal treatment of handicapped persons, was the action secular or religious? Is a minimum wage act secular or religious? Is Medicaid a secular or a religious act? Konvitz believes the distinction is not useful, or even possible. The book is divided into three parts, reflecting Konvitz's range of intellectual interests. The nine essays offer concise intellectual biographies of three American Jewish philosophers, three Supreme Court Justices, and three rabbis. The philosophers-Horace M. Kallen, Morris Raphael Cohen, and Sidney Hook-are world-renowned. The jurists-Louis D. Brandeis, Benjamin N. Cardozo, and Felix Frankfurter-hold prominent places in American legal history. And the three rabbis-Leo Jung, Robert Gordis, and Jacob Agus-are known wherever Jewish thought is studied. By treating with equal seriousness the lives and writings of both religious and secularist thinkers, the author intentionally minimizes the conventional antagonism and frequent conflict between religion and secularism. An unusual feature of the book is the fact that the author was a close friend of six of the persons whose lives and work are examined, allowing him a perceptive insight into their character and thought. Although the book is about serious subjects, its graceful style makes the contents easily accessible to lay persons as well as scholars and students of Judaica.

From Library Journal In this intellectual biography, Konvitz (industrial and labor relations law, Cornell Univ.; Torah and Constitution) focuses on three philosophers, three jurists, and three rabbis whom he respects and who, he feels, shaped his world. Among them are Horace Kallen, Louis Brandeis, and Robert Gordis. Konvitz briefly introduces each person, then describes how his work influenced his profession and U.S. society. Naturally, the rabbis' contributions were strongly connected to Jewish practice and thought as they sought to define religious presence. Social responsibility and conscience were the driving forces behind the work and thought of the lawyers as well as the philosophers, for whom justice and fairness were the all-important guides. Interesting but specialized, this is a secondary purchase for public or undergraduate libraries, where there is need or interest in books about contributors to U.S. society. DNaomi E. Hafter, Broward Cty. P.L., Ft. Lauderdale, FL Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. These short profiles get straight to the essential biographical facts and teachings of three philosophers, Horace Kallen, Morris R. Cohen, and Sidney Hook; three jurists, Brandeis, Cardozo, and Frankfurter; and three rabbis, Leo Jung, Robert Gordis, and Jacob B. Agus... Not comparative, the essays may be read independently, but they all focus on recurring issues: the individual and community within society, boundaries between religion and secular outlooks, and civil rights and duties. Among his best writing His book shows how nine thinkers found that grounding in two cultures, Jewish and American, enriched their contributions to both. General readers and legal professionals; faculty and researchers. S. Ward, Choice "These portraits, previously published and now collected in this volume, deserve to be read not merely twice, but in two very different ways." Midstream About the Author Milton R. Konvitz (1908-2003) was a professor of law and professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition, he was the founder of Cornell's department of Near Eastern studies and of its program in Jewish studies. He is the author and/or editor of many important books in constitutional law, Judaic studies, and philosophy, including *Liberian Code of Laws Revised*, *On the Nature of Value: The Philosophy of Samuel Alexander*, and *Nine American Jewish Thinkers*.