Niebuhr, Reinhold (1892-1971)

Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr was an influential pastor and theologian in America. His first stage of thought was oriented around liberal pacifism, later he turned to the program of the social gospel and finally to “Christian realism.” Niebuhr’s father was a German immigrant Protestant pastor; his mother also came from an immigrant pastor’s family. Niebuhr completed his theological education at Eden Theological Seminary (Webster Groves, Missouri) and Yale Divinity School and was ordained in 1913. After working as a minister in Detroit, Michigan, in 1928 he joined the staff of Union Theological Seminary which became his academic home. In 1930 he started the Fellowship of Socialist Christians and in 1935 the journal *Radical Religion*. Later he founded and led the Liberal Party in New York and the organization Americans for Democratic Action. In 1941 he founded the journal *Christianity and Crisis.* Niebuhr addressed many social issues and supported military engagement against Nazi Germany. Love, justice, equality and human responsibility formed the central components of his ethics. His Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941), provided an account of human freedom in discourse with theological and philosophical traditions.

Richard Wightman Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: a biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985)

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