Niebuhr, Reinhold (1892–1971)

Niebhur 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 a theological education and was ordained in 1913. After working as a minister, 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.

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

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