

Weil, André

Souvenirs d'apprentissage. (Memories of apprenticeship). (French) Zbl 0733.01024
Vita Mathematica, 6. Bâle etc.: Birkhäuser. 201 p. sFr 78.00; DM 88.00 (1991).

Here is a story, told by a mathematician, spanning his life from the beginning of this century, until the bombing of the Hiroshima. André Weil, one of the founders of the Bourbaki is a primary source of information on this mathematical phenomenon. Thus he explains that discussions with Henri Cartan on the level of generality of Stokes' formula in teaching led to the founding of Bourbaki. The reader will find topics such as early education at l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, on Sorbonne, Collège de France, on textbooks, on inadequacy of American college education, on many mathematicians who shaped mathematics of the 20th century, on Bhagavad Gita and Sanscrit, Nehru, Gandhi and life in India, on places, universities and mathematicians from Soviet Union, Finland, Norway, Germany, Italy, to England, France, USA and Brazil, on necessity of learning how to type in a development of a mathematician, on reasons for disproportionate influence of Jews in the development of recent Western culture and southern Brahmins in India, on the Nazis and politics, on religions, on prisons (where he was at least twice) and a claim that his best mathematical work was done while imprisoned in Rouen, for trying to avoid the draft, on finding a position at an American university and immigration laws and many more. This book is a highly recommended reading, very interesting, in the least because the author has a definitive opinion on about every aspect of human activity, thus prompting the reader to agree or disagree as definitely and as engagingly. There is an English translation of the book with translator's comments (and sometimes censored translations of a few "vulgar" phrases). Unlike the original, the translation has an index of names.

Reviewer: R.Dimitrić (Stanford)

MSC:

[01A70](#) Biographies, obituaries, personalia, bibliographies

[01A65](#) Development of contemporary mathematics

Cited in **3** Reviews

Cited in **2** Documents

Keywords:

[Bourbaki](#); [French and German mathematical schools](#); [Indian mathematics](#); [Hadamard](#); [Delsarte](#); [Cartan](#); [algebraic geometry](#)

Software:

[GITA](#)