

American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise. Edited by Shulamit Reinharz and Mark A. Raider. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005. lix + 393 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, tables, notes, glossary, and index. \$60.00 (cloth); \$26.00 (paper).

Finally, a comprehensive book for teaching about American Jewish women and their role in the creation of American Zionism and the State of Israel. Although I am not currently teaching American Jewish history or women's history, this book makes me want to shift back in that direction. It is a superb teaching tool and an excellent introduction to a long overlooked subject.

Through the use of scholarly essays, a variety of articles, and primary accounts, *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise* provides everything one needs to begin a critical study. It demonstrates "that it is virtually impossible to appreciate the scope of pre-state Zionist activity in the United States—and some key social and political initiatives in Palestine—without considering the pivotal role played by American Jewish women leaders and women's groups in advancing and sustaining the Zionist agenda" (p. xx). The editors successfully argue that "the nexus between American Jewish women, the Zionist enterprise, and the Land of Israel was more broadly and richly developed—and that it began much earlier—than most scholars have previously recognized" (pp. xxiii). Therefore, the relationship should be studied as an important aspect of American Jewish history. With this in mind, the editors constructed the book to promote scholarship in the field.

Unlike most anthologies, this work is structured to gradually educate the uninitiated reader. Each chapter builds on the previous one. The introduction supplies a concise history of Zionism, the formation of Israel, and the relationship between Zionist organizations and American Jews. A map and detailed timeline place the subjects in geographic and historical context while the comprehensive footnotes and introductory material do the same for the sections and chapters. The book considers questions including how American Jewish organizations differed from those in Europe and the role of women and Judaism in the United States. It is organized into four parts: "Three Generations of American Jewish Women and the Zionist Idea"; "American Jewish Women's Organizations and the Zionist Enterprise"; "Aliyah, Social Identities, and Political Change"; and "Women Report and Remember: Documentary Portraits." It moves from proto-Zionist writings to analytical essays on organizational formation and individual women—some accompanied by primary documents—and concludes with writings by American women who chose to make Israel their home. Significantly, it reinterprets the careers of familiar luminaries such as Henrietta Szold and Golda Meir and introduces readers to relatively unknown women including kibbutz founder and pioneer public health nurse, Sara Bodek, and secret fundraiser for the Haganah, Rose Viteles. I especially appreciated the eyewitness accounts in the fourth section for they bring intimacy to the book and make readers feel as if they were in

dialogue with the authors. Although Irma Lindheim and Zipporah Porath made very different contributions to Zionism, their personal stories help the reader identify with the immigration experience.

The weaknesses of the book are few, but readers should be forewarned that not all of the chapters are of the same quality. While some, like Mark A. Raider's chapter on pioneer women and Shulamit Reinharz's on Irma Lindheim, are well-written and thought-provoking, a few chapters read like conference presentations while a couple of others seem like high school papers. The contributors come from a variety of scholarly backgrounds and this at times makes the book interesting and at other times just uneven. The index, although useful, is not complete.

American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise will be of value to students as an introduction to the subject, academics beginning research, and general readers. It should be relevant for women's studies, American Jewish history, Zionism, and Jewish women's literature and history classes. The editors' innovative structure—using primary documents and secondary articles together for documentary evidence and analysis—is a model for other teaching anthologies. Reinharz and Raider's book would have helped me when I first began to study the relationship between America and the Holy Land for it brings alive the events and people who I later researched and wrote about.

Ava F. Kahn

Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement. By Carol Faulkner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 200 pp. Photographs, notes, and index. \$39.95 (cloth).

In this thought-provoking work, Carol Faulkner traces the efforts of white and black women to shape the American government's response to freedmen during Reconstruction. She makes a convincing argument that a distinctly female Reconstruction effort emerged, staffed primarily by women and shaped by contemporary gender conventions. Drawing on the biographies of activist women, Faulkner shows how they advocated for a more direct and longer-lasting government role in freedmen's relief. She contends that gender played as central a role in Reconstruction policies as race, since crucial concepts like dependency, free labor, and moral justice had gendered connotations.

Faulkner contends that during the Civil War a "uniquely female perspective on freedmen's relief developed" which focused on women's "empathy for the poverty and exploitation of former slaves" (p. 10). While stressing the need for self-reliance, women backed up their lectures with a helping hand full of clothing, food, and other necessities. This brought them into direct conflict with male abolitionists and military officials who advocated free labor ideology and who saw public women and personal dependency as threats to the American way of life.