Having paved the way in Russia and Poland, East European Jewish women, as American immigrants, would play major roles in the accommodation to the New World of America. Here, they would negotiate the boundaries between the cultures as agents of assimilation, embracing the consumer goods and leisure pastimes that would define their new American families. At the same time, they would act as buffers against the dissolution of the group, choosing to remain in the immigrant milieu and later to prefer their own kind, setting limits, which Jewish males would come to resent, to the project of assimilation.

In the concluding chapter, "The Sexual Politics of Jewish Identity," Hyman turns to the highly uncomfortable juncture of antisemitism and misogyny. She posits that Jewish men responded to antisemitic portrayals feminizing them by creating negative representations of Jewish women. The result, she argues, was that Jewish men constructed a modern Jewish identity that devalued women and marked them as the Other in Jewish culture. (N.B. This discussion tellingly resonates for those familiar with more recent Jewish authorities' hostility to the contemporary Jewish feminism Hyman helped launch.)

An expansive work, sweeping across modern Jewish history from 1850 to 1950, this challenging book is essential reading for all concerned with the historical intersections of gender, ethnicity, and modernity. Yet, I also recommend it to those for whom such historical scholarship rarely resonates. Contemporary American Jewish communal leaders are desperately seeking paths to Jewish life viable for the twenty-first century. Hyman's book points by illustration of the past to how Jewish men and *Jewish women* who went before negotiated the very same questions puzzling their descendants today.

Pamela S. Nadell
American University

Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the 20th Century. By Samuel C. Heilman. The Samuel & Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1995. xvi + 190 pp. Tables, notes, and index. $30.00 (cloth); $17.95 (paper).

Samuel C. Heilman, now a distinguished American Jewish sociologist, immigrated to the United States as a child in 1950, accompanied by his parents, survivors of the Nazi concentration camps. In this volume, based on the Stroum lectures that he delivered at the University of Washington, Heilman portrays American Jewish life in the decades since he arrived on these shores. The story he tells is one of declension, and like so many other recent chroniclers of contemporary trends in American Jewish life, he is disheartened:

> [T]oday the younger Jews are not just overwhelmingly native born, they are native Americans, integrated into American society and as such more distant from public and civil Judaism and its more parochial manifestations of

> traditional observance and identity and even from an ethnic or political connection to Israel. If they represent the future of Judaism in America, it is a future that is significantly less Jewishly intense and involved. (p.124)

Heilman's earlier work, particularly his celebrated *Synagogue Life* (1973), drew upon rich ethnographic data, focused on Orthodox Jews, and was heavily influenced by the methodological insights of Erving Goffman. Here, however, he relies largely upon surveys, press reports, and intuition. His prose is lively and his anecdotes telling, but his conclusions offer few surprises and leave many questions unanswered.

Heilman's central thesis concerns "the emergence in the late sixties and the seventies of two distinct types of American Jews" (p.65): minimalists, who form the majority, and activists, a far smaller minority. How and why this polarization came about he does not adequately explain, nor does he relate his findings to those of Robert Wuthnow and others who discern similar trends in American religion generally. Jack Wertheimer's *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America* (1993), which apparently appeared too late to be consulted, is far more successful in this regard. Other students of contemporary Jewry question whether the bipolar model applies at all. In the new edition of his *Community and Polity* (1995), for example, Daniel Elazar uses the same data Heilman relies upon but comes up with five major categories of American Jews—Integral Jews, Participants, Affiliated Jews, Contributors and consumers, and Peripherals (p.92)—and discerns positive trends in contemporary Jewish life that elude Heilman entirely.

Heilman is strongest when he abandons his charts to provide readers with the mood and feel of the eras he evokes. He also contributes an original, important and in some ways surprising analysis of the world he knows best: contemporary Orthodox Judaism. But he is weak on history—a misleading quotation from New Amsterdam's Governor Peter Stuyvesant is based on a quote taken from *Time* magazine (p.18)—and his analysis of contemporary data relies too heavily on broad-gauged population surveys. Such qualitative changes in Jewish life as feminism, spiritual renewal, the renaissance of Jewish learning, and other difficult-to-quantify religious developments all receive short-shrift.

Future historians may read Heilman's "portrait" as something of a period piece. It bespeaks the crisis of confidence that pervades the contemporary American Jewish community and ends, as Howard Morley Sachar's *A History of the Jews in America* (1992) also does, with a call to Zion. Coming from Heilman, the child of Holocaust survivors, the *cri de coeur* is particularly poignant and revealing: "If I am to be certain that my children and their children will continue to be actively Jewish," he concludes, "then the boat that brought my family here to America in 1950 may still have another trip to make" (p.164).

Jonathan D. Sarna
Brandeis University