FROM THE EDITORS

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In the last few years, feminism has lost several leaders with Jewish backgrounds — including, notably, Betty Friedan, Andrea Dworkin, Rita Arditti, and — just last month — Adrienne Rich. Their departures — and the aging, retirements, and deaths of numerous other Jewish women who were prominent in Second Wave feminism — along with other factors, seems to be accompanied by a lessening of attention to Jewish women’s concerns within women’s studies. This is not due to a lack of publication, however, and anyone who teaches women’s studies and wants to apply a gender lens to the diverse Jewish community has several excellent new works to choose from.

In this issue of Feminist Collections, we review four such books, two offering historical perspectives and two focusing on contemporary Jewish feminism and gender patterns. For reviewers Ruth Abrams (“Ladies in Hats and Other Jewish Gender Surprises,” p. 1) and Rebecca Ennen (“Who’s Afraid of Jewish Patriarchy?,” p. 6), who are themselves steeped in contemporary Jewish life, the questions addressed are more than academic, whether they are couched in scholarly articles or asked in essays aimed at a more general audience. We invite our readers — Jewish and otherwise — to examine these thoughtful reviews and to ponder with our reviewers the role of Jewish women in postwar America, gendered patterns of work, education, and family in American Jewish life, and feminist understandings of the Jewish past, present and future.

Reproductive choice for women — or, perhaps more accurately, the war over reproductive choice — is much in the news these days. When rights are being eroded or threatened, it’s good to have reliable sources of the history of those rights. One notable resource is the reproductive-health archive at Duke University’s Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture. Laura Micham, women’s studies librarian, gender and sexuality history curator, and Merle Hoffman Director of the Bingham Center, introduces us to the collection in this issue. Below is a snippet from just one of the documents the Center holds; a few others are shown on pages 12–13.

Take particular note of the “e-sources” described on pages 14–17. If you use Google Chrome, try out the “Jailbreak the Patriarchy/Binary” extensions, and let us know your — and your students’ — reactions! And speaking of students, might you know some who would benefit from reading The Guy’s Guide to Feminism? It’s reviewed by one of our students on pages 19–20.

P.H.W. & J.L.