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Prudence Wright Holmes, an actor and writer, compiled this collection of essays, articles, interviews and other sample writings of Jewish women in connection with a brief biography on each woman represented, “to be viewed as a construction of consciousness raising” (i). Doris B. Gold, the editor of this collection, explains in her introductory preface that the goal of this collection was to gather the thoughts of Jewish women voicing their opinions and experiences on an array of topics holding a variety of positions in society. The topics covered in this collection are “politics, war and peace, feminism, workplace discrimination, family-problems” (iii). One of the shortcomings of this collection, as explained by Gold, is the lack of women found in several fields such as space science and programmers.

42 women are represented in this collection and because of the Alphabetic organization of the biographies, the book has an encyclopedic feel to it. The essays cover a variety of perspectives from women holding different positions in society. For instance, there are women politicians, such as Dianne Feinstein or Bella Savitsky Abzug, who talk about their experiences of being elected officials to businesswomen. For instance, Muriel Siebert shares her experience of being one of the first women to work on Wall Street. The stories of these women are on one hand very different from each other because of the variety of topics covered, however there are similarities in the experiences because they share two characteristics: they are women and they are Jewish.

To illustrate the diversity of opinions and themes voiced in this book I have chosen two women, an athlete and a businesswoman. The first story I have chosen is from Gretel Bergman, an athlete who competed during Hitler’s Third Reich in her discipline of high jump. Bergman went to school in Germany where she had excelled at her sport. When Hitler came to power she was forbidden to go in any cafes, restaurants or enter places where she had trained because she was Jewish. Bergmann decided to go to England where in 1934 she won the British High Jump Championship. Because she was the best in her discipline the Nazis wanted her to compete in the Olympics, so they sent her father to force her to come back to Germany. She refused, but he explained to her that there would be dire consequences for her family if she did not return. In this interview, Bergmann shares some of what she experienced while training with the Nazis, who to her surprise where very nice to her. Bergmann describes her best friend as a “Super Nazi” and suspects that most of her teammates where in the Hitler party. Bergmann explains that she also knew the Nazis opinions of the Jews and she did not believe they would actually let her compete in the Olympics and feared what they would do to get rid of her.

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In the end the Nazis claimed she was injured and unable to compete, which was a great relief to her. I have chosen this story not only to illustrate that many of the stories are the memoirs of these women, but also because this is a very unique voice that should not be forgotten.

To contrast this story I have chosen a very different woman, who fought for her rights in an occupation which had been dominated by white males. Muriel Siebert describes her experiences upon arriving on Wall Street and how she established her place in that environment. She suffered discrimination as a woman which she proved while applying for a particular job. When she sent in her application with her name on it, she was refused a position, however when she sent the same application with only her initials on it, the job was offered to her. Siebert’s and Bergmann’s stories illustrate the range of stories and topics presented in this collection, but they also show the struggles these women endured to prove themselves in society.

This collection of essays is an excellent source for readers embarking in the study of feminism, focusing on the experiences of Jewish women who have fought for women’s rights. The footnotes are a helpful resource to find the sources of the text and guide readers who want to further research these women. The book also reaches a larger audience because there is great variety of women represented.

Unfortunately, the pieces on each woman are very brief, which seems to be unnecessary because of the large print of the book. The reader is left to wonder why this collection was not somewhat expanded. The introduction is also very short, only three pages, and expends too much effort explaining why certain things were not included instead of focusing on what was included and why. Most texts are accessible to all readers, however there are some texts that require the reader to have background knowledge of the times or religious aspects in order to understand the struggles of the women. This could have been addressed in the introduction.

The book is overall a great resource for readers who are just embarking in the study of feminism, specifically the experiences of Jewish women. Even though the experiences are so different from each other and span over 125 years, there is a sense of commonality among the experiences: the struggle of the women trying to change the world around them. This book not only shows the changes that have been made by women in many different fields in the last 125 years but it points to the work that still needs to be done.