

# [PDF] Jew Vs Jew: The Struggle For The Soul Of American Jewry

Samuel G. Freedman - pdf download free book

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Samuel G. Freedman  
Author of The Information

**Books Details:**

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**Description:**

*Jew vs. Jew* is Samuel G. Freedman's passionate story of the "struggle for the soul of American Jewry." Freedman believes that three fundamental questions are rending the American Jewish community today: "What is the definition of Jewish identity? Who decides what is authentic and legitimate Judaism? And what is the Jewish compact with America?" Exploring these questions leads Freedman down a number of wild paths. He listens patiently to the fierce neighborly squabbles in

Great Neck, New York; he reconstructs the tension-filled final days of a labor Zionist summer camp in the Catskills; he witnesses orthodox Jews attacking American conservative Jews worshipping at the foot of the Western Wall. Freedman expertly sketches the major conflicts in American Judaism-- "secularist against believer, denomination against denomination, gender against gender, liberal against conservative, traditionalist against modernist even within each branch." The book's conclusions (such as "America without Jews is unimaginable, and the brave assimilationists made that possible, even if the price was much of their own distinctiveness as Jews") are not particularly groundbreaking. But *Jew vs. Jew* is a thoughtful and beautifully written assessment of the precarious situation of Jewish identity in America today. --*Michael Joseph Gross* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From Publishers Weekly** Though it almost always presents a united front to the world, the American Jewish community, according to acclaimed journalist Freedman (*The Inheritance*; *Upon This Rock*; etc.), is a house divided against itself. With the small contingent of the Orthodox on one side, and predominant Reform and Conservative Jews on the other, the fault lines are threatening to break into yawning fissures. Even the Orthodox are divided between the centrist Modern Orthodox of Yeshiva University and the ultra-Orthodox of Agudath Israel and the Hasidim falling further to the right. In sharply pointed tableaux, Freedman shows that American Jews cannot agree among themselves on who is a Jew, how far women's equality should go or even whether to build a new synagogue complex in a Cleveland suburb. The depth and excellence of Freedman's reporting shines in his nuanced portraits of individuals on both sides of each debate he outlines: David Gottesman, a Modern Orthodox Jew who wants to build an Orthodox synagogue in the largely Reform suburb of Beachwood, Ohio; Rachel Adler, the feminist theologian who divided a progressive congregation when she tried to introduce gender balance into the central part of the prayer service; Harry Shapiro, a good-hearted loner but ultra-Orthodox hawk regarding the PLO man who placed a bomb (supposedly rigged not to go off) in a Conservative synagogue where Israeli leader and peace negotiator Shimon Peres was scheduled to speak. All the portraits are objective, even sympathetic, and yet Freedman doesn't mask how ugly the battles can become: in Ohio, one Orthodox Jew calls his opponents Nazis. This outstanding report is sure to fuel the flames on all sides of the debate. Agent, Barney Karpfinger. (Aug.)

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