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Jonathan D. Sarna

A GREAT AWAKENING

The Transformation That Shaped Twentieth Century American Judaism And Its Implications For Today

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Jonathan D. Sarna

Learning from History

A century ago, the American Jewish community became deeply concerned about its viability. The assumptions that had guided its thinking for a generation were tested and found wanting. Jews wondered, neither for the first time nor for the last, whether Jewish life in this country would continue.

This essay looks back at a transforming moment in our past in an effort to place contemporary challenges into historical perspective. What makes the inquiry particularly pertinent is the fact that the American Jewish community *met* the multiple challenges it faced. An imaginative vision and innovative ideas revitalized its spirit and restored its self-confidence. The result—laden with implications for today—was a community that experienced a renewed sense of mission and an awakening of new life.

American Jews rarely look to history for insights into issues of contemporary concern. Critical challenges that emerge are inevitably seen as 'new' problems. History, it is assumed, has nothing to say about them.

In fact, history has a great deal to offer when properly studied. The misfortune, as Gerson Cohen pointed out years ago in an address to Jewish educators, is that we have failed to present history in a way that brings "its relevance home to the Jewish student."[1] What we need—a far cry from what most Jews are taught—is a history that places today's complex issues into context and perspective. Such a history would belie the

The assumption, then, is that East European Jews were responsible for introducing a "new spirit" into American Jewish life. They overwhelmed the hitherto dominant Reform Movement, reducing it, statistically, "to the position of a denomination of high social level representing only a fraction of the American Jews." Scholars like Nathan Glazer and Henry Feingold go so far as to argue that without this immigration American Jews might well have assimilated and disappeared.[4]

Yet, well-rooted as this view is within twentieth-century American Jewish historiography, it does not stand up under close scrutiny. Nobody, of course, disputes that East European Jewish immigration had a profound historical impact. But it is extraordinarily difficult to argue that the immigration challenge is central to the whole period, sufficient in and of itself to explain all of the many changes that historians attribute to it. Three problems with the interpretation are particularly daunting.

First, the interpretation is, in many ways, anachronistic. Many of the changes attributed to mass immigration actually took place earlier, either before 1881 or before American Jews realized how portentous the immigration would be. So, for example, it is claimed that East European Jews are responsible for breathing a "new spirit" into American Judaism, resulting in a considerable movement back to tradition even among native-born Jews. Yet in fact this movement began much earlier, in the late 1870s, and was associated not with immigrants but with a core of American-born young people, particularly in Philadelphia and New York. Reports that "genuine Orthodox views are now becoming fashionable among Jewish young America" circulated as early as 1879,[5] and that same year saw the establishment of the new journalistic voice of these young people, the *American Hebrew*,

he Immigrant Interpretation"

s from 1881-1914 are generally known in American Jewish raphy as the era of mass immigration, the period when European Jews were overwhelmed by East European Jews and n's Jewish population increased twelve-fold. Most historians hat whatever else happened during these years was a response migration, a subsidiary consequence of the era's main theme. k's interpretation sums up what is essentially a consensus view:

> e tidal wave of East European Jewish immigrants which an after 1881 inundated the Jewish community and trans- ned the confident [R]eform majority into a defensive minor- In the wake of the radically different values and attitudes of newcomers and the problems created by their arrival, the cess of adaptation and adjustment began anew. A new burst organizational energy led to new modes of accommodation to the creation of the complex institutional and ideological orama of twentieth-century American Jewry.[2]

is view is not new; indeed, one finds it expressed as early as Rabbi Solomon Schindler's famous *mea culpa* sermon entitled s I Have Made." Schindler, who had by then abandoned r radicalism and become a kind of born-again Jew, a *baal* believed that post-Civil War Jews "seemed near assimilation." ing contemporary scholars, he attributed subsequent changes, g his own sense of personal guilt for having formerly espoused on, to what he called the "new spirit" that East European brought with them:

> loud came up out of the East and covered the world. It ught here to us two millions of people. Whilst they were erent from us in appearance and habits, there were ties of

assumes, again wrongly, that the religious history of America's Jews was exclusively shaped by immigrating East Europeans. Instead of viewing American Jewish history in its broadest context, noting parallels to developments within American society and in Europe, the immigrant interpretation reflects and encourages a lamentable tunnel-vision that clouds our understanding of what the period's history was really about.

A Jewish Renaissance in America

Contemporaries understood turn-of-the-century developments in American Jewish life quite differently. They used terms like "revival," "renaissance," and "awakening" to explain what was going on in their day, and they understood these terms in much the same way as contemporary Protestants did. The London *Jewish Chronicle* thus reported in 1887 that "a strong religious revival has apparently set in among the Jews in the United States." It was especially struck by the number of American synagogues looking for rabbis and by the comparatively high salaries that rabbinic candidates were then being offered.

Cyrus Adler, writing in the *American Hebrew* seven years later, described what he called an American Jewish "renaissance" and a "revival of Jewish learning." He listed a series of Jewish cultural and intellectual achievements in America dating back to 1879. By 1901, lawyer and communal leader Daniel P. Hays was persuaded that the previous decade had witnessed "a great awakening among our people—a realization that the Jew is not to become great by his material achievements, but by his contribution toward the higher ideals of life

w organizational forms likewise predated mass immigration. ıendous growth of the Young Men's Hebrew Associations, to ıaps the most significant example, began in the mid-1870s. , some 120 of the associations had been founded nationwide, places scarcely affected by immigration.[8] These and other cultural, and organizational changes cannot be attributed to nigration, and are therefore not explicable according to our ınderstanding of late nineteenth-century developments.

ond, besides being anachronistic, the current interpretation traordinarily simplistic. It assumes that a wide array of late th-century developments can all be explained by a single ass migration, and that this one factor was sufficient to full-scale cultural revolution in American Jewish life. Yet of the founding of such new nationwide organizations as the ıblication Society (1888), the American Jewish Historical 1892), Gratz College (1893), the Jewish Chatauqua Society nd the National Council of Jewish Women (1893), as well ıbitious project to produce a *Jewish Encyclopedia* in America which began in earnest in 1898), demonstrate that they originally justified on the basis of the mass migration and r limited initial connection to it. These were instead cultural ational undertakings designed to promote Jewish learning ırt of native Jews, to promote America itself as a center of e, and to counter antisemitism.[9] Admittedly, some of these ions subsequently changed their mission in response to the ıt challenge. But we misunderstand a great deal if we assume, ıy today do, that immigration was the fountainhead from other turn-of-the-century developments flowed.

direct connection with revivalists and revival meetings. They see revivalism and revivalists as the symptoms of the process of cultural stress and reorientation, and not as the prime movers." Borrowing concepts from anthropology and sociology, he defined an awakening as "a major cultural reorientation—a search for new meaning, order, and direction in a society which finds that rapid change and unexpected intrusions have disrupted the order of life."[15] This definition matches, quite precisely, what I see as having happened in the late nineteenth-century American Jewish community.

I shall argue that a "major cultural reorientation" began in the American Jewish community late in the 1870s and was subsequently augmented by mass immigration. The critical developments that we associate with this period—the return to religion, the heightened sense of Jewish peoplehood and particularism, the far-reaching changes that opened up new opportunities and responsibilities for women, the renewed community-wide emphasis on education and culture, the "burst of organizational energy," and the growth of Conservative Judaism and Zionism—all reflect different efforts to resolve the "crisis of beliefs and values" that had developed during these decades.[16] By 1914, American Jewry had been transformed and the awakening had run its course. The basic contours of the twentieth-century American Jewish community had by then fallen into place.

From Confidence to Crisis

The late 1860s and early 1870s were a period of confident optimism in American Jewish life. The Central European Jews who immigrated two decades earlier had, by then, established themselves securely. The

storians of American Judaism have paid scant attention to
.ims.[11] Terms such as "revival," "awakening," and "renaissance"
part in the traditional religious vocabulary of Judaism, and in
they run counter to the standard assimilationist model
its "linear descent," a movement over several generations of
n Judaism, from Orthodoxy to Reform to complete seculari-
ere historians of American Protestantism have long posited
l pattern of revival and stagnation ('backsliding'), a model
holic historians have now borrowed, no such pattern has been
d in the story of American Judaism—at least until we reach
)orary times.[13]

/ argument here, however, is that the explanation offered
of-the-century Jews to describe the developments of their day
ıtially correct. Jews *were* experiencing a period of religious
ural awakening, parallel but by no means identical to what
ıtism experienced during the same period.[14] This multifac-
kening—its causes, manifestations, and implications—holds
o understanding this critical period in American Jewish
explaining much that the regnant "immigration synthesis"
dequately contain.

ore proceeding to make the case for a late nineteenth-century
n Jewish awakening, a methodological problem must be
of. In recent years, Timothy Smith, Jon Butler, and others
stioned whether "religious awakenings," at least as historians
them, ever truly existed. Are they, in Butler's words, "interpre-
)n," perhaps "more a cycle...in the attention of secular writers,"
charges, "than in the extent of actual religious excitement?"

is question was debated at length at a session held in

Germany, they optimistically assumed that prejudice against them would in time wither away. The two well-publicized incidents of the late 1870s—Judge Hilton's exclusion of banker Joseph Seligman from the Grand Union Hotel (1877) and Austin Corbin's public announcement that "Jews as a class" would be unwelcome at Coney Island (1879)—proved so shocking precisely because they challenged this assumption.[19]

The questions posed by Hermann Baar, Superintendent of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, in his response to Corbin's outburst, were the questions that Jews in all walks of life suddenly had to ask of themselves:

> In what age and country do we live? Are we going to have the times of Philip II, of Spain, repeated, or do we really live in the year 1879, in that century of progress and improvement, of education and enlightenment? Do we really live in the year 1879, in that era of moral refinement and cultured tastes, of religious toleration and social intercourse? And if we really live in this era, can such an act of injustice and bigoted ostracism happen on American soil, in this land of the free and brave, in which the homeless finds a shelter and the persecuted a resting place, in which the peaceable citizen enjoys the blessings of his labor and the devout worshiper the full liberty of his religious conscience, and in which humanity teaches to other countries and nations the blessed code of right and justice?[20]

Calls for a "Christian America"

By brazenly defending and legitimating antisemitism on socioeconomic, racial, and legal grounds, incidents such as these paved the way for a depressing rise in antisemitic manifestations of all sorts, from social discrimination to antisemitic propaganda to efforts to stem the tide of Jewish immigrants. Over the next two decades, Jews experienced a

ogues, and, in 1875, a rabbinical seminary. The nation was
g; liberal Jews and Protestants spoke warmly of universalism;
ois and ministers even occasionally traded pulpits.

ıall wonder that Jews looked forward with anticipation to the
a glorious "new era" in history, described by one rabbi in an
:ture delivered "in every important city east of the Mississippi
s a time when "the whole human race shall be led to worship
ighty God of righteousness and truth, goodness and love,"
n Jews would stand in the forefront of those ushering in
len age of a true universal brotherhood."[17]

ginning in the late 1870s, this hopeful scenario was under-
y a series of unanticipated crises that disrupted American
'e and called many of its guiding assumptions into question.
nitism"—a word coined in Germany at the end of the 1870s
ɔe and justify ("scientifically") anti-Jewish propaganda and
ıation—explains part of what happened. The rise of racially
ti-Jewish hatred in Germany, a land that many American Jews
· ties to and had previously revered for its liberal spirit and
ıdvancement, came as a shock. Here Jews had assumed that
ıtion, enlightenment, and human progress would diminish
ɔrejudice directed toward them, and suddenly they saw it
in the highest intellectual circles, and by people in whom they
:d great faith. German antisemitism was widely reported
:he United States, covered both in the Jewish and in the gener-
What American Jews were witnessing," Naomi W. Cohen
was nothing less than "the humiliation of their Jewish parents,
e that could shake their faith in Judaism itself."[18]

.at made this situation even worse was that antisemitism
cularly social discrimination soon spread to America's own
nti-Jewish hatred was certainly not new to America, but Jews

a confused young rabbi named David Stern, who subsequently committed suicide. Stern remarked that the religious agenda of his day was "entirely different" from what it had been before. "Then the struggle was to remove the dross; to-day it is to conserve the pearl beneath."[23]

Mass East European Jewish immigration, coming on the heels of all of these developments, added a great deal of fuel to the crisis of confidence that Jews experienced in the 1880s. In Russia, as in Germany, liberalism had been tested and found wanting; reaction followed. The resulting mass exodus strained the Jewish community's resources, heightened fears of antisemitism, stimulated an array of Americanization and revitalization efforts, and threatened to change the whole character of the American Jewish community once East European Jews gained cultural hegemony.

So visible and longlasting was the transformation wrought by East European Jewish immigration that it eventually overshadowed all other aspects of the late nineteenth-century crisis. From the point of view of contemporaries, however, antisemitism at home and abroad, the specter of assimilation and intermarriage, and the changing religious and social environment of the United States were no less significant.

Faced with all of these unexpected problems at once, American Jews began to realize that their whole optimistic vision of the future had been built on false premises. Even the usually starry-eyed Reform Jewish leader Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, writing in 1881, felt his faith in the future slowly ebbing away:

> There is something wrong among us optimists and humanists, sad experience upsets our beautiful theories and we stand confounded before the angry eruptions of the treacherous volcano called humanity. There is a lie in its nature which has not been

r Richard Gottheil, of Columbia University, complained,
in 1897 to a private meeting of the Judaeans, the cultural soci-
ew York's Jewish elite. "Private schools are being closed against
lren one by one; we are practically boycotted from all summer
and our social lines run as far apart from those of our neigh-
ney did in the worst days of our European degradation."[21]

velopments within American Protestantism added yet anoth-
sion to the mood of uneasiness that I sense in the American
ommunity of this period. The spiritual crisis and internal
that plagued Protestant America during this era—one that
ed all American religious groups with the staggering implica-
Darwinism and biblical criticism —drove Evangelicals and
like to renew their particularistic calls for a "Christian
" Visions of a liberal religious alliance and of close coopera-
veen Jews and Unitarians gradually evaporated. Although
exchanges continued, Jews came to realize that many of
istian friends continued to harbor hopes that one day Jews
ee the light." Much to the embarrassment of Jewish leaders,
ristian liberals looked to Felix Adler's de-Judaized Ethical
novement as a harbinger of Judaism's future course.[22]

the Jewish side, this period witnessed a comparable crisis
rit. Alarmed at religious "indifference," Jewish ignorance,
l-publicized cases of intermarriage, and Felix Adler's success
ing young Jews to his cause, many began to question prior
ons regarding the direction in which American Judaism
ove. Was Reform Judaism really the answer? Had the effort
nize Judaism gone too far? Would assimilation triumph?

he 1880s, the Reform Movement was on the defensive,
acks from both left and right. Its uncertainty found expres-
e 1885 Conference of Reform rabbis that produced the

Sulzberger (1843-1923), the city's foremost Jewish citizen, was the "patriarch" of this group, and his associates (several of whom were also his relatives) included such future activists as Solomon Solis-Cohen (1857-1948), Cyrus Sulzberger (1858-1932), Joseph Fels (1854-1914), Samuel Fels (1860-1950), and Cyrus Adler (1863-1940). All were initially involved in the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia, founded in 1875 to promote social as well as cultural activities of a Jewish nature, including lectures, literary discussions, formal Jewish classes, and the publication of a lively newsletter.

Of primary significance, for our purposes, was their campaign, carried out in association with the YMHA of New York (founded in 1874), for "the Grand Revival of the Jewish National Holiday of Chanucka," complete with appropriate pageants and publicity. This was an effort "to rescue this national festival from the oblivion into which it seemed rapidly falling," and was a direct challenge to Reform Judaism, which had renounced national aspects of Judaism as antithetical to the modern spirit; presumably, the campaign also sought to counteract the evident allure of Christmas. In 1879, the "revival" proved a triumphant success. "Every worker in the cause of a revived Judaism," one of the organizers wrote, "must have felt the inspiration exuded from the enthusiastic interest evinced by such a mass of Israel's people."[26]

A few months before this "revival," on October 5, 1879, several of the young people in this circle bound themselves together in a solemn covenant "for God and Judaism" they called *Keyam Dishmaya* in which they pledged all in their power to bring Jews back "to the ancient faith." Solomon Solis-Cohen's papers preserve letters from a corresponding member of this group, Max Cohen, later librarian of New York's Maimonides Library, that indicate the earnestness and fervor with which these young people undertook their mission.

ɔpia, in short, had proved more distant than expected. The istic prophecies of the 1860s and 70s had failed, the hoped- era" had not materialized, and conditions for Jews in America nd the world had grown worse instead of better. This posed a :risis of the highest order for American Jews and precipitated ral awakening that changed the face of American Jewish life.

"Bottom-up" Revival

t awakenings, at least as historians have described them :a, operate from the top down. A revivalist, like Dwight L. r Billy Sunday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth , stimulated a movement of religious revitalization, usually ıis preaching. In retrospect, scholars discover that he defined ral issues (or less charitably embodied the "cultural confu- ıt characterized his era as a whole. Parallel Jewish awakenings, st, percolated from the bottom up. Young people and others from the religious establishment stood in the forefront ıeteenth-century efforts to promote religious revitalization. their teachings (much more than their preaching) as well as .nizational activities they stimulated the conversions, religious ıt, schismatic conflicts, theological disputations, and nal changes that promoted the cultural transformations we with a religious awakening.

sh awakenings are somewhat more difficult to identify and char- an Protestant ones, since one cannot easily focus on the work ual revivalists. What one can present is evidence of revitalization 't of a whole range of individuals and groups caught up in a ous process aimed at promoting Jewish religious renewal.

ar the most important group seeking to promote Jewish reli-

> while we may not live to see the restoration of our people to the land of their inheritance, we may yet so live that we shall do our share toward hastening these events; we may so live that the work we now are doing will be taken in hand by others who profiting by our experience, our example and our lives, shall continue the good work we are in. May God grant us the ability to continue in the cause, may He raise us above the petty strifes of daily occurrences, may He strengthen us to renewed labor and renewed activity, may He bring us peace of mind wherewith to labor undisturbed, may He bless our covenant and grant us a successful issue in our labors 'for God and Judaism.' Amen![28]

In this letter of 1880, Sulzberger spelled out the three cornerstones of the revival that he and his associates were trying to spawn: They sought, first, to revitalize and deepen the religious and spiritual lives of American Jews; second, to strengthen Jewish education; and third, to promote the restoration of Jews as a people, including their ultimate restoration to the land of Israel.

Together, these goals signified an inward turn among young American Jews. Their response to the cultural crisis of their day was to reject universalism, assimilationism, and the redefinition of Judaism along purely religious lines—themes heavily promoted by Reform Judaism at that time—in favor of a Judaism that was in their view more closely in tune with God and Jewish historical tradition.

The New Leaders

No movement for change can confine itself to secret societies and clandestine cells. For this reason, and in order to promote their lofty aims among the 'movers and shakers' of the American Jewish commu-

.. They who wish to give Israel her true position in the world's
ıy must set a high ideal before them and abide thereby."

another letter, Cohen discussed his forthcoming lecture,
"The Restoration of the Jews," and expressed pleasure "with
ement that is now on foot...to recreate the ancient Hebrew
" He hoped that the Sabbath Movement would result "in
universal observance of other Jewish ordinances and the
nt to higher spiritual life."

hen was all of twenty-six when he expressed these lofty senti-
d still lived at home. His "Israel must be" letter concluded
hurried note, "Mother is calling that it is time to blow out
."[27]

the first anniversary of *Keyam Dishmaya*, one of its leaders
ıty-two-year-old Cyrus L. Sulzberger (1858-1932). He had
ed from Philadelphia to New York and was on the road
ıing a prominent New York merchant and communal
well as the grandfather of the *New York Times* columnist
zberger). Sulzberger summed up the group's achievements
in a remarkable and revealing letter:

> hat fateful 5th of October night' has borne its fruit. The
> l then planted fell on no barren soil. The covenant then
> le has not been broken. We have kept before us that vow
> God and Judaism' and with that we have used all the abili-
> God has given us in His sacred cause. Looking back over
> first year of our Berith [covenant], we have cause to be
> eful to God for the successful manner in which we have
> un our work. We have in the *American Hebrew* a means of
> ressing the community; we, here, [in New York] have in
> Bible Class a means of addressing a smaller community
> ɔm, with God's blessing, we shall redeem to the ancient
> ı. You in the Sunday School did good work in your address
> have further good work to do: there is at least one straying

In the space of a few decades they created, among other things, the Jewish Theological Seminary (1886), the Jewish Publication Society (1888), the American Jewish Historical Society (1892), Gratz College (1893), and Dropsie College (1907). They were associated with the publication of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901-1906); with the movement to bring the renowned Jewish scholar Solomon Schechter to America (he arrived in 1902); with the transfer to America's shores of the scholarly journal, the *Jewish Quarterly Review* (1910); and with the establishment, by the Jewish Publication Society, of American Jewry's first high-quality Hebrew press (1921). They were also involved in the Jewish Bible translation project (1893-1917) and the Schiff Library of Jewish Classics (1914-1936), both specially funded projects of the Jewish Publication Society.

These highly ambitious and for the most part successful undertakings mirror the "organizing process" that Donald Mathews associated with the Protestant Second Great Awakening; they sought to provide "meaning and direction" to Jews suffering from the social and cultural strains of a transitional era.[33] Appropriately, the organizations intended to reach different audiences: Some looked to scholars, some to rabbis and teachers, and some to the Jewish community at large and to non-Jews.

In the case of Cyrus Adler, Naomi W. Cohen describes this multi-tiered cultural agenda as a conscious creation:

> On one level, Adler envisioned the modern training of Jewish scholars, abetted by appropriate library and publication resources. On a second, he aimed for the education of American rabbis and teachers who would inculcate a loyalty to historical Judaism in consonance with acculturation to American surroundings. On still a third, he worked for a community knowledgeable about its heritage, that would appreciate the value of reading books of Jewish interest, of collecting

irst issue, "shall consist of untiring endeavors to stir up our
to pride in our time-honored faith." The newspaper's
; Philip Cowen, recalled half a century later that "we were fully
d that not only New York Judaism, but American Judaism,
ts journalistic redeemers!"[29]

e nine editors of the new newspaper, some Philadelphians,
w Yorkers, were all anonymous—understandably so, since
ranged from twenty-one to twenty-nine. They represented a
ıomenon on the American Jewish scene: Most were American-
s who were at once "strong for traditional Judaism" (two
ıe were rabbis) yet at the same time eager to accommodate
o American conditions.[30]

ır proclivities...are toward 'reformed' Judaism and yet our
ın is toward orthodoxy," the editors admitted in their first
rs later, Max Cohen described his associates as having been
of young American Jews who, while not inordinately addict-
hodoxy as a rigid standardisation of thought and conduct,
pposed to the wholesale and reckless discarding of every-
t was Jewish simply because it was inconvenient, oriental,
ıt in conformity with Episcopalian customs."[31]

he time he published this recollection, in 1920, Cohen and
erstwhile members of his group had moved far beyond
ican Hebrew. Led by the indefatigable Cyrus Adler, who
d the editorial board of the paper in 1894, members of this
New York and Philadelphia Jews established a wide range
l and religious institutions and involved themselves in an
ommunal projects. Some were designed to strengthen what
nown as Conservative Judaism, one of the most significant
aching outcomes of this whole religious awakening.[32]
ere designed to extend the work of Jewish cultural and

Jewish philanthropy had been part of the synagogue's domain and governed by men.

The Jewish Sunday School movement, pioneered by Gratz in 1838, transformed the role of Jewish women still further by making them responsible for the religious education and spiritual guidance of the young. By the time Gratz died, in 1869, it can safely be estimated that the majority of American Jews who received any formal Jewish education at all learned most of what they knew from female teachers. These teachers, in turn, had to educate themselves in Judaism, which they did with the aid of new textbooks, some of them written by women as well.[37]

By the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to a legacy left by Rebecca Gratz's brother, Hyman, women could receive advanced training in Judaism at Gratz College, the first of a series of Hebrew teachers colleges across the United States that trained women on an equal basis with men.[38] In still another transformation, this one beginning in 1851 and confined to Reform temples, women achieved parity with their husbands in the realm of synagogue seating. No longer were they relegated to the balcony or separated from men by a physical barrier; instead, by the late 1870s, mixed seating was the rule throughout Reform congregations.[39] Now, building on these earlier developments, women experienced still more far-reaching changes as part of the late nineteenth-century American Jewish awakening.

The first woman to achieve great prominence in the awakening was the poet Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), who was best known for her poem "The New Colossus," composed in 1883 to help raise funds for the pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty rests.[40] Born in New York to an aristocratic Jewish family of mixed Sephardic and Ashkenazic heritage, she had emerged at a young age as a sensitive poet (her first book was published when she was seventeen), but had

ll these levels sought to promote religious renewal, improved
education, cultural revitalization, the professionalization of
scholarship, a positive Jewish image to the Gentiles, and the
n of American Jewry to a position of greater prominence,
reeminence, among the Jews of the world.

dmittedly, the challenge posed by massive East European
mmigration led, for a time, to a greater rhetorical emphasis upon
inization as a goal, but this should not be exaggerated. Promoters
h renewal understood better than other Jewish leaders did that
concern was not so much how to assimilate the East Europeans,
to ensure that all American Jews would not assimilate completely.
his critical insight, coupled with a prescient sense that American
eeded to prepare itself to play a central role in the affairs of
ewry, that prompted these Jews to participate in the creation of
eat institutions and projects that shaped American-Jewish
and religious life into the late twentieth century.[35]

though this remarkable cohort of Philadelphia and New York
nost of them young, male, and well-educated laypeople, rather
obis [36]—formed the most visible leadership cadre of the late
ith-century awakening, they were by no means its only source
gy. In fact, more than generally realized, the awakening marked
g-point both in the history of American Jewish women and
istory of the American Reform Movement.

The Role of Women

e of women in American Judaism had been undergoing change
e early decades of the nineteenth century. Influenced by the
Great Awakening, Rebecca Gratz of Philadelphia introduced
women into the world of Jewish philanthropy, establishing in

Gilead, and Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*, she abandoned her own skepticism concerning Jewish nationalism and became "one of the most devoted adherents to the new dogma." She embraced it as if it were a full-fledged religion, and in doing so she recognized that she was not alone:

> ...Under my own eyes I have seen equally rapid and thorough conversions to the same doctrine. In the minds of mature and thoughtful men, men of prudence and of earnest purpose, little apt to be swayed by the chance enthusiasm of a popular agitation, it has taken profound root, and in some cases overturned the theories and intellectual habits of a life-time.[44]

With her untimely death, of Hodgkins disease, at the age of thirty-eight, Lazarus became something of a saint to Jews caught up in the late nineteenth-century awakening. A special issue of the *American Hebrew* memorialized her, with tributes "from the foremost literati of the age," and her *Epistle to the Hebrews*, published in pamphlet form in 1900, was kept in print for many years by the Federation of American Zionists.

Even as her memory was kept alive, however, her death came as a blow to the movement for Jewish renewal. It deprived it of its first truly significant convert to the cause, its most inspiring and cosmopolitan intellectual figure, and its foremost advocate (to that time) of what would shortly become known as American Zionism—the other great movement (along with Conservative Judaism) that the late nineteenth-century American Jewish awakening did so much to spawn.[45]

Yet another dimension of the effervescence of late nineteenth-century American Jewish religious life is suggested by the career of Ray Frank, known in her day as the "girl rabbi" and the "female messiah." While not of long-lasting significance, her brief stint as a charismatic woman Jewish revivalist demonstrates that the late nine-

ıtisemitism and the first wave of East European Jewish immi-
shocked Lazarus. In 1882, in a burst of creative energy, she
ł as a staunch defender of Jewish rights, the poet laureate of
ish awakening, and as the foremost proponent of the "nation-
h movement" aimed at "the establishment of a free Jewish
Her oft-quoted poem, "The Banner of the Jew," composed
ɔring of 1882, began with the words "Wake, Israel, wake!"
led on a militant note:

deem not dead that martial fire,
Say not the mystic flame is spent!
ith Moses' law and David's lyre,
Your ancient strength remains unbent.
t but an Ezra rise anew,
lift the *Banner of the Jew*!
rag, a mock at first—erelong
When men have bled and women wept,
guard its precious folds from wrong,
Even they who shrunk, even they who slept,
all leap to bless it, and to save.
ike! for the brave revere the brave![42]

eanwhile, her essays, notably her *An Epistle to the Hebrews*
883), called for "a deepening and quickening of the sources of
nthusiasm" in response to the "'storm-centre' in our history"
s were passing through.[43]

zarus herself soon established close ties with the publisher of
rican Hebrew, where much of her work now appeared, and
ın studying the Hebrew language. Her interest, however,
n the religious revitalization of the Jews, as advocated by the
s of *Keyam Dishmaya*; instead, she placed her emphasis on
ɔeoplehood, emphasizing the virtues of unity, discipline, and

> sions with regard to ceremonials and join hands in a glorious cause, that of praying to the God of their fathers. She emphasized the fact that they shirked their duty if they did not form a permanent congregation and that by being without a place of worship and all that it stands for they were doing an incalculable harm to their children. After Ray finished her sermon, a 'Christian gentleman' who was in the audience arose and said that he had been very much impressed by what he heard and if the Jews would undertake the building of a synagogue, he would present them with a site to be used for that purpose.[49]

Throughout the 1890s, Ray Frank delivered sermons and lectures, mostly in the West, and published articles extolling the virtues of Judaism, the Jewish family, and Jewish women. According to the memoir published by her husband after her death, people "flocked to listen" as she talked on 'Heart Throbs of Israel,' 'Moses,' 'Music and Its Revelations,' 'Nature as a Supreme Teacher,' and related topics.[50] In these lectures, she attacked divisions in Jewish life, called for peace in the pulpit, and promoted spirituality, simplicity, earnestness, and righteousness:

> Give us congregational singing which comes direct from the heart and ascends as a tribute to God.... Give us simplicity in our rabbi, sympathy with things which practically concern us, give us earnestness, and our synagogues will no longer mourn in their loneliness.[51]

On one occasion, she disclosed a mystical vision, a call from God in which she herself was cast in the role of Moses ("I know I hold in my hand the staff of Moses. I kneel and raise my hands in adoration of the Eternal. I pray that all knowledge be mine.... I go down. I will tell all I know to the world.... I must wherever and whenever I can preach my message."[52]) For the most part, however, hers was a conservative message. She opposed women's suffrage, spoke

ly the preserve of traditionalists and proto-Zionists. It was,
a complex nationwide phenomenon that affected a wide
Jews, men and women, in sometimes unpredictable ways.

y (Rachel) Frank (1861[46]-1948), born in San Francisco,
ıoolteacher, writer, and lecturer. Critical of the Judaism of
she published in 1890 a stinging critique of the American
e in response to a New York Jewish newspaper's call for arti-
he question "What would you do if you were a rabbi?" What
ıld not do," she emphasized, was emulate the many abuses
idered characteristic of the pompously materialistic American
e. She called on rabbis to don "the spiritual mantle of Elijah,"
lied that women ("were the high office not denied us")
› the job better.[47]

ɔrtly after this article appeared, Ray Frank achieved momen-
e when she travelled to Spokane, Washington, and became
Jewish woman in the world, may be the first since the time
ophets" to preach from a synagogue pulpit on the Jewish
idays.[48] According to the story widely reported in her day
equently preserved by her husband:

ıappened to be on the eve of the High Holy Days and she
de inquiries concerning the location of the synagogue as she
ıted to attend services. When informed that there was no
agogue and there would be no services, she called on one of
wealthy Jews in town, to whom she had letters of introduc-
ı, and expressed surprise that a town containing many well-
do Jews should be without a place of worship. The man,
o knew Ray Frank by reputation, said, 'If you will deliver a
mon we shall have services tonight.' Ray acquiesced. At
›ut five o'clock on that day special editions of Spokane Falls
zette appeared on the streets announcing that a young lady
uld preach to the Jews that evening at the Opera House.
e place was crowded. After the services were read, Ray spoke

The National Council of Jewish Women, established in 1893, was the first national Jewish organization to take up this challenge. Created at the Jewish Women's Congress of the Columbian Exposition, its original goals explicitly addressed the responsibilities of Jewish women to strengthen Jewish life:

> Resolved, that the National Council of Jewish Women shall (1) seek to unite in closer relation women interested in the work of Religion, Philanthropy and Education and shall consider practical means of solving problems in these fields; shall (2) organize and encourage the study of the underlying principles of Judaism; the history, literature and customs of the Jews, and their bearing on their own and the world's history; shall (3) apply knowledge gained in this study to the improvement of the Sabbath Schools, and in the work of social reform; shall (4) secure the interest and aid of influential persons in arousing general sentiment against religious persecutions, wherever, whenever and against whomever shown, and in finding means to prevent such persecutions.[59]

Faith Rogow, in her recent history of the Council, points out that "no one believed more strongly in woman's ability to save Judaism than did Council women themselves." Motherhood, the primacy of the home, the extension of motherhood into the synagogue—these were the values and goals that Council members proudly espoused. Indeed, "motherhood and its presumed opportunity to influence husbands and children" was touted "as the only possible savior of Jewish life in America." [60]

Through "sisterhoods of personal service," Jewish women extended the sphere of "motherhood" into new realms aimed at combating the social crisis within the Jewish community. Initiated at Temple Emanu-El of New York in 1887, sisterhoods offered Jewish women the opportunity to emulate, from within a synagogue setting, the same kind of philanthropically directed urban missionary work performed

ıch like a Protestant revivalist, Frank was described by those rd her as a spellbinding preacher whose enthusiasm proved ıs. "Before she had finished," the *San Francisco Chronicle* one of her lectures, "her words were dropping like sparks souls of aroused people before her."[54] So well-known had she that at the Jewish Women's Congress, held in Chicago in e was invited to deliver the opening prayer. Four years later, 7,000 people reportedly turned out to hear her at the adult n Chautauqua at Gladstone Park in Portland, Oregon, was billed as "Ray Frank Day."[55]

1898, Ray Frank travelled to Europe, where she met and ın economist named Simon Litman. Her marriage and sojourn he couple did not return until 1902) effectively ended her reer.[56] The success that she demonstrated during her years on e circuit, however, suggests that her message struck a meaning-.[57] On the one hand, she spoke to the spiritual concerns and ıl values of American Jews of her day; on the other hand, r virtue of her sex, she challenged Jews' religious and gender-ımptions. In evoking, simultaneously, both new and old died, but in no way resolved, the cultural contradictions that the religious ferment to which she herself contributed.

aising the issue of women's role both in American society daism, Ray Frank had pointed to one of the central con-he late nineteenth-century American Jewish awakening. In to the manifold crises of the day, particularly assimilation igration, responsibility for "saving Judaism" came increasing-upon the shoulders of women. Just as in Protestantism, ı Judaism, religion had become "feminized." The home, the e, and philanthropic social work came increasingly to be ırt of women's domain, especially among Reform Jews.

in the wake of her first visit to Palestine (1909), she and a few like-minded Zionist women activists in the New York area met to form a new women's Zionist organization, which, at Szold's insistence, would have both a general and a highly specific purpose: "In America, to foster Jewish ideals and make Zionist propaganda; in Palestine, to establish a system of District Visiting Nursing."[63]

In many ways, the new organization did for Jewish women what foreign missions did for Protestant women: It provided them with an opportunity to participate in the 'holy work' of "salvation through social, medical and educational agencies."[64] As the historian of Hadassah's early years explains, Henrietta Szold firmly believed that women, unlike men, were interested in "specific practical projects of immediate emotional appeal to their maternal and Jewish religious instincts." Szold was convinced, therefore, that "we [American Jewish women] need Zionism as much as those Jews do who need a physical home." By working to strengthen Jewish life in the land of Israel, she hoped, women's own Judaism, and American Judaism generally, would be strengthened and renewed.[65]

Redefining Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism, which by the last quarter of the nineteenth-century had become firmly established in the United States, maintained an uneasy relationship with all of these proponents of Jewish renewal. This was understandable: For half a century, young progressive American Jews had marched under the Reform banner and had viewed its program as the wave of the future, the only viable direction for Judaism in the New World to follow. Led by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, many Reform Jews had triumphalistically believed that their brand of Judaism would in time become *Minhag Amerika*, the rite

, industrial and domestic education, day nurseries, kinder-
mployment bureaus: These and related efforts devoted "to the
e needy and the distressed" harnessed the energies of Jewish
ı ways that synagogues never had before. By 1896, practically
or uptown synagogue in New York had established a sister-
l in 1896 a Federation of Sisterhoods was established, in
on with the United Hebrew Charities.

at distinguished these efforts from their more secular coun-
vas their religious character. Indeed, Rabbi David de Sola
ɔunting the activities undertaken by the Orthodox sister-
blished in 1896 at the venerable Shearith Israel Synagogue
ork, stressed its role in "the loyal conservation and transmis-
wish religious values." Increasingly, in response to the per-
sis of the day, women were fulfilling new roles within the
mmunity, expanding on those that they had formerly
ıt almost exclusively within the home.[61]

ɔf these new themes—the cultural and educational work
Jews in Philadelphia and New York, the Zionism of Emma
he spirituality of Ray Frank, salvation through motherhood
ɛd by the National Council of Jewish Women, and the
ork of the Sisterhoods of Personal Service—eventually came
n what became, after our period, the largest and strongest
vish women's organizations created to revitalize American
ɛ: Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America.

ırietta Szold (1860-1945), who played the dominant role
ıblishment of Hadassah in 1912, had been involved in the
ɛwish renewal since she was a teenager, first as an essayist
ıtor, later as Secretary of the Publication Committee (that is,
the Jewish Publication Society, and still later, in addition
ıer work, as a leader of the Federation of American Zionists

the same themes that animated those young people and others who, as we have seen, were self-consciously caught up in the movement for American Jewish renewal. Kohler, for example, called for greater "help and participation" by women in Jewish religious life. He also spoke out on behalf of a publication society and a periodical press to "foster Jewish life, awaken Jewish sentiment and train the Jewish minds and hearts." Criticizing his Reform colleagues for "leaving the home unprovided," he called for a revitalization of Jewish home life, including the renewed observance of Chanukah and major Jewish festivals. In addition, he and others at the conference called for educational reforms to counter the "appalling ignorance...which seems to constantly grow from year to year."[69]

In short, even as the Pittsburgh Platform reaffirmed Reform Judaism's opposition to Jewish nationalism ("We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine...nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state") and reiterated its abrogation of those ceremonial laws "not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization," Reform Jewish leaders did participate wholeheartedly in other efforts to revitalize Jewish life at the end of the nineteenth century. Educational and cultural programs, measures to revitalize Jewish home life, expanded roles for women, and enhanced spirituality in worship all loomed large on the new Reform Jewish agenda. In addition, the Movement participated in a general return to Jewish forms, characterized not only by a revival of certain Jewish ceremonies, like Chanukah and the synagogue celebration of Sukkot, but also by a return to distinctive Jewish terminology, such as greater use of the word "Jew" as opposed to "Hebrew" and "Israelite," and the almost complete abandonment by World War I of such once commonly used terms, borrowed from Protestantism, as the Jewish

led into question. Indeed, some critics argued that Reform, being the solution to the crisis facing American Jews, was ɔart of the problem.

counting those who had never considered Reform Judaism ɛ and favored the moderate traditionalism championed in cades by Isaac Leeser,[66] Reform still found itself on the defen- ɛen by the same crisis of confidence that transformed so much ɛan Jewish life during this period, it struggled to redefine itself. ɛ 1885 Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference, called by Rabbi ın Kohler "for the purpose of discussing the present state can Judaism, its pending issues and its requirements," was most significant attempt to respond to the new situation it found itself. Its objective was clearly stated: to unite the abbinate around "such plans and practical measures as seen d by the hour." Michael A. Meyer explains in his history form Movement that the gathering was actually an attempt ɔwn a set of defining and definitive principles which would ɔh Reform Judaism from a wholly nonsectarian universalism ıe hand and from more traditional expressions of Judaism her." Under attack both from the left and from the right, the ıo came to Pittsburgh now sought to focus Reform Judaism orm bold enough and inspiring enough to, as Kohler put it, forces," "consolidate" and "build."[67]

well-known eight-point "Pittsburgh Platform" produced nference succeeded in its task. It was, in Isaac Mayer Wise's ords, a "Declaration of Independence." It defined more clear- er before the Reform Jewish understanding of Judaism, and vn the gauntlet to those who understood Judaism differently. n, however, as the Platform distanced Reform from ative Judaism" (which Kohler did not apparently distinguish

to the former stress on Judaism as a faith; toward a new emphasis on the spiritual and emotional aspects of Judaism as opposed to the former emphasis on rationalism; and toward the goal of a Jewish homeland as opposed to the diaspora-glorifying ideology of mission that was formerly predominant.

The transformation of women's roles, the revival of Chanukah and other Jewish ceremonies, the shift back to traditional Jewish terminology, the new emphasis on Jewish education and culture, the rise of the Conservative movement, the Zionist movement, the Social Justice movement, and, of course, many individual 'conversions' of assimilated Jews back to their faith: All testify to the magnitude of the transformation that ultimately took place.

Meanwhile, massive East European Jewish immigration heightened the sense of urgency that underlay the work of revival and resulted in parallel efforts to revitalize the Judaism of the ghetto.[74] The result, only discernible in retrospect, was a new American Judaism—the Judaism of the twentieth century.

Reinventing American Judaism: *Four Lessons from History*

What are the implications of these developments for our own day? We face a crisis in many ways parallel to that experienced a century ago. Our community, too, has been rocked by a series of unexpected developments that have shaken it to its core. In our day, too, some of the most basic assumptions of American Jewish life have been called into question. As we once again struggle with the complex issues subsumed under the rubric of "Jewish continuity," there is much, I think, that we can learn from our late nineteenth-century forebears, particularly the following four lessons:

ıst important of all, Reform Judaism in this period offered affected with synagogue life a new alternative means of :xpressing their faith.[71] Following the lead of Rabbi Emil G. f Chicago, it called upon Jews, in the words of the Pittsburgh , to help "solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, lems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present orga- of society."[72] This social justice motif—the Jewish equivalent otestant Social Gospel—became ever more influential within :ircles over the ensuing decades, and provided an alternative k to Judaism for those whose interests focused less on ı on religiously-inspired work.[73]

Paradigm Shift

nineteenth-century American Jewish awakening outlined thus a broad-based and multi-faceted movement of religious parallel to the awakening taking place at the same time with- can Protestantism. Of course, many Jews remained unaffect- –such is always the case with movements of religious revital- Those who did fall under its spell, however, included tradi- and reformers, women as well as men, and Jews living in all f the country. There was no clear focus to this movement, ıl leader, and no listing of agreed-upon principles. What did various participants was a shared sense of cultural crisis ɔnal stress, a palpable loss of faith in the norms, institutions, es, and goals of an earlier era, and an optimistic belief, rly on the part of young people, that through their personal merican Judaism as a whole could be saved.

ı consequence of the awakening, a massive long-term para- t took place within the American Jewish community: a shift

4. **Finally: The American Jewish community benefits from challenges and often emerges from them stronger than before.**[75] Over and over again, the community has confounded those who predicted gloom and doom, and has experienced surprising bursts of new life. There is no guarantee that this will happen again: The New World, after all, contains a number of examples of Jewish communities, like the Jewish community of Jamaica, that assimilated beyond the point of recovery. But if history offers us no guarantee of success, it does at least provide us with a warrant for hope. Late nineteenth-century American Jews, as we have seen, successfully reinvented American Judaism. Let their example instruct us and inspire us.

their emphasis on religious particularism and on Zionism, past wisdom on its head. New historical conditions created vements, new emphases, and new paradigms—the very e of the tried and true. Today, we, too, must be willing to ge some of our most basic assumptions. Even as we support, st support, the so-called "continuity agenda," it bears remem- hat discontinuities— at least of the right sort—may have a mpact still.

We cannot place our trust in magic formulas. Many of gaged in the effort to preserve and revitalize American Jewish ıe nineteenth century did believe that they held the magic for success—spiritual renewal, Jewish education, Zionism, ng the potential of Jewish women, and so forth. In fact, as we n, not one of these panaceas by itself lived up to its advanced ıll of them fell short. Together, however, these efforts succeed- lrously, and in ways that nobody could have predicted in . The lesson, then, is to resist placing all of our eggs in one ty basket.

The most creative ideas for revitalizing Jewish life often m the bottom up, rather than from the top down, and from s rather than insiders. The young (like the *American Hebrew* the alienated (like Emma Lazarus), and those on the periph- wish life (like Louis Brandeis), precisely because they are ded to the community's central assumptions, are the most come up with innovative approaches and creative ideas. es not mean that all of their ideas are worthwhile, but it is calling how many of the central developments in American fe, even in our own day, have come from these "non-estab- " sources. We dare not close our ears to them.

5. *The Jewish Advance* 79 (December 12, 1879), p. 4.

6. Max Cohen to Solomon Solis-Cohen (November 10, 1879), Solomon Solis-Cohen Papers, Collection of Helen Solis-Cohen Sax and Hays Solis-Cohen, Jr., National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, PA. I am grateful to Helen Solis-Cohen Sax, Solomon Solis-Cohen's granddaughter, for granting me access to these papers. See also Philip Cowen, *Memories of an American Jew* (New York: The International Press, 1932), p. 50.

7. See Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Making of an American Jewish Culture," in Murray Friedman (ed.), *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1993), pp. 148-150.

8. Benjamin Rabinowitz, *The Young Men's Hebrew Associations* (1854-1913) (New York: National Jewish Welfare Board, 1948) [largely reprinted from *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 37 (1947)]; Jonathan D. Sarna, JPS: *The Americanization of Jewish Culture* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), pp. 15-16.

9. Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 13-27; Nathan M. Kaganoff, "AJHS at 90: Reflections on the History of the Oldest Ethnic Historical Society in America," *American Jewish History* 71 (June 1982), pp. 466-485; Mitchell E. Panzer, "Gratz College: A Community's Involvement in Jewish Education," *Gratz College Anniversary Volume*, Isidore D. Passow and Samuel T. Lachs (eds.), (Philadelphia: Gratz College, 1971), pp. 1-9; Peggy K. Pearstein, "Understanding Through Education: One Hundred Years of the Jewish Chautauqua Society 1893-1993" (Ph.D., George Washington University, 1993), pp. 1-68; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), pp. 9-85; Shuly Rubin Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the* Jewish Encyclo-pedia (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1991), pp. 1-36.

10. [London] *Jewish Chronicle* (March 11, 1887), p. 13; *American Hebrew* 56 (1894), pp. 22, 181; *American Jewish Year Book* 3 (1901-2), p. 216; 6 (1904-5), p. 388; see also "What Passengers Means"

ɔtes

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Leon Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue*, 1820-1870 ; NH: University Press of New England, 1976), p. 193.

American Hebrew 88 (April 7, 1911), p. 667; on Schindler, see lann (ed.), *Growth and Achievement: Temple Israel 1854-1954* Congregation Adath Israel, 1954), pp. 45-62; Arthur Mann, *eformers in the Urban Age: Social Reform in Boston* 1880-1900 k: Harper Torchbook, 1954), pp. 52-72.

16. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*, p. xiii.

17. Isidor Kalisch, "Ancient and Modern Judaism," *Studies in Ancient and Modern Judaism*, Samuel Kalisch (ed.), (New York: George Dobsevage, 1928), p. 61. For a statistical picture of Jews in this period, see *Statistics of the Jews of the United States* (Philadelphia: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1880). See also Benny Kraut, "Judaism Triumphant: Isaac Mayer Wise on Unitarianism and Liberal Christianity," *AJS Review* 7-8 (1982-83), pp. 179-230.

18. Naomi W. Cohen, "American Jewish Reactions to Anti-Semitism in Western Europe, 1875-1900," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 45 (1978), pp. 29-65 (quote is from p. 31); Michael A. Meyer, "German-Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model*, Jacob Katz (ed.), (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987), pp. 247-267; *idem*, "The Great Debate on Antisemitism: Jewish Reactions to New Hostility in Germany, 1879-1881," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 11 (1966), pp. 137-170; Hans L. Trefousse, "The German-American Immigrants and the Newly Founded Reich," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, Frank Tommler and Joseph McVeigh (eds.), (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 160-175.

19. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 39-41; Stephen Birmingham, *Our Crowd* (New York: Dell, 1967), pp. 169-180; *Coney Island and the Jews* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1879).

20. Hermann Baar, *Addresses on Homely and Religious Subjects Delivered Before the Children of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum* (New York: H. O. A. Industrial School, 1880), p. 238.

21. *American Hebrew* 62 (December 10, 1897), p. 163. For developments in this period, see Naomi W. Cohen, "Anti-Semitism in the Gilded Age: The Jewish View," *Jewish Social Studies* 41 (1979), pp. 187-210; and John Higham, *Send These To Me* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 116-195.

. Evyatar Friesel comes closest to the mark in his "The Age of ;m in American Judaism, 1900-1920," *A Bicentennial Festschrift for ıder Marcus*, Bertram W. Korn (ed.), (New York: Ktav, 1976), -155, but he sees the idea of "optimism" as the motivating force developments in this period, while to my mind this optimism is use but a result.

2. For a review of recent research, see Steven M. Cohen, *:n Assimilation or Jewish Revival* (Bloomington: Indiana University 988), pp. 43-57. Cohen properly observes (p. 43) that "genera- hange has long occupied a central place in research on Jewish iden- ın in the United States." I have critiqued "generational determin- American Jewish historical writing elsewhere; see *Modern Judaism* 10 er 1990), p. 353, and *Judaism* 34 (Spring 1985), pp. 246-247.

3. Glazer, writing in 1957, titled his final chapter in *American ı*, covering the period 1945-1956, "The Jewish Revival." For more developments, see, for example, M. Herbert Danzger, *Returning to on: The Contemporary Revival of Orthodox Judaism* (New Haven: niversity Press, 1989).

4. Compare William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and* · (University of Chicago, 1978), p. 2: "Until the present genera- ɔeriods of cultural readjustment have been associated almost wholly ıe Protestant churches."

15. William G. McLoughlin, "Timepieces and Butterflies: A Note Great-Awakening-Construct and its Critics," *Sociological Analysis* 44), p. 108; the entire "Symposium on Religious Awakenings," with arti- · R. C. Gordon-McCutchan, Timothy Smith, William McLoughlin, Hammond, and John Wilson may be found in *Sociological Analysis* 44), pp. 81-122. See also the follow-up by Michael Birchen, Awakening-Cycle Controversy," *Sociological Analysis* 46 (1985), 25-443. The essays that sparked this controversy include William G. ughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*; and Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm

29. *American Hebrew*, November 21, 1879, p. 3, reprinted in Philip Cowen, *Memories of an American Jew*, p. 55; see also p. 49, and Max Cohen to Solomon Solis-Cohen (November 10, 1879), Solomon Solis-Cohen Papers.

30. Cowen, *Memories of an American Jew*, pp. 40-111, esp. p. 42, 50; Charles Wyszkowski, *A Community in Conflict: American Jewry During the Great European Immigration* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), pp. xiii-xvii.

31. *American Hebrew*, November 21, 1879, p. 4, as quoted in Wyszkowski, *A Community in Conflict*, p. 101; Max Cohen, "Some Memories of Alexander Kohut," in Alexander Kohut, *The Ethics of the Fathers* (New York: privately printed, 1920), p. xcviii.

32. For a somewhat different analysis of the relationship between the "Historical School" and Conservative Judaism, see Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in 19th Century America* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1965), pp. 169-170.

33. Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process," *American Quarterly* 21 (1969), pp. 23-43. Some measure of the organizational revolution within the American Jewish community of that time may be discerned from the fact that 13 of the 19 national Jewish organizations listed in the first volume of the *American Jewish Year Book* (1899) had been founded after 1879.

34. Naomi W. Cohen, "Introduction," in Ira Robinson (ed.), *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), I, p. xxx.

35. Cf. Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 13-20, and Sarna, "The Making of An American Jewish Culture," pp. 149-50, where portions of this argument first appeared.

36. On this point, see Sarna, "The Making of an American Jewish Culture," p. 151.

37. Dianne Ashton, "Rebecca Gratz and the Domestication of

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40, Murray Friedman (ed.), (Philadelphia: ISHI Publications,
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ı (ed.), pp. 58-74; Philip Rosen, "Dr. Solomon Solis-Cohen and
delphia Group," in *ibid*, pp. 106-125; Jonathan D. Sarna,
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ı D. Sarna, "Is Judaism Compatible with American Civil Religion?
›lem of Christmas and the 'National Faith,'" in *Religion and the*
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5. The quote is in a letter from Max Cohen to Solomon
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7. Max Cohen to Solomon Solis-Cohen (October 14, 1879);
›hen to Solomon Solis-Cohen (November 10, 1879), Solomon
›hen Papers.

46. Ray Frank's year of birth is a matter of dispute. I follow Reva Clar and William M. Kramer, "The Girl Rabbi of the Golden West," *Western States Jewish History* 18 (January 1986), p. 99, who base themselves on the 1870 United States census records. The standard date, supplied by her husband (who expressed some uncertainty about it) is 1864 or 1865; see Simon Litman, *Ray Frank Litman: A Memoir* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1957), p. 4. Rogow in *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women*, 1893-1993, p. 228, cites unnamed records dating her birth to April 10, 1866. Might she have sought to conceal her date of birth when she married her much younger husband, Simon Litman, who was born in 1873?

47. *Jewish Messenger*, May 23, 1890. Reprinted in Jacob R. Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1981), p. 380; see also Litman, *Ray Frank Litman: A Memoir*, pp. 12-13. A month later, she replied to a question from *The Jewish Times and Observer* on "What would you do if you were a *rebbitzen* [rabbi's wife]?" Her reply is reprinted in Litman, p. 14.

48. Excerpts from her Yom Kippur sermon (1890), where this quote appears, may be found reprinted in Ellen M. Umansky and Dianne Ashton, *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality: A Sourcebook* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), pp. 128-129.

49. Litman, *Ray Frank Litman*, pp. 8-9; see also Clar and Kramer, "The Girl Rabbi of the Golden West," pp. 104-5, 108.

50. Litman, *Ray Frank Litman*, p. 68.

51. Quoted in Litman, p. 15.

52. *Ibid*, pp. 43-45.

53. *Ibid*, pp. 55-57.

54. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 18, 1895, quoted in *ibid*, p. 50.

55. *Papers of the Jewish Women's Congress* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1894), p. 8, cf. pp. 52-65; *Reform*

38. Panzer, "Gratz College" (cited *supra*, n. 9), pp. 1-6. According ızer's footnote, three of the college's first four graduates were women n. 12).

39. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Debate Over Mixed Seating in merican Synagogue," in *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary ormed*, Jack Wertheimer (ed.), (New York: Cambridge University 1987), pp. 366-379.

40. John Higham, "The Transformation of the Statue of Liberty," *These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns ins University Press, 1984), pp. 71-80.

41. A large literature seeks to explain Lazarus's "conversion"; for ılysis of this literature see Joe Rooks Rapport, "The Lazarus Sisters: ıily Portrait" (Ph.D., Washington University, 1988), pp. 12-108. :s are from the centennial edition of Emma Lazarus, *An Epistle to ·brews*, with an introduction and notes by Morris U. Schappes York: Jewish Historical Society of New York, 1987), pp. 64, 73.

42. Emma Lazarus, *Selections from her Poetry and Prose*, Morris U. pes (ed.), (New York: Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's , 1978), pp. 35-37.

43. Lazarus, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 8.

44. Lazarus, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 34-35, 80; Arthur Zieger, ıa Lazarus and Pre-Herzlian Zionism," in I. S. Meyer (ed.), *Early y of Zionism in America* (New York: American Jewish Historical y, 1958), pp. 77-108. Emma's older sister, Josephine Lazarus (1846- , also came to adopt Zionism as her religion, although she sought a sal religion and dabbled with Unitarianism as well. Her *The Spirit ıism* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1895) documents in part American m's spiritual crisis. For her Zionism, see Josephine Lazarus, ism," *American Hebrew* 62 (December 10, 1897), pp. 159-162 [and l in *New World* 8 (June 1899), pp. 228-242]; and her "Zionism and can Ideals," *Maccabean* 8 (May 1905), pp. 198-204. No full-length

62. The most recent full-length biography is Joan Dash, *Summoned to Jerusalem: The Life of Henrietta Szold* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); for Szold's early life and work, see Alexandra Lee Levin, *The Szolds of Lombard Street* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960); and Sarna, *JPS*, pp. 23-135.

63. *American Jewish Year Book* 16 (1914-15), p. 284.

64. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 111; cf. Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984).

65. Carol B. Kutscher, "Hadassah," in Michael N. Dobkowski (ed.), *Jewish American Voluntary Organizations* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 151-152; *idem*, "The Early Years of Hadassah, 1912-1922" (Ph.D., Brandeis University, 1976); Henrietta Szold to Alice L. Seligsberg (October 10, 1913) in Marvin Lowenthal, *Henrietta Szold: Life and Letters* (New York: Viking Press, 1942), p. 82.

66. On the anti-Reform animus of Mayer Sulzberger, Cyrus Adler, Moses Dropsie, and other Philadelphia Jewish leaders caught up in the spirit of religious renewal, see Sarna, "The Making of an American Jewish Culture," pp. 150-151.

67. "Authentic Report of the Proceedings of the Rabbinical Conference Held at Pittsburgh, Nov. 16, 17, 18, 1885," reprinted in Walter Jacob (ed.), *The Changing World of Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect* (Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Congregation, 1985), pp. 92-93; Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, pp. 264-270; Jonathan D. Sarna, "New Light on the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885," *American Jewish History* 76 (March 1987), pp. 358-368.

68. Sarna, "New Light on the Pittsburgh Platform," p. 364; cf. Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism*, pp. 222-228.

69. "Authentic Report," pp. 92-102, 109. The Platform is conve-

. For her subsequent career and her contributions to the founding
, see *ibid*, p. 143-202; and Winton U. Solberg, "The Early Years of
:h Presence at the University of Illinois," *Religion and American*
2 (Summer 1992), pp. 215-245.

. Clar and Kramer, "The Girl Rabbi of the Golden West,"
351, discount Frank's religious motivations and credit her success
;ent, Samuel H. Friedlander, whom they believe both managed her
ıd kept her name before the press. It would seem more likely that
red Friedlander as a consequence of her success. Only *after* she
rated that she had something to promote did it make sense for her
ı promoter. Even Clar and Kramer agree that she was a woman
iple and formidable talents."

. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of*
'omen, 1893-1993, pp. 43-78; Karla Goldman, "The Ambivalence
m Judaism: Kaufmann Kohler and the Ideal Jewish Woman,"
ı Jewish History 79 (Summer 1990), pp. 477-499.

. Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*, p. 23. Note that immigrant
so important a part of the Council's work, went unmentioned
:solution.

. *Ibid*, pp. 53, 76.

. No full-scale history of synagogue sisterhoods has yet appeared.
is sketch on Jenna Weissman Joselit, "The Special Sphere of the
Class American Jewish Woman: The Synagogue Sisterhood,
40," in Jack Wertheimer (ed.), *The American Synagogue: A*
y Transformed (New York: Cambridge, 1987), esp. pp. 208-210;
Gottheil, *The Life of Gustav Gottheil* (Williamsport, PA: Bayard
)36), pp. 179-181; Hannah B. Einstein, "Sisterhoods of Personal
Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) vol. 11, p. 398; and David de Sola
Old Faith in the New World (New York: Columbia University,
)p. 369-70. In response to the demand for professional social
sisterhoods later transformed their activities and forgot their

About The Author

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," *The American Jewish Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons* (Cincinnati: 1881), p. 9; the diary of David Philipson, September 11, 1890, in David Philipson Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, nd Benjamin Rabinowitz, "The Young Men's Hebrew Association 1913)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 37 , pp. 302, 307. How Judaism in this period gradually ceased to be ed in Christian terms and began to be described in its own terms s a separate treatment.

1. Professor Ellen Umansky properly observes that by this time "many - and upper-middle-class Jewish women had already come to identify ervice as a spiritual path and didn't need the Reform movement" for pose. Instead, she suggests, what Reform Judaism may have done for ewish women is to validate as religious "activities in which they were engaged." (Letter to the author, May 18, 1994; see also Umansky and *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality*, pp. 15-17.)

2. "Authentic Report," pp. 102, 109, 119-120.

3. On various aspects of the Social Justice movement and its ship to the Social Gospel, see Egal Feldman, "The Social Gospel Jews," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 8 (March 1969), pp. 2; Leonard J. Mervis, "The Social Justice Movement and the n Reform Rabbi," *American Jewish Archives* 7 (1955), pp. 171-230; Martin, "The Social Philosophy of Emil G. Hirsch," *American rchives* 6 (June 1954), pp. 151-166; John F. Sutherland, "Rabbi Krauskopf of Philadelphia: The Urban Reformer Returns to the *merican Jewish History* 67 (June 1978), pp. 342-362; and Jonathan ı, "Seating and the American Synagogue," in Philip R. Vandermeer ert P. Swierenga (eds.), *Belief and Behavior: Essays in the New History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 195-202.

. See, for example, Jeffrey Gurock's account of the Jewish r Society in Dobkowski, *Jewish-American Voluntary Organizations*, 231.