Introduction

The women’s liberation movement that began in the United States in the late 1960s may have been the most important social movement of the last century, challenging gender inequality in myriad forms and participating in what soon became a global movement to transform women’s lives. Although the movement began with the formation of several small collectives in rapid succession, historians often cite Chicago’s West Side Group as the first women’s liberation group in the country. Formed in late 1967, that group shared the ecstasy and exhilaration of creating a movement that was “ready to turn the world upside down,” in the words of Naomi Weisstein, one of its key members. Every subject was a topic of intense discussion, Weisstein recalled. “We talked incessantly . . . about our pain, . . . our righteous anger, . . . our orgasms. Then we felt guilty for talking about our orgasms. Shouldn’t we be doing actions?”

And act they surely did, to stunning effect. The power and joy of their deep involvement in the women’s movement is reflected in the image of Weisstein that adorns the cover of this book.

The one issue that the group never talked about was the Jewish backgrounds of the majority of its dozen members. “We never talked about it,” Weisstein admitted to me and to several West Side friends when, some forty-five years after the group’s founding, I brought them together to probe the issue. “It was so embarrassing to have so many Jews around,” Weisstein acknowledged. “There was even a silent agreement that we didn’t bring it up because it was counter to the universalist vision of that time. . . . It was sort of a whiff of anti-Semitism.”

Even in the decades after the demise of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, the citywide group the West Side women had helped to create, they did not discuss their Jewish identities. The same was true for most Jewish women who joined women’s liberation groups in other cities in the 1960s and 1970s. While a few individual Jewish women have been acknowledged for their work as women’s liberationists, for the
most part, Jewish women’s impact on the movement as Jews seemed to be unimportant, a matter ignored by participants in the movement and historians alike. This neglect also characterized the post-1970s phase of women’s liberation, sometimes referred to as feminist identity politics, which drew together specific groups of women on the basis of shared racial, ethnic, sexual, or other backgrounds. Radical feminists who identified Jewishly found themselves to be outsiders in the increasingly multicultural landscape fashioned by the politics of identity.

Yet the place of Jewish women in women’s liberation is highly significant. Jewish women were leaders, helping to start several of the first radical feminist groups in the country, among them the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, New York’s Redstockings and New York Radical Women, and Boston’s Bread and Roses. Eight out of the dozen founders of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, one of the most long-lasting women’s liberation projects in the country, were Jewish.

Jewish women in second-wave feminism helped to provide the theoretical underpinnings and models for radical action that were seized on and imitated throughout the United States and abroad. Their articles and books became classics of the movement and led the way into new arenas of cultural and political understanding in academe, politics, and grassroots organizing. Even a partial honor roll of Jewish women’s liberation pioneers must include such figures as Shulamith Firestone, Ellen Willis, Robin Morgan, Alix Kates Shulman, Naomi Weisstein, Heather Booth, Susan Brownmiller, Marilyn Webb, Meredith Tax, Andrea Dworkin, Linda Gordon, Ellen DuBois, Ann Snitow, Marge Piercy, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, and Vivian Gornick.

Despite historians’ acknowledgment of the salience of Jewish women in earlier social movements, their prominence within radical feminism failed to attract much attention. Well-known histories of second-wave feminism, including those by Sara Evans, Alice Echols, Ruth Rosen, and Susan Brownmiller, do not identify the contributions of Jewish women to the women’s liberation movement. Benita Roth’s study of black, Chicana, and white pathways toward feminism does not accord a distinct place to Jewish women but subsumes them under whiteness. Winifred Breines’s study of black and white women in second-wave feminism refers to many radical feminists who are Jewish but treats them simply as white and does not explore differences within that category.³
By making the Jewish component of the radical feminist movement visible, I hope to offer a deeper understanding of the complexities of feminist activism and the multiple political issues in which feminists inevitably became involved as the movement developed and feminist consciousness expanded. This excavation is necessary because Jewish women’s participation in this movement has been hidden for several generations. To recover this history, the book documents and assesses the depth and diversity of Jewish women’s participation in a wide range of feminist activities and actions within the second wave of the women’s liberation movement broadly defined. It examines both the early women’s liberation movement and the later, more self-consciously identified “Jewish feminist” movement that arose in the 1970s and 1980s to address Jewish religious and secular life. Analysis of these two groups offers a fuller picture of second-wave feminism and an enhanced understanding of the relationship of Jewish women’s liberationists and Jewish feminists to their non-Jewish counterparts. Even though, at first glance, the objectives, politics, and profiles of Jewish women’s liberationists and Jewish feminists may seem divergent, their stories are interrelated. Interrogating the connections between these two branches of feminist endeavor will help to revise what Sara Evans has criticized as the “homogenized” narrative of the second wave and to create what Stephanie Gilmore describes as a “capacious definition of feminism.”

To foster such an understanding, I brought forty representatives of the two branches of Jewish-inflected feminism together for a two-day conference titled “Women’s Liberation and Jewish Identity” at New York University in April 2011, asking the women to reflect on their personal motivations for activism and the role of Jewishness in their lives and the movement. A number of these women had created the first radical feminist groups in the country, including women’s liberation groups in Chicago, Boston, New York, and Atlanta; others represented the subsequent wave of explicitly Jewish-identified feminists who initiated significant social change in Jewish-based secular and religious life. Over the ensuing decades, many leaders in both groups pursued their activism in striking ways: increasing women’s participation in religious and communal life; organizing for improved health care and reproductive rights; advocating for consumer, welfare, and housing rights; protecting the homeless, the aging, and low-income workers; and much more.
Those who became writers and scholars are responsible for landmark works in women’s art, culture, politics, and history. But by and large, the two groups that attended the conference—the women’s liberation feminists who are Jewish and the Jewish-identified feminists—had not met each other or directly interacted before. Most of the women’s liberationists had not been involved in activities within the Jewish community, nor had most of the Jewish feminists participated in broader movement activities. My goal in convening the conference was to introduce and probe the stories of these two groups of feminists in relation to each other and to larger narratives of feminist and Jewish activism and to place these accounts on the historical record.

While some of the speakers were wary about participating in an event that segregated Jewish feminists from their non-Jewish allies, they found themselves deeply engaged in conference dialogues and excited to learn from feminists with different experiences and perspectives. The diversity of views about Jewishness and radical feminism exhibited at the conference mirrored the main themes of this book: that Jewishness and feminism profoundly impacted each other and the revolutionary feminist movement of our time. Separately and together, they are complex amalgams, modified and reinterpreted over time but building on customs, values, and traditions that grew out of particular heritages as well as changing social locations. Conference presenters demonstrated the multiple ways in which, from these beginnings, feminism unfolded over the course of their lives, offering a vivid portrait of political and social activism that is astonishing in its breadth and originality.

The book’s chronicle of Jewish radical feminism correlates with the main thrust of second-wave feminism, from the late 1960s through the mid- to late 1980s. The women who shaped this movement were a distinct “political generation,” according to sociologist Nancy Whittier. Whittier believes that those who entered the movement at about the same time “identified as belonging to a common group” that set them apart from later feminists and thus constitute a “mini-cohort”—“a group with distinct formative experiences and collective identity that emerged at and shaped a particular phase of the women’s movement.” My analysis suggests that in addition to the particular time at which women entered the movement, the racial, religious, and ethnic factors
embedded in their activism differentiates their collective identities from other second-wavers and from each other.

Recovering the Jewish stories of second-wave radical feminists can help us to understand the varied meanings of Jewish life in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century America, when traditional modes of religious and community belonging have given way to more personal and varied affiliations and choices. These stories also provide crucial links in the chain of Jewish women’s activism over time. Exposing the shared cultural values that drew Jewish women in numbers disproportionate to the population into these social movements connects “the feminist and the Jew,” as leading feminist organizer Heather Booth said at a conference at Brandeis University. It is a way of passing on the “legacy to change the world”; we can “reinforce what drives us forward and correct what holds us back.” Such markers of identity, reflecting positive aspects of Jewish social values, should have substantial appeal to young twenty-first-century Jews as they seek to construct individual and collective meanings of Jewishness in a world where identity is increasingly chosen voluntarily.

The feminist activism of Jewish women builds on the legacy of the past. Jewish women participated in and led successive movements for social change in America—as garment workers, trade unionists, suffragists, campaigners for birth control and reproductive rights, anarchists, socialists, communists, civil rights workers, peace activists and antiwar protesters, and more. Their numbers in these radical movements far exceeded their numerically small representation in the population at large, paralleling or surpassing those of their male coreligionists as well as those of U.S.-born and other ethnic women. Jewish women’s participation in second-wave feminism is similarly compelling, not only because of the prevalence of these women in feminist ranks but because of the formative impact of Jewish background and values on them, even when not consciously acknowledged, and on the movement as well. Although Jewish women struggled with their own ambivalence and anger about Jewish religious and social customs that tended to marginalize them, they were inevitably shaped by their inheritance.

The generational chasm between these women and their parents and grandparents may well have been narrower than it was among other
young radicals during the 1960s, since many Jewish rebels were strongly motivated by their parents’ radical backgrounds and their moral and religious values.\textsuperscript{11} Although the story of Jewish feminist activism is fundamentally one of gender rebellion, it is also about an intergenerational Jewish legacy. At the same time, clashes over Jewish norms, religious traditions, and family patterns motivated other Jewish radical feminists and helped shape their political identities. Post-1960s radical feminism differed markedly from Jewish women’s activism before the 1960s, which historian Melissa Klapper describes as an organic fusion of Jewish identity and women’s organizational affiliations that flowed from the gendered ideology of maternalism, which celebrated the civic values of motherhood in both the private and public spheres.\textsuperscript{12} Most Jewish radical feminists, to the contrary, engaged in a no-holds-barred struggle against maternalism.\textsuperscript{13} The confluence between Jewishness and activism served as a driving force for some radical feminists, but it is more difficult to locate and gauge in this later period.

How and why young women related to this powerful, transformative movement and what role Jewishness may have played in their activism are questions that can illuminate the influences of gender and ethnic inheritance on social activism and feminism.\textsuperscript{14} These explorations can also elucidate the many ways that Jews, as a minority ethnic group in a postmodern, postethnic world, chose and constructed their identities. As we explore these issues, context becomes extremely important. Geographic location, family background, class position, religious affiliation, the place of the Holocaust, views of Zionism and experiences in Israel, civil rights and New Left involvements, new ideas about gender, sexuality, and activism—all were important determinants of the interactive and dynamic influences of Jewishness and Judaism on women’s liberationists and, through them, on the movement itself.\textsuperscript{15} This story forms a critical counterpart to that of the disproportionate presence of Jewish youth in the civil rights and student movements of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to creating a richer portrait of second-wave feminism, I hope that this book expands our understandings of American Jewish history, which historian David Hollinger has characterized as unnecessarily narrow due to the neglect of “dispersionist” aspects of Jewish history in favor of a single-minded focus on Jewish “communalist” history. By “dispersionist,” Hollinger refers to the lives of all persons
with “ancestry in the Jewish diaspora,” no matter what their extent of “declared or ascribed Jewishness.” As opposed to such “scattering,” “communalist” history focuses on the “organizations and institutions that proclaim Jewishness” and the “activities of individuals who identify themselves as Jewish and/or are so identified by non-Jews with the implication that it so matters.” Hollinger cites the failure of scholars to probe the Jewish origins of radical feminism as the primary example of the deficient historical analysis that he observed. Calling for an “ethnoreligious demography of feminism” that can anchor an “expanded compass,” he argues that if “Jewishness were as central to our histories of feminism as Protestantism is to our studies of the civil rights movement,” then the contributions of Jews might be better “integrated into our mainstream histories.” Jewish women’s activism as second-wave feminists can serve as a prototype for a new and vital reconsideration of American Jewish history.

Liberal, Radical, and Jewish Feminism

“Women’s liberation,” though often broadly applied to second-wave feminism, in fact refers to the radical wing of the movement, as distinguished from “liberal” or “equal rights” feminism, the feminism of Betty Friedan and the National Organization of Women (NOW). Whereas liberal feminists called for increasing women’s opportunities for individual independence and meaningful careers, women’s liberationists demanded a complete restructuring of society and culture, including the abolition of normative, constricting definitions of masculinity and femininity—and, for some leading radical feminists, of the nuclear family and gender differentiation itself. These two types of feminists also differed in their organizational profiles, strategies, and tactics. Based in organizations such as NOW and state commissions for equal rights, liberal feminists pursued traditional forms of protest such as lobbying, picketing, marches, and lawsuits; nevertheless, they highlighted individual change. As women’s liberationists sought to transform the root structures of society, they joined in more fluid, “amoeba”-like consciousness-raising groups, creating theory that brought together the “personal and the political” and engaging in creative, often dramatic forms of direct action. Although by the mid-1970s the two branches
converged around many ideas and strategies, different orientations remained, often across a generational divide.

The second wave of feminism was composed of distinct currents of activism. Several of them, including liberal feminism, included Jewish participants (according to one estimate, about 12 percent of the women in NOW were Jewish). The Jewish pioneers of women’s liberation were conspicuous in the earliest groups of radical, as opposed to liberal, feminists. I have found that in some collectives in large cities, two-thirds to three-quarters of women’s liberation participants may have been Jewish. The Jewish makeup of several of these collectives was an open secret for some participants, suspected but not explicitly recognized. Jewish identity usually remained invisible, ignored, or thoroughly rejected. Nowhere did Jewish-identified women’s liberationists participate as an organized group within the movement.

In the early 1970s, a second stream of feminism developed, representing the newly self-conscious “Jewish feminist” movement. Consisting of religiously and secularly identified Jews, these women helped to transform ideas about and practices of gender within and beyond the Jewish community. Using lessons learned from women’s liberationists, Jewish-identified feminists called for immediate redress of inequalities in religious and Jewish communal life. While religiously based Jewish feminists generally saw a basic harmony between Judaism and women’s liberation, some at first dissented from prominent feminist themes, particularly regarding the nuclear family and reproductive rights. Feminism’s embrace of radical individualism was generally absent from Orthodox Jewish feminism, although not from most liberal denominations. While some people in Orthodox Jewish feminists’ communities saw the women as “radical fanatics,” these feminists considered themselves as authentic religious Jews and as activists and change agents.

In embracing the demand for expanded rights and obligations for women, Jewish feminists promulgated an agenda consonant with that of second-wave feminism. They were directly influenced by the work of second-wave radical feminists and personal encounters with them. Some religious feminists were closer to the liberal stream of women’s liberation than to the self-identified radical one, but these women, too, dedicated themselves to changing gender norms that subordinated women within Jewish community life and religious texts and traditions.
I use the term “radical feminist” in a capacious, open-ended way to refer to all the women in this book who sought such transformations.

In contrast to religiously Jewish feminists who targeted inequality in the synagogue and seminary, secular Jewish feminists waged all-out war on what Aviva Cantor, a Radical Zionist, called “the assimilation game,” asserting the need for Jewish women to proclaim their distinctiveness as Jews rather than to blend into the mainstream. For these women, trying to “pass” meant committing “cultural suicide.” While promoting Jewish identification, they linked their struggle as Jewish women fighting patriarchal institutions to larger efforts to eradicate capitalism, racism, and sexism. To be fully aware of themselves as Jewish women was a first step toward combating the multiple causes of social oppression. But this commitment included supporting the liberation of Jews along with that of other subjugated groups.

Jewish lesbian feminism was another vital component of radical Jewish feminism. For Evelyn Torton Beck, who edited the landmark 1982 collection *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*, becoming visible as a Jew within the feminist movement paralleled the process of coming out as a lesbian. Beck and her contributors descried the invisibility of Jewish women in the movement, especially lesbians, speaking to the fear and dangers Jewish women experienced when identifying themselves as Jewish feminists. Worse yet, they remained vulnerable to anti-Jewish feelings within that movement. “Writing as a Jew,” Beck observed, “the feminist takes the risk of losing her place.”

Jewish lesbian feminists also had to fight against the homophobia within Jewish communities. Neither Jewish space nor lesbian space offered them a haven. Because LGBT people were not welcome in synagogues, dozens of lesbian and gay groups were created across the country. Publicly claiming their identities as Jewish lesbian feminists became part of the campaign to challenge the universal oppressions of women and minorities.

In the early years of Jewish feminism, assertions of identity politics tended to separate feminists from others in the Jewish community who saw their strong stance on gender issues as potentially threatening to Judaism. Women’s liberationists either rejected separatist Jewish feminism or ignored it. But increasingly, as religious Jewish feminists successfully critiqued ancient patriarchal customs, women’s liberationists
supported their attempts to overhaul masculinist systems within Jewish religious and community life. “If we are able now to speak as feminists in the Jewish community,” Alisa Solomon wrote, “it’s only because we first learned to speak as Jews in the feminist community.”

A sudden explosion of concern about anti-Semitism in the women’s movement in the late 1970s that continued through the 1980s became another site for the acknowledgment and development of Jewish feminist identity that this book chronicles. At a time when historians and many Jewish communalists pronounced anti-Semitism to be of declining importance within the United States, radical feminists faced contentious debates about this issue at conferences and meetings at home and abroad and in the feminist press. These controversies raged among Jewish women, as well as between them and non-Jewish feminists and Third World women.

The issue of anti-Semitism within the women’s movement surfaced at three UN World Conferences on Women held in Mexico City, Copenhagen, and Nairobi during the UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985. A “Zionism is racism” plank passed at the Mexico City conference in summer 1975 set the stage for the Zionism-is-racism UN General Assembly resolution a few months later, shocking many previously unidentified American Jewish feminists into a new awareness of their Jewishness. At the International Women’s Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism resurfaced in even more blatant forms, with openly anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish women from Third World delegates and the passage of a resolution calling for the elimination of Israel. Although a Zionism-is-racism resolution was defeated at the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi five years later, harsh condemnations of Israel and ubiquitous anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic rhetoric alarmed Jewish attendees and colleagues in their home countries.

Tensions over these issues escalated within the United States as well, with accusations of anti-Semitism and racism splitting apart longtime alliances, including many African American and Jewish women. These difficult conflicts spurred consciousness-raising about the intersections of ethnicity, race, religion, sexual identity, class, and other differences. Many Jewish women discovered themselves as Jewish feminists for the first time. Unlike many earlier women’s liberationists and Jewish
feminists, they adopted a dual agenda composed of struggles against both sexism and anti-Semitism.

A smaller group of Jewish women saw these issues differently. Allying themselves with Third World anticolonialists and antiracist struggles, they opposed Zionism as a project of military occupation and state force and did not support Israeli nationhood. Prioritizing the political goals of anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, and solidarity with Palestinian and Third World struggles, they began to debate issues of anti-Semitism, Zionism, and anti-Zionism with Jewish-identified feminists.31

Such opposing perspectives might have reflected what Deborah Dash Moore calls “Jewishly inflected identity politics,” which had grown out of Jewish involvement in the New Left. “No longer could one claim an identity as a Jew and then adopt whatever politics one desired,” Moore explained. “Politics and identity were intertwined.”32

Jewish Universalism versus Jewish Particularism

The women’s movement acted as a crucible for change both in society at large and in the Jewish community, providing opportunities to channel values inherited from Jewish tradition, especially those promoting social justice and tikkun olam (repair of the world). For many women, feminism opened the door to activism by addressing feelings of marginality that Jewish women had experienced growing up. Yet, like the white women who went south on Freedom Rides in the 1960s, most radical feminists did not self-consciously identify as Jews.33 At a time when the vision of a common sisterhood took primacy within the movement, the claims of any particular ethnic or religious group, especially one identified with white privilege, could not hold sway. Even when radical feminists acknowledged their Jewish roots in a manner that historian Matthew Frye Jacobson identifies as part of a wider “ethnic revival,” they refrained from explicitly asserting that ancestral inheritances drove the momentum for change.34

Movement activists especially held back from making such a connection. “Our identification with the outside world, in opposition to our parents’ narrow . . . views, was rebellious and progressive, a response against the broader society’s divisions by ethnicity and religion,” said
Vivian Rothstein, a member of the West Side Group and a founder of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union. “Why would we identify ourselves as Jews when we wanted to promote a vision of internationalism and interfaith and interracial solidarity?” “We identified as universalists,” agreed Paula Doress-Worters of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective. “We were afraid of seeing ourselves as too driven by our particularities; it wouldn’t have been proper to call ourselves radical Jews. But that is exactly what we were.”

Yet the embrace of universalism over particularism was itself very Jewish. As Ezra Mendelsohn points out, for many Jewish adherents of universalism, “the very vision of the essential unity of mankind . . . was a Jewish vision, invented by the greatest humanists of all, the Hebrew prophets.” Like universalism, secularism was important to modern Jewish social thought. “Jewish secularism is a revolt grounded in the tradition it rejects,” argues David Biale, citing Isaac Deutscher’s often-quoted remark about “the non-Jewish Jew,” made in a 1954 speech. The “Jewish heretic who transcends Jewry belongs to a Jewish tradition,” Deutscher asserted.

Although Deutscher had his eye on European intellectuals, including Spinoza, Marx, Freud, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg, the same could be said of American radical thinkers and activists such as Emma Goldman, who celebrated the Day of Atonement, the holiest night of the Jewish year, at the anarchists’ festive Yom Kippur Ball. Individuals such as these moved beyond the confines of Jewry, crossing boundaries they considered too narrow. “Their minds matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other,” Deutscher wrote. They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations. “They were each in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it.” Like their European forebears in this tradition, pioneer Jewish women’s liberationists in the U.S. were well assimilated into the culture of their times, but nevertheless, in disclosures to this author and at public events related to this project, they acknowledged a sense of difference based on their ethnicity and gender. This otherness helped take these activists “beyond the boundaries of Jewry,” in Deutscher’s words, enabling them to “rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations . . . to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future.”
Jewish women had been prominent in social movements, both in Europe, where they constituted one-third of the membership of the eastern European socialist bund in the early twentieth century, and in the United States, where disproportionate numbers of Jewish immigrant women played active roles in the socialist, anarchist, and trade union movements. While Jewish women mixed with like-minded men and women from other ethnic and racial groups, more often than not they agitated alongside other Jews, their proximity a natural outcome of common upbringing and beliefs as well as their concentration in neighborhoods and occupations. Jewishness was a factor that supported the universal goals of these social justice movements, but often with conflict and ambivalence. As Tony Michels elaborates in his study of New York City Yiddish socialists, questions of Jewish identity, culture, and community were problematic for radicals trying to reconcile competing claims of Jewish group identity and wider spheres of community in the early twentieth century. Their struggles brought into sharp focus a major issue facing Jews in the modern world: “How should Jews define themselves in relation to the larger society and community of nations in which they live?”

The issue was particularly acute for Jewish women, who encountered deep-seated prejudice from male radicals and co-workers, even from other Jews, and confronted an invidious gender division of labor in the workplace and political organizations. To be a Jewish woman radical meant to question the place of the individual in regard to the state, the shop floor and factory, and the synagogue and religion, as well as to interrogate the presumed boundaries between domestic and public life and fundamental inequalities of gender and power.

Many Jewish women in the early twentieth century flocked to reform as well as radical causes, working to alleviate the infirmities of class, injustice, and poverty suffered by their immigrant coreligionists, alongside a host of other campaigns to improve the lives of Americans. They were sometimes motivated by non-Jewish women’s activism in the public sphere, but the acknowledgment of special Jewish interests and the taint of Christian women’s organizations’ anti-Semitism led them to form their own organizations, such as the National Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah, and to join alliances of Jewish women’s groups, such as the World Council of Jewish Women. Many of these women...
identified as Jewish feminists but found little difficulty in affiliating with secular as well as Jewish women's organizations. They could locate their primary allegiance in the Jewish community but still recognize themselves as “sisters” who banded with other women in search of solutions to the vexing problems of women's lives.42

In both the interwar and postwar eras, once seen as periods when feminism was “in the doldrums,” Jewish women engaged in multiple activist causes, including women's rights, birth control, and international peace, which according to Melissa Klapper provided them opportunities for “gendered activism without abandoning Jewish meaning.”43 For members of the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the Workmen's Circle, and other organizations, Judaism and Jewishness were sources of activism, compelling the women's involvement in wider causes. Klapper sees little discontinuity between Jewish women's organizations and secular ones.

I believe that the connection between Jewish women's activism and explicit Jewish motivations was much less explicit in the social movements of the 1960s than in the earlier period. The Jewishness of Jewish men and women involved in the civil rights, student, antiwar, and New Left movements took diverse forms, but at the time, most young Jewish student activists did not consider their ethnicity or religion to have motivated their social action. Although Jewish women made up a considerable proportion of the women who participated in sit-ins and Freedom Rides, Debra Schultz argues that these young women did not identify Jewishly, even though Jewish values and backgrounds were positive influences on them. Rather, their antiracist activism was “one expression of a universalist concern with justice that has roots in Jewish history, ethics, and political radicalism.”44

Universalist concerns propelled Jewish student activists in other 1960s social movements. Jews accounted for about one-quarter of the white Freedom Riders and a significant proportion of volunteers who journeyed to Mississippi to register voters. Approximately one-third to one-half of New Left activists were Jewish, including the membership of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). They were highly represented in the free speech movement that arose at the University of California at Berkeley and in the student-led antiwar movement. Even
when compared to the relatively high proportion of Jews in the university population (10 percent among the general college population), these numbers suggest the degree to which Jewish youth were overrepresented in New Left activism.\textsuperscript{45} But few identified Jewishly at the time, preferring to see themselves as socialists, internationalists, and civil rights and human rights workers.\textsuperscript{46}

Like New Left activists generally, liberal feminists in the second-wave feminist movement included many Jewish women. Particularly notable was Betty Friedan, who made little of her Jewish (and left-wing) origins until the mid-1970s, and Bella Abzug, elected to Congress in 1970, who with Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and others founded the National Women’s Political Caucus. Although Abzug had a more pronounced connection to Zionism and the Jewish community than Friedan did, her Jewish identity and connections played a less direct role in her championship of women’s causes than in her lifelong peace activism. Steinem, whose father was Jewish, has said that she identifies as a Jew “whenever there is antisemitism.”\textsuperscript{47}

The Jewish radical feminists who helped create the women’s liberation movement of the late 1960s had even less reason to emphasize their Jewish upbringings than did the Jewish women of NOW, the National Women’s Political Caucus, and other liberal second-wave organizations. A full generation or younger than Friedan and Abzug, they had grown up in postwar rather than Depression America, their Jewish families generally well integrated into the mainstream. Most had made it into the middle class, though some occupied its insecure rungs. Beginning in the late 1940s, anti-Semitism began to decline, and although it never disappeared completely, Jewish children generally grew up without facing the open prejudice that some members of the previous generation had encountered. Coming of age in a world where religion increasingly seemed to be a private matter, particularly and symbolically after the election of John F. Kennedy as president in 1960, the rising feminists of the late 1960s did not fear the stigma of Jewishness—or pay much attention to their Jewish identity at all.

They believed that the struggle that they had to engage concerned their place as women in a world of pervasive gender inequality. It was sexism, and not the limits of ethnicity, that called them into battle.
The Ambiguities of Racial, Class, and Cultural Belonging

The revolutionary potential of radical feminism lay in the way it channeled women’s feelings of otherness into a protest against the social structures and prejudices that marginalized and excluded them. Women from many racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds participated in the assault against the patriarchal status quo. As social historians continue to correct the more monolithic accounts of this uprising, we see that a movement originally characterized as racially white and economically middle class was much more varied in its leadership and constituencies than previously recognized.48

The combination of gender marginality with racial, class, ethnic, and sexual otherness led to accumulated experiences of subordination and difference, fueling women’s anger and channeling their insights. On the edges of the majority society, these women were more motivated to see the flaws in the conventional structures of society than many others were. Despite the high achievements of Jewish women and the successful assimilation of many of their families into the American mainstream, many perceived themselves as part of a minority group and shared feelings of alienation.

Yet Jewish women’s liberationists were more likely to have experienced the personal impact of privilege than of social and economic deprivation. Scholars such as Karen Brodkin have suggested that Jews transitioned over the course of the twentieth century from “racial other” to “not-quite-white” to “white,” distinctly American categories that were socially constructed on the basis of the racial binary between blackness and whiteness but also carried class implications.49 For Brodkin, becoming fully “white” allowed a previously marginalized minority to reap the rewards of power and material success but came at the price of adopting mainstream social norms, particularly regarding gender, about which Jewish women were ambivalent.

Some Jewish youth dissociated themselves from the culture of prosperity in which they had been raised. “By being radicals we thought we could escape our Jewishness,” commented Mark Rudd, who led the 1968 student uprising at Columbia University. “Left-wing radicalism was internationalist, not narrow nationalist; it favored the oppressed and the workers, not the privileged and elites, which our families were
striving toward.” Jewish radicals retained a sense of themselves as never quite blending in. “We Jews at Columbia—and I would guess at colleges throughout the country—brought the same outsider view to the campuses we had been allowed into. We were peasant children right out of the shtetls of New Jersey and Queens,” Rudd said. Although he did not recall a single conversation in which radicals discussed their Jewishness, he said, “all of us were Jewish”: “[SDS] was as much a Jewish fraternity as Sammie.”

Many second-wave feminists sensed that as Jews, their backgrounds differed from those of other movement activists. Childhood encounters with anti-Semitism and the experience of McCarthyism, which targeted Jewish political and labor activists, and especially the influence of the Shoah imparted a powerful sense of difference. Some radical feminists had direct experiences with the Holocaust as the children of refugees or as child refugees themselves, while others had close relatives who had perished or been displaced. A generation of young women who grew up in the lingering shadow of World War II instinctively grasped the importance of collective action as a bulwark against violence and victimization.

For some Jewish women’s liberationists, the legacy of social justice bequeathed to them as children of Yiddishists, anarchists, socialists, and communists served as the most powerful springboard to activism. Their activism demonstrates that the link to the radical tradition of Jewish life did not end when a majority of Jews left the working class and that Jewish women, who had been prominent in social movements in the first half of the twentieth century and in the later civil rights movement, continued to play a vital role in social justice movements.

The women’s movement enabled many Jewish women to escape from the suburban, parochial, confined environments where they had been brought up as well-behaved, acculturated daughters of the middle class. Some of these rebels from materialism and conformity, a stance that prevailed among those who would most readily fit Brodkin’s description of the postwar Jews who became “white,” ardently declared war on sexism, class and gender inequality, and homophobia as well.

Even though these women might have been “insiders,” as a matter of background and style, the women often felt like “outsiders.” “The consciousness-raising movement made it okay to be different,”
commented one woman at the NYU conference. For example, “it normalized being loud, bookish, talking with your hands”—the outward characteristics that others frequently saw as Jewish.\textsuperscript{53} Jewish women’s feelings that they stood outside the dominant culture’s frame of womanhood may have increased their sense of otherness, but it also shaped their abilities to critique patriarchy and encouraged new theoretical stances and innovative problem solving.

The range of motives for political and social protest associated with Jewish roots was thus quite varied. For radical feminists, it could be associated with religious beliefs; a set of attitudes toward social justice; a tradition of intellectual debate; emotions and feelings involving marginality and insecurity; a leadership style marked by assertiveness and articulateness; or a set of affiliations to schools, camp, synagogue, shul, or parents. These influences were combined in different ways, ebbing and flowing in consonance with individual and group experiences. For most of the Jewish women’s liberationists, attitudes concerning gender discrimination were much more salient at the time than were Jewish influences, even though these had unacknowledged significance.

Yet many radical feminists who might be considered “non-Jewish” Jews utilized Jewish culture and political traditions to promote goals of the women’s movement. Against the backdrop of Jewish patriarchy, they were empowered by examples of strong, nurturing Jewish parents or other role models and by Jewish secular and religious values handed down through generations. “Believing in freedom and justice and the struggle for freedom itself was a Jewish value,” Heather Booth remarked. Booth explained what Judaism came to mean: “I valued the struggle for freedom and felt tied to a people who had an obligation to continue that struggle.”\textsuperscript{54}

Maximalists, Minimalists, Intersectionalists

Those who initially identified as Jewish feminists came to embrace Jewish particularism as an essential step on the road to their own liberation. When, in the early 1970s, the first idealistic understandings of gender universalism began to evaporate and were soon replaced by an emphasis on differences among women, these Jewish feminists began to pay attention to the markers of ethnic or religious identity. They viewed
themselves as “maximalists” in regard to Jewish identity, as opposed to more “minimalist” women’s liberationists. For them, Jewishness signified personal identity, inherited values, and community.

Goaded by radical feminism’s powerful attack on patriarchy, Jewish-identified feminists mobilized explicitly as Jews and began to carry on the fight against sexism within Jewish religious and community life. Despite the fact that women’s liberationists provided them with useful tools they could wield in their fight against patriarchal oppression, their struggles could be painful and divisive. Could they be revolutionaries, be committed Jews, and navigate the gender divide in ways that would break the back of centuries of Jewish patriarchy? Would they lose standing in the Jewish community? Would they become isolated or marginalized within the feminist movement?

For both Jewish women’s liberationists and Jewish-identified feminists, identity was never single themed. Given that all persons have multiple identities and that power dynamics exist on multiple grids simultaneously, as political scientist Marla Brettschneider puts it, oppression is not “crystallized into one single aspect of our group identity.” In Audre Lorde’s powerful words, “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives.”

Like the African American women whose widely influential 1977 Combahee River Collective Statement asserted that women’s identities were marked by multiple, linked oppressions, Jewish women who identified Jewishly, apart from the wider feminist movement, shared a similar unease with universalist feminist models. Jewish women noted the pioneering work of women of color in creating a new intellectual feminist framework, acknowledging that the new consciousness had emboldened them to explore their own multiple identities.

Critical legal studies scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 to describe how different power structures interact in the lives of minorities, especially black women, causing “compound and overlapping” discrimination. For Crenshaw, a key idea was that each group needed to go beyond critique to consistently explain its own experiences and create its own theories, “so it’s incorporated within feminism and within anti-racism.” The term immediately gained a toehold in the field of feminist and critical studies, but for the most part, Jewish women’s position was excluded from consideration
in relation to the interlocking issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality that framed this discourse.

While some Jewish feminists acknowledged the opportunities that their race and economic circumstances provided, they saw their invisibility within these new discourses as itself a symptom of “radical otherness.” In similar ways, Jews who attempted to become part of what Eric Goldstein calls the “multicultural rainbow of minority groups” had also met with resistance. Sharing a sense of “alienation and disengagement,” some Jewish women protested that the notion of “undifferentiated whiteness” did not apply to them. They preferred to view themselves as an “off-white” race, constructing their identity from a “double vision” that came from what Karen Brodkin called “racial middleness.”

Still other Jewish women’s liberationists resisted the assertion of Jewish distinctiveness. In their view, an attitude of “Jewishness first” masked the privileges of whiteness that many midcentury Jews enjoyed. Yet entering the world of American whiteness meant more than privilege, Goldstein explains; it could involve the loss of communal cohesion and a concomitant increase of alienation and psychic pain.

Like attitudes toward race, ethnicity, color, and culture, Jewish women’s choice between maximalist or minimalist approaches to Jewish feminist identity was a matter of background and personal predilection. These choices could seem baffling, irrelevant, or of deep significance. Moreover, the decision as to where to place oneself on the spectrum of Jewish feminist identity could change over time and vary in different circumstances. For example, feminist antipornography activist Andrea Dworkin, who never affiliated with a Jewish group, told an interviewer in 1980, “Everything I know about human rights goes back in one way or another to what I learned about being a Jew.” She recalled a time in childhood when she witnessed the collapse of a concentration-camp survivor who had been in the midst of narrating her experiences to Dworkin’s family. “Later, when I began to think about what it means to be a woman,” Dworkin asserted, “it was that experience that I called on. Everyone’s history is central to the way they think. . . . In my particular case, my Jewishness is the background that’s most influenced my values.” Yet her opinions on Israel, Jewishness, and Judaism remained ambivalent and fluid.
The difficult task of locating Jewishness as a contributing factor to feminism and its salience in personal and public identity unfolded in a conversation between Fran Moira, an editor of the women's liberation magazine *off our backs*, and Jewish lesbian feminist writer and scholar Evelyn Torton Beck in 1982. “I don’t know how my voice as a Jewish woman is different from my voice as a woman,” Moira told Beck. “It’s not that one’s background doesn’t make any difference,” said Moira. “I feel a close identification with Jewish history, with certain ways of being, . . . but . . . I don’t see where all that matters to what we’re doing now, how we relate to one another, and what we want. I see us all being equally aware of what we would consider the injustices in the world.” “There’s a big difference between just being Jewish and being consciously Jewish in the world,” Beck replied. “In a way, it changes our whole experience.”

That conversation encapsulates the varied experiences of Jewish radical feminists recounted in this book. The rich and diverse set of narratives that emerges highlights a multiplicity of identity patterns and activist engagement during these formative decades.

Life Stories of Feminists and Their Collectives

The story of Jewish women in radical feminism may be seen as simultaneously diachronic, evolving over time and incorporating issues of legacy and roots, and synchronic, occurring at a particular moment because of strategies, tactics, and opportunities taken by specific individual actors and collective groups. In contrast to the continuous historical developments that characterize diachronic history, synchronic understandings emphasize the structure of the present and the interrelations between groups. Both modes—the historical and temporal, describing how individuals and their generational cohort change over time, and the sociological, portraying the demographics and social structure at a particular moment—help to convey the richness and variety of Jewish women’s radical feminist activism and its underlying causes. Another framework employed in this book, which is applied both to individuals and to generations, focuses on the dynamic, psychological process of identity formation over the life course.

Taken together, these perspectives illuminate why and how Jewish women shaped women’s liberation and how they in turn were shaped
by it. As historian Linda Gordon observes, change happens “through a group process that provides a sense of belonging in a new community.” These narratives reveal how the “belonging” that came from Jewish values and traditions played a complementary role in creating identity and social change.

The notion of Jewishness in constant development, shaped by relationships, feelings, beliefs, and actions, as well as by broader social changes over time, parallels feminist emphases on individual autonomy and transformation, as well as postmodern or “postethnic” ideas about Jewish identity described by such scholars as David Hollinger, David Biale, and Shaul Magid. For Bethamie Horowitz, Jewish identity was not a unitary, fixed factor but “multifacteted and multi-dimensional.”

This notion of fluidity, which goes against the grain of the inherited or behavioral measures of Jewish identity, accords well with Erik Erikson’s classic psychological perspective, which defines identity formation as a process experienced as an individual moves through the life course. The emphasis on flux and change is also central to the idea of “cultural identity” articulated by Stuart Hall, the influential Afro-Caribbean scholar who founded critical cultural studies in Britain. For Hall, “cultural identity” entails “becoming” more than “being.” Identities can “undergo constant transformation,” he wrote. “Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power.”

In my book *The Journey Home: How Jewish Women Shaped Modern America*, I used the notion of “journey” to encapsulate the ways in which over the course of the twentieth century, American Jewish women movers and shakers frequently found themselves guided “home” by influences from their Jewish heritage. These were often powerful but unacknowledged. Bethamie Horowitz similarly considers Jewish identity to encompass “how Jewishness unfolds and gets shaped by the different experiences and encounters in a person’s life. Each new context or life stage brings with it new possibilities. A person’s Jewishness can wax, wane, and change in emphasis. It is responsive to social relationships, historical experiences and personal events” as individuals navigate “interior journeys” in subjectively meaningful ways. The stories in this book show flux since they include retrospective accounts of previously unexamined Jewish backgrounds. While such themes may
Introduction

not have reached conscious levels of examination in the 1960 and 1970s, they emerged as salient to life choices and values when women were prodded by later events or my own inquiries.

In addition to the idea of identities-in-flux, this book highlights the notion of collective struggle and collective identities. Radical feminists drew attention to the multiple ways that group affiliations serve as markers of women's lives. They brought to their movement a sense that while the individual was a starting point for remedying injustice, only shared experience would overcome the demons in the outside world and in women's own heads that denied them respect and agency. When the individual is linked integrally with the collective, the “personal is political” and “sisterhood is powerful.”

For women's liberationists and Jewish feminists, belonging to a collective unit was fundamental to the perception of self. Rather than being dichotomous with individual identity, collective identity provided mutual respect, an understanding of the social world, and the strength to act efficaciously. Historically, Jews located the individual's basic identity within the larger entity of the Jewish people; Rabbi Hillel's admonition not to “separate yourself from the community” remained a guiding ethical principle through the ages. Similarly, second-wave feminists recognized that the deepest wellsprings of selfhood derived from shared experience in the group. As Linda Gordon wrote of the women's movement, “‘collective’ was a sacred liturgical word and ‘individualist’ a damnation.”

Bringing together the individual and the collective, this book embeds the personal narratives of dozens of Jewish women's liberationists and Jewish-identified feminists within the framework of the small group or collective, the organizational structure that typified the women's movement. While for centuries, the minyan of ten adult Jewish males required for public worship has been essential to traditional Jewish religious and communal life, the all-female women's collective served as the engine of feminist community building in the late twentieth century. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the paradigmatic feminist collective studied in this book consisted of approximately ten members.

As Kimberlé Crenshaw has emphasized, women need to “tell their stories,” to document, explain, and theorize about the interlocking themes, meanings, and oppressions of their lives, restoring what has
been invisible and erased so as to articulate “what difference the difference makes.”

Telling the stories of Jewish women who became feminists from the late 1960s through the 1980s is the project of this book. It is my hope that in presenting these stories, the individuality of the actors, along with the ties that bound them to each other, emerges intact. These multiple yet intertwined narratives provide a catalogue of Jewish women’s diverse pathways to feminist activism. Their accounts and viewpoints create an intersectional history of lives-in-process, taking us beyond binary categories and oversimplified theories. Rather than a template that presents set patterns, the women emerge as a polyphony of voices encapsulating the distinctiveness, individuality, and fluidity of diverse experiences. By speaking to “what difference the difference makes,” they enable us to understand the multidimensional significance of being both Jewish and feminist during this formative period.

To collect these stories, I interviewed Jewish women involved in women’s liberation and Jewish feminism in several major urban centers and convened the NYU “Women’s Liberation and Jewish Identity” conference in 2011. These women’s recollections and reflections, supplemented by archival and print research about their lives and times, anchor this book. I include a few additional individuals whose trajectories intersect with the women and collectives discussed and whose viewpoints provide additional perspectives. Among them are several non-Jewish founders of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, who offer especially valuable insights. While the book focuses on collectives in Boston, New York, and Chicago, the outlooks and histories that emerge can elucidate the choices and perspectives of Jewish radical feminists in other cities and regions. The varied stories of these activists bear witness to the heterogeneous experiences of Jewish women and their influence on second-wave feminism.

Based on unstructured interviews that enabled narrators to reflect on their own choices and histories, these biographies take us deep into the construction of identities, providing “thick descriptions” of lives in motion. They immerse us in unique journeys of feminist activism, chronicling influences, motivations, turning points, conflicts, and struggles that the women regarded as Jewish related. Whichever aspect each woman may have placed as primary, she lived at the nexus of multiple identities. From converging locations of gender, ethnicity, class,
sexuality, religion, race, age, and region, the narrators traveled to the social movements that drew in so many others of their cohort, providing a basis for joint action.

A part of the second-wave cohort (birth years 1936–1955), the majority of subjects in the book were born in the 1940s. A good many belonged to the minicohort that Nancy Whittier labels “the initiators,” inaugurating the earliest phase of the movement; other second-wave minicohorts included founders (1970–1973), joiners (1974–1976), and sustainers (1977–1984). According to Whittier, the time of joining the movement determined participants’ collective identity even more than age did, reflecting shared social circumstances, political messages, and other synchronic factors. The narrators in this book came into the radical feminist movement at various moments during the heyday of the second wave, carrying with them the particular perspectives that stemmed from the context of their everyday lives and the outside world. But they also brought heritages from family and ethnic backgrounds that influenced their political socialization and coming of age.

I begin this history in 1967, a moment in time that marked divergent directions for radical women and radical Jews. Tumultuous meetings of the New Left’s National Conference for New Politics (NCNP) over Labor Day weekend in Chicago that year left in their wake two failed resolutions relating to women and to Jews. The refusal to consider a resolution developed by Shulamith Firestone, Jo Freeman, and their Women’s Caucus set the stage for Firestone’s and Freeman’s creation of West Side, the first women’s liberation group in the United States. With other early groups, West Side helped to spawn the rapidly expanding feminist movement throughout the country. By a three-to-one margin, the convention did pass a resolution condemning the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict as an “imperialist Zionist War”; this resolution was introduced—and then rescinded—by the Black Caucus. For some feminists, the popularity of the anti-Zionist resolution at the NCNP harbored a troubling anti-Semitism and made it difficult for them to identify as Jewish women on the left.

I see this moment in 1967 as inaugurating disparate yet often converging paths to complex Jewish and feminist identities. Over the next two decades, women’s liberationists and their successors shaped and refined an autonomous radical movement, and secular and religious
Jewish feminists prompted a sweeping transformation of Jewish life. Each group was influenced by varied amalgams of heritage, background, networks, and relationships. The book ends in the late 1980s, with the First International Feminist Conference for the Empowerment of Jewish Women in Jerusalem and other emblems of the new global directions of Jewish feminism.

The book treats the two branches of Jewish radical feminism as distinct though interconnected. Part 1 tells the stories of approximately twenty Jewish women in women’s liberation collectives, including Chicago’s West Side Group, New York’s Redstockings and New York Radical Women, and Boston’s Bread and Roses and the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective. Part 2 presents narratives of another twenty women in the religious feminist group Ezrat Nashim, the Jewish Student Network, the Brooklyn Bridge and Chutzpah collectives, and the Jewish lesbian feminist collective Di Vilde Chayes. The final chapter of part 2 takes the development of Jewish feminist identities to locales across the nation and globe, chronicling tensions around anti-Semitism, racism, and anti-Zionism. The conclusion and epilogue assess the varied pathways to feminist and Jewish identities during these decades and provide thumbnail sketches of six younger women whose lives demonstrate changing amalgams of gender and Jewish identity.

For a good number of the women whose Jewish and feminist lives are chronicled in this book, the conversations and conference led to a renewed exercise in consciousness-raising. Indeed, at the conference, West Side Group member Vivian Rothstein described me as an “instigator” as well as a historian for asking women’s liberationists to excavate the Jewish influences in their lives that had remained buried. But she and almost all other narrators were enthusiastic about reclaiming this past and placing it for examination alongside other feminist stories. For some, the excursion into the Jewish aspects of their histories was unfamiliar and potentially uncomfortable, yet they ventured into this arena with keen interest. In inviting the women to remember, I hoped to encourage them to pursue memories and to try out ideas, rather than determine the directions they might follow. As “reminiscing subjects,” they framed their own narratives in interaction with my prompts, constituting themselves in multiple ways as participants in this mosaic of ethnic feminist history.
While demonstrating individual influences and motivations, the stories also reveal themes that result from common social locations and shared beliefs. In the life story, as Janet Giele explains, “the subject passes through thick and thin to emerge a distinctive individual, driven by a unique identity that is interactively shaped by the culture of origin and subsequent social forces.” Focusing on shared sociocultural contexts, such narratives represent more than isolated, idiosyncratic accounts. In this book, they offer clues to factors that determined Jewish and feminist identifications, among them historical location, social relationships, personal motives and individual traits, and adaptation to major life events.

Using life stories in this collective fashion, the book evokes prosopography, an investigation that relies on “writing history in sets of multiple biographies.” A primary means of studying marginal groups, prosopography is especially applicable to the history of Jewish women because it emphasizes a “catalogue of lives side by side” as well as the life narratives of individual women. In this way, it can bring out “affinities or traditions,” with the assembled biographies representing both “the individual and the group.” Informed by subjects’ memories and reflections, the composite stories create a framework for analysis of multiple, overlapping, feminist identities, which today we recognize as intersectional. Sometimes dominant and definitional, at other times crosscutting or conflicting, the women’s collective identities as feminists and Jews responded to social context variables as well as individual experiences and histories. While these hybrid identities were not always uppermost at the time, they served important social, psychological, and political functions and demonstrate distinctiveness, meaning, and historical resonance. These multiple stories become keys to an expanded history of second-wave feminism and a more complex understanding of Jewish identity.

“What would have changed if you acknowledged your Jewish identity at the time?” historian Alice Kessler-Harris asked women’s liberationists at the NYU conference, an admittedly counterfactual question. A question that might have been posed to the Jewish-identified feminists there is equally counterfactual: what would have changed if you had not been forced to struggle for validation of your identity within the feminist and Jewish communities? Or if anti-Semitism had been less of a
present and frightening force at home and abroad, both among femi-
nists and in the wider world? While such hypothetical questions have
no answers, the memories and perspectives of these women tell us a
great deal about the way that history did in fact happen. Their stories
and those of other Jewish second-wave feminist activists offer fresh per-
spectives on a movement that did so much to change the ways that we
understand and imagine our world.

Connections to both the individual and collective struggles of these
pioneering feminists can provide a framework for understanding con-
temporary struggles for belonging and usable models of inquiry and
social change. At a moment in time fraught with increasingly complex
personal and political challenges for Jews and feminists, the chronicle
of these sometimes frayed but often linked bonds offers pathways for
claiming meaningful identities and for comprehending the dynamic
social movements that have shaped our lives.