## Signposts: Reflections on Articles from the Journal's Archive

# How a Kosher Meat Boycott brought Jewish Women's History into the Mainstream: A Historical Appreciation[1]

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In 1980 Paula Hyman published an article in *American Jewish History* on an obscure three-week boycott of kosher butcher shops in New York City that would subsequently revolutionize American Jewish women's history, bringing it into the mainstream of American women's history.[2] "Immigrant Women and Consumer Protest: The New York City Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902" was not the first article on American Jewish women reflecting the impact of the feminist movement. In fact, several influential articles, one by Alice Kessler-Harris on three Jewish women labor organizers in the garment industry and another by Maxine Schwartz Seller on the education of immigrant women in the United States, considered significant activities of American Jewish female immigrants.[3] However, Hyman's was the first to conceptualize immigrant Jewish women's activism within the context of Jewish as well as American history. By devoting attention to married Jewish women's behaviors, she also deliberately engaged emerging paradigms that highlighted single Jewish women in the paid labor force as significant actors in shaping immigrant politics and culture. As she introduced married Jewish women's activism into American history, she challenged the relegation of Jewish women to labor history where their strikes and unionization attracted serious scholarship.[4] In the process she broadened the scope of women's

1. This article, drawn from the inaugural lecture of Paula E. Hyman Memorial Lecture at Yale endowed by her husband, Stanley Rosenbaum, was originally given on October 14, 2013. I decided to take the liberty of focusing specifically on Paula Hyman's scholarship and using some of my own personal knowledge based on my friendship with Paula.

2. Paula E. Hyman, "Immigrant Women and Consumer Protest: The New York City Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902," *American Jewish History* 70:1 (September 1980): 91–105. All future references to this article will be page numbers in the text.

3. Alice Kessler-Harris, "Organizing the 'Unorganizable': Three Jewish Women and Their Union," *Labor History* (Winter 1976): 5–23. Maxine Schwartz Seller, "The Education of the Immigrant Woman, 1900–1935," *Journal of Urban History* 4:3 (1978): 307–30.

4. See, in addition to Kessler-Harris, "Organizing the 'Unorganizable'," subsequent scholarship by Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture*

history in the United States and drew attention to consumer boycotts as sites of political activism. Finally, with this article Hyman initiated a whole new field of historical scholarship on American Jewish women.

Her article on the kosher meat boycott of 1902 succeeded in using a case study to illuminate gender dynamics and economic conflict within the immigrant world of New York City that reverberated far beyond the confines of its place and era. It pointed toward fresh understandings of Jewish modernization both in Europe and the United States that Hyman would subsequently articulate in her influential volume on *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*.[5] Most importantly, through these Lower East Side housewives she brought Jewish women into Jewish historical consciousness. In addition, the article connected her feminist activism with her historical professionalism, charting a path that many scholars would subsequently follow.[6]

As a feminist, Paula Hyman knew that women had made Jewish history but in the 1970s they were mostly invisible. Scholars ignored them. (Worse, many Jewish historians denigrated both women and efforts to study them.) Politically engaged feminists like Hyman believed their activism had precedent, but without historical scholarship, they lacked critical knowledge. Hyman employed a number of venues to awaken American Jews to the historical importance of women, starting with two essays on Jewish women published in general Jewish journals, *Conservative Judaism* (1972)[7] and *Congress Monthly* (1975)[8], that reached an audience of affiliated American Jews. These served as prelude to *The Jewish Woman in America* (1976), a jointly authored volume that she

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*on the Lower East Side, 1890–1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

5. Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

6. For an analysis of her scholarship on French Jews, see Richard I. Cohen, "Afterword: An Emancipating Experience: The Jews of France in Paula Hyman's Oeuvre," in *Gender and Jewish History*, ed. Marion A. Kaplan and Deborah Dash Moore (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 367–82.

7. Paula Hyman, "The Other Half: Women in the Jewish Tradition," *Conservative Judaism* (Summer 1972): 14–21. Reprinted in *The Jewish Woman,* ed. Elizabeth Koltun (New York: Schocken, 1976): 105–113.

8. Paula Hyman, "Looking for a Usable Past," *Congress Monthly* (October 1975): 10–15. Reprinted in *On Being a Jewish Feminist,* ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Schocken, 1983): 19–26.

wrote as a graduate student together with Charlotte Baum and Sonya Michel.[9] This explicitly feminist history, published by a trade press, reached an even broader audience than her essays.

In *The Jewish Woman in America* Hyman had written sections that narrated a transnational history of Jewish women, looking at German Jewish immigrants and their gender roles in Europe and the United States and comparing them to Eastern European immigrants. Researching Jewish women in the United States, she produced innovative scholarship that broadened the scope of modern Jewish history. She also demonstrated as a modern European Jewish historian that American Jewish history lay within her purview. Indeed, Hyman considered American Jewish history as part of modern Jewish history. Writing her chapters for the book, she introduced topics rarely broached by historians at that time. For example, in the chapter on labor, "Weaving the Fabric of Unionism: Jewish Women Move the Movement," she devoted several pages not only to gender bias and discrimination against women in the garment industry but also to sexual abuse. (132–36, 144–48) Despite this accomplishment, Hyman was aware of academic bias against writing popular, not to mention feminist history. So she kept the book off of her curriculum vita for over a decade.

This reluctance to allow *The Jewish Woman in America* to stake an academic claim for a feminist and gendered interpretation of American Jewish history influenced her decision to research and write the kosher meat boycott article. This essay examines her path leading from the book, a product of Hyman's feminism and the place where she did her first work in American Jewish history, to her article. A brief analysis of the article will show how it addressed multiple audiences, including immigrant historians and those European historians interested in women's political activism (especially their roles in food riots), in addition to her primary audience of Jewish historians.

The article began as a paper read at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. The Conference itself started in 1973 as Women's History was emerging as a field, although there had been a regular gathering dating back to the 1930s of women historians who did research in various areas. The Conference's initial 1973 meeting attracted three hundred participants, far more than anticipated. The 1974 conference at Radcliffe College drew a thousand, an enormous number for those years.[10] Recognizing the growing importance of the Berks, as the Con-

9. Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1976). Future references will be page numbers in text.

10. http://berksconference.org/history/; accessed June 14, 2014.

ference came to be called, for women's history, Hyman wanted Jewish history to be part of this intellectual exchange. She did not want Jewish women as actors in history to be left out of the emerging scholarship on women. When the call for papers for the 1978 conference at Mt. Holyoke came out, Paula was visiting me with her daughters at Vassar College, where I was teaching Jewish history in the Religion department.

On that 1977 summer visit we talked about the importance of Jewish historians appearing on the program at the Berks and discussed what Paula might propose as a topic. The labor historian, Herbert Gutman, had recently published a provocative op-ed in the *New York Times*. In the piece, titled "As for the '02 Kosher-Food Rioters . . .", Gutman called attention to rabid language used against Jewish women in order to condemn and contextualize similar terms employed to describe those who participated in looting that occurred during the July 13, 1977 blackout in New York City.[11]

Gutman had previously mentioned the kosher meat boycott in a major article, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, 1815–1919," published in the *American Historical Review* in 1973.[12] There he had argued for the importance of culture in shaping working class social history and used the boycott to illustrate a Jewish expression of a broad desire on the part of workers to seek a just price for food. The editors of *America's Working Women: A Documentary History 1600 to the Present* (1976) picked up on Gutman's quotes from a *New York Times* 1902 editorial condemning the immigrant Jewish women and published newspaper articles on the "food riots" in their volume.[13]

But in this particularly hot summer when the New York City press fearfully followed the serial murders of "Son of Sam," Gutman was seeking to give a history lesson that might make New Yorkers reflect on their revulsion toward the mostly African American and Latino rioters. He condemned unpardonable language that described the blackout as "the night of the animals," characterizing looters as "vultures" and "a jackal pack." Such language had historical precedents, he noted, and

11. Herbert G. Gutman, "As for the '02 Kosher-Food Rioters . . . ", *New York Times*, 21 July 1977, p. 23.

12. Herbert G. Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, 1815–1919," *American Historical Review* 78:3 (June 1973), pp. 531–88.

13. "Brooklyn Mob Loots Butcher Shop," and "Butchers Appeal to Police for Protection," in Rosalyn Baxandall, Lynn Gordon and Susan Reverby, *America's Working Women: A Documentary History 1600 to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1976), pp. 432–37.

had been used against immigrant Jewish women. Gutman quoted not only from the *New York Times* of 1902 but also from Irving Howe's bestselling, *World of Our Fathers*, that had appeared the previous year, the same year as *The Jewish Woman in America*. Gutman hammered home his point: "The animal metaphor always serves a base function," he wrote. "It separates the *behavior* of the discontented poor (striking, rioting, looting, boycotting) from the *conditions* that shape their discontent. Animal behavior, it is wrongly believed, is 'natural' and 'lawless'—therefore inexplicable. The best that can be done is to restrain it." By reminding readers to think of the world of "our mothers and grandmothers" and to recognize how wrongly they were tarred as "a pack of wolves," Gutman hoped to inspire empathy and understanding for contemporary poor and foreign New Yorkers.[14]

Gutman's op-ed unleashed a flood of letters, very few of which seemed to have been inspired to extend sympathy to the current looters. Instead, they rallied to support the kosher meat rioters even as the letter writers (most of whom appeared to be Jewish) distinguished between rioting about food prices as opposed to looting such commodities as cameras and televisions. (In fact, Gutman made a similar point about riots versus looting in his scholarly article.[15]) Many extolled their hardworking forbears who put themselves on the line to better society rather than just seeking "selfish gain."[16] Only a handful acknowledged the power of animal language to separate the poor from those who are comfortable. The labor historian Joshua Freeman, in his 2000 history of the working class in New York City, observed that a subsequent *Times* editorial "left unaddressed the utter lack of empathy among the letter writers for New York's poor," not to mention "the meanness and self-satisfaction that pervaded their outrage at Gutman's linkage of their ancestors with contemporary rioters . . . ."[17]

These recent political uses of the kosher meat boycott attracted Hyman's attention as a politically involved city resident. But she was interested in more than comparisons with contemporary rioters. Her politics extended specifically into the realm of feminism as well as the academy. The kosher meat boycott itself intrigued her and, equally important, she wanted to examine it as part of Jewish history. Gutman

14. Gutman, "As for the '02 Kosher-Food Rioters . . . ", p. 23. Emphasis in the original.
15. Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society," p. 576.
16. "Disorders of '02 and '77: Readers Replies," *New York Times*, 3 August 1977, p. ?
17. Freeman also discusses a vitriolic attack by Midge Decter in *Commentary* on Gutman's "truly disgraceful" article. Joshua Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II* (New York: New Press, 2000), pp. 281–82.

had not looked at the Yiddish press in his scholarly article, an omission that reduced what could be said about the boycott. The Yiddish press potentially offered an alternative understanding. At the very least, Yiddish journalists articulated viewpoints that expressed Jewish opinions on women boycotters. More importantly, considering both Yiddish and English sources was critical to presenting the kosher meat boycott as a part of both American and Jewish history as well as women's history. The result—a brilliant article that achieved her aims—challenged both European and American historians' analyses of street protests, food riots, women's roles as activists, and the gendered character of immigrant Jewish community. Now it is time to consider the article to see how she achieved her goals.

The opening sentence articulates Hyman's breadth and boldness: "Women have always participated in politics." (91) Never mind that women's political activism has regularly been overlooked, the fundamental fact of that participation cannot be denied. With this opening salvo, Hyman situated her own profound political commitments as a woman. She goes on to offer examples drawn from European history in both England and France, thus setting her subject—a kosher meat boycott—within a grand tradition of women's revolutionary political activism. Hyman then turns to her specific topic of immigrant Jewish women and quotes one of those juicy *New York Times* attacks on the women that Gutman also cited. But she specifically mentions "infuriated women going about" the city "with petroleum destroying goods and trying to set fire to the shops of those against whom they are angry." (92) This quickly reveals what the women were trying to do and prompts a series of fundamental questions: what impelled women to act in this fashion? Spontaneous rage? Women's inclination to riot? Is this an expression of a pre-industrial sensibility as Gutman had argued? Hyman answers no to each of these three hypotheses. Instead she proposes that the incident exposes much about immigrant Jewish women's self-perceptions, political consciousness and sense of community.

She writes her thesis with vigor and clarity and it pays to quote the paragraph in full:

> Despite their superficiality to earlier food riots, the kosher meat riots of 1902 give evidence of a modern and sophisticated political mentality emerging in a rapidly changing community. With this issue of the high price of food, immigrant housewives found a vehicle for political organization. They articulated a rudimentary grasp of their power as consumers and domestic managers. And, combining both traditional and modern tactics, they temporarily turned their status as housewives to good advantage, and used the neighborhood network to stage a successful three-week boycott of kosher

> meat shops throughout the Lower East Side, parts of upper Manhattan and the Bronx, and Brooklyn. The dynamics of the kosher meat boycott suggest that by focusing almost exclusively upon organized political activity in the labor movement and socialist parties, historians have overlooked the role of women. Although for a great part of their life absent from the wage-earning market, immigrant Jewish women were not apolitical. They simply expressed their political concerns in a different, less historically accessible arena—the neighborhood—where they pioneered in local community organizing. (92–3)

Hyman then footnotes a Hampshire College undergraduate student paper written by Daphne Kis as another example to support her argument.[18] Her decision to recognize and credit young scholars making early forays into Jewish women's history reflected Hyman's feminist politics and intellectual generosity just as her conclusion that married immigrant women had pioneered in local community organizing drew upon her own experiences in anti-war activism. Handing out leaflets in Brooklyn together with Marion Kaplan expanded Paula's consciousness of the processes of female community activism. This paragraph and the article would similarly combine Hyman's continuing political and personal commitments with her exceptional historical acumen.

Hyman then launches into a narrative of the origins of the May 14th strike, drawing upon the Yiddish Daily *Forverts* for a colorful account of women's self-perceptions. Women knew how to make a strike, averred Mrs. Levy, unlike the retail kosher butchers, who had half-heartedly opposed the rise in meat prices. Hyman also notes the role of restaurant-owner Sarah Edelson, as well as the specific streets (Monroe and Pike) where the women started to gather support. Additional juicy quotes come from the *Forverts,* including the admonition from a sheitel-wearing striker to a woman buying meat for her sick husband that "a sick man can eat tref meat." With this quote, Hyman reminds her reader that this event belonged in Jewish as well as American history. The two Yiddish terms—sheitel and tref—signified internal Jewish arguments among the women as well as their gendered commitments to a religious culture that extended far beyond the Lower East Side. Hyman would use the Yiddish press to argue cogently for the religious knowledge, commitment, and competence of these immigrant housewives, especially when they subsequently entered synagogues to disrupt the reading of the Torah

18. Daphne Kis did not become an historian but went on to earn an MBA at NYU and then served as owner, CEO and president of EDventure Holdings. She remained a feminist activist committed to women and entrepreneurship, is a leader in the technology revolution, married and raised two daughters. http://www.daphnekis.com/; accessed June 14, 2014.

because a matter of justice was at stake. In short, the women knew how to build an effective movement of consumer protest despite their appearance as mere housewives.

By Sunday, May 18th, a mere four days after it started, the strike had spread beyond the Lower East Side to Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx and the women were ready to organize beyond mass meetings. Hundreds of women participated in meetings; dozens volunteered to boycott stores. Their presence on the streets in front of kosher butcher shops and their aggressiveness in preventing other women from entering the shops and purchasing meat led to scuffles with the police and arrests of the women. Hyman assiduously identifies the women by name, ideally with their own first names but occasionally only with their husband's name. Using the Yiddish press, the Orthodox *Yiddishes Tageblatt* as well as the Socialist *Forverts*, she succeeded in uncovering conflict and competition among the women. Male communal leaders took advantage of this struggle for power between Sarah Edelson, one of the initiators of the boycott, and Caroline Schaatzburg, President of the Ladies Anti-Beef Trust Association later formed to coordinate the boycott. Not to be outdone, the men set up an alternative group. Several days later the previously organized male Retail Butchers affiliated with the boycott against the wholesale butchers' Beef Trust. With the lines clearly drawn, initially by the women boycotters, and with wide swaths of neighborhood women steadfastly engaged in the boycott, the wholesale butchers capitulated. By June 5th, the strike ended. A few of the cooperative butcher shops that had been established during the boycott continued to operate. Although the price of meat plummeted down to 9 cents wholesale (14 cents retail), it slowly rose again. Hyman judged the three-week boycott movement "a qualified success." (96)

The story of the boycott's brief history gleaned through the press served Hyman as a starting point for further discussion. Employing the tools of social history, she sought to identify these Jewish women activists. It was not enough that she had named them and analyzed the boycott. She wanted to bring them back into history as much as possible. Using manuscript census records and city directories she located eleven of the activists and then generalized from what she found. They were neither recent immigrants nor young (mean age of 39); they were were married, with children, and their husbands worked in typical immigrant occupations. Furthermore, their children over age sixteen also worked, leading Hyman to conclude that they were "not an elite in their community, but a true grass roots leadership." (97)

At this point Hyman introduced her forceful argument regarding the women's politics: they understood supply and demand in a capital-

ist society, they had distinct economic objectives to lower the cost of meat, and they possessed a clear political strategy. Calling themselves "strikers," the women utilized radical rhetoric reflecting their political self-understanding and claimed for themselves vaunted American ideals of freedom of speech. "Thus Lower East Side women were familiar with the political rhetoric of their day, with the workings of the market economy, and with the potential of consumers to affect the market," she concludes. (98) One needed to distinguish between impulses that started the boycott and the actual boycott. And, one had to pay attention to the neighborhood nexus that sustained the boycott over several weeks and allowed women to recruit each other. Hyman notes the quasi-public character of neighborhood life that encouraged women to exert moral and physical pressure on each other. She calls the immigrant neighborhood "a form of female network," and a "locus of community." (99) As she writes, the women "assumed the existence of collective goals and the right to demand shared sacrifices." (98) Individual preferences had to be subordinated to a collective that was local but also Jewish and transnational.

Hyman argued that in general the women secured the support of the Jewish community. "The climate of the immigrant Jewish community facilitated the resolute behavior of the women," she contends. (100) Here one sees her own politics reappearing in her largely positive assessment of most local rabbis. In fact, she cites an appeal by the women for communal ostracism of one rabbi, Dr. Adolph Radin of the People's Synagogue, who objected to the boycott and treated the women rudely in his synagogue when they interrupted the Torah reading to secure the men's support. (Radin eventually apologized.) She also notes that the *Forverts* condemned collusion between Rabbi Jacob Joseph's son and the German Jewish beef trust. Although she does not elaborate on this ethnic competition between German wholesalers (the beef trust) and the largely eastern European retail butchers, the boycott did expose some of the other fissures among New York Jews. And she detailed efforts by men to wrest leadership of the boycott from women, often in the guise of assistance. There were limits on Jewish communal support.

In contrast to the Yiddish press as well as most rabbis and Jewish communal leaders, English language Socialist papers criticized the women and their consumer boycott as ineffective politics. Hyman characterized this stance as more ideologically pure. She also suggested that despite tendencies by Jewish and labor historians to portray Jewish Socialists as "assimilationist," they remained closer to the values of their Jewish community than other American radicals.

Her conclusions pointed to directions that would later be followed by other historians. First, she noted how highly politicized Jewish immigrants were. Then she observed that the penchant of historians to categorize Jewish immigrants according to ideologies did not do justice to the mutability of either immigrant identities or politics. "Boundary lines were fluid," she writes, "and socialist rhetoric tripped easily from the tongues of women who still cared about kosher meat, could cite Biblical passages in Hebrew, and felt at ease in the synagogue." (102) Finally, she looked for precedents in Europe that might have exerted an impact and cites Hasidic rebbes' calls for passive resistance against the tax on kosher meat through a boycott. As the scholarship of Tony Michels, Daniel Soyer, Annie Polland and Glenn Dynner would subsequently reveal, future scholars would amplify these conclusions.[19]

Yet in the end, Hyman did not ignore the rapidity with which the activists seem to have disappeared from the scene of history. Although there would be other forms of neighborhood activism such as rent strikes as well as another meat boycott in 1917, different women would lead these protests. She closes on note of realism. "Because its leaders faded into obscurity with the conclusion of the boycott, because of the very nature of a short-lived grass roots movement, it is impossible to assess the impact of the movement upon its participants. However," she affirms, "it is likely that the political awareness expressed by the boycotters was not an isolated phenomenon but was communicated effectively, if quietly and informally, to their younger sisters and daughters." (105) Thus the kosher meat boycott of 1902 served as a prelude to future struggles and also held out the promise of the transmission of political consciousness from one generation of Jewish women to another.

While it is impossible to determine whether the boycotters had any direct descendants of political activists, their history, told so effectively and compellingly by Paula Hyman, has reached thousands of undergraduates in American universities since 1980. Historians regularly teach the article. It appears on many different course syllabi. American studies scholar, anthropologist, and women's studies scholar, Riv-Ellen Prell reports that often her students claim that its introduction to Jewish working-

19. See Tony Michels, *A Fire in their Hearts: Yiddish Socialist in New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Daniel Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880–1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Annie Polland, "May a Free Thinker Help a Pious Man? The Shared World of the 'Religious' and the 'Secular' among Eastern European Jewish Immigrants to America," *American Jewish History* 93:4 (December 2007): 375–407; Glenn Dynner, *Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

class women's activism is one of the things they most valued about her course.[20] The boycotters continue to awaken political consciousness and the possibilities of initiating change on the part of ordinary women, a message Hyman would have appreciated.

Others have also revisited this article recently as part of an assessment of the impact of Paula Hyman's scholarship. Rebecca Kobrin, who studied with Hyman as an undergraduate at Yale and then returned as a post-doctoral fellow and colleague, turned to the article in remarks prepared for a panel at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem in 2013. The article, Kobrin wrote, "revolutionized the way Jewish female activism was theorized, conceptualized and narrated not only by Jewish historians, who rarely looked at women or considered them a subject worthy of research, but also by the growing ranks of scholars in women's history who rarely dealt with issues of religion or questions of lifecycle." In fact, Kobrin contends, it "arguably made a deeper impact on the field of American history and in particular American women's history," than Hyman's later important book, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History.*[21]

Kobrin observed that the "kosher meat boycott article bridged another important divide, between labor and consumer history . . . ."[22] Because of her location as a scholar of European history, Hyman paid attention to women's activism in consumer protests, a subject that had not yet been treated by American historians in 1980 when her article appeared. Kobrin pointed to Nancy Hewitt, a historian of United States women's history, who wrote in a 1985 review of women's history scholarship that Hyman's article came out at a time when "the notion of a single women's community rooted in common oppression" was seen as "denying the social and material realities of caste and class in America." Increasingly, "the concept of community" which had been the bedrock of American women's history in the 1970s, had "become problematic for women's historians."[23] But as Kobrin contended, Hyman demonstrated "how 'community' was still a valid analytical concept for those interested in understanding how gender operated and shaped the past."[24]

Kobrin found inspiration in the article's insistence on an "approach to analyzing the past on its own terms." Both in her teaching and her

20. Conversation with Riv-Ellen Prell, July 2013.

21. Rebecca Kobrin, "Jewish History Since Gender: A Panel in Memory of Paula Hyman," paper delivered at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem (July 30, 2013).

22. Ibid.

23. Nancy A. Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1980s," *Social History*, 10: 3, North American Issue (October 1985): 300–301.

24. Kobrin, "Jewish History Since Gender."

scholarship, Hyman taught "the critical importance of listening to historical sources for the voices of those who have been silenced. Indeed," Kobrin writes, "the women she found on the front page of the *Jewish Daily Forward* because they were upset about the price of meat were far from unknown or silent in their day, . . . ."[25] These women's experiences were central to Jewish immigrant history and to the larger history of American Jews.

Six years after it appeared, American Jewish historian Jonathan Sarna reprinted the article in his anthology on *The American Jewish Experience* (1986) and five years later immigrant historian George Pozzetta included it in an anthology on *Ethnicity and Gender: The Immigrant Woman* (1991).[26] Seven years after that American Jewish historian Jeffrey Gurock reissued it in his multivolume collection of articles from *American Jewish History*. Then Jewish women's historian Pamela Nadell incorporated it into her landmark collection of articles on *American Jewish Women's History* that appeared in 2003. This collection marked the coming of age of American Jewish women's history, a burgeoning field by the early 21st century. Reflecting recent trends, the volume included only two articles written prior to 1990. Hyman's article was one of them.[27] Ironically this book grew out of Nadell's frustration at the absence of scholarship on Jewish women from anthologies of American women's history—among Hyman's motivations in the 1970s, namely, to have scholarship on Jewish women participate in women's history. The large volume designed for teaching edited by Ellen DuBois and Lynn Dumenil particularly irritated Nadell.[28] However, there is no question that Hyman's article crossed over into both American and Jewish history in addition to American women's history as she had hoped.

References to the article span an even wider range than its reprinting. A few examples reveal the diversity of its readers. It is discussed in *Consumer Boycott: Effecting Change through the Marketplace and the Media* as well as in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (in this book Hyman's open-

25. Ibid.

26. Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *The American Jewish Experience* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986); George E. Pozzetta, ed. *Ethnicity and Gender: The Immigrant Woman* (New York: Garland, 1991).

27. Pamela S. Nadell, ed. *American Jewish Women's History: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2003). The other pre–1990 article was by Alice Kessler-Harris, "'Organizing the Unorganizable:' Three Jewish Women and Their Union."

28. Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: an American History with Documents*, 2 vol (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2005).

ing discussion of European practices is mentioned). It appears in *The Restless City: A Short History of New York from Colonial Times to the Present* as well as in *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working Class Politics in the United States, 1900–1965*.

With the kosher meat boycott, Paula Hyman found just the women to enter and disrupt Jewish historical consciousness. Ordinary, working class, married, middle-aged (many of them older than she was when she wrote the article), these Jewish immigrant mothers possessed simultaneous commitments to maintaining Judaism, expressed through their observance of kashrut, and pursuing justice and a fair price on meat, evidenced through their willingness to strike. Their blend of modern political organizing with a traditional sense of Jewish collective responsibility illuminated Jewish history's gendered character. Their radicalism upset the status quo, provoked outrage on the part of "respectable" New Yorkers that registered in the English language press (not to mention the fury of judges who chastised the women arrested for protesting), and revealed possibilities of female activism.[29] Through her research Hyman uncovered a Jewish past that spoke effectively to diverse scholarly and popular audiences. The kosher meat boycott article opened new ways of conceptualizing and theorizing history. It brought back to life the voices of those silenced and provided an incisive example of the fusion of feminism and history.

"Women have always participated in politics," she wrote. Indeed they have. Hyman's kosher meat boycotters continue to inspire new generations.

29. Hyman quotes from the *Forward* a dialogue of a judge questioning women arrested for disorderly conduct. "What do you know of a trust? It's no business of yours," a judge condescendingly inquired. Rose Peskin replied, "Whose business is it, then, that our pockets are empty?" (91)