
Unsere Leit (“Our People”):
Anna Hillkowitz and the
Development of the East European Jewish
Woman Professional in America

Jeanne Abrams

Jewish women in America have traditionally been active in a myriad of benevolent organizations and institutions in the Jewish community, generally occupying voluntary positions. This phenomenon has been exhibited in the history of the early Denver Jewish community as well. In 1872, wives, daughters, and sisters of middle- and upper-class Denver Jewish men formed the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society, and later, in 1893, the Denver chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, which was devoted largely to settlement work and educational projects. Historian June Sochen has noted that the achievements of volunteers in general have usually gone unrecorded in American as well as Jewish history. Sochen has further maintained that the role of Jewish women in philanthropic organizations in particular has received only cursory attention in historical accounts.¹ The purpose of this essay is to bring to light the story of one such volunteer turned professional woman. Anna Hillkowitz became a volunteer for the Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society, one of the most vital early Denver benevolent organizations, even before the institution formally opened its doors as a tuberculosis sanatorium in September of 1904. Not infrequently, being a volunteer was a stepping-stone for a woman to a paid position, as in the case of Anna Hillkowitz. As early as 1906 she was hired as a major fund-raiser for the JCRS, receiving a salary equal to if not higher than her male coworkers. What makes Anna Hillkowitz's story especially significant are her Eastern European immigrant origins and the fact that her letters were fortunately retained for posterity. Her correspondence, written while she was employed by the JCRS, forms one of the most fascinating sections of the JCRS Archives.

In order to better understand Anna Hillkowitz's role, a brief history of the JCRS is necessary. The Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society was founded in 1904 by a group of twenty Jewish immigrant tradesmen, primarily to aid Jewish tuberculosis victims in all stages of the disease.² For the next fifty years the JCRS Sanatorium admitted patients free of charge and served as a haven for thousands of patients afflicted with the "white plague." While the institution was to be formally nonsectarian, it was organized primarily to serve Jewish patients in a distinctively Jewish environment.

When the JCRS opened its doors in 1904, another Jewish hospital for tuberculosis treatment was already in existence in Denver. Opened in 1899, the National Jewish Hospital (NJH) had been organized and funded largely by wealthy, liberal, Reform German Jews.³ Like the JCRS, the NJH extended its services free of charge. However, it also imposed a rigid set of rules governing patient admissions. In accordance with the medical opinions of the era, only patients with incipient tuberculosis were admitted to the NJH. Besides a formal application and formal medical examination, the prospective patients at NJH also had to show proof of having sufficient funds to either remain in Denver through their own means of support after discharge from the hospital or to return to their original hometowns. Patients could remain at the NJH only for a limit of six months.⁴ In addition there was also a feeling on the part of many Eastern European Jews (they comprised the vast majority of the early patients at the JCRS) that NJH acted in a patronizing and condescending manner toward them, and made it particularly difficult for religious Jews to observe the laws of *kashruth* and Jewish festivals and rituals.⁵ The JCRS, then, would provide an alternative for destitute Eastern European Jewish tuberculosis victims seeking a more Jewish environment, as well as those persons with more severe cases of the disease who were not admitted to most sanatoria of the era. Since patients were treated at the JCRS free of charge, fund-raising would become a pivotal and perennial task.

The prime mover and guiding genius of the JCRS organization, which was principally supported and populated by Eastern European Jews of modest means, was Dr. Charles Spivak. Born in Russia, Spivak emigrated to America as a young man. In Russia he had received both an extensive talmudic as well as secular education. His departure from Russia was hastened by the Russian secret police, which sought his

arrest for involvement in radical socialist activities. In America Spivak found positions as a day laborer, typesetter, and teacher. Characteristic of his devotion to humanity, the profession he ultimately settled upon was medicine. He graduated in 1890 from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Because of his wife's poor health, he moved to Denver in 1895, and was soon conducting a thriving medical practice.⁶ Dr. Spivak guided the JCRS institution from its infancy, serving as executive secretary from 1904 until his death in 1927. As executive secretary, Spivak directed the institution's financial affairs, and in this capacity he would later serve as Anna Hillkowitz's supervisor. In light of his early experiences, Spivak's association with the JCRS probably served to fulfill not only his commitment to *Yiddishkeit* but the humanitarian aspects of his socialist philosophy.

Although men primarily occupied the positions of elected officers and board members of the JCRS, women did serve as members of a number of vital early committees, including the JCRS Sanatorium House Committee and the Instruction and Recreation Committee.⁷ These areas, of course, had traditionally been viewed as within the sphere of women. More important than the committees, however, were the ladies' auxiliaries of the JCRS which had sprung up in most large American cities by 1905. The importance of the contributions of these auxiliaries was documented continually in all the JCRS publications. Interestingly, of the twenty-seven Tributary Societies listed in the *First Annual Report* of the JCRS, it seems that more JCRS auxiliaries and aid societies were composed of men than women.⁸ However, within a short time, most auxiliaries became the realm solely of women.

While women may be the unsung heroines of American Jewish history, at the JCRS their contributions were apparently highly appreciated. Dr. Spivak, an amateur historian with a decided gift for narrative, also served as the unofficial recorder of the institution's early history. In his "Secretary's Report of 1905" he proudly noted the vital role of women at the JCRS institution.

Our Deborah's merit particular mention: Ladies auxiliary societies were started in various cities, and, whenever societies were organized with the object of helping the J.C.R.S., the women of Israel took a most active part.

Our local Ladies' Auxiliary Society, headed by Mrs. Louis Levy, has been a helpful adjunct to our Society from the beginning, and its usefulness, whether in

the collection of funds or in the management of the Sanatorium, is being manifested every day more and more.⁹

The subject of the activities and importance of the women's contributions to the JCRC as not merely confined to the organization's early years. Almost all publications concerning the institution (which closed its doors as a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1954)¹⁰ reported in great detail on the work of the auxiliaries, often describing them as an unparalleled pillar of support.

The history of the JCRC ladies' auxiliaries is worthy of a major study in itself, but Anna Hillkowitz, a paid financial solicitor for the organization in the institution's early years, is the major focus of this article. Committed at a young age to philanthropic work on behalf of her fellow Russian immigrants, by 1906 Hillkowitz was traveling the United States soliciting contributions for the JCRC and, not incidentally, earning a respectable income.

Anna Hillkowitz was born in Russia, probably around 1880. At the age of six she emigrated to America with her parents, Rabbi Elias (Elya) and Rebecca (Hindel) Hillkowitz.¹¹ Settling in Cincinnati, Rabbi Hillkowitz founded an Orthodox synagogue where he served as rabbi until asthma forced him to move to Denver's dry and sunny climate in 1890.¹² Anna, along with three of her siblings, accompanied the family to Denver; two adult children remained behind in Cincinnati.¹³ In Cincinnati Anna Hillkowitz had attended public schools, and she continued her education in Denver, graduating from East Denver High School in 1897. Following her graduation she entered a library-training school and later secured a position as a member of the Denver Public Library staff. According to one source she was the only Jewish woman of the era in Denver to enter that profession.¹⁴

Apparently education was a highly valued commodity in the Hillkowitz family. Rudolf Glanz has pointed out the importance of American educational institutions to the Eastern European immigrants in general.¹⁵ Soon after his arrival, Rabbi Hillkowitz, noted for his erudition, was accepted as the "dean" of Denver's Orthodox rabbis.¹⁶ Of the six Hillkowitz children, Anna became a librarian; two sons, Philip and William, became prominent physicians; and a third son, Solomon, became manager of the Denver Vegetable Grower's Association. No information is available on the other two daughters, Rose Hillko-

witz Holzberg and Ella Hillkowitz.¹⁷ The Hillkowitz children's education may have speeded the family's upward mobility. In 1893 the family resided in Denver's West Side, known as the Jewish "ghetto," but by 1900 they had moved to the more fashionable East Side neighborhood.¹⁸

Anna identified closely with her Jewish heritage. As an active member of the Young Women's Jewish Alliance, she frequently visited the Colorado State Industrial School to instruct young Jewish boys in the history and customs of Judaism. Somewhat of a bluestocking, Anna also presented a number of papers before the Denver chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, of which she was an active member.¹⁹ Anna's membership in the early NCJW is significant. It indicates that even though she was of Eastern European origins, she was able to participate fully in an organization which was mainly composed of Denver's German Reform Jewish elite. Anna had been educated in American schools, and while she apparently remained traditional in her religious observances, on a cultural level she seemingly was able to easily and comfortably interact with these women. Her literary abilities were also recognized, as in 1905 she was asked to write an article on the history of Jewish businessmen and merchants in America which was published in the *Denver Jewish Outlook*.²⁰

The Hillkowitz family had been instrumental in the founding of the JCRS. Anna's brother Philip, a leading Denver pathologist and bacteriologist, served as the institution's president from 1904 until his death in 1948. Anna's father, Rabbi Elias Hillkowitz, had served in 1904 along with Jenny Charsky Spivak (Mrs. Charles Spivak) and Abraham Kobey as one of the institution's three incorporators.²¹ It was Rabbi Hillkowitz who had suggested the JCRS's fifty-year motto, "He Who Saves One Life Is As If He Had Preserved the Whole World" (Talmud). Anna was involved with the JCRS from the beginning. *The First Annual Report* lists her as a member of the JCRS Instruction and Recreation Committee,²² and Dr. Spivak recorded that the furnishings for the first JCRS tent-cottages for housing patients were donated, "principally through the untiring shnorring [begging] expeditions of the President of the Denver Ladies' Auxiliary J.C.R.S., Mrs. Louis Levy, and the Misses Leonore Moses and Anna Hillkowitz."²³ Soon she would become a paid worker.

In 1906 Anna Hillkowitz took a leave of absence from her position

on the staff of the Denver Public Library to become a traveling "field secretary," or fund-raiser, for the JCRS. Anna was certainly not the only Jewish woman to have held this type of position at the turn of the century. In Denver, for example, Mrs. Seraphine Pisko, a widow of German descent, held the powerful position of executive financial secretary of the National Jewish Hospital. In Chicago, Goldie Stone, a Lithuanian who came to the United States in 1880, became the financial secretary for the Orthodox Federated Charities of Chicago. When her position was challenged as being too difficult for a woman, her male coworkers defended her, pointing out that biblical women such as Deborah and Miriam, for example, had occupied high positions of leadership among the Jews.²⁴

While Anna Hillkowitz perhaps did not occupy an unusual type of occupation, she is probably rare in having left historians vivid documentation of her experiences. We are fortunate that over two hundred letters written by Anna Hillkowitz to Charles Spivak, and vice versa, survive in the JCRS Archives. Hillkowitz's letters chronicle her travels throughout the United States in 1906 and 1907 and the difficulties she encountered in raising funds for the young hospital. Her letters are particularly relevant because they reveal the story of an early professional woman of Eastern European origins. Although she obviously became rapidly acculturated and Americanized, she still retained a significant degree of commitment to traditional Judaism and certainly to Yiddish culture which is apparent in the correspondence. In order to prevent possible misunderstanding, a definition of terms is appropriate here. The use of the adjective "traditional" to describe Hillkowitz's religious views is meant to denote her general outlook. It seems probable that Hillkowitz did personally observe many Jewish traditions and customs. However, it is doubtful that she followed strict Orthodox religious practices. It is highly unlikely, for example, that an Orthodox Jewish woman at the turn of the century would have traveled across the country on her own, particularly speaking before mixed audiences.

Anna Hillkowitz's letters, written while she traveled across the country, demonstrate that the position of JCRS field secretary combined the skills of a public relations person, accountant, and fund-raiser. Apparently a forceful and independent woman, she canvassed Jewish communities across the nation on her own, generally staying in

local hotels and making her own traveling and financial arrangements. Her main goal, of course, was to spread the JCRS "message" and collect as much money as possible for the young organization. As mentioned previously, she had taken a leave of absence from her work as a librarian to operate as a field worker for the JCRS. It is obvious from her correspondence that she took her position seriously and was concerned both with supporting herself and with aiding the organization from a deep sense of responsibility for the indigent Jewish consumptives at the JCRS. In a letter to Dr. Spivak, dated August 9, 1906, Hillkowitz discussed at length the pay she received and her motives for working for the institution: "I solemnly assure you were it for anything else but the J.C.R.S. I would not do it for \$3,000 per year for another cause. If it were for the money there was in it I would have been back in Denver ere this. . . . Had I the means my dear Doctor I would gladly travel without remuneration."²⁵ In short, Anna Hillkowitz exhibited extreme dedication to the JCRS cause but at the same time revealed clearly that she was also dependent on earning her own income.

Hillkowitz viewed herself as a professional woman, and conducted herself accordingly. She apparently carried a formal business card with her and an official letter of introduction. At times she even produced letters of testimony from prominent people in the Denver community when she thought it might help her in raising money. One such letter was written for Hillkowitz by Judge Ben Lindsey, a Progressive Denver judge of national reputation who had earned his fame through the defense of juvenile rights.

Hillkowitz's schedule was arduous. To raise funds she accepted numerous speaking engagements in cities throughout the country at local synagogues, federations, women's groups, and fraternal organizations. In addition, she collected funds practically door to door, and was also responsible for compiling careful lists of donations and potential donors and then forwarding the money and the bookkeeping details to Spivak in Denver.

Apparently a highly articulate and self-possessed young woman, Anna Hillkowitz was not intimidated by either large or unfriendly audiences. In a letter dated April 30, 1906, Spivak advises Hillkowitz: "You will have your hands full at the Philadelphia convention, lobbying, discussing and answering all sorts of questions fired at you."²⁶ A

few days later Hillkowitz replies, "I ran around seeing delegates at both the Arbeiter Ring [Workmen's Circle] and the I.O.B.A. [International Order of B'rith Abraham]. I addressed the Arbeiter Ring with a short talk."²⁷

While the Hillkowitz letters are largely concerned with day-to-day fund-raising procedures and mundane details, often fascinating insights emerge from the correspondence as well. One of these areas, for example, is the subject of antagonisms between the German and Eastern European Jewish communities in America at the turn of the century.

As a fund-raiser for the JCRS, Anna Hillkowitz frequently saw herself in competition with representatives of the National Jewish Hospital for the collection of money. While in the early years of the twentieth century the German Reform Jewish community generally provided the funding for NJH, and the Eastern European Orthodox segment for the JCRS, both groups also sought more general financial support. In a letter written to Spivak while she was enjoying a brief stay in Denver in February of 1906, Hillkowitz made some perceptive observations on the situation: "In the cities I visited I found that the German Jews and the Russian Jews do not and will not unite for any cause not even for the sake of charity. . . . It is deplorable that there is such a gulf and especially that it won't be bridged even for the cause of charity."²⁸ Hillkowitz encountered German prejudices on occasion in her role as fund-raiser for the JCRS. When approaching the St. Louis federated charities, apparently controlled by German Jews, she was questioned in minute detail and reported to Spivak: ". . . the prejudice of the German for the Russian is terrible. . . . after I talked and told them everything and they had questioned me and requested me, one member remarked to another, soto voce, of course (so I was told by another member): 'Even if this thing [the JCRS] was started and is run by a lot of kikes, it looks like a d[am] good thing, and we ought to help it.'²⁹ Despite the antagonism, however, it is significant to note that Anna was assured by the St. Louis Charities that they would donate \$500 to the JCRS.³⁰ This incident demonstrates once again that although the German Jews may have looked upon their Eastern European brethren with some disdain, they generally donated generously of their money for the welfare of their "poor cousins."

In each city Hillkowitz tried to approach leading members of both

the Eastern European and German communities to solicit funding. In Rochester, New York, she met with the wife of the German Reform rabbi and reported to Spivak that “she [the rabbi’s wife] is a crank on scientific charity and just as a machine performs a function so she disperses charity—with not a bit of heart or charitable spirit.”³¹ In these comments Anna Hillkowitz is articulating the feeling, held by many Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century, that the German Reform Jews, in following the American Progressive ideals of the era, had turned charity into a purely business venture.

Generally Hillkowitz’s greatest success in raising funds came through Orthodox congregations. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for example, she found that the “Orthodox Rabbi Goldstein has been the greatest help to me of any Rabbi since I have traveled for the J.C.R.S. He has even run the chances of making bad friends in order to help our cause. . . . the Reform Rabbi told me that there is nothing ‘doing’ among his congregation, that those that contribute to the NJH would certainly not give.”³² Yet at times, each group apparently stepped out of its normal pattern. At the end of her stay in Rochester, despite the discouragement Hillkowitz received from the Reform rabbi and his wife, she was able to report to Spivak: “The German Jews in this town have come worthy to the front.”³³ She was not pleased with the Eastern European Jews in Rochester, however, observing: “. . . the Russians are a great disappointment to me. They have here some Russian or Polish Jews to be more correct who have a great deal of money and they are the lowest subscribers on the list.”³⁴ Even so, she obviously identifies with this Eastern European segment, calling them “*unsere leit*” (“our people”), but rather deprecatingly observes that since these Jews are “nouveau riches” they are more interested in gaining a foothold in German society than in fulfilling their charital obligations.³⁵ While Spivak shared Hillkowitz’s disdain for scientific charity as well as for those Eastern Europeans who shirked their duty, he seems to have taken some of her complaints as simply blowing off steam. After receiving her first letter from Rochester in which she describes her encounter with the wife of the Reform rabbi, Spivak observes with humor: “I am by this time accustomed to hearing your complaints about the inhabitants of the various cities in the East, and yet after you are through with a city you nevertheless succeed in turning out their pockets, so I do not feel blue about your blue letters.”³⁶

According to an article entitled "Travel Notes," written by Hillkowitz for a 1907 issue of the JCRS publication, the *Sanatorium*, she visited over forty cities in her first six months as field secretary. In each community she recalled, she was greeted with hospitality she met not only with financial assistance but with moral support.³⁷ Her comments indicate that a loose network of potential donors in the American Jewish community was in existence even at the turn of the century, and they provided a ready-made support system for solicitors. As early as 1906 the JCRS had appointed around two hundred "National Directors" in cities throughout the United States. These men and women were designated as "friends" of the JCRS who had accepted this honorary position to act as liaisons between the JCRS solicitor and the local community.

Anna Hillkowitz generally visited cities in the Midwest and in the East, stopping in such varied places as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New York, Huntington, West Virginia, and Guthrie, Oklahoma. In large cities like St. Louis, she battled established Jewish federations to solicit allotments for the JCRS. Even small towns like Huntington, West Virginia, where the Jewish populations were small, were considered proper targets for fund-raising. After visiting Huntington in April of 1906, Hillkowitz remarked: "Huntington has . . . ten or fifteen Jewish families . . . who hold on to what they have with a vengeance. Nevertheless, I have a few annual subscriptions and some donations."³⁸ Apparently she was able to spark the conscience of the Huntington Jews, as a letter from Spivak to Hillkowitz written a few days later acknowledged a collection of \$54.50 from that town, solicited by Anna Hillkowitz.³⁹

In collecting funds Anna Hillkowitz left no stone unturned. In Northumberland, Pennsylvania, she visited a cap factory owned by a Jew. She arranged a meeting with the factory workers, who were all Jewish, and not only collected \$40 from them, but also secured a promise from the workers that they would pass a per capita tax of 10 cents per month per worker to benefit the JCRS.⁴⁰

While the JCRS during its early years received limited support from Jewish federations and even some money from donors of substantial wealth, the majority of the contributions came from men and women like those at the Northumberland factory who were of modest means. The JCRS was one of the first successful examples of an institu-

tion organized by Eastern European Jews for their fellow Eastern European immigrants. The underlying factor in the success of the JCRS was the ability of the organization to tap financial sources in almost all sections of the United States, from people in virtually every socioeconomic group. As noted previously, however, the vast majority of contributions were small; thus the JCRS attempted to interest large numbers of men and women in its cause. Literally thousands of receipts acknowledging the numerous donations, which were sometimes as small as 5 and 10 cents, fill the JCRS files.

The decision to concentrate on raising funds among the lower classes was not a haphazard one, but rather reflects the basic philosophy of Dr. Spivak and other JCRS leaders. When Hillkowitz writes Spivak concerning her hope to approach a number of wealthy Jews for contributions,⁴¹ Spivak firmly replies: "I think you should abandon entirely the idea of making any strenuous effort to meet our rich brethren. If our Institution is to be a peoples' institution, it should be supported by the people only. Let us collect our moneys in dollars and quarters."⁴² This advice was not new to Hillkowitz, and as a matter of record she had in reality been collecting funds in this manner for some time. In January of 1906, for example, she had written Spivak about her success in collecting money in Wichita, Kansas: "Our Russian Jews there are all paying twenty cents a month for the benefit of the JCRS with the exception of Mrs. Bronstein who pays forty cents a month."⁴³ Even though the "Russian Jews" amounted to only eleven people and their contribution was the modest sum of \$2.40 per month, they appeared to be worthy of mention in Hillkowitz's view.

Anna Hillkowitz's professional relationship with Spivak is interesting. Although at times he criticizes her for her failure to bring in more money, or for mistakes in her bookkeeping, he gives her a great deal of freedom in carrying out her duties, particularly in determining where and how she will solicit funds. The fact that she was a woman apparently did not influence Spivak's opinion of her as a fund-raiser. Seemingly she was judged simply in terms of her success, i.e., how much money she did or did not bring in. When she "brought in the dough," as Spivak put it, he wrote to commend her and assure her she was his best field worker. After receiving one check for \$100 that Hillkowitz had solicited in Oklahoma, Spivak wrote: "Hurray! Three cheers for the Field Secretary of the JCRS. You have done wonderfully well."⁴⁴

When Anna Hillkowitz's intake of funds fell short of expected goals, Spivak was also quick to show his disapproval. In a letter written to Hillkowitz on May 23, 1906, Spivak pointed out that she received a salary of \$50 per month more than one of her male coworkers, Mr. Dolitsky, yet she had collected almost \$900 less than Dolitsky during a three month-period. In the letter we are informed that her pay was about \$200 per month, a respectable sum for the era.⁴⁵ At no time did Spivak make any distinction concerning her role as a female fund-raiser, nor did he imply any connection between Dolitsky's financial success and his being a man.

Indeed in Anna Hillkowitz's own letters there is little to suggest that she herself gave much conscious thought to her occupying a position more commonly associated with men. Among all the letters there is only one brief reference to the entire subject. At one point she makes the following observation in regard to gaining supporters for the JCRS: "I would go up to some men (and it is after all the men that count), and try to talk of the J.C.R.S."⁴⁶ However, this statement is made matter-of-factly, with absolutely no elaboration, and it seems that rather than considering the situation from a critical point of view, she is simply giving what she considers a realistic appraisal of who controlled the finances in most families during the era.

From the correspondence it appears that Anna Hillkowitz's primary identification was with her fellow Jews and the JCRS. While it is impossible to determine the extent of Hillkowitz's religious observance from her letters, it is obvious that, like Spivak, she exhibited a deep commitment to her Jewish heritage and Yiddishkeit. References to Jewish holidays and customs are frequent in the correspondence, along with a liberal sprinkling of Yiddish terms. In one letter written to Spivak from Rochester, New York, in December of 1906, Hillkowitz mentions that she gave a speech for the JCRS cause in "shool" (synagogue) on Friday night after services and that, of course, she did not actually collect funds because of the Sabbath.⁴⁷ In another letter Spivak wishes Hillkowitz a "Kosher Pesach" (Passover),⁴⁸ and at a later date before Yom Kippur, "an easy fast."⁴⁹ Whether Hillkowitz strictly followed Orthodox Jewish observances is unknown; however, the letters seem to indicate that she was very familiar with Jewish rituals and practices.

Like Spivak, Hillkowitz was a devotee of the Yiddish language. Un-

doubtedly it was her native language, and it is quite apparent that she did not regard it as either a demonstration of lack of culture or an unfortunate reminder of an outmoded tradition. In fact her fluency in Yiddish served her well in her duties as JCRS field secretary. In one of her very first letters to Spivak, Hillkowitz states: "I found my knowledge of the Yiddish language a great help to me as there were meetings that I addressed in Yiddish and also individuals who understood me better in that language than in English."⁵⁰ No doubt the ability of any solicitor for the JCRS to speak Yiddish was a decided asset at the turn of the century. In addition to its practical value, Hillkowitz and Spivak as well probably viewed Yiddish as an almost symbolic bond which perpetuated Jewish cultural values among the Jewish people.

Although the facts are unclear, Anna Hillkowitz apparently resumed her position as a librarian at the Denver Public Library after 1907. Sometime later, probably in her early thirties, Hillkowitz married Dr. Abe Bresler, a dentist from New York, and gave birth to two children, Reva, who would also become a librarian, and Elya, named after Anna's father.⁵¹ Although she apparently did not continue her work for the JCRS in a formal manner, nevertheless her ties remained close. A letter from Spivak to Anna Hillkowitz Bresler written in 1924, some seventeen years after she left her job as field secretary, acknowledges a check for \$200 presented by Anna to the JCRS on behalf of her brother Solomon Hillkowitz in California.⁵²

Anna Hillkowitz demonstrated that leadership skills were not found only among the German Jews. An independent, educated, and cultured woman with a strong identification with Judaism as well as with her fellow Eastern European immigrants, Anna Hillkowitz perhaps served as a role model for the generations of women that followed her. She had turned a voluntary task into a professional job and had also successfully synthesized her role as a Jew and an American. For Hillkowitz, her primary identification was with her Jewish heritage, yet she was quick to grasp the opportunities of American education and appreciative of the freedom her family enjoyed in America. Her American education allowed her to interact with both German Reform Jews and non-Jews on a cultural and professional plane, in her work as a librarian and in her involvement with Denver's Jewish women's organizations. Yet, in the end her closest ties were perhaps with the group she had referred to as *unsere leit*, the Eastern European Jews

with whom she shared her Jewish identity.

Jeanne Abrams is the director of the Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Society at the University of Denver. She received her doctorate from the University of Colorado.

Notes

1. June Sochen, *Consecrate Every Day: The Public Lives of Jewish American Women 1880-1890* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 47.
2. Charles Spivak, "The Genesis and Growth of the JCRS," *Sanatorium*, January 1907, p. 6 (JCRS Archives, Box 170).
3. James Giese, "Tuberculosis and the Growth of Denver's Eastern European Jewish Community" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1979), p. 11.
4. Rosslyn Stewart and Laurie Simmons, "A Small Gathering of Men: The Origins of Denver's Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society" (unpublished essay, 1981).
5. Philip Hillkowitz, "Dr. C. D. Spivak and the JCRS," *Sanatorium* 22, no. 4 (October-December 1927): 4 (JCRS Archives, Box 170).
6. See Marjorie Hornbein, "Dr. Charles Spivak of Denver: Physician, Social Worker, Yiddish Author," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*, April 1978, for a more complete version of his life story, and "Biographical Sketch of C. D. Spivak," from the Congressional Library at Washington, D.C., on deposit at the Ira M. Beck Memorial Archives of Rocky Mountain Jewish History, University of Denver.
7. *First Annual Report of the JCRS, 1905* (JCRS Archives, Box 170).
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
9. Charles Spivak, "The Secretary's Report," *ibid.*, p. 26.
10. In 1954 the JCRS became a cancer research-center and hospital. Its name was changed from the JCRS to the American Medical Center and later the AMC Cancer Research Center and Hospital.
11. S. Friedenthal, "The Story of the Jews of Denver," *Reform Advocate* (Chicago), October 31, 1908, p. 28.
12. Ida Uchill, *Pioneers, Peddlers and Tzadikim* (Denver: Sage Press, 1959), p. 233.
13. Information Sheet on the Hillkowitz family, on deposit at the Ira M. Beck Memorial Archives of Rocky Mountain Jewish History.
14. Friedenthal, "Story of the Jews of Denver," p. 28.
15. Rudolph Glanz, *The Jewish Woman in America*, vol. 1, *The Eastern European Jewish Woman* (New York: Ktav and National Council of Jewish Women, 1976), chapter 6.
16. Uchill, *Pioneers, Peddlers and Tzadikim*, p. 233.
17. Hillkowitz Information Sheet.
18. In 1893 the family resided at 943 10th Street, and in 1900 at 2011 Clarkson Street, according to the *Denver City Directory* for those years.
19. Friedenthal, "Story of the Jews of Denver," p. 28.
20. *Jewish Outlook*, November 24, 1905.
21. *First Annual Report of the JCRS*, p. 3.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

23. Spivak, "Secretary's Report," *ibid.*, p. 30.
24. "Goldie Stone, Liaison Communal Worker for the New Immigrants, 1912," in *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History*, ed. Jacob R. Marcus (New York: Ktav and Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1981), p. 600.
25. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Arverne, Long Island, August 9, 1906.
26. Spivak to Hillkowitz, Denver, April 30, 1906.
27. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Philadelphia, May 6, 1906.
28. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Denver, February 7, 1906.
29. Hillkowitz to Spivak, St. Louis, April 4, 1906.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Rochester, N.Y., December 23, 1906.
32. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Harrisburg, Pa., November 1, 1906.
33. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Rochester, N.Y., December 28, 1906.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. Spivak to Hillkowitz, December 29, 1906.
37. Anna Hillkowitz, "Travel Notes," *Sanatorium* 1, no. 3 (May 1907): 51, (JCRS Archives, Box 170).
38. Hillkowitz to Spivak, April 29, 1906.
39. Spivak to Hillkowitz, May 3, 1906.
40. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Williamsport, Pa., November 8, 1906.
41. Hillkowitz to Spivak, May 11, 1906.
42. Spivak to Hillkowitz, May 14, 1906.
43. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Wichita, Kans., January 7, 1906.
44. Spivak to Hillkowitz, January 13, 1906.
45. Spivak to Hillkowitz, May 23, 1906.
46. Hillkowitz to Spivak, undated.
47. Hillkowitz to Spivak, Rochester, N. Y., December 23, 1906.
48. Spivak to Hillkowitz, April 12, 1906.
49. Spivak to Hillkowitz, September 28, 1906.
50. Hillkowitz to Spivak, February 7, 1906.
51. Hillkowitz Information Sheet.
52. Spivak to Hillkowitz, July 28, 1924.