



This entry is from the book *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990, A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast, Indiana University Press, 2001.

The Chicago Women's History Center holds the copyright to this book. The excerpt is for personal and/or academic use. Please do not reproduce any part of it without permission from CWHC.

To properly credit this entry, use the citation, below:

Citation (Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian):

Hast, Adele. "Hannah Greenebaum Solomon," *Women Building Chicago : A Biographical Dictionary 1790-1990*, edited by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Accessed online www.chicagowomenshistory.org/wbc-entries

[researcher inserts date of access] pdf

SOLOMON, HANNAH GREENEBAUM

January 14, 1858–December 7, 1942

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATION,
SOCIAL ACTIVIST, CIVIC REFORMER, CLUBWOMAN

As founder and president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Hannah Greenebaum Solomon was prominent in the American Jewish community and renowned internationally. In addition she moved into leadership positions in the larger Chicago community through her organizational work in progressive social and civic reform.

Hannah Greenebaum was born in Chicago, one of ten children of Michael and Sarah (Spiegel) Greenebaum, immigrants from Germany. She had three older and two younger sisters and four younger brothers. Her father, trained as a tinsmith, came in 1845 from Eppelsheim, a German village in the Rhenish Palatinate. After living in New York City for a year, he moved to Chicago, thinking the climate might be better. By 1852, his entire family—parents and seven siblings—had come to Chicago. Sarah Spiegel, Michael Greenebaum's cousin, and her family emigrated to New York in 1848 from Abendheim, Germany. Michael and Sarah Greenebaum were married in Chicago in 1852. He had begun work as a salesman in a hardware business; after their marriage, he became "a prosperous hardware merchant" (*Fabric of My Life*, 21). Michael Greenebaum was one of the founders, in 1861, of the first Reform synagogue in Chicago, Sinai Congregation. Hannah Greenebaum would be a lifelong member of Sinai Congregation and would engage in social action, influenced by the attitude of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, a progressive reformer.

Greenebaum first attended private school at Reform Temple Zion, where she studied Hebrew and German; she then moved to a public school, Skinner Grammar School. In 1871 she entered West Division High School, just before the Great Fire. The Greenebaum home was far enough away not to be burned, and the family gave shelter to persons whose homes had been destroyed. Two years later, when her parents gave her a choice of completing her schooling in Germany or with tutors at home, she chose to focus on piano study. She took lessons from Carl Wolfsohn, who was also teaching Fannie Bloomfield, later the great pianist FANNIE BLOOMFIELD ZEISLER. Greenebaum practiced three hours each day and performed often in public student recitals.

A lover of music all her life, Greenebaum joined the Beethoven Society, a choral group formed by Wolfsohn in 1873 that presented public concerts. In 1877 she became a member of the first board of the Zion Literary Society, founded by her father as a social and cultural group engaged in lectures, music, and other educational programs, and that prepared a newspaper for which she was assistant editor. She remained active until 1892, when the group disbanded.



FIG. 108. Hannah Greenebaum Solomon, founder of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893.

Although her life was focused on her own family and on activities among upper-class and upper-middle-class members of the German Jewish community, Hannah Greenebaum had an opportunity to meet non-Jewish women of the same classes in the larger Chicago community. When the Chicago Women's Club (CWC) was formed in 1876 (it became Chicago Woman's Club in 1895), some members were friends of Hannah Greenebaum and her sister Henriette. The next year, club members considered inviting the Greenebaum sisters to become members but were concerned that "the presence of women of a different faith might prevent frank and open discussion of certain important issues" (*Fabric of My Life*, 42). A member of the club therefore came to the Greenebaum home to meet the candidates without telling the reason for the visit. Shortly afterward, the sisters became the first Jewish women elected to membership.

On May 14, 1879, she married Henry Solomon, successful in the sale of men's clothing, whom she had met at the Zion Literary Society. It was the beginning of a long and happy relationship; he died in 1913. Her first child, Henry (who died in 1899), was born in 1880, followed by Helen in 1882 and Frank in 1888.

For about a decade, while her children were young, she devoted her time to running the household and raising her children. She pursued self-education, reading a great deal and studying astronomy with a neighbor. Music continued to be an important pleasure; a weekly gathering of amateur musicians at Solomon's home brought performances of classical music. She gave her children their first piano lessons.

Solomon remained involved in the Chicago Women's Club. In 1891, as a member of the Philosophy and Science Department of the club, she presented "Review of Spinoza's Theologico-Politicus" based on her reading of Spinoza in German. The following year, the program committee asked her to talk about religion, the first time for this subject. Solomon drew upon her Jewish identity for the paper, "Our Debt to Judaism." She gave a history of the development of Judaism, which to her meant the Judaic religion, in the context of the story of the Jewish people, discussing Jewish thought as the root of Christian and Muslim ethics. Solomon contended that "the whole world owe[d] a greater debt to Judaism than [was] often acknowledged" (p. 21). That same year she again gave a talk at the Chicago Women's Club, "Italian Women," which focused on a topic on which she would speak again—legal restrictions on women and the need for "equal rights of both sexes" (p. 36).

At this time she was already involved in a major project for the World's Columbian Exposition, which was to open in Chicago in 1893. ELLEN HENROTIN, who was vice-president of the Board of Lady Managers (with BERTHA HONORÉ PALMER as president), asked Hannah Solomon to call together Jewish women under the Woman's Branch of the World's Congress Auxiliary. Since Solomon defined being Jewish in purely religious terms, she believed that Jewish women belonged in the Parliament of Religions, one of the important assemblies of the exposition. She became a member of the women's board of the parliament and in that capacity chaired the committee to arrange a Jewish Women's Congress, called by Henrotin and Palmer a "Congress of Jewish Church" (letter of Palmer and Henrotin to Solomon, January 30, 1894). Ellen Henrotin, a member of Chicago's upper class, knew Hannah Solomon through the Chicago Women's Club and other social and cultural activities that were part of the life of their class. Solomon's acceptance of this invitation brought her into an important activity in the non-Jewish world based on her Jewish identity. In 1891 she began work on two of the major tasks involved in organizing a Jewish Women's Congress—developing a program and inviting Jewish women to participate. She felt it was necessary to involve women throughout the country and wrote to rabbis in larger communities and cities for the names of women leaders in their congregations. As a result, Solomon herself wrote letters about the congress to ninety women. She appointed a committee, mainly women members of Sinai and a few from other cities, to work with her. By 1892, she and the committee members had written some two thousand letters to women all over the country. She asked them to set up committees to select delegates to the congress. From the outset, she explained, a goal of the Jewish Women's Congress would be to establish a permanent organization. At the congress, ninety-three women came as representatives of Jewish women in twenty-nine

cities. Solomon considered these women authorized to consider plans for a new organization.

By March 1893, Solomon had commissioned two Jewish women speakers, Henrietta Szold and Josephine Lazarus, for the general program of the parliament and was commissioning additional talks for the Jewish Women's Congress. The men arranging a Jewish congress invited Solomon to a planning meeting to talk about cooperation with the women's group. She explained that the plans of the women were already well in process but that they would join the men if the women participated in the program. After consideration, the men presented her with a program without Szold's and Lazarus's names and refused to add any women speakers. Solomon responded sharply: "Under these circumstances we do not care to cooperate with you, and I request that the fact of our presence at this meeting be expunged from the records" (*Fabric of My Life*, 83).

She and her committee developed, as the Jewish Women's Congress, a four-day program of speakers and discussion. Some papers dealt with Judaism, Jewish religion, and women's role in the synagogue. In addition, Solomon went beyond religious themes to deal with secular social and political issues. Julia Richman discussed women wage-earners, especially immigrants. In the session "How Can Nations Be Influenced to Protest or Even to Interfere in Cases of Persecution?" discussants included Emil Hirsch and Christian reformer Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones. The congress was well attended, with audiences often too large for the hall. The highlight of the final day was SADIE AMERICAN's enthusiastic speech, "Organization," in which she proposed a national organization of Jewish women. Solomon selected American, a member of the Jewish Women's Committee, to present the proposal and plan for the organization, which took the name National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Solomon's decision to allow Sadie American to propose the organization was to have repercussions in later years in disputes over who founded NCJW. At the congress, the assembly adopted goals for NCJW that focused on religious education for Jewish women. The women would work in the fields of religion, philanthropy, and education. They would study principles of Judaism as well as Jewish history and customs. Further, they would work to improve Sabbath schools. They would also become involved in social reform. Through the NCJW (in its early years also called the Council of Jewish Women), Hannah Solomon brought women into a realm dominated by men—the study of religion and concern for religious education. Solomon was elected president and Sadie American became corresponding secretary. Under Solomon's leadership, NCJW developed sections throughout the country. By 1896, fifty cities had branches with a total of four thousand members; by the third triennial convention, held in 1902 in Baltimore, NCJW had some seven thousand members.

During her years of leadership in NCJW, Hannah Solomon continued to do social service in the community. In December 1893, the Chicago Women's Club opened an emergency workroom to provide jobs for women who had been employed at the World's Columbian Exposition. Solomon, a member of the CWC board, took charge once a week and made new contacts in the Chicago Jewish community. She found that about one-third of the women were Russian Jews. They spoke Yiddish, a

language that Solomon, in her German Jewish surroundings, had hardly ever heard. Visiting the homes of the Russian Jewish women, Solomon became aware of the needs of these immigrant families. As a result of this experience, Solomon obtained funding from the Chicago section of NCJW to set up a non-sectarian Bureau of Associated Charities in the 7th Ward in 1897. The group soon became the Bureau of Personal Service, which received Jewish clients from another branch of Associated Charities and sent non-Jewish cases to them. Solomon chaired the bureau, which was set up independently of NCJW, with MINNIE LOW as executive director. The organization provided legal aid, reviewed applications for loans, and organized a workroom for Jewish women, modeled on the one run by CWC. The neighborhood near Hull-House had a large Jewish population, and Solomon worked with JANE ADDAMS to provide services to the residents; the bureau reviewed and approved requests for coal received by Hull-House. The Bureau of Personal Service participated in a study of tenements and worked for better housing laws, opened a summer playground in a neighborhood park, and built a day nursery that was run by Solomon's daughter for children of working mothers.

Through her work in the Bureau of Personal Service and her knowledge of the efforts of the Chicago Woman's Club on behalf of children in the city jail, Solomon became involved in efforts to reform the court system. When, through the leadership of LUCY FLOWER and JULIA LATHROP, a Cook County Juvenile Court was established by the state legislature in 1899, no provision was made for probation officers. Solomon joined the Juvenile Court Committee, which raised money for the salaries of probation workers. The Bureau of Personal Service eventually funded three salaries.

As organizations of Jewish women broadened their civic and philanthropic activities, Solomon saw a need for these groups to work together to avoid duplication of services. In 1895 she joined with LIZZIE BARBE, her cousin and lifetime friend, and others to form the first Conference of Jewish Women, twenty-six groups that coordinated their activities. The conference remained active until 1900, when a new organization, the Associated Jewish Charities (AJC), was formed; it included both men's and women's charity groups. Solomon became the sole woman trustee of AJC, representing the women's societies. She continued to manage the Bureau of Personal Services until 1910, when it became part of Associated Jewish Charities.

Once the National Council of Jewish Women became established, Solomon saw the importance of connection with other women's groups. In 1894, NCJW under Hannah Solomon became a member of the National Council of Women, which included many groups in the United States and which belonged to the International Council of Women (ICW). Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a founder of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, had joined with others in 1888 to organize the ICW to support social reform activities and woman suffrage. When NCJW took part in 1895 in the convention of the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C., Hannah Solomon and FRANCES E. WILLARD ran a program, with each of them chairing half of the meeting. Here, Solomon met leaders of other national women's organizations, including Susan B. Anthony, president of the National American Woman

Suffrage Association, with whom she developed a lifetime friendship. In 1899 the National Council of Women elected Solomon treasurer.

Because of its philanthropic work, NCJW was also invited to join the General Federation of Women's Clubs (organized in 1890); but NCJW refused because it saw itself as a religious group. However, when the federation started to organize state branches in 1894, state Councils of Jewish Women became interested. Solomon was involved in organizing an Illinois State Federation of Women's Clubs and served as a vice-president. She went to the General Federation meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1896 as delegate from both the Illinois Federation and the NCJW.

Solomon took every opportunity to spread information about the work of NCJW. When Emil Hirsch asked her to take the pulpit in his absence and address the Sinai congregation on February 14, 1897—the first such invitation to a Jewish woman at Sinai—she gave a talk, “Council of Jewish Women: Its Work and Possibilities.” Six months earlier, in the *Reform Advocate*, May 9, 1896, Hirsch had published an editorial, “Signs of the Times,” describing the importance of the NCJW in fostering Judaic religion. He noted that men, recognizing the effectiveness of the organization, now wished to join, but that the restriction to women was “for the time being the indispensable condition of successful work.” Solomon spoke about the strength of women's organizations and the goals of NCJW to foster religious education and to do social welfare work to help the poor.

Operating from a secure family base, Solomon involved her husband and children in her work for NCJW. Since she was speaking at Sinai without benefit of amplification, she instructed her children to sit in the balcony and let her know, by shaking their heads, whether she could be heard. Her daughter, Helen Levy, recalling the experience many years later, told of how she traveled with Solomon, who was invited because of her renown in NCJW, when she gave talks in synagogues in other cities. Solomon was a petite woman—four feet six inches in height, who stood on a footstool when she spoke at a podium. When Solomon sat in the rabbis' chairs, her feet did not touch the ground, but, according to Levy, Solomon's words carried strength both in volume and in content.

In June 1904 she combined work for the International Council of Women and the National Council of Jewish Women on an extended European trip. Since her family went with her, the journey took on personal as well as organizational aspects. She attended the ICW meeting in Berlin as an American delegate and also met with Jewish women in several European cities to encourage them to establish sections of National Council. In London, she spoke at the Jewish Study Society, a women's group that had been founded in 1899. When she met with women in Paris, she distributed a French translation of the NCJW constitution as well as a file of the organization's reports, and the recipients became interested in creating a similar group. In Germany she spoke before a men's committee of the B'nai B'rith lodge. She talked about NCJW to a group of German women who represented several organizations and gave them copies of the council's constitution in German. In the years that followed, German women organized sections of the Council of Jewish Women.

Because Solomon was fluent in both French and German, she served at the International Council of Women as interpreter for Susan B. Anthony, also a delegate from the United States. Solomon's knowledge of languages placed her on the nominating committee, which she chaired. The ICW, with delegates from all over the world, covered such issues as woman suffrage and women's political equality, racial rights, and white slavery. In an interview in Germany with a *Chicago Daily News* correspondent, Solomon reported that the two dominant matters discussed were the need for woman suffrage and the importance of coeducation.

Although she did not become active in promoting woman suffrage beyond her work for ICW, Solomon believed that women needed the vote to have the fullest influence on legislation to gain equal rights for women. She thought that the women's congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition had “converted a surprising number of people, men included, to the point where suffrage actually became fashionable!” (*Fabric of My Life*, 109). In June 1916 she would be one of some five thousand in the woman suffrage parade on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, organized by GRACE WILBUR TROUT.

While she was in Germany, Solomon learned that the Democratic Party in Cook County had nominated her to run for the office of Trustee of the University of Illinois, although she was not a part of the party's machine politics. She was amused by what she perceived as a token nomination, since she believed that Republicans outnumbered Democrats; she was defeated. In her only other foray into local politics, she again ran for the same office in 1916 but was not elected.

Solomon's involvement in ICW was a reflection of her views on the role and status of women. She called herself a “confirmed woman's-rights-er” (*Fabric of My Life*, 48), but her perceptions of such rights were a mix of traditional and progressive approaches. For Solomon, the most desired role for a woman was as wife and mother. She contended, “There is no higher or holier duty, nor one more to be coveted than guardian of home, mother and protector of children, the companion and friend of husband” (“Women as Breadwinners,” 65). She did not believe that a woman attained freedom by not marrying and working to support herself and insisted that “life offers no freedom equal to that of a married woman” (“Women as Breadwinners,” 61). At the same time, she knew that many women would not be able to marry and would have to work outside the home, and she spoke out strongly against discrimination in the workplace. In a talk to a men's group, Chicago Beefsteak Club, in January 1896, she challenged the belief that women were weaker than men and should be restricted to certain occupations or education, explaining, “Women in schools and colleges, in universities and the few professions open to them have proven the fallacy of every argument against higher education for women on the score of physical weakness” (“Women as Breadwinners,” 62). She insisted that women should have “fullest freedom to compete with men in every line for which they have talent” (“Women as Breadwinners,” 67). In discussing work conditions, she held a progressive view: wealthy women should “in public agitate for and secure shorter hours for all, demand equal pay for equal work, a fair field and no favors to man or woman.” They should “not buy a garment that

had not given living wage to every one that handled it" ("Women as Breadwinners," 67).

Until 1905, Hannah Solomon was reelected president of the National Council of Jewish Women at each triennial meeting, and she focused her efforts on the goals of the organization. By 1905, the organization was well established and was giving greater focus to philanthropic and social reform activities with less stress on the religious educational goals so important to Solomon at the outset. When she declined the presidency, the council board elected her honorary president, a title and role that she kept for the rest of her life, except for one brief period—1908–11—when she resigned because of a disagreement over NCJW policy. The organization had raised annual dues in 1905 from one to two dollars to demonstrate an increased philanthropic focus. The Cleveland Section refused payment and was told in 1908 that it would be expelled. Solomon was appointed to head an arbitration committee, which canceled the expulsion. When the executive board, led by Sadie American and the president, overrode the committee's decision, Solomon refused election as honorary president until the next triennial convention.

She continued to serve NCJW on committees and boards and attended the triennial meetings but was ready by 1905 to free time to move into leadership in a community organization. Five years earlier, in her report to the NCJW triennial convention in 1900, she had complained that the president and secretary had too much work and that women had a responsibility to their duties in organizations other than NCJW.

During her presidency, Hannah Solomon worked closely with the corresponding secretary, Sadie American, but over the years between 1900 and 1910, their relationship, both personal and professional, was marred by disagreements and ill feelings. At first, they seemed to work well together. In 1895, Solomon gave "the greatest praise" to American "for the faithful, able performance of her duties . . . and her unselfish labor" ("Report of the National President," *First Annual Report*, 3–4). In planning for the NCJW convention in 1900, Solomon asked American for her opinion on program papers, arrangements, and any other items that she thought it important to consider. Solomon again praised American in her official talk prepared for the 1900 national convention, reporting that "her exceptional ability, . . . her devotion to the cause, have been the greatest power in whatever measure of success we have achieved" ("Address of the President," *Proceedings*, 22). American, in her official report to the 1900 convention, bestowed similar encomiums on Solomon. "To our President, I wish here to express, both in my official and personal capacity, my deep appreciation of her wisdom, kindness and helpfulness in managing the affairs of the Council. . . . It will perhaps never be known to any but those closely associated with her, with what open-minded justice, with what clear thought, with what self-sacrificing zeal she has wrought for the Council all these years" ("Report of the Corresponding Secretary," *Proceedings*, 94).

During the proceedings at the 1900 meeting, however, a conflict arose involving Sadie American and several members of the board that revealed tensions between her and Solomon. A recent talk at Sinai by American supporting the congregants' observance of the Sabbath on Sunday had been given newspaper

publicity, and some NCJW officers accused her of giving the opinion as a representative of National Council. Although Solomon practiced Sunday Sabbath, she did not discuss the matter at NCJW meetings. In an unhappy letter to Solomon after the meeting, American responded to a letter that she had received from Solomon. According to American, Solomon had criticized her behavior, accusing American of trying to dominate Solomon and describing American's manner as impossible. American related how Solomon secretly supported another woman for corresponding secretary and brought in a slate of candidates who were all Sinai Temple members. Sadie American, a single middle-class woman who worked outside the home—receiving pay for teaching at the Sinai Sunday school—was not a member of Hannah Solomon's social community of Jewish upper-class married women. American felt that Solomon took an unwarranted liberty in talking to American's mother about how to train her. Nevertheless, both were reelected and continued to work together, although conflict continued. American moved to New York City in 1901, where immigrant aid—especially at Ellis Island—the project most important to her, "became Council's primary focus" (Rogow, 118), increasing her power. She was sometimes "accused of making important decisions on her own rather than consulting the board" (Rogow, 118).

When the NCJW board selected Solomon as delegate to the ICW meeting in 1904, American wished to go. Solomon opposed American's participation, but put the matter to a vote, ready to veto the proposal in case of a tie. The board gave a positive vote and provided five hundred dollars for American's expenses. In 1905 she was elected executive secretary of NCJW, the first member of the staff to receive a salary.

By 1908, when the board overturned the decision of Solomon's arbitration committee, her break with American was almost complete. Solomon believed that American wished her to resign as honorary president. The final break came in 1910 when Sadie American attempted to have the executive board recognize her and Hannah Solomon as cofounders of NCJW. In a letter to Carrie Wolf, a member of Solomon's planning committee for the World's Columbian Exposition, asking for her recollections of the founding of the organization, Solomon summarized her sense of class, her views on Sadie American, her continuing disagreement with American on NCJW policies, and her dismay at being accused of taking credit falsely. She justified her position, stating, "Sadie was only a casual acquaintance of mine, socially secluded, and unknown in Organizations. I had the purpose and plan of forming a National Organization before she came into our meetings. . . . In the beginning she . . . helped me to carry out my plans. . . . Had I not known that I was the Founder I should have denied it long ago. . . . I totally differ with Sadie as to the entire National policy and work as at present conducted. . . . I cannot allow the implication that I wore honors for years to which I was not entitled by my thought and work" (February 4, 1910).

When Solomon gave up the presidency of NCJW in 1905, the Reform Department at the Chicago Woman's Club was about to investigate and reorganize the Illinois Industrial School for Girls in Evanston, Illinois—a residential school for girls who needed a home—and Solomon joined the investigation com-

mittee. She soon became a member of the board of the school and then president in 1906. The school needed funds to provide adequate care to the children and to obtain a building in good condition. In January 1907, a new board was established that included Jane Addams and Ellen Henrotin. Solomon served as president until 1909, then continued to be an active board member. The CWC provided some money, including income from a legacy, and the board raised the rest. Solomon and the board had a new school built, a group of cottages, on land owned by CWC in Park Ridge, Illinois, and renamed it the Park Ridge School for Girls. The first cottage at the entrance was named after Hannah Solomon. She lobbied successfully at the state legislature to raise the allowance of public funds from ten dollars to fifteen dollars for every girl at a public institution. In later years, Solomon reported, "No project ever affected me more deeply" (*Fabric of My Life*, 151).

Solomon remained involved in the International Council of Women. When the organization held a meeting in Toronto, Canada, in 1909, and delegates visited Chicago, Solomon headed the committee that arranged events for the visitors, with Jane Addams as honorary chair.

In 1910, Solomon and other women concerned with city management organized the Woman's City Club to deal with civic affairs. Solomon took the office of vice-president. She immediately became head of the Committee on City Waste; MARY McDOWELL and HARRIET VITTUM were members of the committee. They investigated Chicago procedures for dealing with garbage and reported on problems such as polluted water and uncovered garbage trucks. Solomon realized how little the women knew about the subject when she arranged to inspect a city dump and came carrying a parasol and wearing a long white lace gown, her usual evening dress.

At the same time, Solomon continued to work on social reform issues through the Chicago Woman's Club. When the club formed a Committee on City Ordinances in 1911, she became vice-chair, later serving as head of the group. The goal was to educate Chicagoans about city laws and government. The committee selected ordinances and had them published in newspapers in English and other languages, making the information available to immigrants. In 1916, under Solomon's leadership, the committee published a booklet, *Ordinances of the City of Chicago*, with laws arranged alphabetically by topic. The pamphlet was designed for use by school children; according to Solomon, the school superintendent requested thousands of copies.

Pursuing her interest in law enforcement, Solomon became chair of the CWC Committee on Motion Pictures. The women helped write a movie censorship law that was passed by the legislature in 1907 and upheld two years later by the state supreme court. The law prohibited public showings, including movies, stage plays, and advertising, that displayed "vice, crime, degradation of women and defiance of laws" (*Fabric of My Life*, 170), and Solomon believed that such censorship was necessary for "decency" (p. 170). In her usual method of seeking increased power by coalescing various groups, she brought together delegates from women's organizations interested in taking similar action and formed the Joint Committee on Motion Pictures. The CWC committee aided the legally provided censor in the

Police Department and was upheld in court controversies over censorship.

In 1916, Hannah Solomon took a brief step into national politics by supporting the reelection of President Woodrow Wilson. She served on the local committee of the Woman's National Democratic Committee and attended the inauguration of Wilson in Washington, D.C. Although her support was based on Wilson's promise of peace, when the United States entered World War I, Solomon led women's participation in the war effort. She met with members of the Chicago National Council of Jewish Women to discuss their involvement but ultimately concentrated her efforts on the work of the State Council of Defense. As head of the Ward Leaders' Committee of the Chicago unit in 1917, she led a survey in the city's wards to determine the most useful work that needed to be done. Once again, she dealt with immigrant women, bringing them information on food conservation, enlisting their service, aiding them on matters regarding their sons overseas in the military, and helping with other essentials.

Beginning in the 1920s, Solomon reduced her active leadership work and did a great deal of traveling all over the world, mostly with young women relatives and friends. She continued to attend NCJW triennial conferences and was often the celebrated speaker. In 1917 the NCJW had established the Hannah G. Solomon Scholarship Fund from which an annual award was made. Solomon chose to give the scholarship to women entering social service, partly because she perceived a great need for professional social workers. At a Jewish International Conference in London in June 1927, she attended meetings of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women and the Union of Jewish Women, descendant of the Jewish Study Society that Solomon had visited in 1904. At Solomon's seventieth birthday, the Sinai Temple Sisterhood, an activist women's group, commemorated her concern for peace by establishing the Hannah G. Solomon Peace Fund, which gave prizes to children in the religious school who wrote the best essays about peace. She gave the awards and delivered a talk each year.

For the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago in 1933, Governor Henry Horner appointed her a hostess in the Illinois State House. At the fair, the Chicago Woman's Club presented lectures on the progress women had made, and Solomon spoke on the topic "Woman in Organization." That same year an International Congress of Women was held in Chicago, sponsored by the U.S. National Council of Women, and the exhibits included a recording by Solomon about the origin, goals, and development of NCJW.

When Solomon reached her seventies, the National Council of Jewish Women observed her birthdays with special celebrations. For her seventieth, in 1933, the Chicago section of council invited the national president and Jane Addams as special guests and speakers at a birthday luncheon. For her seventy-ninth birthday, an international radio broadcast brought Solomon greetings from women in the United States, Canada, and European countries. Solomon also spoke. To celebrate her eightieth birthday, two hundred sections of NCJW met throughout January, many convening simultaneously.

Solomon remained active, attending her final NCJW triennial

nial convention in 1941. She completed her autobiography, *Fabric of My Life*, during her last year of life and awarded the Hannah G. Solomon Peace Fund at Sinai Temple just two weeks before her death. She died at the age of eighty-four and was buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago.

Hannah Solomon understood the importance of the National Council of Jewish Women that she founded in 1893. One hundred years later, its national membership totaled some ninety thousand women, and it is still a thriving organization in the year 2000. She always was involved in council to some degree; as she explained, "The firm thread of the National Council of Jewish Women runs unbroken through the fabric of my life" (*Fabric of My Life*, 205). She moved Jewish women into the realm of religious education and philanthropy on a national scale and then became an effective progressive reformer in the larger non-Jewish community, serving as a leader in secular organizations seeking civic and social change.

Sources. The Hannah Greenebaum Solomon Papers at the Library of Congress contain writings and speeches of Solomon; correspondence, including Solomon's letter to Carrie Wolf, February 4, 1910, and letters of Sadie American to Solomon; biographical information; and organizational material, much of it dealing with her founding of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Sadie American's comments on her relationship with Solomon are found in her undated letter to Hannah Solomon [1900]; a transcription was made by Julia Wood Kramer and is held by Ann E. Feldman. Records of the NCJW national office also are at the Library of Congress. The Hannah Solomon Collection in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, has "Interview with Mrs. Philip Angel of Charleston, W. Va. by Gerald Kane," April 20, 1970; this typescript of an interview with Solomon's granddaughter, Frances Levy Angel, provides biographical information. Materials in a scrapbook in the collection at American Jewish Archives include a letter from Bertha Palmer and Ellen Henrotin to Solomon, January 30, 1894; Emil J. Hirsch's "Editorial: Signs of the Times," *Reform Advocate*, May 9, 1896; and an unidentified clipping about Solomon's campaign for University of Illinois trustee, October 1916. The CHS holds materials from the NCJW Chicago Section, with information on Solomon as well as her travel diaries from 1917 to 1927. Julia Wood Kramer discusses Solomon's work for the Parliament of Religions in "Paradise Was Not Perfect without Woman: World's Fair Women of 1893 and the Founding of the National Council of Jewish Women," a paper given at a meeting of the Chicago Jewish Hist. Soc., April 18, 1993. Hannah Solomon's autobiography, *Fabric of My Life* (1946), provides detailed information on her personal and organizational life. Solomon's *A Sheaf of Leaves* (privately printed, 1911) contains articles she wrote, some based on speeches, including "Our Debt to Judaism," 1892; "Italian Women," 1892; "Women as Breadwinners," 1896; "Council of Jewish Women; Its Work and Possibilities," 1897; and "Addresses as President of the Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1905." For Solomon's early reports as NCJW president, see "Report of the National President," *National Council of Jewish Women: First Annual Report, 1894-1895* (1895) and "Address of the President," *Proceedings of the Council of Jewish Women, Second Triennial Convention* (1900); the 1900 *Proceedings* include Sadie American's "Report of the Corresponding Secretary." Recent biographical sketches of Solomon are Beth Wenger's "Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858-1942)," in *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore (1998), and Gerald Soren's essay in *American National Biography*, ed. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (1999). Two histories of NCJW from different perspectives discuss Solomon's impact: Ellen Sue Levi Elwell, "The Founding and Early Programs of the National Council of Jewish

Women: Study and Practice as Jewish Women's Religious Expression" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana Univ., 1982), and Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (1993).

ADELE HAST