



# **A Price Below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels and Radicals**

*Naomi Shepherd*

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Why, in the late nineteenth century, did Jewish woman suddenly march into the pages of radical history? A Price below Rubies introduces us to some of these memorable women - particularly, Anna Kuliscioff, Rosa Luxemburg, Esther Frumkin, Manya Shochat, Bertha Pappenheim, Rose Pesotta, and Emma Goldman - a few of them familiar, others less so but no less intriguing. Naomi Shepherd's collective biography of these seven women and others tells the story of a revolution that began at home, in communities whose limits stirred women to rebel. Each woman, whether feminist or unionist, Marxist scholar or Jewish Commissar, was a member of a distinct historical group. A Price below Rubies takes us into the middle-class Jewish families in Czarist Russia that produced populists and terrorists, Marxist teachers and theorists - and, in many cases, exiles and martyrs. We come to know the working-class women who swelled the ranks of the Jewish socialist movement, the Bund, and the women revolutionary Zionists who were indispensable members of the Palestinian agricultural collectives. In Western Europe, we meet the semi-assimilated Jews whose daughters would dominate pacifist movements in Hungary and Holland and would create a vigorous Jewish feminism in Germany. Among the masses emigrating from Eastern Europe in the 1880s, we find Jewish women who would become the most active European anarchists and American union organizers. The story of a world in upheaval, taking us from the 1870s through the 1930s, A Price below Rubies shows us Jewish radical women at once remarkable and representative, writing themselves into history - and out of the tradition that produced them.

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