



For Immediate Release
May 14, 2003

Contact: Esme Berg
(212) 294-8350; eberg@asf.cjh.org

THE JEWS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IN MODERN TIMES

A Conversation with the Authors and Editors at the Center for Jewish History

Meet Editor and Publisher of the Jewish Week Gary Rosenblatt in conversation with editors and authors of *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* on Wednesday May 14, 2003 at the Center for Jewish History. This timely volume describes the Jewish communities that lived in the Islamic world and documents the variety and diversity of Jewish life in the Middle East and North Africa over the last two hundred years. Mr. Rosenblatt will be joined by editors and authors Reeva Spector Simon and Sara Reguer, and some of the other contributing authors. The event will take place at 7:00 PM. The conversation will be followed by a book signing and reception.

In the introduction to this valuable work, the editors write, “This volume is an attempt to reclaim modern Middle Eastern Jewish material, cultural, spiritual existence, not just to prove that such history existed.” Leading scholars in their fields were invited to an international conference at Columbia University where they presented their papers, discussed them and ultimately submitted them as chapters of this book. “In the Middle East... Jews were not really a people who lived apart, as they had in Europe...” The writers go on to explain that the momentous changes that took place in Europe during the 18th to the early 20th centuries affected Jewish communities, not only in Europe, but in the Middle East as well. How these societies coped with these changes is the subject of this book which is divided into thematic chapters that “cut across the region to highlight trends and overarching generalizations of sameness,” and chapters about the various countries that include Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine and Egypt.

This event is presented by The American Sephardi Federation and its programming division, Sephardic House, with the mission of informing the American Jewish public about the important contributions that Sephardim have made to Jewish and Middle Eastern cultures. We hope you will join with us to learn more about the Jews in this important part of the world. A suggested contribution at the door will enable ASF/Sephardic House to continue to organize programs of this nature. The Center for Jewish History is located at 15 West 16th Street between 5th & 6th Avenues, New York.