

ascended to the Hapsburg throne in Germany in 1780, was offering the Jews of his empire their first opportunity to acquire legal rights comparable to those of non-Jews. His 1781 *Edict of Tolerance* provided the Jews with limited religious freedom. The process became known as Emancipation. The two phenomena, Enlightenment and Emancipation, were organically connected: the former was a prerequisite to the latter. Indeed, Weiser's book was dedicated to Emperor Joseph, in gratitude for the Edict of Tolerance. In Western and Central Europe, the combination of Enlightenment and Emancipation fostered a renewed Jewish social and intellectual ferment during the first half of the 19th century. By contrast, in Eastern Europe, where authoritarian Tsarist rule remained unencumbered and Jews were restricted to the Pale of Settlement, the effect of these movements was delayed until the revolutions of the early 20th century. In America yet another contrast equality under law had already been enshrined in the Declaration of Independence by the early 18th century; the American challenge was to prevent the erosion of Jewish tradition by prevailing Protestant norms and beliefs. This was the tripartite background of Max Lilienthal's career. He was born