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Arno Herzig. *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart.* Muenchen: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1997. 323 S. (broschiert), ISBN 978-3-406-39296-2.

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A. Herzig: Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland

Arno Herzig's Juedische Geschichte in Deutschland proposes to give a representative overview of over a thousand years of German-Jewish history, combining in less than 300 pages a wealth of information in a concise and often compendious chronology.

As professor of Modern History in Hamburg, Herzig rightly makes the point that the history of German-Jewish relations cannot solely be reconstructed in the context of the Holocaust. He stresses that such a narrow approach, which he refers to as an "Einbahnstrasse in diese Katastrophe", can lead to a misleading, even distorted historical account. Although the Holocaust leaves modern German history with a permanent scar, Herzig refocuses his readers' attention on the fact that since the Middle Ages, and particularly since the Enlightenment, Jews were much more than just mere onlookers or passive victims. He points out, as others have already done, that Jews in Germany increasingly interrelated with their Gentile environment and contributed extensively to society's political. economic, scientific and cultural life. Christian-Jewish relations wove a rich and colourful fabric of cultural exchange in which both sides learned and benefited from each other.

Herzig bases his premise on the understanding that German-Jewish history is set within a framework which, on the one hand, was defined by the various degrees of flexibility and freedom given to Jews by the Church and society. On the other hand, this framework was also determined by the extent to which Jews were able to capitalize on their liberties. The dynamics of Jewish and Christian interaction is, therefore, one of the two most important, significantly related, leitmotifs in Herzig's study.

The second, equally prominent leitmotif is the role of both the Catholic and Protestant churches as fundamentalist institutions successively trying to marginalize and defame the Jewish community to the point of a complete "Ausgrenzung" from German society. Segregation in the German territories of the Holy Roman Empire became increasingly a factor in the 13th century, when the Church ordained the 'servitudo Judaeorum" forcing Jews to wear specific garments. Regulations to segregate Jews were tightened even more once the Basel Council decreed in 1450 that all Jews should take up residence within the cities' designated areas, the "Judengasse", or the ghettoes such as in Frankfurt and Worms. The Reformation brought no improvements, contrary to the hopes of some Jews. Luther emphatically demanded that Jews needed to be converted "wo aber nicht, so sollen wir sie auch bey uns nicht dulden noch leiden". What he insinuated by this was later spelled out in his pamphlet "Von den Juden und ihren Lugen" of 1543, when he advised burning down the synagogues and the Jewish living quarters, depriving Jews of their Talmud, and prohibiting rabbis from teaching.

By the 17th century, the antagonisms of earlier years had largely abated, but Lutheran anti-Judaism incited Christians to reject and mistrust Jews in many ways, particularly if they were economically successful. Not until 1871 were Jews finally made equal before the law. This prompted a more rapid acculturation of Jewish youth, especially among young Jewish intellectuals, both men and women, who became soon over-represented in German universities - compared to their small number in the wider society. Herzig makes the point that, despite this acculturation, German Jews remained faithful to their Jewish identities, which signified to them much more than just a religious quest. Jewishness gave them a sense of self and belonging.

Starting immediately after Hitler's accession to power, German Jewry was incrementally deprived of all their civil rights. Herzig assesses that out of 134,000 German Jews in 1939, only about 8,000 survived the Holocaust. He sees the role of the Church, in face of this tragedy, as one of a silent eye-witness, if not accomplice. Only the Catholic Raphaelsverein, which assisted

Jews to emigrate, was an exception. But while Catholics were largely reluctant to preach and propagate the Nazi racial ideology, numerous representatives of the Protestant churches became convenient mouthpieces of Nazi propaganda. It is unfortunate that Herzig devotes less than 20 pages to the fortunes of German Jewry after 1945. German ambivalence about their present situation still remains, even though the popular media, and all politicians, take a strong position against antisemitism.

Given the book's tight format and its emphasis on portraying an overall history of Jews in Germany, it is clearly intended for the general public. However, Herzig's narrative is not easily accessible and, in places, quite convoluted. It comes as a surprise that he makes relatively little use of primary sources and, specifically, that his coverage of Jewish women is almost nonexistent. Even though he writes that, during the first pogroms in Germany in 1096, many women formed part of the resistance, choosing suicide over enforced baptism, he never elaborates on this remarkable demonstration of female solidarity. In another case, he shows that a conservative Jewish women's liberation, under the leadership of Bertha Pappenheim, took place in the Wilhelmine period, but the information is only sketchy. And what of all those noteworthy Jewish women philosophers, writers, artists, scientists and social reformers? Should they not be included in any representative survey?

Another difficulty in this book arises from Herzig's refusal to be explicit on the extent to which social segregation hurt, or even destroyed, Jewish-Gentile relationships throughout history. Reading this book, one unfortunately feels rushed. I think it would have been more beneficial if fewer facts had been accumulated, but more background provided about how these facts came about. And lastly illustrations would have been a valuable addition.

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