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Pierre Birnbaum, Ira Katznelson. *Paths of Emancipation.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995. $75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-03460-7; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-691-03461-4.

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The history of Jewish emancipation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is well traveled. Scholars from all disciplines have published a plethora of regional and national histories that have chronicled the struggle undertaken by Jews and Gentiles alike for equal rights for Jews. The value of this volume lies not in new ground broken or fresh issues introduced, but in the presentation of eight distinct essays that evaluate the historiography of emancipation in eight countries: The Netherlands, Germany, France, England, The United States, Italy, Turkey, and Russia. For readers who want a succinct history and review of the literature of the many complex issues surrounding emancipation, this book will be invaluable.

The volume begins with a thoughtful comparative summary of the emancipation issue and the progress toward civil rights. Jews in each country obviously had differing experiences with regard to when and how they were emancipated. Still, one thread ties the histories together, namely, the interrelationship between civil rights and liberalism. A lengthy and often bitter debate ensued in each state over whether to emancipate Jews. Yet in almost every case the argument occurred within the context of larger discussions on the role of government, the place of minorities, and the enfranchisement of other traditionally persecuted groups. During the nineteenth century, when most of the countries under discussion were contemplating emancipation, arguments took two general forms. One side held that Jews first had to demonstrate loyalty to the state and begin to behave like "natives" in order to merit citizenship. The other side, best represented by Christian Wilhelm Dohm in Germany, asserted in a pejorative way that Jews acted differently due to their historic mistreatment; the best way to assimilate the small Jewish population was to grant them civil rights with the caveat that they abandon all of their "odious" traits and act more like ethnic Germans. Similar arguments were advanced elsewhere. The explicit message was that Jews would have to become patriotic, while the implicit message attempted to guide Jews toward Christianity.

As most of the authors show, Jewish successes in gaining their rights were not complete victories. First, legal changes were not always accompanied by greater toleration on the part of the churches or general populations, though one could argue that the former was a necessary precondition for the latter. Second, emancipation presented Jewish communities, often bound tightly together because of their distinct legal status, with a serious dilemma. During the French Revolution, as Pierre Birnbaum illustrates, the revolutionaries offered the Jews freedom as individuals and not as a community. In an age of growing nationalism, revolutionaries hoped to build a more homogenous state, not one with distinct religious enclaves. In his excellent article on American Jewry, Ira Katznelson quotes a Philadelphia newspaper which proudly contended that "Liberty has done for them [the Jews] what the hard repression and persecution of other nations has failed to accomplish. They are in the undoubted process of an unreserved assimilation into the citizenship of the country. They have conquered to a great extent their own prejudices and ours" (157). Yet for the Jewish community, freedom was Janus faced, bringing an increased rate of conversion, intermarriages, and religious apathy in small communities. Here were exactly the results for which many advocates of emancipation had hoped. The conundrum facing nineteenth century Jews, familiar also to Jews today, concerned how much assimilation and reform was too much. Zionism, another derivative of nineteenth century liberalism, warned that the price of emancipation was too steep, but Zionists remained a small minority throughout the emancipation process. Reform Judaism, on the other hand, garnered tremendous support in its effort to blend Judaism with liberalism and nationalism. Most Jews, especially in the United States but also in most European nations, jumped at the chance to leave their stifling communities and assimilate. Except for those in Russia, most Jews fervently believed that they could be both Jewish and patriotic.

Though Jews in many nations underwent similar experiences, it is of particular interest to compare Michael Stanislawski's essay on Russian Jews with Katznelson's on Jews in the United States. The United States seems unique in that Jews never endured persecution to the extent that they did elsewhere. The relative tolerance in the United States was in part due to the newness of the state and to the fact that ethnic homogeneity was conceived differently in a nation of immigrants. For their own part, especially during the nineteenth century, Jews assimilated and became loyal Americans whose successes in American society cannot be underestimated. Conditions were diametrically different in Russia, where a weak tradition of liberalism produced few advocates for emancipation. Indeed, Russian Jews were never presented with the American Jewish dilemma which balanced assimilation and success against reform and apostasy. Millions of Jews instead resided in the Pale - a legalized ghetto in the Russian Empire - and were mistreated by every segment of society including the government itself. One need only contrast George Washington's gracious and tolerant speech to the Jews of Newport with any number of proclamations by the Russian Tsars and ministers who harbored deep hatred for Jews and Judaism. The Russians tried to assimilate their Jews by force rather than by emancipation, and the results were negative on both sides. Russian Jews never became loyal Russians and many lived in abject poverty. The fact that many participated in revolutionary movements while millions emigrated should not be surprising. On the other hand, Werner Mosse's study of German Jews, who were as assimilated as their American brethren, demonstrates that integration was no guarantee of permanent emancipation. It was the dominance of liberal ideals that allowed Jews to assimilate; if liberalism were to falter, as would be the case during the twentieth century, the Jews' civil rights would weaken as well.

This volume is well edited and compiled, and useful for readers interested in the arguments which surrounded Jewish emancipation and in the broader connection between liberalism and civil rights. There are numerous notes for readers who want to learn more about a particular period as well. It is inevitable that the essays differ in scope and size, and that the foci vary slightly. More discussion of the role that Jews played in gaining their own freedom would also have been welcome, though some of the authors do include a detailed discussion on Jewish reactions during the emancipation debates. Each essay meanwhile reminds the reader that Jews constituted a small but visible minority and that emancipation, while generally successful, also created an intensified antisemitism which now sought to blame Jews for the woes of the nation.

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