PIERRE BIRNBAUM IRA KATZNELSON

Paths of Emancipation

Jews, States, and Citizenship

PATHS OF EMANCIPATION

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JEWS, STATES, AND CITIZENSHIP

Edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson

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PREFACE

N 1987, Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson co-taught a course, "The Modernization of the Jews," at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research. At the time, Birnbaum was deeply involved in research on French Tewry and Katznelson sought to extend his interest in institutions and political identities to Jewish subjects. They sought to systematically and comparatively explore the political and economic insertion of Western European and North American Jews into the institutional realms of nineteenth-century states by bringing together relevant considerations drawn from general literatures in the social sciences and history with work by students of the Jewish experience. The course looked mainly at France, England, Germany, and the United States. while treating the Russian case as a comparative foil; that is, as a critical instance where Jews did not secure political or economic emancipation. It focused on a distinction between state emancipation and societal emancipation of the Jews and explored the implications of these paths of emancipation for the constitution of Jews as political actors.

What quickly became apparent in the construction of the curriculum and in week-to-week teaching was that this kind of analytical and comparative effort was not a feature of the most important extant work. There was a considerable divide between relevant studies on such themes as state building, identity, and collective action, on the one side, and Jewish studies on the other. Further, within the ambit of investigations of the Jewish experience in the West, the relevant literatures treated the incorporation of Jews into western modernity either as a unitary experience in spite of considerable differences distinguishing specific settings, or as *sui generis* in single-country studies.

This book was first imagined as a response, and its structure and content is marked by the ambitions and goals Birnbaum and Katznelson identified when they taught their seminar. They proceeded by circulating a discussion paper to a small group of specialists in Jewish history, including colleagues whose work appears below. This document provided the basis both for a successful application to the Council for European Studies to provide funds for the creation of a Research Planning Group and for the drafting of preliminary papers that the authors discussed face-to-face at a meeting at the European University Institute in Fiesole, Italy, in May 1989. That session refined and focused the group's common questions and provided an opportunity for tough-minded collegial criticism. The authors met for a second time in Paris in March 1990 with

draft essays in hand. This session was also supported by the University of Paris I and by the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques. The papers in this book were revised thoroughly after this second round of discussion and critique.

As in most scholarly ventures, we owe a great deal to others. Ioannis Sinanoglou of the Council for European Studies facilitated our birth as a diverse group of scholars willing to proceed with a common enterprise. Steven Lukes at the European University Institute took a lively interest in our endeavor and facilitated the remarkable hospitality we experienced there. Michael Silber and Robert Wistrich participated actively in our discussions but were unable to complete papers for this book. The result is a volume close to the design of the Birnbaum-Katznelson seminar; one that concentrates primarily on Western Europe and North America, now accompanied by two non-Western cases. We also are indebted to two anonymous readers for Princeton University Press, who pointed the way toward alterations in the text, to our copyeditor, Eric D. Schramm, and to Lauren Osborne, our editor at Princeton University, who has been enthusiastic about this project from the moment it first was broached to her.

PATHS OF EMANCIPATION

ONE

EMANCIPATION AND THE LIBERAL OFFER

Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson

BEST KNOWN for Berlin Alexanderplatz, the mordant novel filmed on an epic scale by Fassbinder, Alfred Doblin was a writer, physician, psychiatrist, and socialist, and a quite thoroughly assimilated Jew. In 1924, he published Reise in Poland. This travel memoir includes evocative and, in retrospect, remarkably poignant descriptions of Jewish life in Warsaw, Vilna, Lublin, Cracow, Lemberg, and Lodz. Doblin's personal history, his skills as an interested observer, and the timing of his trip make his text a revealing companion for more analytical attempts to apprehend Jewish emancipation in the West, treated not as a unity or a singular experience but as a complex variegated family of instances.

Doblin wrote at the end of what might be called the long century of emancipation, the period assayed in this book. The epoch opened with the creation of a new American Republic with a constitution that proscribed religious tests for office and with the annulment by the French National Assembly in September 1791 of all legal barriers to citizenship "affecting individuals of the Jewish persuasion." These radical departures effectively opened up the prospect that Jews in these countries and elsewhere could secure civic integration without the quid pro quo of religious conversion or the provision of specific utilitarian services to the state and its rulers, as had been the case for the several hundred Court Jews who had served various monarchs in the development of their fiscal instruments. A third revolution, that of the Bolsheviks, concluded the protracted era of emancipation by eliminating any formal distinction between Jews and other Soviet citizens.²

¹ Doblin's works were banned by the Nazis in 1933. He emigrated in 1940, first to France, then to the United States.

² While Russia's Jews almost universally had welcomed the February Revolution, far fewer favored the Bolshevik one; but they flocked to it once the White Guards and Ukrainian nationalists promoted a bout of fresh pogroms. An extended discussion about the relationship between revolutionary Marxism, including Bolshevism, and the Jews can be found in Jacob L. Talmon, Myth of the Nation and Vision of Revolution: Ideological Polarization in the Twentieth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

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At the time of his journey, Doblin had lived for three decades in Berlin, a span that began only some twenty years after German Jews had achieved full legal and political emancipation. By the early 1920s, a great gap had opened with which he tried to come to terms: in the West there were many Jews whose traditional life and learning were fading, while in the East there were what appeared to be—misleadingly, from the vantage point of Berlin—fossilized Jewish communities, in which the vast majority of the world's Jews still resided, most only newly emancipated. Yet, even then, Jews as acculturated as Doblin were forced to deal with the incapacity of Jews or Gentiles to make issues of Jewish difference evanesce into a world of liberal individualism and rights.

"Emancipation" is a congested term. It is a shorthand for access by lews to the profound shifts in ideas and conditions wrought by the Enlightenment and its liberal offspring; religious toleration, secularization, scientific thought, and the apotheosization of reason, individualism, the law of contract, and choice. It entailed a shift in legal position, both for the collectivity and its individual members. Much as for slaves unshackled from bondage, colonized subjects freed from imperial domination, or serfs liberated from neo-feudalism, emancipation conduced a double transformation: in standing, as Jews moved from the position of presociological and prepolitical persons to become sociological and political actors, and in the creation of new options, based on rights, for them.³ Admission to citizenship, the central hallmark of legal emancipation, also implied access to state power and the control of capital, and it raised fresh questions about the status of community, culture, and minority rights. Although the precise provenance of the term "emancipation" is open to some question (its first usage has been located in the 1828 political writings of W. T. Krug in Wurttemberg by Jacob Katz and Reinhard Kosseleck, but others have found earlier applications of the term in the

³ Leo Spitzer provides an attempt to compare the emancipation of blacks and Jews in the nineteenth century in *Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil, and West Africa, 1780–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Our book and his represent different, if complementary, responses to the historiographical tendency to treat Jewish emancipation on its own terms as a unitary experience. Spitzer reminds us in a salutary way that the ending of legal-political disabilities for Jews was not unique; in so doing, however, he depicts Jewish emancipation in rather broad strokes. Our strategy, instead, is to treat Jewish emancipation comparatively, by focusing primarily on differences between countries in spite of similarities, rather than on similarities in spite of differences. Important parallels between colonialism and postcolonialism and paths to and from Jewish emancipation can be drawn from rich works by Benedict R. O'G. Anderson on Indonesia, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), and Kwame Anthony Appiah on sub-Saharan Africa, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

dozen preceding years),⁴ the language used from the start to discuss the process of Jewish incorporation spoke of civic status, naturalization, national equality, and the granting of equal political rights.⁵

At its core, Jewish emancipation was concerned with three sets of issues about citizenship and rights: (1) whether broadly liberal and republican doctrines and institutional arrangements grounded in Enlightenment values would come to govern transactions between the state and civil society to provide fresh potential bases for Jewish citizenship; (2) whether such innovative formulas for political participation, once in place, would prove sufficiently encompassing to include the Jews; and (3) whether the terms of admission to the polity these arrangements countenanced would permit a far-reaching or narrowly gauged pluralism for Jews seeking both to take up the offer of citizenship and remain meaningfully Jewish.

Each of these issues was pressed forward with a high degree of urgency once Jewish opportunities for social and spatial mobility and for novel definitions of identity multiplied after the American and French Revolutions, and, later, after other initiatives made it possible for increasing numbers of Jews like Doblin to participate in the discrete spheres of modernity without undergoing the entry ritual of baptism. The inventory of possibilities possessed by organized Jewish communities and by individual Jews for forging relationships with the main institutions and cultures of the Christian West altered decisively, if unevenly. Whether by virtue of movement across the Atlantic, or as a result of the removal of extant barriers to equal participation in the state, the economy, and civil society, or by virtue of the collapse of rights-less regimes, or the triumph of new, less enclosed forms of nationalism, Jews now were thrust into radically altered possibilities and predicaments.

Doblin himself was the son of Jews from Posen who had moved West, and, in so doing, had detached themselves from the tight embrace of religious-communal authority. In Berlin, the family attended synagogue only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, where they prayed in German and Hebrew. Doblin's parents spoke Yiddish, Polish, and German, and they could read Hebrew; of these languages, he knew only German. He thought of himself neither as a member of the Jewish masses he observed

⁴ Jacob Katz, "The Term 'Jewish Emancipation,' Its Origin and Historical Impact," in A. Altman, ed., Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 1–25; O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Kosselleck, Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historiches Lexicon zur politischsozialen Sprache in Deutschland, (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1975), 2:97–115.

⁵ For a discussion, see Artur Eisenbach, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Poland*, 1780–1870 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 8-9.

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on his trip nor as an enlightened Jew, but as "a west European passerby." Later, after moving to the United States, he converted to Catholicism,6 taking advantage of two options, one ancient and one recent, available to Jews who wished to get away.

Among its virtues, Doblin's travel account reminds us that the great mass of world Jewry remained unemancipated long after the French Revolution. Even in countries like the Netherlands, where emancipation came in 1796 on the heels of the creation of a unitary state the previous year, the new liberality initially had an impact exclusively for the narrow stratum of Jews situated to take advantage of the access now on offer. Thus, while Jews in Vienna were able to achieve a remarkable overrepresentation in educated classes and professions, even including parts of the military, the vast majority of Austrian Jews lived in penurious and unintegrated conditions in Bukovina and Galicia. Only on the eve of their mid-twentieth century catastrophe did European Jews virtually everywhere, including Russia, lose their legal and political disabilities to become citizens of modern national states.

Doblin's Polish report shines a very bright light on the soon-to-be-extinguished plurality of Jewish life-forms at the conclusion of the era of emancipation. He recorded his impressions without knowledge of the unimaginable horrors just around the corner. Unmarked by the teleological issues and pressures that the reference point of Nazi genocide presses on us today, the quaint innocence of Doblin's travelogue enhances its value as a historical marker. He wrote when it was still possible for some Jews to believe, as Hannah Arendt once put it, that they were "people in general" who happened to be Jews, and when it was still possible to celebrate this as a positive liberating value, at a time when choices for

⁶ George Mosse comments: Doblin's "relationship to the Jews was idealistic, based upon the same idealism as his earlier socialist commitment. It proved no more lasting when confronted with the reality of political struggles among the Jews. His final conversion to Christianity took place within this context. Christ becomes the exemplification of justice and freedom, fighting to prevail in an evil world without recourse to force. The problem of revolution, force, and power, which was to occupy so many of his fellow intellectuals, had been solved. Moreover, Doblin's Christianity also gave him roots, a resting place in his wanderings. For he joined the Catholic Church, which provided him with a 'halt' and a 'harmonious coordinated system.' At the same time he castigated Jews who, after all their suffering, still clung to business-as-usual, while he seemed to have recaptured his old idealism within a more settled and traditional form." George Mosse, *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1980), 150.

⁷ Istvan Deak, "Pacesetters of Modernity: Jewish Officers in the Hapsburg Monarchy," East European Politics and Societies 3 (Winter 1989); Peter Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3–16.

⁸ Cited in Moishe Postone, "Review," New German Critique 20 (Spring/Summer 1980): 189

Jews about what it meant to be Jewish under conditions of emancipation seemed more consequential than they soon proved to be.

Well before the early 1920s the rumblings had begun. Certainly, the universalism of the American and French Revolutions and the liberating sense provided by the apparent fusion of aspirations for the general liberation of humankind in 1848, which promised to carry lews to a bright new day, had given way by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to a sober and anxious recognition of the practical limits to Enlightenment humanism at a time of demotic nationalism and global war. Emblems of disappointment dotted virtually all of Europe's landscape. In the East, the reaction to anti-Jewish riots, even to the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 or the Odessa pogrom of 1905, was muted, not just by forces of romanticism and reaction but among many socialists and liberals who feared too close an identification with Jewish causes.⁹ The quickening pace of industrialization and urbanization in Poland and Russia produced a growing confrontation between Jews in the towns positioned as middlemen between the dominant and the peasant classes and Slavic newcomers who found Jews in niches they wished to occupy. In the West, Houston Stewart Chamberlain's immensely influential two-volume study. The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, declared the emergence of the Jews from Europe's ghettos to be the century's defining characteristic, bringing with it dangers of contamination and contagion. In France, the Dreyfus affair was enfolded in a robust and popular anti-Semitism that sought to expunge the alien Jewish element from the state. In Austria, where anti-Semitism defined a pivotal axis of politics in the capital, the granting of full male suffrage in 1905 led to a larger parliamentary delegation for the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party and the Czech Social Party than for the Social Democrats—the "natural" party of the newly enfranchised working class. In Doblin's Germany, which was one of the latecomers to political emancipation, high Jewish visibility in the press, banking, the professions, literature, the arts, scholarship, and radical politics engendered popular petitions to reverse legal emancipation; furthermore, this visibility led to exclusions from the judiciary, the officer corps, and the higher civil service and to a growing partition of civil society into Gentile and Jewish clubs and associations by means of the widespread device of Aryan clauses. During the Great War, German nationalism was

⁹ Yosef Hayım Yerushalmi suggests that a similar motivation, that of seeking to protect psychoanalysis from the charge that it was merely a Jewish science, accounts for the importance of Freud's partnership with Jung. For a consideration of the role Freud's Jewishness played in his life and work, including his "sense of otherness vis-à-vis other Jews which cannot be explained merely as a reaction to anti-Semitism," see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

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suffused with Christian symbolism, revealing "a deep gulf between Germans and Jews" who were reminded of their status as uncomfortable outsiders in a Germany of "the Volk community, the camaraderie . . . wrapped in a Christian analogy." ¹⁰ It was not only to an anti-Semite like Count Heinrich Coudenhove-Kalergi that emancipation seemed a fiasco. ¹¹

Just at this moment spanning the turn of the century, when Europe's Jews were suspended precariously between modernism and romanticism, universalism and nationalism, city and country, and assimilation and segregation, their condition engaged the literary imagination of Jews such as Franz Kafka, Joseph Roth, and Arthur Schnitzler who inhabited these borderlands. Pead in this context, Doblin's account of his journey to Poland appears as credulously unaware. Nonetheless, it was the juxta position of his own experience of German emancipation and post—World War I insecurities that motivated his trip. When he published his travelogue, he had left implicit the reasons he chose to go where and when he did. A quarter century later, after the Second World War, he explained:

In the first half of the nineteen-twenties, pogromlike events took place in Berlin, in the eastern part of the city, on and around Gollnowstrasse. They occurred against the lansquenet backdrop of those years, Nazism let out its first shriek. At that time, representatives of Berlin Zionism invited a number of men of Jewish origin to meetings to talk about those events, their background, and also the aims of Zionism. In connection with these discussions, a man came to my apartment and tried to talk me into going to Palestine, which I had no intention of doing. His influence had a different effect on me I did not agree to visit Palestine, but I had to get my bearing about the Jews. I realized I didn't know any Jews I had friends who called themselves Jews, but I could not call them Jews They were not Jewish by faith or by lan-

¹⁰ Mosse, Masses and Man, 272 A superb overview of transformations to the character of anti Semitism and the circumstances of Jews between 1879 and 1914 can be found in Pulzer, Rise of Political Anti-Semitism, also see Shmuel Almog, Nationalism and Antisemitism in Modern Europe, 1815–1945 (Oxford Pergamon Press, 1990)

¹¹ Count Heinrich Coudenhove Kalergi, Anti-Semitism through the Ages (London Hutchinson and Company, 1935)

¹² Perhaps more than any other leading figure of this kind at the time, Joseph Roth directly confronted the perilous interstitial situation of post emancipation Jews, both in his fiction and journalism Celebrating the values of ethnic diversity, his novels, such as his first, The Spider's Web (1923), and his published nonfiction collections, most notably Juden auf Wanderschaft (Wandering Jews, 1927), engaged pogroms and Jewish vulnerability, as well as the none too-promising options available to them What gave Roth a particularly penetrating vantage point was his own experience as a displaced person from Galicia who had secured the cultivation of an assimilated westernized Jew Unlike Doblin, he knew both worlds firsthand Like Doblin, he was later attracted to Catholicism A useful discus sion of Kafka's Jewishness is provided by Frederick R Karl, Franz Kafka, Representative Man (New York Ticknor and Fields), 1991

guage; they were possibly remnants of an extinct nation that had long since integrated into a new milieu. So I asked myself and I asked others: "Where do Jews exist?" I was told Poland. And so I went to Poland.¹³

Doblin's travels came at a moment when Polish national liberation still was fresh. Walking the recently renamed streets of Warsaw, ¹⁴ he had a first encounter with bearded men dressed in ragged gabardine: "They are Jews. I am stunned, no, frightened." His German preconceptions proved inadequate to the discovery of incredible Jewish poverty or an anti-Semitic tabloid that fused liberal nationalism with anti-Jewish venom. Above all, he was staggered to find that these Jews "are a nation. People who know only Western Europe fail to realize this. The Jews have their own costumes, their own language, religion, manners and mores, their ancient national feeling and national consciousness." By contrast, "what you see in western Europe is disfigurement." ¹⁵

As an astute observer, Doblin found the situation of Polish Jews to be unexpectedly complex. He did not happen on a singular ossified "traditional" Jewry. ¹⁶ Had he been able to read the region's Yiddish literature, with its preoccupations with secularization, the impact of modernity, the allure of the West, and ties between Jews and non-Jews, Doblin would have been better prepared for the diversity of Jewish existence. ¹⁷ What

- 13 Alfred Doblin, Schicksalsreise: Bericht und Bekenntnis (Frankfurt am Main: J. Knecht, 1949), cited in the introduction to Doblin, Journey to Poland, ed. Heinz Graber (New York: Paragon House, 1991), xii. What Doblin left out of this account was his enthusiastic embrace for a period during the 1930s of the doctrine of territorialism: indifferent to Palestine as the location but committed to settling Jews on the land in order to become a legitimate Volk. "More important than the land is the Volk," he wrote in Flucht und Sammlung des Judenvolkes (Amsterdam: Querido Verlag 1935), 34. For a discussion, see Mosse, Masses and Man, 148–50.
- ¹⁴ An excellent collection of papers that puts Doblin's Warsaw observations in perspective is Wladyslaw T. Bartoszewski and Antony Polonsky, eds., *The Jews in Warsaw: A History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), especially the two articles by Piotr Wrobel on Jewish Warsaw before and during the First World War and the essay by Edward Wynot Jr. on Jews in interwar Warsaw.
 - 15 Doblin, Journey to Poland, 7, 35, 50, 54.
- 16 In part, of course, this diversity was the product of the distinctive circumstances of Jews in the different parts of Austrian, Russian, and Prussian (then German) Poland before the results of the First World War produced the possibility of a new Polish state. For an overview of Jewish demography, social structure, culture, and political activity in Poland in this period, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). Polish Jewish diversity, it should be cautioned, while characterized by a not inconsiderable amount of acculturation, "remained basically Yiddish-speaking, lower middle class and proletarian, and strongly influenced both by religious Orthodoxy and modern separatist Jewish nationalism" (Mendelsohn, *Jews of East Central Europe*, 8).
- ¹⁷ For a fine overview, see Ruth R. Wisse, "Two Jews Talking: A View of Modern Yiddish Literature," *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 4 (January 1984).

he discovered was that Polish nationalism and transformations to economic and political conditions threatened traditional Jewish autonomy and spawned a surprisingly heterogeneous set of responses by Jews. These included efforts to achieve more vigorous isolation, resignation, or cultural imitation without much participation in the wider society, and active engagement in debates about whether the new Poland would be enthusiastically multinational or a homogeneous entity that would tolerate cultural and religious differences only grudgingly. Doblin encountered the last moments of a massive out-migration, principally to America; a Zionist alternative that pitted Hebrew against the Yiddish vernacular; Communist and Socialist politics; splits between hasidim and mitnagdim; the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah; and local styles of acculturation (ungainly by Berlin standards) that discarded Orthodox dress and demanding religiosity. He also discovered that even the provincial, insular masses had been affected by the wider European currents of emancipation. In spite of fierce, at times violent, anti-Semitic resistance and the hegemony of their antimodern leadership, these Iews, too, were being pulled into the ambit of the modern economy and state. In the industrializing petroleum districts, he found, "Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian workers work side by side," a harbinger of the intensifying integration of the Jewish economy and workforce with the larger, increasingly capitalist, economy. And in the realm of political activity, he noted, "'State,' [and] 'Parliament' loom on the horizon—against the Gaon and the Baal-Shem."18

The multilayered process of emancipation Doblin and his family had experienced, and which he observed in Poland, reconstituted Jews as social actors by recasting the problem of group solidarity, that is, "the extent to which members of a group comply with its collective rules without compensation." Michael Hechter has argued that such cohesion is most likely "when individuals face limited sources of benefit, where their opportunities for multiple group affiliations are minimal, and

Jewish writers in the East faced the problem of the public. Those who wrote in Yiddish obviously wrote for other Jews, but not all did so. Some Jewish authors, including the first to write in Russian (Grigori Bogrov, Lev Levanda, and Osip Rabinovich), sought to plead the Jewish cause to the general Russian public; none was considered an authentic Russian writer by their intended audience.

¹⁸ Doblin, *Journey to Poland*, 54, 56–60, 177, 103. Doblin was particularly scathing about the nouveau-bourgeois of Jewish Warsaw: "I view those 'Enlightened' ones like Africans who flaunt the glass beads they've gotton from sailors, the dirty cuffs on their dangling arms, the brand-new dented top hats on their heads. How poor, how shabby, how unworthy and soullessly devastated the Western World is, giving them those cuffs; how are they supposed to know" (191).

¹⁹ Charles Tilly, review of *Principles of Group Solidarity*, by Michael Hechter, *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (January 1989): 876.

where their social isolation is extreme."20 Pre-emancipation Iewry had met these conditions, in part by imposition, in part by preference. By altering the structural location of Jewish life within the state, the economy, and civil society, emancipation undermined the conditions that previously had underpinned Jewish cohesion. Desired individual and collective goods now could be procured outside the ghetto. The networks Iews could join multiplied, as their isolation diminished. As a result, the capacity of organized Jewish communities to control deviant behavior became more tenuous. As Jews traversed paths to emancipation, their new condition as members of voluntary communities confronted them with choices that functioned as solvents to dissolve pre-emancipation patterns of Jewish solidarity. These options were concerned both with how to try to engage the wider non-Jewish world in all its dimensions, and about how to be Jewish in the circumstances of emancipation; that is, how to define the character of theological Judaism, the social organization of Jewry, and the qualities of Jewishness as a way of life.

"Paths of Emancipation," as a title, should be taken seriously. "Paths" connotes comparison and a plurality of passages; it also implies path dependency, as the resolution of options at a given moment shapes and constrains future developments. The book's main historiographical characteristic is a departure from evolutionist interpretations still present in much (but by no means all) modern Jewish scholarship. Our aim is to promote a systematic understanding of the great diversity of types of emancipation and of Jewish responses, including their attachment, in varying degrees, to their own values and community structures, their entry onto the public stage, their commitment to social struggles, their readiness to emigrate or join the Zionist movement, or, by contrast, their boundless attachment to the nations that had admitted them to citizenship.

If emancipation constituted a giant, step-wise change in the Jewish condition, and if it also produced a cascade of unprecedentedly diverse dispositions and patterns of behavior, the task remains to ask how, if at all, large-scale variations among countries—including their type of state and public institutions, political doctrines, cultural codes, rates and characteristics of urbanization, patterns of capitalist development, and the nature of accommodation between social classes—structured situations in a manner that biased the ways Jews chose to be Jews after emancipation.²¹ Paths of Emancipation chronicles and analyzes this interjacency

²⁰ Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 54; cited in Tilly, review of *Group Solidarity*, 875.

²¹ No useful comparative history of this process can be written if Jewish history is segmented from the histories of the many different societies to which Jews belonged, since their identities and practices were affected distinctively by the configuration of each case.

of elements from the perspective of variations both to the settings within which Jews found themselves embedded and in the selections they made as cognitive and strategic actors from the repertoire generated by their location in these circumstances.

In pursuing these subjects, we are keen to stride a passage located between two sets of alternatives, too often thought of as dichotomous. The first discriminates between emancipation as a unitary process and as a discrete series of single country experiences. Our focus is on variation within the family of instances with the intent to construct the cases by posing a common agenda of questions to make them susceptible to comparison.²² The second distinguishes between Jews as historically constituted and constrained by large-scale processes beyond their ken and as self-created historical agents. We are keen to understand the Jewish experience in the dual sense of this junction term: how Jews experienced specific instances of emancipation; and their process of learning, adjustment, and action. The central challenge of this book is to find a fresh perspective from which to undertake this double-barreled analytical effort.

Historiographical Puzzles

A number of historiographical obstacles stand in the way.²³ We are entering a conversation long established, with whose terms and content we are

Moreover, responses to emancipation, whether in prospect or in fact, were not affected solely by internal factors. From one country to another, models of emancipation and assimilation also were imported or exported, thus influencing the way in which the character of each individual case was shaped, though often running up against constraints specific to each society, which, as we shall see in the case studies below, sometimes precluded the adoption of an external model.

²² A useful collection of surveys, country by country, of the current status of Jewish historiography was published in *Modern Judaism* in 1990 and 1991. See, for examples, Jonathan D. Sarna, "American Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 10 (October 1990); David Weinberg, "French Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 10 (October 1990); Todd M. Endelman, "English Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 11 (February 1991); and Shulamit S. Magnes, "German Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 11 (February 1991).

²³ The most intractable is the inescapability of the Holocaust as a reference point. As Yasmine Ergas writes, "Like all traumas, the Holocaust can neither be assimilated nor expunged. It sets the stage, instead, for future projections of the self and limits the role which can be comfortably played." Thus, it is impossible to treat assimilation sympathetically as a positive value. A second consequence is the devaluation of the historical tale when what counted in the end was proximity to the organized violence of the Third Reich. Yet another implication is the enormous difficulty we now have in honoring the first working principle of good historical research and writing: historicization without teleology. Solutions to these dilemmas are inherently unavailable; we can proceed only in awareness of these conundrums. Yasmine Ergas, "Growing Up Banished: A Reading of Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* and Etty Hillesum's *An Interrupted Life*," unpublished manuscript, 1985.

appreciative but uneasy. The very notion of Jewish historiography as a particular craft itself is the product of the process of emancipation, as the Iews were thrust into modernity and were affected by historicity. The ways in which the story of emancipation has been rendered inevitably have been partisan. Down the ages, Jews had viewed time as immemorial and established a direct lineage between the course of their own lives and the era of the Bible. The repetition of its narrative had punctuated their daily lives and organized their perception of time. Suddenly, voluntarily or against their will, they were transformed into actors of a history in the making within the crucible of a multiplicity of revolutions well beyond their suzerainty. The ahistorical qualities of rabbinic thought had guided them away from any reference to immediate events; this helps explain the lack of a Jewish historiography. After a number of attempts which, to varying degrees, proved fruitless, it was only during the later decades of the nineteenth century that secular Jewish historians made their appearance and began to approach the richly varied history of the Iews from an angle which viewed that record as integral to the general history with which it is inextricably bound at the individual and collective levels. Not until the more recent past has Jewish history been institutionalized as a professional quest to join Jewish historians in a cross-national epistemic community. As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi has pointed out, "It is only in the contemporary era that we find, for the first time, a Jewish historiography which is distinct from the collective Jewish memory and, on a number of crucial points, in total opposition to that memory."24

Constituted as an independent enterprise, this effort to write Jewish history has been doubly enclosed. Its rich harvest has ripened inside only some of the options available to Jews after emancipation. The craft of Jewish history, moreover, largely has been a specifically Jewish enterprise even when it has been located in the academy outside of such specifically Jewish institutional locations as YIVO in Vilna and New York or the Jewish Theological Seminaries of Breslau and New York. Jewish historiography thus has been caught up in and shaped by debates about contested values and strategies geared to guide Jewish destinies. In turn, the writing of most "general" history characteristically continues to sidestep the challenge of integrating Jews and Jewry into larger narratives. Jewish history remains a latent and unintegrated subject, thrust to the periphery of the historical profession. Serving as their own historians, Jews have

²⁴ Yosef Hayım Yerushalmı, Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982). Spinoza, of course, was the first modern secular Jewish intellectual. For discussions, see Joel Schwartz, "Liberalism and the Jewish Connection: A Study of Spinoza and the Young Marx," Political Theory 13 (February 1985); and the outstanding biography by Yirmiyahu Yovel, Spinoza and Other Heretics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

been tempted by notions of Jewish exceptionalism and have oriented most of their scholarship to specifically Jewish audiences.

We have no wish to break entirely either with this committed patrimony or its vocational motivation; nor could we. We do strive, however, to encourage a more robust engagement between Jewish historical studies and wider scholarly currents, especially with parts of the social sciences. In this effort, we are not alone. In the past two decades, a good many Jewish historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have found direction from social science scholarship on ethnicity and nationalism.²⁵ Our effort is characterized by complementary emphases and informed by the anti-evolutionist treatment of large-scale social processes. especially state building (but also economic development, international migrations, urbanization, and associational life in civil society) generated in the past two decades by sociologists and political scientists working in a comparative and historical macroanalytical vein, as well as by social science scholarship on cognition and choice and by attempts from within liberal political theory to make a place for difference and incommensurable ways of life.

A first step in grappling with this agenda is the need to take care not to reify the circumstances and characteristics of pre-emancipation European Jewry. A reckoning with the plurality of configurations of modern Jewish history does not come easily, however, because portraits of pre-emancipation Jewry too often have been one-dimensional. In a useful commentary on Max Weber's *Ancient Judaism*, Shmuel Eisenstadt takes up just this issue.²⁶

Weber, of course, sought to treat the great world religions in terms of their progressive rationalization, and to distinguish them from each other as a part of the project that sought to account for the elective affinity of Protestantism and capitalism. Eisenstadt points out that Weber might have interpreted Judaism's failure to develop the asceticism and economic ethic he ascribes to Protestantism by focusing on factors outside Jewish control, such as their political vulnerability and dependency. Instead, Weber's picture of European Judaism, before Napoleon's armies diffused liberal citizenship and equality before the law, portrays a unitary pariah people outside the social, political, and economic mainstream. This community, in his view, had come to be enclosed by its rituals as a consequence of a fateful decision taken after the Babylonian exile during

²⁵ This point is made with some force by Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Toward a New Historiography?," in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17–23.

²⁶ S. N. Eisenstadt, "The Format of Jewish History-Some Reflections on Max Weber's Ancient Judaism," Modern Judaism 1 (May 1981).

the period of the Second Commonwealth to transmute the universalistic potential of Judaism's prophetic tradition into a culture dominated by rabbinic legalism.

Eisenstadt shows persuasively that Weber's stark distinction between the prophetic and rabbinic is based on an overly flat reading of the forms and institutions of Jewish history. Viewing the two traditions as alternatives presents a false picture because the prophetic impulse never disappeared. While the Jewish community—or, rather, Jewish communities —came to be organized with a populist base of observant members following meticulously specified rules for daily life led by a rabbinic elite whose claims to authority were based on sacred learning, the prophetic tradition deepened to make its focus less the redemption of individuals than the community's possibilities within history. In this cultural and political crucible, one that necessarily varied from place to place, Jewish identities formed based on a fusion of ritualistic and prophetic elements. The precise mix, and their balance and content, varied considerably by location in the diaspora as a consequence of the requirement that Jews as a minority (indeed as a minority that viewed its exile as impermanent) come to terms with heterogeneous, often menacing, environments.

Notwithstanding this diversity, the promise and practice of emancipation did utterly transform the conditions of Jewish existence and the character of the challenge to Jews to develop a sense of who they were and how they might live in an uncertainly welcoming world. Emancipation both reflected and caused alterations to the context of communal life that overwhelmed the various formulas for living that Jews had developed and redeveloped since the Second Commonwealth. Everything changed—from communal social organization to religious practice to family life to migration patterns to employment to schooling to ideology to collective action. So, too, did the sheer range of Jewish orientations to the wider milieu.

It is the shared radical quality of this break that has impelled some of the leading historians of this process, preeminent among them Jacob Katz, in *Out of the Ghetto*, to present "as one fabric . . . a compound picture" of emancipation's shared linear qualities, rather than to focus on variations. Katz has viewed the Jewish community as having been marked more by "tradition than . . . the people among whom it dwelt. When the framework of traditional society all over Europe disintegrated, the more traditional a society had been, the deeper was its transmutation"; especially, he insisted, for the Jews.²⁷ Though we are critical of this position, both for its leveling of difference and its soft teleology, it is

²⁷ Jacob Katz, Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1, 4, 6.

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important, nonetheless, not to underestimate the profound qualities of emancipation that can get lost in an appreciation of variation. After all, Iews were caught up in a multidimensional set of postfeudal transformations to the Europe in which they lived. With the (long and uneven) demise of feudalism, modern states were born on the basis of a partition of sovereignty from property that implied a new distinction between the sphere of political or public law and rights and the sphere of civil or private law.²⁸ The number of states fell dramatically as sovereignty came more and more to be concentrated. The state itself increasingly became an entity distinguishable both from the particular person of the ruler and from ecclesiastical authority. Under postfeudal conditions, states had to develop mutually advantageous relations with the partially autonomous macrostructures of the economy and civil society. Contests about the terms of these transactions within newly constituted national public spheres became the centerpiece of modern politics in the West, whose issues concerned the scope and limits of state activity, and the rights of economic actors as well as citizens and subjects.

To the extent that emancipation conduced a redefinition of the relationship of Jews to the state, these trends enfolded the diverse instances of emancipation within a more general story. The vast revisions to political structures, relationships, and policies in early modern Europe effectively ended the viability of the autonomous niche-status Jews had maintained within feudal conditions. Further, Jewish demography, urbanization, and encounters with mercantile economies and markets in capital, land, and labor shared many traits across national boundaries.²⁹ In these circumstances, Efraim Shmueli has noted, there was a high degree of resemblance to the normative and institutional responses of Jews to emancipation. Across different settings, they learned new languages and forgot old ones, sought to transcend a mentality of exile, and reduced the scope of religious authority and of Jewish autonomy in culture, politics, and community affairs. They also experienced a significant widening in the range of views held by members of the intelligentsia, who now ranged from traditional religious authorities to secular intellectuals seeking to embrace the opportunities of emancipation without a total sacrifice of Iewish identity.30

²⁸ See Morris R. Cohen, "Property and Sovereignty," Cornell Law Quarterly 13 (1927), for a discussion that is still suggestive.

²⁹ Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman, *The Transformation of the Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³⁰ Efraim Shmueli, Seven Jewish Cultures: A Reinterpretation of Jewish History and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On the intellectuals of the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, see David Sorkin, "The Genesis of the Ideology of Emancipation: 1806–1840," Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 32 (1967).

These features characterizing the points of articulation between Jews and their larger European environment authorized Katz to underscore the shared aspects of Jewish emancipation in western and central Europe rather than its diversity. "Emancipation," he stressed, "in its wider sense, occurred more or less simultaneously. It can also be said to have followed a similar, if not identical, course."31 For all its value, however, this unitary and linear perspective pushes far too hard in the direction of singularity. One goal of Paths of Emancipation is to underscore just how wide a perspective, and just how much of a flattening of variations, is required to sustain Katz's landmark formulation. For the cases we consider, his "simultaneously" would need to mean a period lasting well over a century, and his "similar, if not identical" would have to encompass quite a diverse range of historical developments, including much variation in ways Jews came to define their Jewishness after emancipation. By focusing on differences in spite of similarities, the papers in Paths of Emancipation begin where works that underscore similarities stop, but they do so in a manner that is aimed at facilitating an understanding of each case as a distinctive instance of a larger set of historical processes.

Katz's approach (constructed on the basis of the German model viewed implicitly as the ultimate outcome toward which the history of other European Jews tended) is nested within, and complements, what Frankel describes as the nationalist current in Jewish historiography, one of whose characteristics is that of downgrading the significance of diverse paths of emancipation because it sees the history of emancipation, under the best, most liberal circumstances as leading to the dissolution of the Jewish people. David Vital, for example, maintains that the breakthrough to modernity with the French Revolution and the progressive application of the emancipating principles of equality and individualism that emerged in the age of Enlightenment spelled the end of the Jewish people. Treating figures like Doblin as emblematic, he argues that from emancipation to the Holocaust, Judaism was preserved only in eastern Europe, where community structures were sheltered and bore within them their own traditions and culture, protecting at the same time the use of a specific Jewish vernacular. In Vital's rendering, the center of Jewish existence did not, indeed could not, lie in the heart of a western Europe in the throes of modernization, but with the self-contained Jewish communities on the periphery to the East, as though awaiting their belated involvement in a process of development identical to that already experienced by the emancipated lews of the West. Only the unemancipated

³¹ Katz, Out of the Ghetto, 3 Katz does acknowledge the macroanalytic and comparative problem of variation between different paths of emancipation, as in his discussion of contrasts between France and Germany, but he does not take up this theme systematically

who refused or preferred to disregard western modernization constituted the true center of a Judaism that looked with indifference at a history they interpreted as a mutilating factor. From this perspective, it follows that with their tragic extermination by Hitler's Reich, Israel alone was capable of preserving the unity of a Jewish people otherwise destined to disappear in the individualist West.³²

This perspective is tenable only by a considerable leveling of the historical landscape. By no means is it self-evident that emancipation in the West has been accompanied by an unambiguous impairment of Judaism. leaving only the Jews of the East as the guardians of Jewish religion and culture. Such visions of modern Jewish history do not make sufficient allowance for the multifold qualities of the situations in evidence both in the West (including North America) and, as Doblin discovered, in the East. This dichotomous tendency overlooks the interdependence of West and East, manifested by migration patterns, the impact of modern ideas and movements such as the Haskalah, and the generation of choice for eastern Europe's Jews by the emancipation of those in the West. It also tends to disregard the reconstitution in the West of alternative Jewish community structures characterized by associative links that proved capable of transmitting a sense of belonging and loyalty. Relationships of partnership within society, as Tönnies held, need not be radically incompatible with links within a community. Given that the Iews nowhere exercised power as a nation state, is it reasonable to assume that they "stepped back" from history, that their own history simply became tributary to that of others? To the contrary, emancipated lews maintained or pioneered distinctively Jewish networks of social relations as vectors of culture and tradition. In some instances, they even forged forms of power which, though not founded on the control of a state, nevertheless existed in other forms by means of the circulation of information and protective organizations, among other vehicles.³³

The modern history of the Jews, in short, did not follow a linear path from servitude to liberation, from an integrated community to fragmentation, from the *pletzl* to professions in the tertiary sector, from tradition to assimilation, or from the ghetto to a citizenship oriented entirely toward general civism accompanied by a disregard of their specific identity and patterns of life. Contrary to customary interpretations of Franco-Judaism, or indeed of *Bildung*, there was no near-complete eradication of Jewish culture in the societies in which the Enlightenment and emancipation left their most striking marks. By contrast to the classical devel-

³² David Vital, *The Future of the Jews: A People at the Cross-Roads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), chap. 1.

³³ See David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1987).

opmentalist theories of sociology implicit in a good deal of the historiography of emancipation that consider the social roles specific to modernity as being fundamentally different from traditional ones, we wish to embrace important aspects of the welcome historiographical trend that seeks to demonstrate the surviving existence, even the renewed vitality in some instances, of Jewish marriage patterns, institutions, and associational networks conducive to the survival and enhancement of values specific to Judaism.

Working in this mode, for example, Todd Endelman's rigorous analysis of individual destinies has shown how "acculturation, integration and secularization reshaped and attenuated lewish identity but rarely did they extinguish it."34 In countries profoundly affected by the Enlightenment and by modernity more generally, such as France and Germany, and, a fortiori, in those countries that continued to stand apart from this trend, as in much of the Russian Empire; or, finally, in those countries, especially the United States, where it was legitimate for widely different particularist cultures to be maintained, meaningful lewish history certainly did not disappear with the advent of modernity. Even in those societies where socioeconomic modernization was most pronounced, ethnicity could persist, if often in new forms. Thus, Goldscheider and Zuckerman observe, "occupational, residential and educational change moved Jews to new locations and to greater exposure to non-Jews. But in the new order. Iews continued to interact with Iews. They concentrated in new occupations and built new communal institutions. Hence, modernization created new forms of Jewish cohesion as it destroyed old forms. . . . Ethnicity did not disappear."35

Goldscheider and Zuckerman are persuasive in insisting that the social and economic modernization of the Jews did not command the destruction of their particularity, just as political emancipation did not demand merely disembodied forms of citizenship. Their focus on economic and social change, however, much like Katz's on political transition in *Out of the Ghetto*, treats emancipation as a singular trajectory. Like states, nineteenth-century capitalism differed in many pivotal respects from place to place: in the degree of penetration of capitalist structures, the relations between social classes, rates of social and geographical mobility, urbanization and the growth of cities, the starkness of the division between workplaces and residential communities, the character of neighborhoods, and the complex interplay between economically grounded

³⁴ Todd M. Endelman, "The Chequered Career of 'Jew' King," in Frances Malino and David Sorkin, eds., *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750–1870* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 175; also see Todd M. Endelman, "The Legitimization of the Diaspora Experience in Recent Jewish Historiography," *Modern Judaism* 11 (May 1991).

³⁵ Goldscheider and Zuckerman, Transformation of the Jews, 80.

and other identities. These variations, in turn, intertwined with differences between states. Thus, for example, in their entry into French capitalism, Jews were not as capable of maintaining their own particularistic ethnic bonds as easily as English or American Jews, due largely to the hubris of the French state and its assertive definition of citizenship. In turn, from a more sociological point of view, the growth of cities in the United States (and, later, the suburban phenomenon) was embedded within a decentralized polity that implied dispersion and a different kind of challenge to group and personal identities.

There exists today no systematic comparative study of such differences in the linkages between the state, the economy, and society for Jews during the long century of emancipation. Our aim in *Paths of Emancipation* is to suggest foci for such an effort and to make a start by way of a selective emphasis, primarily on state-centered factors, in a number of case studies in the direction of this ambitious project.

Toward Comparison

Happily, just this set of considerations—a concern to understand "flux, . . . a myriad of contexts, and . . . a multiplicity of responses," to transcend too stark a division between tradition and modernity or between East and West, and to lend "greater credence to the survivalist strategies of Western Jewry," while encouraging "a view of group consciousness as developing in open-ended, unpredictable and idiosyncratic ways"—has begun to characterize the work of leading, especially younger, students of modern Jewish history. Their pivotal insights have included a departure from the handling of emancipation as a unitary and linear process, and a recognition, informed by studies in the social sciences on ethnicity and nationalism, that in the case of Jews seeking to engage the various liberal offers of inclusion in the polity, "the loss of linguistic and cultural distinctiveness" did not necessarily bring "with it a loss of ethnic identity."³⁶

In order to define where *Paths of Emancipation* stands with respect to this important historiographical trend, we should like to attend to the two leading attempts to reckon with and codify it, both of which are based on conferences held in the early and middle 1980s: a transitional volume, *Toward Modernity*, that tries by way of Jacob Katz's introductory essay to bridge the new emphasis on plurality and the Germancentered unitary view for which he has been the most influential figure; and *Assimilation and Community*, a wholehearted embrace of the revisionist impulse.³⁷

³⁶ Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews," 31, 22.

³⁷ Jacob Katz, ed., *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987); Frankel and Zipperstein, *Assimilation and Community*.

The excellent essays in Katz's collection strain against the deep ambivalence of its editor. Ranging from thematic studies of the Haskalah in Hungary, Italy, Galicia, and Russia, city-based considerations of the Jews of Vienna and Prague, an overview of Jewish modernity in England, to relational studies of German Jewry and Jews in France, the Netherlands, and the United States, the volume tenses between the urge to credit the distinctiveness of each case and the impulse to tame the complex story of emancipation by way of holding on to the centrality of the German instance and to inquire about how "German-Jewish development . . . [influenced] what happened elsewhere." The book's subtitle, The European lewish Model, provides a unitary description. At the outset, Katz avers that the volume's purpose is "to compare the process of modernization in German Jewry with its counterparts in other countries," and to assay whether the impact of the German experience on the others "is based on the assumption that the development in the said countries, if it had not a common source, at least reveals a common denominator." Conceding that this theme is not "made explicit in any of the essays," he contends nonetheless that this shared quality can be found "in the criterion by which the modern variation of Jewish communities could be differentiated from its predecessor, the traditional Jewish society." What distinguished the latter was the authoritative enclosure of the Jews, enforced by its communal organs with the sanction of the state; by contrast, "the post-traditional Jewish community was denied the right to impose its will concerning thought and action of the individual."38

We have three principal reservations about *Toward Modernity*. Our first source of disquiet is the book's lack of self-consciousness about the tension it fails to name or analyze between the treatment of emancipation as a drastic break with the past and the focus in the book's essays on the multifarious qualities of emancipation. This is an opportunity missed. Our own focus on variation is premised on agreement with Katz that emancipation entailed a radical fracture; but our definition of the breach differs from his. By focusing on citizenship, the state, and the extension of liberal political rights, we necessarily are inserting variation into the heart of the common element of emancipation. What Katz and his colleagues treat as their objects of analysis—variations in the cognitive and strategic choices of the Jews—we seek to locate within these determinate, also various, political circumstances.

The second hallmark of Katz's volume is its identification of Germany as the locus of the origins of Jewish modernity in Europe: "The process starting in eighteenth-century Germany gradually encompassed the whole Jewish world." This orientation is not so much wrong—for

³⁸ Katz, introduction to Toward Modernity, 1.

³⁹ Katz, preface to Toward Modernity, vii.