



Albion and Jerusalem: The Anglo-Jewish Community in the Post-Emancipation Era (Oxford Historical Monographs)

Michael Clark

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Lionel de Rothschild's hard-fought entry into Parliament in 1858 marked the emancipation of Jews in Britain--the symbolic conclusion of Jews' campaign for equal rights and their inclusion as citizens after centuries of discrimination. Jewish life entered a new phase: the post-emancipation era. But what did this mean for the Jewish community and their interactions with wider society? And how did Britain's state and society react to its newest citizens?

Emancipation was ambiguous. Acceptance carried expectations, as well as opportunities. Integrating into British society required changes to traditional Jewish identity, just as it also widened conceptions of Britishness. Many Jews willingly embraced their environment and fashioned a unique Jewish existence: mixing in all levels of society; experiencing economic success; and organising and translating its faith along Anglican grounds. However, unlike many other European Jews, Anglo-Jews stayed loyal to their faith. Conversion and outmarriage remained rare, and connections were maintained with foreign kin. The community was even willing at times to place its Jewish and English identity in conflict, as happened during the 1876-8 Eastern Crisis--which provoked the first episode of modern antisemitism in Britain.

The nature of Jewish existence in Britain was unclear and developing in the post-emancipation era. Focusing upon inter-linked case studies of Anglo-Jewry's political activity, internal government, and religious development, Michael Clark explores the dilemmas of identity and inter-faith relations that confronted the minority in late nineteenth-century Britain. This was a crucial period in which the Anglo-Jewish community shaped the basis of its modern existence, whilst the British state explored the limits of its toleration.

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