



# Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914

*David Feldman*

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This book presents an important new perspective on Jews in England - and English attitudes towards them - during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was a period of fundamental change. At the accession of Queen Victoria, Jews in England were a small and disadvantaged minority, numbering no more than 30,000 and excluded from parliament. By the early twentieth century, political and legal disabilities had been almost completely abolished, the Jewish population grown tenfold, and mass immigration from eastern Europe had changed the face of Anglo-Jewry. In exploring these fundamental changes David Feldman investigates the reality of Jewish integration more rigorously than any previous study, and addresses the central questions arising from the Jewish presence in England. To what extent did English society accept or reject the Jewish minority within it? How did the Jews' religious, communal and political identities develop in the English context? What was the impact of immigration, and how did the immigrants fare within the English economy? 'Englishmen and Jews' draws on a wide range of source materials in both English and Yiddish. Its chapters span political, religious, economic and social history. It deals with arguments between Whigs and Tories over Jewish emancipation and with the turbulent political life of the Jewish East End of London, with anti-semitic assaults on Disraeli and with the travails of the immigrant sweatshop workers. Above all, it reshapes our understanding of the connections between English and Jewish history during this period. By seeing each in the context provided by the other it enables us to see both in new ways, and adds strikingly to the debates on national identity and liberalism, and on class and community in pre-1914 English society. 'Ambitious and highly sophisticated ... A great achievement providing a well-researched and analytically sharp account.' Tony Kushner, *History Today* 'A stimulating and innovative study ... Ambitious in scope and range of concerns.' Thomas Linehan, *Jewish Quarterly* 'Feldman makes a heroically fair-minded effort to understand opponents of emancipation and unrestricted immigration on their own terms ... On the whole, it is a happy story that he has to tell.' John Gross, *Sunday Telegraph* Dr. David Feldman is a member of the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck College, the University of London.



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