

KWESTIA RÓWNOUPRAWNIENIA ŻYDÓW W KRÓLESTWIE POLSKIM. By *Artur Eisenbach*. Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1972. 578 pp.

In Russian Poland, known as the Kingdom of Poland (also Congress Poland), lived three hundred thousand to six hundred thousand Jews (1820–60), or about 8.5 to 12.7 percent of the total population. Legally and religiously these Jews formed a separate group whose civil and political rights were limited, since citizenship was restricted to Christians by the Constitution of 1815 and later statutes and laws. This spelled official discrimination with regard to settlement rights, limitations on economic activity and education, and exclusion from civil service, from military service (until 1843), and from participation in local government. The Jews were also more heavily taxed than the rest of the population. Beginning in the 1840s some individual Jews of the richer classes attained certain (limited) citizens' rights by petitioning for them. In 1862, when Aleksander Wielopolski was appointed head of the civil government in Poland, and revolutionary trends were prevalent in that country, a law was promulgated granting Jews legal emancipation (with some limitations).

Professor Eisenbach sees the June 1862 act of emancipation of the Jews in Poland as resulting from a long process connected with other social changes in the country. This emancipation, much like the emancipation of the peasants during the same period, "became possible in the revolutionary situation and the new configuration of internal forces in Poland, and partly also in Russia. . . . It was first of all an expression of the aims of the government forces to win the Jewish population over for the political goals of the tsar or at least to neutralize it in relation to the Polish revolutionary movement for independence. The idea of equal rights for Jews found, however, in those times a new ally in the Polish democratic and revolutionary groupings" (p. 561).

The book describes and analyzes all these trends and developments on the basis of a great quantity of printed and archival materials. Almost half of the book deals with the Jewish population, its settlement, legal status, growing secularization, the economic and social situation, and changes and problems. The rest is devoted to the 1850s and the first years of the 1860s. The more liberal atmosphere of Alexander II's first years of rule resulted in demands for civil rights by the more assimilated, Polonized, and usually wealthier Jews—both individuals and small groups. At first these demands met mostly negative reactions and evoked criticism from the Poles, but the positive attitudes of these Jews and of the educated Jewish youth toward the Polish demands for independence, and their activities in support of the revolutionary movements, led to a more friendly, pro-Jewish atmosphere. The second part of the book ably analyzes these trends and gives a good idea of the developing Polish-Jewish relations, including the so-called fraternization of Jews and Poles in the years before the revolution of 1863.

Eisenbach's book also contributes to the understanding of Polish-Jewish-Russian relations in Russian Poland during the decades preceding the Polish uprising of 1863.

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