The Economy In Jewish History

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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND ECONOMIC LIFE

The Jewish historiography tends to stress the religious, cultural, and political aspects of the past. By contrast the "economy" has been pushed to the margins of the Jewish discourse and scholarship since the end of the Second World War. This volume takes a fresh look at Jews and the economy, arguing that a broader, cultural approach is needed to understand the central importance of the economy. The very dynamics of economy and its ability to function depend on the ability of individuals to interact, and on the shared values and norms that are fostered within ethnic communities. Thus this volume sheds new light on the interrelationship between religion, ethnicity, culture, and the economy, revealing the potential of an "economic turn" in the study of history.

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF EUROPEAN JEWS

LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The Economic History of European Jews offers a radical revision of demographics and economics. It explains how the presence of Jews was a limited one and their trade was just that, trade by Jews, not "Jewish Trade".

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Editions Eska This is a very important book that all who care about the history of finance, the Jewish people and most of all truth, should read. For centuries, Jews have been falsely accused of having a shameful relationship with money. This book is also a must-read to understand the nature of capitalism and the role religious values have played. Alan Dershowitz Hereafter lies the history of the rapport that exists between the Jewish people, money and the world at large, I am well aware of the subversive nature of this subject. It has unleashed so many controversies and brought about so many massacres as to have become a veritable taboo, a topic that must not be evoked under any circumstance for fear of provoking some age-old catastrophe. Today, no one dares write on this topic, as if centuries of study have served no other purpose than to fuel book burning The story could lead one to believe in the existence of a united Jewish people: rich, powerful, placed under centralized commandment and responsible for establishing a worldwide power strategy through money. Such a belief would merge with the fantasies that have spread across every century from Trajan to Constantine, from Matthew to Luther, from Marlow to Voltaire, from the Protocol of the Elders of Zion to Mein Kampf, to all that which is propagated today via the anonymity of the Internet It remains nevertheless in the best interest of modern mankind to understand how those who discovered monotheism also founded the ethics of capitalism, how some became its primary brokers and leading bankers, while others its most unrelenting enemy. Finally, it seems essential that the Jewish people themselves face a part of their history that they may not care for, but of which they have every reason to be proud.
THE CHOSEN FEW

HOW EDUCATION SHAPED JEWISH HISTORY, 70-1492

Princeton University Press  Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein show that, contrary to previous explanations, this transformation was driven not by anti-Jewish persecution and legal restrictions, but rather by changes within Judaism itself after 70 CE—most importantly, the rise of a new norm that required every Jewish male to read and study the Torah and to send his sons to school. Over the next six centuries, those Jews who found the norms of Judaism too costly to obey converted to other religions, making world Jewry shrink. Later, when urbanization and commercial expansion in the newly established Muslim Caliphates increased the demand for occupations in which literacy was an advantage, the Jews found themselves literate in a world of almost universal illiteracy. From then forward, almost all Jews entered crafts and trade, and many of them began moving in search of business opportunities, creating a worldwide Diaspora in the process.

PURCHASING POWER

THE ECONOMICS OF MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

University of Pennsylvania Press  How has the ability of Jews to amass and wield power, within both Jewish and non-Jewish society, influenced and been influenced by their economic activity? Purchasing Power answers this question by examining the nexus between money and power in modern Jewish history. It does so, in its first section, by presenting a series of case studies of the ways in which the economic choices made by Jewish businessmen could bring them wealth and influence. The second section focuses on transnational Jewish philanthropic and economic networks. The discussions there reveal how the wielding of power by Jewish organizations on the world stage could shape not only Jewish society but also the international arena. In this way, the contributors to this volume reposition economics as central to our understanding of the Jewish experience from early modern Rome to contemporary America. Its importance for the creation of the State of Israel is also examined. As the editors write: "The study of culture and identity has proved valuable and enlightening (and, in some senses, also comfortable) in understanding the complexities of Jewish history. Perhaps we should now return to the issues of the material bases for Jewish life, and the ways in which Jews have exploited them in their search for wealth and power. Our understanding of the Jewish past will be immeasurably enriched in the effort." Contributors: Cornelia Aust, Bernard Cooperman, Veerle Vanden Daelen, Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Glenn Dynner, Abigail Green, Jonathan Karp, Rebecca Kobrin, Adam D. Mendelsohn, Derek Penslar, Adam Sutcliffe, Adam Teller, Carsten L. Wilke.

JUDAISM AND THE ECONOMY

A SOURCEBOOK

Routledge  Judaism and the Economy is an edited collection of sixty-nine Jewish texts relating to economic issues such as wealth, poverty, inequality, charity, and the charging of interest. The passages cover the period from antiquity to the present, and represent many different genres. Primarily fresh translations, from their original languages, many appear here in English for the first time. Each is prefaced by an introduction and the volume as a whole is introduced by a synthetic essay. These texts, read together and in different combinations, provide a new lens for thinking about the economy and make the case that religion and religious values have a place in our own economic thinking. Judaism and the Economy is a useful new resource for educators, students, and clergy alike.

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE JEWS

New York : Schocken Books

THE MYTH OF THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH MONEYLENDER

VOLUME I

Springer  This book challenges a common historical narrative, which portrays medieval Jews as moneylenders who filled an essential economic role in Europe. It traces how and why
this narrative was constructed as a philosemitic narrative in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in response to the rise of political antisemitism. This book also documents why it is a myth for medieval Europe, and illuminates how changes in Jewish history change our understanding of European history. Each chapter offers a novel interpretation of central topics, such as the usury debate, commercial contracts, and moral literature on money and value to demonstrate how the revision of Jewish history leads to new insights in European history.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF JUDAISM AND ECONOMICS

Oxford University Press The interaction of Judaism and economics encompasses many different dimensions. Much of this interaction can be explored through the way in which Jewish law accommodates and even enhances commercial practice today and in past societies. From this context, The Oxford Handbook of Judaism and Economics explores how Judaism as a religion and Jews as a people relate to the economic sphere of life in modern society as well as in the past. Bringing together an astonishingly strong group of top scholars, the volume approaches the subject from a variety of angles, providing one of the most comprehensive, well-rounded, and authoritative accounts of the intersections of Judaism and economics yet produced. Aaron Levine first offers a brief overview of the nature and development of Jewish law as a legal system, then presents essays from a variety of angles and areas of expertise. The book offers contributions on economic theory in the bible and in the Talmud; on the interaction between Jewish law, ethics, modern society, and public policy; then presents illuminating explorations of Judaism throughout economic history and the ways in which economics has influenced Jewish history. The Oxford Handbook of Judaism and Economics at last offers an extensive and welcome resource by leading scholars and economists on the vast and delightfully complex relationship between economics and Judaism.

SHYLOCK’S CHILDREN

ECONOMICS AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN MODERN EUROPE

Univ of California Press Shylock’s children tells the story of Jewish perceptions of this economic difference and of its effects on modern Jewish identity in Europe.

CAPITALISM AND THE JEWS

Princeton University Press How the fate of the Jews has been shaped by the development of capitalism The unique historical relationship between capitalism and the Jews is crucial to understanding modern European and Jewish history. But the subject has been addressed less often by mainstream historians than by anti-Semites or apologists. In this book Jerry Muller, a leading historian of capitalism, separates myth from reality to explain why the Jewish experience with capitalism has been so important and complex—and so ambivalent. Drawing on economic, social, political, and intellectual history from medieval Europe through contemporary America and Israel, Capitalism and the Jews examines the ways in which thinking about capitalism and thinking about the Jews have gone hand in hand in European thought, and why anticapitalism and anti-Semitism have frequently been linked. The book explains why Jews have tended to be disproportionately successful in capitalist societies, but also why Jews have numbered among the fiercest antifinance and Communists. The book shows how the ancient idea that money was unproductive led from the stigmatization of usury and the Jews to the stigmatization of finance and, ultimately, in Marxism, the stigmatization of capitalism itself. Finally, the book traces how the traditional status of the Jews as a diasporic merchant minority both encouraged their economic success and made them particularly vulnerable to the ethnic nationalism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Providing a fresh look at an important but frequently misunderstood subject, Capitalism and the Jews will interest anyone who wants to understand the Jewish role in the development of capitalism, the role of capitalism in the modern fate of the Jews, or the ways in which the story of capitalism and the Jews has affected the history of Europe and beyond, from the medieval period to our own.

THE JEWS

A HISTORY

Routledge The Jews: A History, second edition, explores the religious, cultural, social, and economic diversity of the Jewish people and their faith. The latest edition incorporates new research and includes a broader spectrum of people - mothers, children, workers, students, artists, and radicals - whose perspectives greatly expand the story of Jewish life.
THE JEWISH REVOLUTION IN BELORUSSIA

ECONOMY, RACE, AND BOLSHEVIK POWER

Indiana University Press

Jewish life was changed fundamentally as Jews joined the Bolshevik movement and populated the front lines of the revolutionary struggle. Andrew Slioń's story follows the arc of Bolshevik history but shows how the broader movement was enacted in factories and workshops, workers clubs and union meetings, and on the Jewish streets of White Russia. The protagonists here are shoemakers, speculators, glassmakers, peddlers, leatherworkers, needleworkers, soldiers, students, and local party operatives who were swept up, willingly or otherwise, into the Bolshevik project. Sloin stresses the fundamental relationship between economy and identity formation as party officials grappled with the Jewish Question in the wake of the revolution.

COTTON CAPITALISTS

AMERICAN JEWISH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA

NYU Press

A vivid history of the American Jewish merchants who concentrated in the nation’s most important economic sector In the nineteenth century, Jewish merchants created a thriving niche economy in the United States’ most important industry—cotton—positioning themselves at the forefront of expansion during the Reconstruction Era. Jewish success in the cotton industry was transformative for both Jewish communities and their development, and for the broader economic restructuring of the South. Cotton Capitalists analyzes this niche economy and reveals its origins. Michael R. Cohen argues that Jewish merchants’ status as a minority fueled their success by fostering ethnic networks of trust. Trust in the nineteenth century was the cornerstone of economic transactions, and this trust was largely fostered by ethnicity. Much as money flowed along ethnic lines between Anglo-American banks, Jewish merchants in the Gulf South used their own ethnic ties with other Jewish-owned firms in New York, as well as Jewish investors across the globe, to capitalize their businesses. They relied on these family connections to direct Northern credit and goods to the war-torn South, avoiding the constraints of the anti-Jewish prejudices which had previously denied them access to credit, allowing them to survive economic downturns. These American Jewish merchants reveal that ethnicity matters in the development of global capitalism. Ethnic minorities are and have frequently been at the forefront of entrepreneurship, finding innovative ways to expand narrow sectors of the economy. While this was certainly the case for Jews, it has also been true for other immigrant groups more broadly. The story of Jews in the American cotton trade is far more than the story of American Jewish success and integration—it is the story of the role of ethnicity in the development of global capitalism.

DOING BUSINESS IN AMERICA

A JEWISH HISTORY

Purdue University Press

American and Jewish historians have long shied away from the topic of Jews and business. Avoidance patterns grew in part from old, often negative stereotypes that linked Jews with money, and the perceived ease and regularity with which they found success with money, condemning Jews for their desires for wealth and their proclivities for turning a profit. A new, dauntless generation of historians, however, realizes that Jewish business has had and continues to have a profound impact on American culture and development, and patterns of immigrant Jewish exploration of business opportunities reflect internal, communal, Jewish-cultural structures and their relationship to the larger non-Jewish world. As such, they see the subject rightly as a vital and underexplored area of study. Doing Business in America: A Jewish History, edited by Hasia R. Diner, rises to the challenge of taking on the long-unspoken taboo subject, comprising leading scholars and exploring an array of key topics in this important and growing area of research.

MONEY, POWER, AND INFLUENCE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITHUANIA

THE JEWS ON THE RADZIWILL ESTATES

Stanford University Press

It has often been claimed that Jews have a penchant for capitalism and capitalist economic activity. With this book, Adam Teller challenges that assumption. Examining how Jews achieved their extraordinary success within the late feudal economy of the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he shows that economic success did not necessarily come through any innate entrepreneurial skills, but through identifying and exploiting economic niches in the pre-modern economy—in particular, the
monopoly on the sale of grain alcohol. Jewish economic activity was a key factor in the development of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and it greatly enhanced the incomes, and thereby the social and political status, of the noble magnates, including the powerful Radziwiłł family. In turn, with the magnate’s backing, Jews were able to leverage their own economic success into high status in estate society. Over time, relations within Jewish society began to change, putting less value on learning and pedigree and more on wealth and connections with the estate owners. This groundbreaking book exemplifies how the study of Jewish economic history can shed light on a crucial mechanism of Jewish social integration. In the Polish-Lithuanian setting, Jews were simultaneously a despised religious minority and key economic players, with a consequent standing that few could afford to ignore.

CZECHS, GERMANS, JEWS?

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE JEWS OF BOHEMIA

The phenomenon of national identities, always a key issue in the modern history of Bohemian Jewry, was particularly complex because of the marginal differences that existed between the available choices. Considerable overlap was evident in the programs of the various national movements and it was possible to change one’s national identity or even to opt for more than one such identity without necessarily experiencing any far-reaching consequences in everyday life. Based on many hitherto unknown archival sources from the Czech Republic, Israel, and Austria, the author’s research reveals the inner dynamic of each of the national movements and maps out the three most important constructions of national identity within Bohemian Jewry - the German-Jewish, the Czech-Jewish and the Zionist. This book provides a needed framework for understanding the rich history of German- and Czech-Jewish politics and culture in Bohemia and is a notable contribution to the historiography of Bohemian, Czechoslovak and central European Jewry.

SPACE AND SPATIALITY IN MODERN GERMAN-JEWISH HISTORY

What makes a space Jewish? This wide-ranging volume revisits literal as well as metaphorical spaces in modern German history to examine the ways in which Jewishness has been attributed to them both within and outside of Jewish communities, and what the implications have been across different eras and social contexts. Working from an expansive concept of “the spatial,” these contributions look not only at physical sites but at professional, political, institutional, and imaginative realms, as well as historical Jewish experiences of spacelessness. Together, they encompass spaces as varied as early modern print shops and Weimar cinema, always pointing to the complex intertwining of German and Jewish identity.

THE JEWS OF PINSK, 1881 TO 1941

The Jews of Pinsk is the most detailed and comprehensive history of a single Jewish community in any language. This second portion of this study focuses on Pinsk’s turbulent final sixty years, showing the reality of life in this important, and in many ways representative, Eastern European Jewish community. From the 1905 Russian revolution through World War One and the long prologue to the Holocaust, the sweep of world history and the fate of this dynamic center of Jewish life were intertwined. Pinsk’s role in the bloody aftermath of World War One is still the subject of scholarly debates: the murder of 35 Jewish men from Pinsk, many from its educated elite, provoked the American and British leaders to send emissaries to Pinsk. Shohet argues that the executions were a deliberate ploy by the Polish military and government to intimidate the Jewish population of the new Poland. Despite an increasingly hostile Polish state, Pinsk’s Jews managed to maintain their community through the 1920s and 30s—until World War Two brought a grim Soviet interregnum succeeded by the entry of the Nazis on July 4th, 1941. For the first volume of this two-volume collection, see The Jews of Pinsk, 1506-1880.

THE RAG RACE

HOW JEWS SEWED THEIR WAY TO SUCCESS IN AMERICA AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Winner, 2016 Best First Book Prize from the Immigration and Ethnic History Society Finalist, 2016 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Winner, 2015 Book Prize from the Southern Jewish Historical Society Finalist, 2015 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award from the Association for Jewish Studies Winner, 2014 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies from the Jewish Book Council The majority of Jewish immigrants who made their way to the United States between 1820 and 1924 arrived nearly penniless; yet today their descendants stand out as exceptionally successful. How can we explain their dramatic economic ascent? Have Jews been successful because of cultural factors distinct to them as a group, or because of the particular circumstances that they encountered in America? The Rag Race argues that the Jews who flocked to the United States during the age of mass
migration were aided appreciably by their association with a particular corner of the American economy: the rag trade. From humble beginnings, Jews rode the coattails of the clothing trade from the margins of economic life to a position of unusual promise and prominence, shaping both their societal status and the clothing industry as a whole.

Comparing the history of Jewish participation within the clothing trade in the United States with that of Jews in the same business in England, The Rag Race demonstrates that differences within the garment industry on either side of the Atlantic contributed to a very real divergence in social and economic outcomes for Jews in each setting.

THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF CREDIT

WHAT A FORGOTTEN LEGEND ABOUT JEWS AND FINANCE TELLS US ABOUT THE MAKING OF EUROPEAN COMMERCIAL SOCIETY

Princeton University Press How an antisemitic legend gave voice to widespread fears surrounding the expansion of private credit in Western capitalism The Promise and Peril of Credit takes an incisive look at pivotal episodes in the West's centuries-long struggle to define the place of private finance in the social and political order. It does so through the lens of a persistent legend about Jews and money that reflected the anxieties surrounding the rise of impersonal credit markets. By the close of the Middle Ages, new and sophisticated credit instruments made it easier for European merchants to move funds across the globe. Bills of exchange were by far the most arcane of these financial innovations. Intangible and written in a cryptic language, they fueled world trade but also lured naive investors into risky businesses. Francesca Trivellato recounts how the invention of these abstruse credit contracts was falsely attributed to Jews, and how this story gave voice to deep-seated fears about the unseen perils of the new paper economy. She locates the legend's earliest version in a seventeenth-century handbook on maritime law and traces its legacy all the way to the work of the founders of modern social theory—from Marx to Weber and Sombart. Deftly weaving together economic, legal, social, cultural, and intellectual history, Trivellato vividly describes how Christian writers drew on the story to define and redefine what constituted the proper boundaries of credit in a modern world increasingly dominated by finance.

"OUR CROWD"

THE GREAT JEWISH FAMILIES OF NEW YORK

Open Road Media The #1 New York Times bestseller that traces the rise of the Guggenheims, the Goldmans, and other families from immigrant poverty to social prominence. They immigrated to America from Germany in the nineteenth century with names like Loeb, Sachs, Seligman, Lehman, Guggenheim, and Goldman. From tenements on the Lower East Side to Park Avenue mansions, this handful of Jewish families turned small businesses into imposing enterprises and amassed spectacular fortunes. But despite possessing breathtaking wealth that rivaled the Astors and Rockefellers, they were barred by the gentile establishment from the lofty realm of “the 400,” a register of New York’s most elite, because of their religion and humble backgrounds. In response, they created their own elite “100,” a privileged society as opulent and exclusive as the one that had refused them entry. “Our Crowd” is the fascinating story of this rarefied society. Based on letters, documents, diary entries, and intimate personal remembrances of family lore by members of these most illustrious clans, it is an engrossing portrait of upper-class Jewish life over two centuries; a riveting story of the bankers, brokers, financiers, philanthropists, and business tycoons who started with nothing and turned their family names into American institutions.

CONSUMER CULTURE AND THE MAKING OF MODERN JEWISH IDENTITY

Cambridge University Press Antisemitic stereotypes of Jews as capitalists have hindered research into the economic dimension of the Jewish past. The figure of the Jew as trader and financier dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But the economy has been central to Jewish life and the Jewish image in the world; Jews not only made money but spent money. This book is the first to investigate the intersection between consumption, identity, and Jewish history in Europe. It aims to examine the role and place of consumption within Jewish society and the ways consumerism generated and reinforced Jewish notions of belonging from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the new millennium. It shows how the advances of modernization and secularization in the modern period increased the importance of consumption in Jewish life, making it a significant factor in the process of redefining Jewish identity.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE ECONOMICS OF RELIGION

Oxford University Press This is a one-of-a-kind volume bringing together leading scholars in the economics of religion for the first time. The treatment of topics is interdisciplinary, comparative, as well as global in nature. Scholars apply the economics of religion approach to contemporary issues such as immigrants in the United States and ask historical
questions such as why did Judaism as a religion promote investment in education? The economics of religion applies economic concepts (for example, supply and demand) and models of the market to the study of religion. Advocates of the economics of religion approach look at ways in which the religion market influences individual choices as well as institutional development. For example, economists would argue that when a large denomination declines, the religion is not supplying the right kind of religious good that appeals to the faithful. Like firms, religions compete and supply goods. The economics of religion approach using rational choice theory, assumes that all human beings, regardless of their cultural context, their socio-economic situation, act rationally to further his/her ends. The wide-ranging topics show the depth and breadth of the approach to the study of religion.

**THE AGE OF SECRECY**

**JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND THE ECONOMY OF SECRETS, 1400-1800**

Yale University Press  The fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries were truly an Age of Secrecy in Europe, when arcane knowledge was widely believed to be positive knowledge which extended into all areas of daily life. So asserts Daniel Jütte in this engrossing, vivid, and award-winning work. He maintains that the widespread acceptance and even reverence for this “economy of secrets” in premodern Europe created a highly complex and sometimes perilous space for mutual contact between Jews and Christians. Surveying the interactions between the two religious groups in a wide array of secret sciences and practices, the author relates true stories of colorful “professors of secrets” and clandestine encounters. In the process Jütte examines how our current notion of secrecy is radically different in this era of WikiLeaks, Snowden, etc., as opposed to centuries earlier when the truest, most important knowledge was generally considered to be secret by definition.

**THE JEWISH WORLD OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON**


**THE ECONOMY OF ANCIENT JUDAH IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The dynamics of ancient Judah’s economy are among the most important, but also neglected and least understood, aspects of ancient Israel's history. The essays in this volume address this gap from a multidisciplinary perspective, involving archeology, biblical studies, economics, epigraphy, ancient history, Jewish studies, and theology. The essays focus on particular issues in the economy of ancient Judah and its neighbors during the late monarchy and the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic periods. Some of them evaluate the theoretical models used to understand the inner workings of ancient agrarian economies, while others explore rural economies, the forces of regeneration and degeneration in particular regions, the settlement histories of different areas, and the exploitation of depopulated land in Judah and Idumea. Essays in the volume also address population growth, urbanization, the role of diverse temple towns (such as Babylon and Jerusalem) in regional market economies, the literary portrayal of patron-client relationships, symmetrical and asymmetrical relations in international trade, and the views of urban elites toward agrarian economic developments. Yet others discuss family economics--policies of reproduction, gender roles, family size, and household hierarchies--in Judah and ancient Persia. Many of the essays appearing in this volume were originally delivered as papers in special sessions devoted to these topics at annual meetings of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies and the European Association of Biblical Studies. The scholars participating in this international project conduct their research at institutions in Canada, Germany, Israeli, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United States.

**"ARYANISATION" IN HAMBURG**

**THE ECONOMIC EXCLUSION OF JEWS AND THE CONFISCATION OF THEIR PROPERTY IN NAZI GERMANY**

Berghahn Books  Published to wide acclaim in its original edition, this book shows how many ordinary Germans became involved in what they saw as a legally sanctioned process of ridding Germany and Europe of their Jews.

**THE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL, 1882-1948**

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

University of Wisconsin Pres  In 1880 the Jewish community in Palestine encompassed some 20,000 Orthodox Jews; within sixty-five years it was transformed into a secular proto-state
with well-developed political, military, and economic institutions, a vigorous Hebrew-language culture, and some 600,000 inhabitants. The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History chronicles the making of modern Israel before statehood, providing in English the texts of original sources (many translated from Hebrew and other languages) accompanied by extensive introductions and commentaries from the volume editors. This sourcebook assembles a diverse array of 62 documents, many of them unabridged, to convey the ferment, dissent, energy, and anxiety that permeated the Zionist project from its inception to the creation of the modern nation of Israel. Focusing primarily on social, economic, and cultural history rather than Zionist thought and diplomacy, the texts are organized in themed chapters. They present the views of Zionists from many political and religious camps, factory workers, farm women, militants, intellectuals promoting the Hebrew language and arts—as well as views of ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists. The volume includes important unabridged documents from the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict that are often cited but are rarely read in full. The editors, Eran Kaplan and Derek J. Penslar, provide both primary texts and informative notes and commentary, giving readers the opportunity to encounter voices from history and make judgments for themselves about matters of world-historical significance. Best Special Interest Books, selected by the Public Library Reviewers Best Books for General Audiences, selected by the American Association of School Librarians

THE BLACK JEWS OF AFRICA

HISTORY, RELIGION, IDENTITY

Oxford University Press “This book presents, one by one, the different groups of Black Jews in Western central, eastern, and southern Africa and the ways in which they have used and imagined their oral history and traditional customs to construct a distinct Jewish identity. It explores the ways in which Africans have interacted with the ancient mythological sub-strata of both western and African ideas of Judaism.” – Résumé de l’éditeur.

JEWS, TURKS, AND OTTOMANS

A SHARED HISTORY, FIFTEENTH THROUGH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Syracuse University Press This book focuses on central topics, such as the structure of the Jewish community, its organization and institutions and its relations with the state; the place Jews occupied in the Ottoman economy and their interactions with the general society; Jewish scholarship and its contribution to Ottoman and Turkish culture, science, and medicine. Written by leading scholars from Israel, Turkey, Europe, and the United States, these pieces present an unusually broad historical canvas that brings together different perspectives and viewpoints. The book is a major, original contribution to Jewish history as well as to Turkish, Balkan, and Middle East studies.

A FAREWELL TO ALMS

A BRIEF ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Princeton University Press Why are some parts of the world so rich and others so poor? Why did the Industrial Revolution—and the unprecedented economic growth that came with it—occur in eighteenth-century England, and not at some other time, or in some other place? Why didn’t industrialization make the whole world rich—and why did it make large parts of the world even poorer? In A Farewell to Alms, Gregory Clark tackles these profound questions and suggests a new and provocative way in which culture—not exploitation, geography, or resources—explains the wealth, and the poverty, of nations. Countering the prevailing theory that the Industrial Revolution was sparked by the sudden development of stable political, legal, and economic institutions in seventeenth-century Europe, Clark shows that such institutions existed long before industrialization. He argues instead that these institutions gradually led to deep cultural changes by encouraging people to abandon hunter-gatherer instincts-violence, impatience, and economy of effort—and adopt economic habits-hard work, rationality, and education. The problem, Clark says, is that only societies that have long histories of settlement and security seem to develop the cultural characteristics and effective workforces that enable economic growth. For the many societies that have not enjoyed long periods of stability, industrialization has not been a blessing. Clark also dissects the notion, championed by Jared Diamond in Guns, Germs, and Steel, that natural endowments such as geography account for differences in the wealth of nations. A brilliant and sobering challenge to the idea that poor societies can be economically developed through outside intervention, A Farewell to Alms may change the way global economic history is understood.
THE ISRAELI ECONOMY

A STORY OF SUCCESS AND COSTS

Princeton University Press. An authoritative economic history of Israel from its founding to the present. In 1922, there were ninety thousand Jews in Palestine, a small country in a poor and volatile region. Today, Israel has a population of nine million and is one of the richest countries in the world. The Israeli Economy tells the story of this remarkable transformation, shedding critical new light on Israel's rapid economic growth. Joseph Zeira takes readers from those early days to today, describing how Israel's economic development occurred amid intense fighting with the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries. He reveals how the new state's astonishing growth continued into the early 1970s, and traces this growth to public investment in education and to large foreign transfers. Zeira analyzes the costs of the Arab-Israeli conflict, demonstrating how economic output could be vastly greater with a comprehensive peace. He discusses how Israel went through intensive neoliberal economic policies in recent decades, and shows how these policies not only failed to enhance economic performance, but led to significant social inequality. Based on more than two decades of groundbreaking research, The Israeli Economy is an in-depth survey of a modern economy that has experienced rapid growth, wars, immigration waves, and other significant shocks. It thus offers important lessons for nations around the world.

JEWISH HISTORY: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION

Oxford University Press. How have the Jews survived? For millennia, they have defied odds by overcoming the travails of exile, persecution, and recurring plans for their annihilation. Many have attempted to explain this singular success as a result of divine intervention. In this engaging book, David N. Myers charts the long journey of the Jews through history. At the same time, it points to two unlikely--and decidedly this-worldly--factors to explain the survival of the Jews: antisemitism and assimilation. Usually regarded as grave dangers, these two factors have continually interacted with one other to enable the persistence of the Jews. At every turn in their history, not just in the modern age, Jews have adapted to new environments, cultures, languages, and social norms. These bountiful encounters with host societies have exercised the cultural muscle of the Jews, preventing the atrophy that would have occurred if they had not interacted so extensively with the non-Jewish world. It is through these encounters--indeed, through a process of assimilation--that Jews came to develop distinct local customs, speak many different languages, and cultivate diverse musical, culinary, and intellectual traditions. Left unchecked, the Jews' well-honed ability to absorb from surrounding cultures might have led to their disappearance. And yet, the route toward full and unbridled assimilation was checked by the nearly constant presence of hatred toward the Jew. Anti-Jewish expression and actions have regularly accompanied Jews throughout history. Part of the ironic success of antisemitism is its malleability, its talent in assuming new forms and portraying th