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978-0-521-87393-2 - The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638-1848

Jonathan Karp

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THE POLITICS OF JEWISH COMMERCE

This study demonstrates the centrality of economic rationales to debates on Jews' status in Italy, Britain, France, and Germany during the course of two centuries. It delineates the common motifs that informed these discussions: the ideal republic and the ancient constitution, the conflict between virtue and commerce, and the notion of useful and productive labor. It thus provides the first overview of the political-economic dimensions of the Jewish emancipation literature of this period, viewed against the backdrop of broader controversies within European society over the effects of commerce on inherited political values and institutions.

By focusing on economic attitudes toward Jews, this book illuminates European intellectual approaches toward economic modernity, measured against traditional political and constitutional ideals. By elucidating these general debates, it renders contemporary Jewish economic self-conceptions, and the enormous impetus that Jewish reformist movements placed on the Jews' economic and occupational transformation, fully explicable for the first time.

Jonathan Karp is Associate Professor in the Judaic Studies and History Departments at Binghamton University, SUNY. He is coeditor of *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times* (with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2007). His current book projects are *The Rise and Demise of the Black-Jewish Alliance: A Class-Cultural Analysis* and *Philosemitism in History* (with Adam Sutcliffe; Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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JONATHAN KARP

Binghamton University, SUNY



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*To my mother and father, Naomi and Martin Karp, with love,
gratitude, and admiration.*



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