

Abstract

The dissertation deals with the theme of the Jewish communities that were able to originate in Moravia and Silesia as a result of the civil emancipation of Jews in the middle of the 19th century. The individual chapters focus on the different aspects of the emancipatory Jewish communities from their external institutional manifestations to their internal social structures, which reflected the plurality of transforming religious, national and political identities within Jewish society.

Attention is first devoted to the legal and demographic prerequisites for the establishment and development of Jewish settlement in the places where the Jews were not allowed to live before the emancipation. The emancipatory Jewish communities did not emerge as mere clusters of members of the Jewish minority, but rather as organized religious communities. Therefore, the work devotes great space to the genesis of small pre-emancipatory prayer fellowships, to their transformation to religious associations and religious communities, then focuses on attempts to transform the religious communities into democratic or national ones and on their degradation and destruction by the Nazi occupiers. The thesis examines the various factors influencing the "organization of Jewry" (attitude of the state authorities to the Jewish society, changes in the legislative framework, efforts of the traditional Jewish communities to maintain their position). It opens the question of the degree of autonomy of the Jewish religious society towards the state and its equality with other state-recognized churches. The thesis then focuses on the issue of mutual relations between different Jewish communities (traditional and emancipatory communities, religious associations, religious communities, federations of the Jewish religious communities).

The second part of the dissertation deals with the internal affairs of the emancipatory Jewish communities. It first reveals the character of Jewish religious associations and religious communities by analyzing the statutes of these institutions, and further examines the efforts to democratize them and nationalize them so that they fulfill not only religious tasks, but also social, cultural and national functions. The text then focuses on the dynamics of the financial base of local Jewish religious organizations and traces the successfulness of the efforts to ensure the tradition of the Jewish faith through institutional and material means. The last and most comprehensive chapter focuses on the plurality of the emancipatory Jewish communities, the identity of different groups within the Jewish society, their mutual relations and their representation in the administration of the Jewish religious communities. The work thus comes to the examination of the process of alienating the Jewish religious community to its members and the transformation of the Jewish community into an estranged and institutionalized society.

The conclusion of the dissertation recapitulates different levels of the Jewish emancipation and returns to more general questions of Jewish collective rights, emancipation processes within individual Jewish communities and of diversity of Jewish identities.