

Comparing Eastern & Western European Jewry

It is important to recognize that neither of these cases are absolutes. There existed within each of these models various shades of grey. And in the Mediterranean countries, inhabited primarily by Sephardim Jews, the model of Jewry would be different still with different languages spoken (Ladino as opposed to the Yiddish), different foods, customs and religious observance.

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| <p>EASTERN EUROPE. Including Poland, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary & Czechoslovakia</p> <p>The majority of Jews spoke Yiddish or Hebrew as their Mother Tongue- Jewish languages.</p> <p>A large proportion of Orthodox Jews lived in the State.</p> <p>Little intermarriage existed</p> <p>Jewish National Identity was high</p> <p>Jews tended to be rural, although they had a prominent profile in cities too.</p> <p>There was a recent history of "pogroms" and over acts of anti-Semitism</p> <p>Acquiring citizenship was a very serious problem, and Jews did not enjoy full or equal rights with non-Jews.</p> <p>Jews had a lower literacy rate than Western Jews, but a higher rate than local non-Jews.</p> <p>Emigration quotas, weakening economic base, and anti-Semitism, left many youth feeling trapped .</p> <p>Jewish children were very active in Jewish youth movements.</p> <p>Jewish children were schooled in Jewish languages</p> | <p>WESTERN EUROPE. Including France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and Germany</p> <p>Most Jews spoke the "vernacular", some were no longer even fluent in traditional Jewish languages.</p> <p>Far fewer numbers of Orthodox religious Jews lived in the State.</p> <p>Intermarriage rates were high.</p> <p>Judaism was seen as one's religion, National Identity was to the State.</p> <p>Jews tended to be urban.</p> <p>There were few overt acts of anti-Semitism.</p> <p>Jews enjoyed full national and local citizenship rights.</p> <p>Jews tended to be well educated.</p> <p>Such perceptions were almost unheard of .</p> <p>Jewish youth movements were marginal.</p> <p>Few Jewish children attended Jewish schools.</p> |
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This material has been sourced from Yad Vashem material developed for Teachers Seminar on the Holocaust as well as the Ohio Dept. of Education Holocaust Curriculum titled "Prejudice Unleashed". It gives examples of 2 distinctive European Jewish communities.