

Steen Felding

The Many and the Few - the Danish Census 1787 and 1801 and the Jewish Population - a Critical Revision

Steen Felding's thorough examination of the Danish census 1787/1801 and of other archival material such as the issue of trade licences in different provincial towns reveals that previous attempts at establishing the exact number of Jews in Denmark have overlooked a Jewish presence in several provincial towns. Felding documents a Jewish pattern of settlement in 15 Danish provincial towns in 1787. In 1801 the number had grown to 28. He provides a detailed overview of the demographics of the Jews of Køge, Skelskør, Maribo, Svendborg, Middelfart and Aalborg. Felding is able to give the readers glimpses of Jewish life around 1800 although they are restricted to stories told through legal documents. Thus we learn about several Jewish frauds and rowdies.

Felding discusses the results of the 1787 and 1801 censuses in terms of the geographic growth and location of the Jewish population. The numbers are illustrated by tables. The total number of registered Jews was 1,855 in 1787 and 2,460 in 1801. The author furthermore discusses the question of the extent of undercounting in the two censuses, and he estimates an undercounting of the Jewish population of around 3.6 percent in 1787 and 1.9 percent in 1801. Finally the author outlines the relationship between the Jewish population in the provinces and in Copenhagen between 1787 and 1901. In 1787, 19 percent of the Jewish population lived in the provinces. The proportion of provincial Jews reached its height in 1840 when 41.44 percent lived outside Copenhagen. In 1901 the figure was 12 percent. The Jewish population as a percentage of the total Danish population, however, never exceeded 0.36 percent and was down to 0.14 percent in 1901. Felding concludes that despite their relatively small number, the Danish Jews showed quite an extensive settlement pattern.

Arthur Arnheim

The First Jewish Settlements in Copenhagen

Arthur Arnheim argues that the history of the Jews of Denmark and the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein in the 17th century almost exclusively has been based on official documents and that earlier histories have focused on the Sephardic Jews who by 1700 no longer were a significant presence in Denmark. Fewer scholars have examined the history of the German Ashkenazi Jews who started doing business and settling in Denmark from around 1670. Most of the German Jews who settled in Denmark came from Hamburg/Altona as they already had links to Denmark by way of their royal privileges which Christian IV; who had inherited the Duchies in 1640, confirmed and expanded.

However, unofficial documents exist in the form of hitherto unpublished private letters. Arthur Arnheim argues that these letters throw light on the settlement of Ashkenazi Jews in Denmark proper and broaden our knowledge about their social, economic and cultural life in Northern Europe in the 17th century. Arnheim discusses five letters from 1666 in Yiddish to a Jew from Hamburg, Jacob Sussman, who was in Copenhagen at the time. These letters express the first known attempt on the part of Ashkenazi Jews to do business in Denmark proper. Furthermore Arnheim presents 18 letters from 1678 also in Yiddish that give a

picture of how Ashkenazi business activities in Denmark had developed since 1666. The letters indicate that the Ashkenazi Jews already in 1678 had developed good business connections and were well-informed about the Danish economic system. Arnheim concludes that the immigration of Ashkenazi Jews to Denmark was unusual as it was not a result of wars, persecution, or economic hardship. These Jews came because they found business opportunities and a relatively tolerant social climate.

Elin Andersen

The Witch from Berlin

Elin Andersen's article portrays the German-Jewish actress, cabaret artist and dancer Valeska Gert, born 1892 in Berlin. As part of the radical artist circles in Berlin of the 1920s she developed her own particular - both provocative and fascinating - dancing style "Dance Grotesque" which was later condemned by the German National Socialists. After Hitler took power, she became homeless in Berlin and was forced on tours until an English passport obtained by marriage and engagements in the United States made it possible for her to settle in New York in 1938. Here she fought a bitter battle against both her own ranks and the authorities to run her cabaret "the Beggar Bar". After the war was over she returned to her beloved Berlin and could still -despite her personal disappointment in the post-war artist milieu, provoke audiences with her grotesque characters in her cabaret "Die Hexenküche". Later in life she participated in movies by Fellini and Fassbinder.

Kaare Bing

Henri Nathansen and his "Jyttevers"

Henri Nathansen (1868 -1944) is a Danish playwright whose play "Indenfor murene" about generational conflict in a Jewish family 1912 has been much loved by Danes. Apart from novels and short stories, he has also written short children's songs, the so-called "Jyttevers", addressed to a neighbour's little girl, Jytte. The music is by Fini Henriques. Kaare Bing tells the story of Nathansen and Jytte.

Emilio Danino

Karl Marx and the Jews

According to Bruno Bauer the Jewish question was essentially a religious one, unsolvable unless the Jews gave up their fanatic faith and stubborn particularism. In *Die Judenfrage*, he insisted that civil rights, equality and freedom could not be granted, they had to be fought for. Karl Marx, who favoured political emancipation of the Jews, argues in *Zur Judenfrage* that civil rights represent but political emancipation, not human emancipation. This emancipation is only fully achieved, when capitalism is overthrown. Therefore Marx concentrates his attack on the social and economical significance of Judaism: "The god of the Jews has been secularised and become the god of the world (money)... As soon as society succeeds in destroying the empirical essence of Judaism -buying and selling -the Jew will become impossible, because his consciousness will no longer have an object... The social emancipation of Jewry is the emancipation of society from Judaism."

The polemical aspects of Marx's essay are not original. Since the Middle Ages Jews have been regarded as parasites in an economical sense, as non-productive middlemen. The question is whether this predominance is related to the 'nature' of the Jews and their "Jewishness" or whether it was the

consequences of the religious and political situation in Christian Middle Ages, that kept the Jews away from guilds, and to a certain extent left them to the practice of peddling and money lending.

Nevertheless, the non-polemical aspect of Marx's essay is more consistent, but still dangerous Marx uses the words Jew and Judaism in a metaphorical sense, including anyone who is buying and selling. Now, how would Marx react if a non-merchant Jew becomes the victim of a metaphor? Willingly or not, Marx contributed to strengthen anti-Jewish prejudice. His essay emerges from an unawareness of the real situation of Jewish people either in his own time or earlier periods of history. It is unfortunate that the contributions of Bauer and Marx to the Jewish question have clouded the issue, especially in a time where the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, needed all the help it could get in order to break down the ghetto walls and open wider cultural horizons for the Jews.