

**A CENTURY AND A HALF OF
JEWISH HISTORY: EXTRACTED
FROM THE MINUTE BOOKS OF
THE LONDON COMMITTEE OF
DEPUTIES OF THE BRITISH JEWS**

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A Century and a Half of Jewish History: Extracted from the Minute Books of the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews by Charles H. L. Emanuel

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OF THE BRITISH JEWS

BY

CHARLES H. L. EMANUEL, M.A.

SOLICITOR AND SECRETARY OF THE LONDON COMMITTEE
OF DEPUTIES OF THE BRITISH JEWS

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INTRODUCTION

SOME introduction is necessary to this book, if only to explain its title. The Jewish Board of Deputies attains the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its foundation this year. The Minute Books, which contain a record of its work from the date of its first meeting on the 19th November, 1760, are stored away, practically neglected, in my safes, and it occurred to me that to peruse these records and publish an extract from them might form an interesting though modest contribution to the celebration of the anniversary in question. Seeing that the Board has, throughout, been the only representative Body of the Jews in this country, its history incidentally comprises the greatest part of the civil history of Anglo-Jewry, and this is my excuse for the title.

Had my leisure been less inelastic, and space permitted, it would have been interesting to have gone further into detail than I have done, and it has been suggested that a complete list of Deputies and their constituencies throughout the hundred and fifty

years might have been inserted in the book ; but with a Board now consisting of some hundred and twenty members, and with fresh names added at each triennial election, this would have entailed a larger sacrifice of space than could be spared ; while the list must necessarily have been supplemented by some biographical details of the more important or more interesting names, which would have increased the difficulty. It would certainly have been a fascinating study to search for particulars of the identity and lives of, say, the pre-Victorian Deputies, and particularly of the early Spanish and Portuguese members of the Board. What finer character, for instance, than Benjamin Mendes da Costa, one of the original seven members, who spent £3000 a year in charity, without distinction of creed, and whose Will was a masterpiece of philanthropy ! Unfortunately, his life was only spared to the Board for four short years, and the Board had to wait for Sir Moses Montefiore for his rival. Since then generation has succeeded generation, and, without show or fuss, the Board has made, and continues to make, Jewish History.

This introduction could not fairly close without some reference to the men who direct the Board's present efforts. To the untiring personal efforts and attention of its President (Mr. D. L. Alexander, K.C.)

and of its Vice-Presidents (Messrs. Leopold de Rothschild and H. S. Q. Henriques), is mainly due the present satisfactory position of the Board.

The desire to see this book published by the date of the Anniversary must be my excuse for any errors which have crept into it. I have pleasure in expressing my best thanks to Mr. J. M. Levy, Treasurer of the Board, who has, amid his other duties, spared time to assist me with his advice and corrections.

CHARLES H. L. EMANUEL.

November, 1910.

A CENTURY AND A HALF OF JEWISH HISTORY

GATHERED FROM THE MINUTE BOOKS OF THE
JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES

THE London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews (commonly known as "the Jewish Board of Deputies") had its origin in the following Resolution passed by the Gentlemen Elders of the Portuguese Congregation (the Portuguese "Nation," as it was then styled) on 24th Heshvan, and confirmed on 12th Kislev, 1760:—

"That 7 Gentlemen of this body be appointed. That it be left to 3 of them to consider what should be done on the present occasion to testify to His Majesty (Geo. III) our homage; and thereafter to deal with the most urgent matters which present themselves in connection with our Nation. And that the said Gentlemen should not seek for new privileges for such Nation without first communicating the matter to the Elders. And that the said Gentlemen have power to confer with any persons whom they should think necessary. But that no business be transacted unless one of the three said Gentlemen be present."

The names of the members of the Committee of seven were: Jacob de Moseh Franco, Benjamin