



## Lobbying for Equality

### Jacques Godard and the Struggle for Jewish Equality during the French Revolution

by Gerard Leval

#### DESCRIPTION:

The French Revolution brought the promise of equality to many oppressed groups living in France. French Jews, long persecuted and considered to be a separate nation, sought to benefit from the new freedoms promised by the Revolution.

To this end, Jewish leaders engaged the services of a 27-year-old Catholic lawyer named Jacques Godard, who had previously defended a slave seeking his freedom, a Protestant defending his property rights, and other disadvantaged individuals.

As the official lawyer and lobbyist for the Ashkenazi French Jewish community, Godard ultimately persuaded the Paris Municipal Assembly to become an important advocate in favor of equal rights for Jews, and, within two tumultuous years, the campaign for Jewish equality achieved its goal: Jews became equal citizens of France.

This inspiring story, set during the dramatic years of the Revolution, shows how one determined individual can be a catalyst for lasting and meaningful change. Gerard Leval has performed an important service by describing the life of a young man who lived more than two hundred years ago and fought for causes for which we still struggle today.

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