

The Jews in Russia
in the nineteenth Century.

(Part I - First Rays of Enlightenment
(1801 - 1855))

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Introduction.

The nineteenth century, offspring of the French Revolution, presents a veritable miracle in the life of the Jewish people. Alongside of the intellectual development of Europe, with its advance in the arts and sciences, the democratic idea came to life. Democracy, it is said, is the peculiar ideal of the bourgeoisie, the middle class. It is wanting in appreciation of noble birth and high station. Under its rule, the classes become masses. However, it is this power making for equality in the hands of the middle class, ^{which} ~~lowered~~ the feudal aristocracy of Western Europe, ~~and~~ raised the Jews to the level of citizenship. Jewish emancipation went hand in hand with the rise of the middle class. Under the influence of the new force in the life of western Europe, the great miracle in Jewish history took place and left the records of a Reësser, a Lassalle, a Meyerbeer, a Heine and a Geiger.

While the "Zeitgeist" of the revolution left no corner of Europe unaffected, its reaction in Russia was somewhat different from that of western Europe. There was no middle class to fight for the democratic ideal; and the bureaucracy, frightened by the red colors of the new banners, concentrated its powers, and drowned the first revolutionary attempts in blood. The bureaucratic regime had few promises for the Jews. If the Middle Ages are rich in isolated cases of brutality as that of King John's extortion of the Jew of Brussels, the history of the Jews in Russia in the nineteenth century, unfolds one long series of heart-rending cruelties, of expulsions, of compulsory baptisms, and of brutal massacres. Russia has always imbued the Jews with the feeling of citizenship as far as duties are concerned, but not with respect to ^{rights} ~~privilege~~. The reigns of the successive monarchs present few significant variations in the life of the Jews. Their taskmasters changed, but the tasks, with slight exceptions, remained the same. It is, therefore, difficult to

distinguish any marked stages in the history of the Jews of Russia of the nineteenth century, along political lines.

The case is quite different on the spiritual side of their development. The rising sun of the intellectual awakening of Europe shed a few rays also into the Pale of Settlement. Indeed, they were very dim rays, but they brought the message of the coming day. This state, covering the first half of the nineteenth century, we have marked as "The First Rays of Enlightenment". In spite of the most disparaging conditions, the Jews did not fail to come under the influence of the "Zeitgeist". Partly through the struggles between the warring religious sects, and partly through contact with the Jews of western Europe, Russian Jewry was stirred from its state of inertia, and moved, with accelerated speed, along the cultural currents of the age. But during this period, the advancement of the Jews was set apart from Russian culture. For Russian civilization, itself, was still in its infancy. Hence, the first rays of enlightenment traveled to the Russian Jewry from Germany, where they were confined to the elite and reached the masses only when stated in Hebrew or in Yiddish. Thus came to life the Neo-Hebraic and Yiddish literatures.

The situation changed during the second half of the nineteenth century. This period witnessed the liberation of the peasants, the emergence of the middle class, and the rise of a national literature. Under the new conditions, the Jews were dragged into Russian culture. This marks the second stage of Russian-Jewish history, that of "The Entrance of the Jews into Russian Culture". This period saw the rise of an Orshanski, an Antokolski, a Rubinstein, a Pinsker and a Gershuni.

The hope of the Jewish intellectuals of Russia that the era of universal brotherhood was at hand, was shattered by the rising tide of Anti-semitism, which was followed by a series of massacres. The Jews emerging from the baptism of blood began to question: "What of the night?" Some watchmen pointed to Zion, others to America and still others an-

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nounced that the dawn would break even in Russia. And the Jew still stands at the parting of the roads, still gazing into the dark future, still lifting his eyes unto the heights. . . .

In the midst of the stifling atmosphere and dense darkness, Russian Jewry was filled with the enchanting strains of M.J.Lebensohn, Peretz, and Bialik, unheard in Israel's tents, since the days of Halevi. The Jew sings lest his heart break with grief. Is that a swan song?... No! His song rings with the unshaken faith that his Redeemer doth not sleep nor slumber, and re-echoes with the buoyant hopefulness of Chernichovski : " A'amino gam be-athid!"; "Yea, I believe in the future."

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Reign of Alexander I.

Chapter I - Russia under Alexander I.

When on the night of March 24th, 1801 Paul I was murdered in a palace conspiracy, his son Alexander I was proclaimed Czar of all Russia. The advent of this enlightened ruler to the despotic throne of the Romanoffs marked the dawn of a new era in Russian life. Coming with an ardent desire to proclaim the rights of man and to give Russia a constitution, he devoted the first ten years of his reign to the remodeling of the administration and to the improvement of the conditions of his subjects. The young ruler and his friends were agreed that Russia was ripe for liberal institutions. His belief was especially strengthened when he noticed the misrule of his half demented father Paul. He wrote: "When my turn comes to reign I will dedicate myself to the task of freeing my country. The revolution must be carried out by the exercise of lawful power, which should cease to exist when the constitution is in force and the nation has chosen its representatives." Alexander formed a liking for the revolutionary phrases Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, which sound rather strange in the mouth of a Czar, through the instruction of his tutor Colonel Caesar Laharpe, the disciple of Rousseau and Voltaire, and the enthusiastic liberal and adherent of the French Revolution. The French philosophic thought became a fad among the higher nobility during the reign of Catherine and consequently affected the young Czar. His innate nature was attuned to the teachings of Rousseau. He was a worshiper of nature and grew ~~xxx~~ ecstatic at the sight of a flower, a green leaf, a landscape. His companions were chosen from men of kin sympathies.

The young ruler came to the throne with abundant enthusiasm for the reorganization of Russia. However, the condition of his country and

the political relations combined in checking the execution of his ideal.

Russian civilization during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was at a very low ebb. The fifty million population of the year 1815, spread over two million square miles was bound together by common religion, language and tradition. "Her enormous population was as monotonous as her forest-fringed steppes."¹ Great Russia with Moscow as its center, was the most progressive section of the country. Little Russia, with Kiev as center, and White Russia, embracing Vitebsk, Moghileff, Grodno and Minsk were still at the threshold of civilization. In the Baltic provinces European culture gained a hold among the upper classes on account of its centuries of influence on the Finnish and Letto-Lithuanian races. There were very few institutions of higher learning and the students were drawn largely from the children of the noblemen. The first institution of this kind was established in 1732, as the "Corps of nobility", by Empress Anna. In 1755 Empress Elizabeth established the University of Moscow. The first generation of graduates from these schools were interested, in accordance with the fashion of the time, in literature and athletics. In the second half of the century philosophy and politics became the fashion. The Russia of 1750-1800 followed each stage of this European intellectual development.

However, this tendency of enlightenment was limited to a small circle. The middle classes and the peasants were steeped in ignorance. While the population was enormous, the inner organization was extremely deficient. The urban population of 1812 was less than five percent of the entire. St. Petersburg had but three hundred thousand citizens in 1820 and Moscow only two hundred and fortyseven thousand in 1823. The cities with the exception of Poland and the Baltic provinces were little more than aggregates of villages. This was largely due to the absence of a Russian middle class.² Peter the Great strove to build up

(1). Skrine, P. 10.

(2). Most Russian towns grew up not on account of commercial needs but of military defense and state colonization. The

such a class by ranging the workers in guilds, exempting the members of the first guild from poll-tax and corporal punishment. However, his efforts were being realized very slowly. External commerce still lay in the hands of foreigners. Handcrafts were not organized. The possession of capital was restricted to the nobility, which differed from European feudal aristocracy in that there were few traces of privilege. They met annually under their marshals in each government to frame representations as to local affairs. They had the monopoly of the fairs and of distilling rye spirits and owned all the land of Russia which did not form a part of the crown domains. The national church, however, possessed many privileges. The parish priests and the monastic orders were exempt from poll-tax and conscription, had their own ecclesiastical courts, and civil justice was in their hands.

The Greek church and autocracy went hand in hand. For the Czar ruled in matters ecclesiastical through the Holy Synod. The religion and civilization of Russia came from Byzantium, whereas the ideals of the Poles, inhabiting the western governments, came from Rome. This was one of the great disturbing elements in Russian History. At one time the hostility resulting between the two groups of the Slav family had well nigh wrecked the Empire of the Czars. No wonder that the official Russia ill tolerated all other religious views save Graeco-Catholic. During the stress of warfare at the beginning of Alexander's reign the Jesuits gained a stronghold in the Russian capital and converted many nobles. This aroused the fanatic zeal of Photii, the archimandrite of the monastery of St. George, and confessor of Araktcheef, the right hand of the Czar. Through his influence an ukase was issued in January 1816 which banished the Jesuits from St. Petersburg; and in 1820 another ukase was issued which expelled them from the whole country.

following table of the growth of urban population is very interesting.
 In 1630 the population numbered 292,000-2.9% In 1835--3,025,000-5.8%
 In 1724 " " 328,000-3 % In 1897--16,289,000-13%
 The Jews formed largely a part of the city population

They were charged with abusing the tolerance granted them, in sapping and in the belief of children entrusted to them, carrying an active propaganda among the German Colonists of the South, the Jews, and the pupils of the State college. Another cause for further religious unrest was the activity of the British Bible Society, which carried on active work in Russia. Alexander's support of the foreign missionaries aroused Photii to remonstrance and led to further hatred of all religions save the Greek church. This church kept the masses in ignorance in accordance with the will of the ruling classes.

Nor could the Greek church educate the masses. For its clergy was ignorant in consequence of the lack of higher schools for clergymen. Thus the population was for the most part illiterate. Milyukov writes about the period before the accession of Alexander I: "Only one tenth man could say his Lord's Prayer, not to mention the Apostles Creed and the Ten Commandments. An A-B-C book or a primer was to be found there at the rate of one copy per twenty-four hundred inhabitants, the Gospel was never read, and, when recited at mass, was heard without being understood; there was no elementary and no regular secondary school even for clergymen and of course no higher school at all. Ideas, if any were to be found there, were of foreign importation - a very rare and most severely prohibited merchandise, kept for the private use of a few persons of higher station, striving after self-culture; for the most part these ideas were preserved in foreign books and carefully put up in the book-cases of a dozen foreign merchants and higher officers."¹.

The peasants were chained to the soil. The land-owners had the power to sell them with the estate which they tilled. In the eyes of the law he was regarded as the nominal owner of the serfs. He collected the imperial taxes, chose the annual tale of recruits for the army, and this resulted in the impoverished state of the peasants condition. He was the sole lawyer and judge on his estate. He was virtually a slave,

(1). Russia and its crisis-p.23-24.

deprived of the right to own himself.

With the advent of Alexander I a change took place in the entire situation of Russia. He commenced to carry the dreams of his youth into reality. His great ambition was to reorganize Russia. Consequently he replaced the collegiate organization of the councillors, which prevailed in Russia since Peter the Great, by ministers, seven in number, and divided the empire into six scholastic circles with a university as the center in each. Ecclesiastical schools were established for the instruction of the Clergy; "above the schools were seminaries; next the Ecclesiastical Academies of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Kiev." 1. Parish and district schools and gymnasias were established for the laity, and pedagogic institutes to train teachers at Moscow and St. Petersburg. Three new universities were founded; in Kazan, Kharkof and St. Petersburg and those of Moscow, Wilna and Dorpat were reorganized. Fifteen government schools were founded for the military education of the young nobles. Alexander strove to lessen the ignorance of the people by making the regimental system a nucleus of public instruction. Thus in 1818 about forty-six thousand children of soldiers were educated at the expense of the state. The censorship of the press was relaxed and the reign of law ensued. The great dream of his life - the liberation of the peasants - was not reached in his day. However, he tried all possible means to improve their condition. Thus he ordered that every seff who joined the colors as a recruit thereby gained his freedom. He also gave signs of good intention towards the raskolinks, (the orthodox of the Greek Church who rejected the reforms of Nikon). "Reason and experience", says the edict, "have for a long while proved that the spiritual errors of the people, which official sermons only cause to take deeper root, cannot be cured and dispelled except by forgiveness, good examples, and tolerance. Does it become a government to employ violence

(1) Russia - V. II - p. 213.

and cruelty to bring back these wandering sheep to the fold of the church?"¹. The same liberal attitude taken by Alexander towards the adherents of other religions explains much concerning his policy towards the Jews in Russia.

However the broadminded policies of Alexander I belong to the first part of his reign, when he was still an enthusiastic liberal and admirer of the revolutionary ideas of France. To this period belong his attempts, under the influence of Speranski, to carry into reality the plans of great reforms, vaguely discussed in the intimate circles of the Czar.

In 1809 Speranski drew up a definite plan for a constitution which Alexander began to put into execution.² Suddenly he changed his mind and yielding to the enemies of Speranski sent him into exile. Meanwhile Russia was invaded by the Napoleonic army. All other plans had to be put aside for the sake of the pressing need of the hour. After the war was over the land was in so low a condition, financially and commercially that he had to devote his best powers to the restoration of the ruined country. Once more he tried to put liberal ideas into practice and ordered Novoseeltzev to work over the draft of the constitution (1819); but at the last moment he withheld it. He had enough of France and of French ideals. The part he took in the Napoleonic drama cured him of Galloomania. Liberalism was replaced by conservatism. The reign of reaction set in under the narrowminded minister Araktcheef, "the apostle of absolute power and passive obedience". All liberal instincts of Russia were repressed under the influence of Photii and Seraphim, Metropolitan of Moscow. The press was submitted to vigorous censorship laws. Prince Galitzin, the liberal minister of public instruction, was dismissed (1824) and Admiral Shiskov appointed in his place. The admiral regarded the sciences harmful to the people, who

(1). Ibid-p.212

(2). The Czar addressed himself to George Washington, who sent him a copy of the American constitution.

were born to obey, and denied the necessity of training the lower classes. Professors suspected of liberal tendencies and Russians educated in foreign universities were dismissed from the teaching staff. The Chancellor of Kazan university, Magnitzki, a colleague of Shishev "proposed to organize the teaching in accordance with the 'Act of the Holy Alliance'; he excluded all suspicious books from the library; forbade the geological theories of Buffon and the systems of Copernicus and Newton to be taught, as contrary to the text of Scripture...The science of medicine must be a Christian science; dissection was almost entirely forbidden, as incompatible with the respect due to the dead. The professor of political economy was enjoined to insist principally on the virtues that turned material goods into spiritual possessions, 'thus uniting the lower and contingent economy with the true and superior economy, and by this means, forming the real science, in a politico-moral sense'. Nikolski, professor of geometry, already demonstrated, in the triangle, the symbol of the Trinity; and in the unity, that is to say the number one, the divine Unity."¹. The best intellectual forces of the country were checked by the rough handling of the reactionary leaders. The spirit of freedom was stifled. Poles were forbidden to study in German universities, which were regarded as the hotbeds of the revolution. Thus came to an end Alexander's beautiful dream of a regenerate Russia.

The varied policy of Alexander had its effect upon the condition of the Jews in Russia. Each period of reforms witnessed some laws concerning the Jews. At his ascent to the throne he was moved by the appeal of Michael Baer, the first French privy councillor of Jewish origin, to all the sovereigns and nations in the name of the "European inhabitants of the Jewish faith" for full justice. In order to ameliorate the condition of his Jewish subjects Alexander summoned a special committee (1802'Oct.9.) to draft a set of regulations concerning the Jews, which resulted in the

(1). Ibid-p.218.

enactment of Dec. 9th, 1804. This was repealed in 1809. The latter part of his life witnessed a great deal of legislation of a reactionary nature concerning the Jews.

Chapter II - The Condition of the Jews.

With the annexation of White Russia by Catherine II during the first partition of Poland a large number of Jews came under Russian jurisdiction. The manifesto on this occasion, of Aug. 11th, 1772 stated that : "Religious liberty and inviolability of property are hereby granted to all subjects of Russia, and certainly to the Jews also; for the humanitarian principles of her majesty do not permit the exclusion of the Jews alone from the favors shown to all, as long as they, like faithful subjects continue to engage themselves as hitherto in commerce and in handicrafts, each according to his vocation". Needless to say, this promise was not fulfilled. The privilege of citizenship which was extended to all the inhabitants of White Russia, was not extended in practice to the Jews. The promise to let them exercise their former rights was also ignored. In addition, the Jews were oppressed by the local administration. The Governor general of White Russia prohibited the landlords from ^{granting} leases to Jews, thereby threatening them with impoverishment. An ukase of the Senate of May 7th, 1786 allowed the landlords to lease their distilleries and inns to the Jews and permitted the election of Jews to the courts, in merchant guilds, in the magistracy and in the city councils.

After this ukase had been issued, large numbers of White-Russian Jews came to Moscow. This aroused the opposition of the merchants of that city. Consequently they applied to the military commander of Moscow (February, 1790) for the expulsion of the Jews. By an ukase of the Empress (December 23rd, 1791) the Jews were forbidden to register in the guilds of Moscow and of all governments other than those of White Russia, Yekaterinograd and Tanrida. This edict, establishing the Pale of Settlement, was intended for the protection of the unenlightened Russian population from the economic enslavement which the Jews might impose

upon them. In 1794 the Pale included the following regions: Minsk, Izyaslav, Brayzlav, Polotzk, Moghileff, Kiev, Chernigov, Moggorod-Syeverak, Ekaterinoslav, and the territory of Tanrida. To these were soon added the Lithuanian governments of Vilna and Grodno. In 1799 Courland was added, and in 1804 the Jews were admitted to the governments of Astrakhan and Caucasia.¹

In these regions the Jews practically controlled all commerce. In ~~the~~ Vilna for example there were in 1797, two hundred and seventy-eight Jewish merchants, including fifty foreigners; and in Slonim there were thirty-one, including sixteen foreigners. To the merchant class belonged only those who carried on an extensive trade. The small traders carried on their activities in the fairs and in house to house sales. The committee of 1809 stated that "all commerce and all trades in the Polish Governments were largely filled with Jews" (ibid P.359). In Lithuania, the greater part of the skilled laborers were Jews. The Governor of Kiev, Fensh, writes that in that city there were practically no Christian skilled laborers, but all of that class were Jews (ibid P.360).

The Jews were not allowed to own lands. In fact land-ownership till 1800 was allowed only to the aristocracy.. However, since that time merchants and small traders might own land without serfs. In spite of this law Jews owned great estates, through some arrangement with the landlords. Thus in 1800 the estate of Admiral Deribas was in the hands of

(1). In 1906 the Pale of Settlement included fifteen governments: Bessarabia, Vilna, Vitebsk, Volinia, Grodno, Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Kovna, Minsk, Moghileff, Podolia, Poltova, Tanrida, Kherson and Cheringov. The Jews lived and still live in great numbers in Courland and in the Visla (Vistula) region: Warsaw, Kalish, Keletzk, Lomja, Liublin, Petrokov, Plotzk, Radom Suvolk and Sedlitz. However these governments do not belong to the Pale and constitute a world of their own. In Courland, only those Jews may live that settled there prior to 1835 and, in the region of the Vistula, those prior to 1862. The Jews living in these regions could not settle in the Pale and those of the Pale were not allowed to settle in the Vistula regions. (Hessen-p. 355-note 3.)

Evsey Nota Haimovitz. This estate included 225 serfs. Similarly Zeitlin had 910 serfs; Kopel Schmeerovitz, 1627 serfs and Nisulevitz, 166. After the government, on the initiative of Derzhavin, forbade the landlords to lease their estates to Jews a certain man by the name of Pessahovitz petitioned the czar on behalf of the Jews of White Russia against Derzhavin's measure. This resulted in a decision of the Senate, dating December 17th, 1800, that the Jews should under no condition be allowed to hold the estates of the nobles and to own serfs. Nevertheless, this practice continued.

That was largely due to the fact, that the landlords of Poland and of White Russia were in need of the Jews. Given to feasting and idling, they needed some one to take care of their estates and to provide them with money. Thus they utilized the Jews for this purpose. The Jew was the middleman between the peasant and the landlord. Although the Jew was a freeman, he was practically a slave to the landlord. Special taxes were laid upon him; He was forced to sell the landlord's distilled liquors, etc. A characteristic example of the relation of the landlords to the Jews is furnished by the following: The owner of the city of Shklov, General Zorich, subjected the Jews to corporal punishment, ordered some of them to remove from the town, took away the houses of two Jews, and of two others he took away the property; He forced some of them to leave the town in twenty-four hours. When the army passed through Shklov, he placed the soldiers in the Jewish homes, claiming that the Jews of Shklov were his subjects and their houses are his, therefore he might do with them what he pleased. He forced the Jewish inn-keepers to purchase from him annually sixteen thousand gallons of rye spirits at three roubles, fifteen kopecks per gallon. When they refused to do it on account of the impossibility of selling such a quantity and because Zorich charged them three times as much for the article, he ^{forcibly} placed ~~him~~ ~~some~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Jewish~~ ~~inns~~ some of his ^{in the Jewish Inns} serfs ^{to} sell the liquor. When they failed to sell the assigned

quantity he ordered ~~to deliver~~ the liquor^{delivered} to the Jewish inn-keepers irrespective of whether or not it be sold, and charged it to their accounts. (ibid-pp.71-2.)

In 1794 a tax had been imposed upon the Jews, "double to that laid upon the citizens and merchants of various Christian denominations" (Hessen p.16). The Karaites, however, were freed from this double tax in 1795. From that time on they enjoyed special privileges in Russia.

At this time there began the expulsion of Jews from the small towns. This movement was opposed by Paul I (1796-1801). Thus he opposed the expulsion of the Jews from Kamenetz-Podolsk and from Kiev. However in 1796, the Senate enacted a law without the Czar's knowledge, calling for a double payment for the guild license by Jewish merchants.¹

In 1797, in consequence of ~~the~~ information concerning the state of poverty of the peasants in the government of Minsk, Paul I ordered the local governor, Karneyev, to investigate the existing conditions of affairs and to report what might be done for the amelioration of those ~~xxxxx~~ conditions. It appeared from the reports that the poverty of the peasants was due to the ignorance of the peasants in the administration of their estates, to the frequent failures of crops, to the political unrest, the frequent transportations of the army and the excessive fees exacted by the clergy. When, in 1790 Radestchev published his famous book, "A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow", the first utterance in behalf of freedom in Russia, in which he advocated the emancipation of the peasants and similar liberal measures, he was exiled into Siberia. The explanation for the root of the evil was to be found in no other source but in the existing serfdom. However, this was distasteful to the landlords as well as to the Government. A different cause had to be found; and it was discovered in the Jew. He appeared to be the cause of the poverty of the peasants and of the economic depression of the country. The remedy was

(1). Paul I granted the privilege of citizenship to the Jews of Courland and granted them also municipal rights.

therefore very easily provided by special legislation against the Jews, prohibiting them the rights of leasing estates, of holding inns, and the like.

Under such conditions, the Jewish masses were impoverished. The governor of Kiev, Pankratyev reported that at least two thirds of the Jewish small traders, numbering about twenty thousand, were in such a condition that not only could they not pay their double taxes, "but secured their daily bread with the greatest difficulty" (p.375). He explained the situation on the following ground: "The Jew has to pay a double tax to the government for permission to live here and equally as much if not more to the landowners for the land and for the permission to deal in such trades as xx lie in their hands. Thereby, with a few exceptions, the Jew arrives at such a condition that not only can he not pay his taxes but he cannot even support himself" (p.375).¹ He also stated that the Jews were the victims of the landlords' greed.

The external conditions of the Jews in Russia were in a most deplorable state. But their internal affairs were correspondingly bad. The source of the inner trouble was of ^a social and religious nature. The social life of the Jews in Russia was centered in the Kahal. In Western Europe this institution dates in part, as far back as the Crusades. In the fifteenth century it was very popular in Poland. It was a local organization governing the Jewish communities. The Kahals were regarded as agents of the government in matters of taxation and enjoyed autonomy in matters relating to the Jewish community. The kahal kept up schools in the communities where the study of the Talmud was cultivated. All secular learning was forbidden. Not even the philosophy of the Jews of the Middle Ages was permitted to be studied.² In the sixteenth century these organizations developed throughout Poland. About the middle of that

(1). Governor Pankratyev proposed the removal of the double tax and the equalization of the Jews with the Christian population in respect to rights.

(2). Dubnov, He'Athid V.3-p.86ff.

century the Kahal was also organized in Lithuania on the Polish model. The work of the Kahal went on rather smoothly until, by the end of the seventeenth century, the Kahal debts came into prominence, ^{a fact} "which strengthened still further the power of the kahal over the individual. Ruined by the Cossack wars, the Jews were in great financial distress, and were obliged to seek loans from the abbots, the only capitalists of that time. These were willing to make loans only on the responsibility of entire Kahal. The increasing debts of the communities led, among other things, to the abuse of the Kahal prerogatives, and created much dissatisfaction."¹. Gradually the moral authority of the Kahal declined in consequence of the cupidity of its administrators. The Kahal assumed the character of an oligarchy and subjected the individuals through the various payments imposed upon them. "The various taxes payable by the members of the community to the kahal included the poll-tax, the ten per-cent property tax, the taxes called "be-torat zakah", "butim", etc., besides compulsory loans to Kahals. There was no escape for the poor. The well-to-do, however, managed to secure from the Kahal or from the civil government, freedom from excessive taxation on payment of a certain consideration: they were thus invested with certain extra-territorial rights, and were not even responsible for the debts of the Kahal. The administration of the Kahal ~~was~~

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia-v.VIII-p.419-11.

The upbraiding remark made by a Pole in 1744 presents a most realistic picture of the condition of the Jews: "Your privilege and freedom in the fulfillment of the Jewish Commandments you lease from the Christian nobles. You may not even elect a Rabbi save one who bought the Rabbinical post for life or for a set date from a Christian noble. The position of the Parnes of the Kahal, for life or temporary, also amounts to a fair sum. Only after you pay the Royal treasury, the princes, the officers, and other officials and various noblemen, you gain permission to build synagogues and are allowed to live according to the laws of Moses and Israel." (Dubnov in He-Athid p.39).

was also monopolized by the rich, who managed to remain in authority through ties of friendship and common interest. At times (e.g. in the eighteenth century) the administrative authority was retained in the hands of a few powerful families".¹ The Kabal became an institution in the hands of the strong for the exploitation of the weak. At the close of the eighteenth century it was the arena of the religious feud between the Hasidim and Mithragdim.

The Hasidic movement founded by Israel of Mesibush or Besht was the inevitable result of the Jewish life in Podolia and Ukraina in the middle of the eighteenth century. Oppressed economically, the Jews found their freedom in the spiritual realms, and especially in the Hasidism of Besht. His teachings spread in Podolia and in Volhynia and soon they reached the Jews in Poland. Besht's emphasis upon the religion of the heart, upon love of God, faith and belief in the efficacy of prayer above the study of the Talmud and above the observance of petty ceremonials, along with a deep sense of brotherhood of all Jews whether learned or ignorant was just the thing for which the Jews craved. When these teachings reached Lithuania they encountered a bitter opposition on the part of the Mithragdim. The Jews remembered full well the Sabbatai Zebi and the Frank Sects and looked with suspicion upon every new movement in Judaism. Therefore "although the Hasidim continually endeavored to prove that this system was different from that of Sabbatai Zebi and of Frank, nevertheless the scholars and leaders of the opposition insisted that their Hasidism had much in common with Frank's system with the only exception that while Frank tried to establish one Messiah over all Israel the Hasidic movement tried to put up a Messiah for each city and town; and that Messiah would be the Zatik" (Litinski, Koroth Podolia p.28).

(1).ibid.

In 1772 the Kahal of Wilna, with the approval of Elijah Ben Solomon, known as "the Gaon", arrested the local leaders of the sect and excommunicated them. Circulars were addressed to the rabbis of other communities to fight the "Godless sect".¹ Consequently cruel persecutions were instituted against the Hasidim. In 1781 a council of Rabbis met in the village of Zelva, in the Government of Grodno, where it was resolved to uproot the destructive teachings of the new sect. "In the circulars issued by the council the faithful ones were ordered to expel the Hasidim from every Jewish community, to regard them as members of another faith, to hold no intercourse with them, and not to bury their dead."² In the South the Hasidim were very strong and had no cause to fear their opponents. In the North, however, the Hasidim were subject to continuous persecutions. Northern Hasidism was practically free from the miracle-working and other superstitions. The name "Zadik" was not even popular among the people. The leader of the sect, R. Zalman, was known by the title "HoRav" ("The Rabbi"). This was largely due to the fact that in the North the standard of Jewish learning was on a higher level than in the South, where the masses were not so highly educated in talmudic lore and were given to yearning after the miracles performed by the Zadik.

In the nineties Hasidism spread in Minsk, which came under Russian rule in 1793, under Mordechai of Lyahovitz and Osher of Karlin. When the new sect became powerful in the city of Pinsk it encountered the opposition of R. Abigdor, the rabbi of that city, who suffered financially through the new teachings. In 1796 Elijah the Gaon presided at a meeting in Wilna which addressed circulars to the Kahals calling upon them to spot out this heresy. However, in Wilna itself, the Gaon was unable

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia VI p.254.
 (2). Ibid.

to clear out the invading forces of Hasidism.

The occasion of the death of Elijah Gaon in 1797 was celebrated by the Hasidim. This aroused the indignation of the orthodox party. On Hoshana Raba during services the Shofar was sounded, the candles extinguished and the 'Herem' was pronounced against all the heretics, in spite of Governor Prizel's law (1797) prohibiting excommunications. Thereby the struggle between the two parties turned from the religious to the social sphere. It became evident to the Hasidim that, if they wished to gain perfect freedom to live according to their doctrines, they would have to disarm the Kahal. For this institution was vested with judicial powers in Jewish matters, religious as well as civil. The limitations of the functions of the Kahal to religious spheres only did not prevent it from carrying on its work undisturbedly even in civil matters. Consequently the Hasidim were forced to appeal to the Government for help. This resulted in the law of April 26th, 1798 issued by the government of Lithuania prohibiting the Kahals from ^{punishing} the heretics. The local government appeared to have been favorably inclined towards the Hasidim. The Mithnagdim, seeing that they had no chance here, turned to the national government. Thus in 1798 the Mithnagdim of Wilna denounced R. Zalman, the head of the Hasidim of White Russia as a political offender.¹ The venerable Rabbi was arrested at his court in Liozno and brought to St. Petersburg (1798). Twenty other leaders of the sect were arrested in Wilna and elsewhere. Reb Zalman was kept in the fortress and was examined by a secret commission. It became evident to the authorities that he was not a political offender but an expounder of

(1). The denunciation was signed by a certain Hirsh Davidovitz of Wilna, but no such person was to be found there.

a new doctrine in Judaism. Consequently he and the other leaders were soon released.¹ Meanwhile the Hasidim gained power in Wilna and succeeded in putting ~~xx~~ eight members in the Kehal. That ^{action} naturally lead to further struggles. In 1800 R. Abigdor of Pinsk appeared again with a petition against the Hasidim. Consequently R. Zalman was arrested again and brought to St. Petersburg. There he found R. Abigdor and had to answer his charges against the new sect. This religious strife reflects very little honor upon both parties and especially upon the Mithnagdim. R. Zalman was released soon after the accession of Alexander I to the throne,² and enjoyed henceforth the full freedom to proclaim his doctrines, to the end of his life (died 1812). This religious war in the North led to the formation of the Hasidim as a separate sect which ^{was} recognized as such in the "Enactment concerning the Jews" in 1804.

(1). Dubnov says that the chief tool in the hands of the Mithnagdim was Abram Peretz, the son-in-law of Joshua Zeitlin of Shklov, who lived in St. Petersburg and enjoyed the acquaintance of high Government officials. He was well acquainted with the state of Jewish affairs and being a former Talmudist and a man of secular knowledge, he could not but be hostile toward the Hasidim.

(2). Dubnov, Yevreyskaya Starina V. II pp. 84 ff. pp. 253 ff.

Chapter III.--Proposed Reforms.

There could be no doubt in the mind of any one acquainted with the conditions of the Jews that a general reform in their legal and social status was imperative. Opinions differed as to the nature and the aim of such reforms. The Governor of Wilna, Frizel, who knew full well the general conditions of the Jews, their religious schism and economic depression proposed the enlightenment of the Jews and full equality with the rest of the population as the only possible remedies. In his "opinion concerning the Jews", submitted to the Senate on December 31st, 1799, he advocated the civic equality of the Jews with the Christian population and the removal of the rights of autonomy of the Jewish community. The last part was aimed against the abuses of the Kahals. He was aware of the ethical defects of the Jewish population, but he was firm in his belief that through humane and enlightened measures they might be remedied. He regarded the Jews as Russian citizens and ^{believed that} as soon as they gained ~~xxx~~ their full rights they would become useful to the Government.

A different view was taken by Derzhavin, the Minister of Justice. He insisted that the Jews could not be regarded "as belonging to the Russian Empire as long as they would not change their fanatical customs and ~~xxxx~~ in some way yield fruit favorable to Christianity". Thus while Frizel sought to direct the Jews to useful occupations and enlightenment through civic equality, Derzhavin advocated civic inequality and ghettos.

Derzhavin had many sources of information concerning the Jews. He was acquainted with the "opinions" of the governors of the Polish provinces, which entered into the third department of the Senate. In addition he had some personal relations with the Jews. On June, 10th, 1800 he was sent by Paul I to White Russia to investigate the conditions of the peasants who suffered from famine. It was his duty to examine

the causes of poverty among the peasants and find some possible plan-
~~xxx~~ for the amelioration of their suffering. In the postscript of the
 official letter from the general procurator Obol'yansky, authorizing him
 to perform this task, it was stated that he should also look into the
 state of affairs of the Jews and the 'harm' they render to the popula-
 tion. He ^{had} manifested his animosity towards the Jews on a former occasion
 when he had been commissioned by the Czar to investigate the complaints
 made by the Jews of Shklov against the proprietor of that town, General Zo-
 rich, a favorite of Catherine II. The Jews accused him of oppression and
 extortion. He subjected them to corporeal punishment and forced them to
 pay such taxes that "he left without payment the air only". In spite of
 the fact that all signs pointed to Zorich's guilt Derzhavin was deter-
 mined to vindicate him. His prejudices against "the enemies of Christ"
 were increased by the unfavorable impression produced upon him by the
 inner struggles among the Hasidim and Mithragdim during his stay at
 Shklov. He therefore recommended to the Czar that the Jewish witnesses
 in the case of Zorich should not be admitted to testify since they were
 concerned in the matter. In addition he stated that since a case of rit-
 ual murder was brought up against the Jews in the Government of Vitebsk,
 Jewish testimonies should not be accepted "until the Jewish nation would
 of the
~~xxx~~ justify itself" before the Czar, "in the matter ^{of the} general outrage with
 which it is charged". However, Derzhavin's prejudices were checked at
 that time by Paul I, who refused to consider these recommendations on the
 ground that once a case is before the courts "it ought not be complicated
 with the question concerning Jewish witnesses."¹ Nevertheless, Derzhavin,
 suspecting that the case against Zorich, pressed by the Jews was encour-
 aged by Kutaisov, a favorite of the Czar, who expected to gain Zorich's
 estate in case he should be proven guilty and that the Jewish broker of
 St. Petersburg, Abraham Peretz, had a hand in it, reported in favor of
 (1). Thereby Paul I warded off very disastrous consequences that might

rich in spite of the evident abuse of his prerogative.

From a man of such decided hatred toward the Jews, little could result in their favor. During his stay in White Russia he had occasion to observe the condition of the Jews. In a letter to Obel'Goninev he stated "It is difficult to seriously accuse any one without violating the common principles of justice and fairness. The peasants sell their grain to the Jews for spirits and consequently suffer want in bread. The landowners do not forbid drunkenness because they derive their income from the sale of liquors. And the Jews, too, cannot be entirely blamed that for the sake of their own sustenance they take the last crust of the peasants".¹. Nevertheless, in his official report he spoke in a different tone. While stating in his 'opinion' that the Poles were idle, careless in their work, unskillful in agriculture and did not provide for the future, and consequently sought all possible ways of spending their time in idleness in inns, etc., and that in one province the failure of the crops lasted for nine years, he strangely arrived at the conclusion that the great numbers of Jews in the governments was the chief cause of the peasants' poverty. He found the root of the evil in the fact that "the Jews being here in great numbers did not produce bread with their own hands and obtained it from the peasants." He was not satisfied with the mere statement of the facts but turned to the authorities and to the landowners to "free these governments from the great numbers of Jews." Thus the only solution of the Jewish problem in the opinion of Derzhavin was to rid the provinces of Jews.

When Derzhavin's work concerning the Jews in White Russia became known Notkin turned to him with his project concerning Jewish reforms. have resulted from these recommendations upon the condition of the Jews in Russia; for their testimony would have been rejected in similar cases and would have tended in the direction of depriving them of the rights of citizenship.

(1). Hensen p.38-39.

Notkin (Nota Haimovitz of Schklev) was an army contractor under Potemkin and a prominent financier. He was one of the earliest champions in behalf of the civic improvement of the Jews in Russia. He conceived the idea that the Jewish condition might be improved through the establishment of agricultural and industrial colonies for the Jews in the Government of Yekaterinoslav and elsewhere. He submitted this project to Raul I through Count Kurakin in 1797.¹ However the government took no action on this project.

Derzhavin in preparing his report made use of Notkin's projects concerning the attraction of the Jews to useful trades. A still greater influence on his report had been exerted by Dr. Frank's communication to Derzhavin on the question "Can a Jew become a good and useful citizen?" Dr. Frank was a disciple of Mendelssohn and resided in Kreslavt in the government of Vitebsk.² He commenced with the premise that in order to bring the Jews to a moral rejuvenation it is necessary "to turn them to the pristine purity of their religion, since the teachers of the people, utilizing the ignorance of the mass, filled it with superstitions and separated it from the other nations." Dr. Frank attacking the Talmud pointed out that the most important thing for the Jewish people was the knowledge of Hebrew and a general education. Therefore, in his opinion, "Jewish reforms should begin with the opening of common schools in which the Jewish youth

(1). It is difficult to tell what led Notkin to his proposed plan of reforms. It is possible that after he learned ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ the conditions of the Jews in Minsk, where they were regarded as the chief cause of the economic depression of the government, he sought for the possible means of freeing the Jews from their neighbors, the Poles, and from the liquor trade through removing them from that region and from their old occupations. It is also possible that the idea was suggested to him by the Prussian laws concerning the Jews, of April, 1797. He may have also known of the previous attempt of Joseph II, in 1786, to solve the Jewish question through agriculture and trades.

(2). This is about all the information extant about Doctor Frank. There is a further mention of his name in connection with the Ritual murder case of Velizh in 1823. (See Hessen p.45-Note 2.)

day study Russian, German and Hebrew." "It is time", he said, ^{that} in this way only the coming generation would be enlightened and the government would "benefit by the Jewish subjects later on, after a long period of time and after many losses; I know it is true that there are other plans of reform which at first glance promise to lead more easily and more rapidly to the goal; nevertheless, the knowledge of human nature in general and especially the true understanding of the Jewish character offer me the ground to emphasize the fact that each hasty and forced reform ^{seemingly} which may bring a ^{instantaneous} ~~xxx xxxxxx~~ help cannot actually lead to a real improvement, and only such ^{improvement} ought to be the aim of our enlightened and humane government." (Hessen, p. 45-46).

In a few months' time, out of such x varied and heterogeneous material in his hands--which might have furnished support for almost any view,--Derzhavin prepared in September, 1800, his celebrated "Opinion as to the Protection of White Russia from Famine and on the Organization of the State of the Jews". The spirit of enmity toward the Jews, "the enemies of the Christians" can be best seen from the concluding remarks of the report stating that Czar Paul I who was to carry out these reforms would go down in history as the first of the Russian monarchs to fulfill the great commandment: "Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you." ¹.

While Frizel and Derzhavin entertained many views in common concerning the Jews, their aims and motives were wholly different. Both agreed that the Jews ought to be removed from the liquor trade and, for ^{that} this reason a part of the Jewish population of White Russia should settle upon unoccupied lands in other governments. In both plans the Jews were divided into classes and the right of settlement in any particular place was to depend upon the nature of their occupations. Frizel proposed that merchants and artisans might live in cities and all others should be turned into agricultural pursuits and accordingly live outside of the

(1). Hessen p. 47.

cities. Derzhavin, on the other hand, graded them differently. Merchants were to be allowed to reside in cities and counties; burghers in cities only. Frizel proposed the equality of Jewish burghers with the non-Jewish in municipal elections; whereas Derzhavin urged to limit their rights on the basis that they "hate the Christians". Derzhavin also proposed that in certain towns the Jews should reside in separate streets in order to prevent the lower strata of Christians from ^{coming} into contact with the Jews. He also proposed to forbid the Jews to engage Christians in service (Cp. Prussian law of 1797). Frizel understanding the inner conditions of the Jews recommended that the government taxes should not be collected by the Kahal but that each class should pay in the same manner as the non-Jewish members of the same class. Thereby he aimed at destroying the Kahal. Derzhavin proposed to limit the sphere of action of the Kahals to those places where they already existed. He regarded the Kahal as the seat of wild fanaticism, which had to be checked for the good of the Christian population. As to the educational problem, Frizel thought that the reform should commence with their religion. He suggested that an investigation should be made into the true nature of the Jewish religion and subsequently exterminate all sects. Thereby he expected to solve the conflict between the Hasidim and Mithnagdim. However, he was probably unaware of the fact that new religious tendencies cannot be exterminated by legislative measures and that the Russian church itself could not exterminate its schisms. Derzhavin under the influence of Dr. Frank, conceived the educational problem of the Jews to consist in raising their intellectual and moral status. However, he colored his views with his peculiar notion that through education the Jews might "yield fruit favorable to Christianity".¹ In regard to religious matters, he constructed the Utopian plan of a Synedrion under the supervision of a "Protector."

(1). Hessen p.61.

Such were the two plans for Jewish reforms. When, in 1802, the commission for the purpose of solving the Jewish problem was called into existence, these two plans were to be considered. It was out of the question that Frizel's plan should gain popularity with the commission. Its liberal and independent spirit was by far too radical for its members. At the same time the Jews could ^{have} benefited ^{very} little ^{had} ~~xxxx~~ Derzhavin's plans ~~xxxx~~ been adopted.

At this crucial point Notkin reappeared on the stage as the champion of the Jews in Russia. In May of 1803 he submitted his plan of reforms to the commission, in which he took a middle stand between the two extremes. Realizing the impossibility of equal rights for the Jews under the conditions of that time, he did not side with Frizel. His main purpose was to disharm the effects of Derzhavin's plan. He urged to rearrange the conditions of the Jews by removing the cause of all their ills, viz. poverty. The poverty of the Jews resulted, according to his opinion, from the policy of the Polish government to discourage the Jews ~~xxxx~~ ⁱⁿ useful professions and to keep ~~xx~~ them down in the lower spheres by forbidding them to engage in commerce and to reside in certain cities. He opposed the plan to prohibit the Jews from ^{engaging} ~~xxxxxx~~ in the liquor trade and ^{from} ~~xxxx~~ leasing lands. He also opposed the idea of the compulsory removal of the Jews from the villages into the cities. In addition, he proposed to create the necessary conditions for the Jews to enter into useful occupations.

When the Commission invited deputies of the Kahals to be present at its sessions, Notkin was also invited.¹ It is not certain who were the rest of the delegates and how many they were in number. One thing is known that the delegation presented a rather heterogeneous element. There

were the orthodox Jews from the provinces and a number of men who studied in German universities. It is only natural that their opinions should have differed radically as to the aim and method of Jewish reforms. The intellectuals insisted on educating the masses, whereas the orthodox regarded such a measure as a menace to Judaism. Notkin was the only man who might have united the two extremes. But unfortunately he died before the enactment was completed.¹ Under such conditions the Jewish deputation accomplished nothing.

(1). Notkin died on the 11th of Elul, 1804 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in St. Petersburg, which he had procured himself.

The Jewish community in St. Petersburg was very small at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the days of Catherine II, there were very few Jews in that city. She said of them that they found shelter with her confessors and all acted as if they had not known anything about their existence. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, their numbers increased. They had their own Shohet and Mohel, but they were without a cemetery of their own. Among the Jews living there at that time were Nathan Note known as Notkin, Abram Peretz, the son-in-law of Joshua Zeitlin of Schklov, and son of the Berlin Rabbi Gershon Lebel, and Laib Nevahovitz, the first Jewish author in the Russian language. Of these Notkin was the only man who was devoted heart and soul to the cause of the Jews. He was the head of the Jewish community in St. Petersburg. His efforts in behalf of the Jews were evident in many different ways. Peretz, while prominent in St. Petersburg society, was rather inactive in things Jewish. Till 1803, when he was invited by the Commission to take part in the proceedings, he showed little interest in Jewish matters save that of assisting the Mitnagdim in their struggles against the Hasidim (cp. p. 20-note 2). He probably regarded it as too trifling a matter to trouble oneself about a Jewish cemetery and other ~~such~~ things of such a nature. Nevahovitz, likewise, endeavored to become Russified in all ways possible. He had the ambition of becoming a literateur and moved in the society of Russian writers. In 1803 he published his "Cry of the Daughter of Juda" which is the first Russian book written by a Jew. The book was dedicated to Count Ketchubey. The author rewrote his book into Hebrew under the title "Kol Shav'ath bath Yehuda" which was published in Schklov in 1804 and was dedicated to Notkin and Peretz. Soon after Nevahovitz converted himself to Christianity and was followed by Peretz. This was the end of the first group of intellectuals and followers of Mendelssohn in Russia.

Chapter IV. The Enactment of 1804.

At first the Commission started out with the intentions of bringing about such reforms which would be in the spirit of progress. In the Journal of the Commission for December 20th, 1803 the following motto was taken: "As little of prohibitions as possible and as much of freedom as possible." Soon, however, this motto was forgotten, and, in place of the broad and liberal spirit that characterized this body, came the old prejudiced idea of Derzhavin. Instead of solving the Jewish problem, the Commission set up for itself the task of protecting the Christian population by rendering the Jews harmless. This was a repetition of the method of procedure of Derzhavin's policy in 1800.¹ In the projected plan of the Commission of December 9th, 1804 it was expressly stated that while the new laws were directed for the welfare of the Jews, they were especially intended for the well-being of the "original inhabitants". Thus in the interests of the Christian population the Jewish needs were forgotten.

The new law preserved for the Jews freedom in religious and communal affairs. Only, the Kahals and the Rabbis were deprived of the right to resort to punishments. This was one of the results of the struggle between the Hasidim and Mithnagdim.

Jewish children were to be admitted to all educational institutions "without any distinction from the other children". Should they not avail themselves of this privilege special Jewish schools would have to be organized, at their own expense, for which purpose a special tax would be levied. In such schools one of the three languages: Russian, German or Polish would be taught. These provisions of admitting Jewish students "are marked by a humanitarian and tolerant spirit; and state that no attempts should be made to lead away from their religion, Jewish children

(1). Cp. pp. 22 ff.

obtaining their education in the schools.¹ Furthermore Jews obtaining the customary education in medicine, surgery, physics, mathematics or other branches of learning should be granted the proper degrees on equal terms with the other Russian students.² In 1811 a law was issued exempting Jewish students who had completed their university studies from the head-tax. In spite of these provisions Jewish students who tried to avail themselves of the privileges were discriminated against. In 1816, a certain Simon Levin Wolf completing his course at the University of Dorpat, petitioned for the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence. He was informed by the faculty that, as a Jew, he could ^{not} be given such a degree. This decision was subsequently confirmed by the ministers.³ At the same time, while the provision was made that the Jewish students should not be ~~xxx~~ led away from Judaism the officials looked upon their education as a means of conversion.

The question concerning the eligibility of the Jews to municipal offices was left undecided. When in 1783 the Jews were put on the level of equality with the Christian population in the participation of municipal government, the inner Jewish organization, centered in the Kahal, was weakened. In Lithuania, due to old Polish privileges, the Jews were excluded from municipal offices.⁴ After the publication of the senatorial decree of December 9th, 1802 granting the Jews the right of eligibility to municipal offices to the extent of one third of the total number of such offices, the representatives of the Christian population of the city of Wilna applied (February 1st, 1803) to Count Veronazov, the Chancellor

- (1). Jewish Encyclopedia-V.X-p.541.
- (2). Pinn, Kirjah He'Bnana p.30 Paragraph 1.2.
- (3). Jewish Encyclopedia V.X-p.541.
- (4). R.J.E. Art. Alexander I.

of the Empire, to repeal this enactment on the grounds that it conflicted with their ancient Lithuanian privileges.¹ The enactment of 1804 while limiting the functions of the Kahal to the collection of taxes, did not dare to restore the Jews to their former right of equality with the rest of the population in municipal government. In one respect the enactment put a certain limitation in the eligibility of the Jews to municipal offices. For example, all positions in city administration were limited to such Jews who knew one of the three languages: Russian, German or Polish, whereas illiterate Christians could fill them.²

The double tax imposed by Catherine II³ upon the Jews for the privilege of engaging in handicrafts or commercial enterprises was not removed by the enactment. However, in order to encourage the Jews, the committee promised to change this double tax⁴ "when all the Jews engaged in agriculture, manufacture and in commerce will show tenacity of purpose and diligence."⁵ Such a qualification was hardly necessary, since the tenacity of the Jews to their occupations could hardly be questioned. ⁶

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia V.X-p.523

(2). Ibid-p.554

(3) P.13.

(4). Jews engaging in Agriculture in their respective places of settlement were to be freed from the double tax. (Pinn, Kirjah Ne'Emuna, p.30).

(5). In 1799 when the Jews of Courland were granted the rights of permanent residence, the law concerning the double tax had been modified in favor of the Jews of Courland "who were too poor to pay the double tax, for three years, and they were immediately sent across the frontier." In 1800 the modification had been abolished and those who could not pay the tax were set to work in the government smelting-works. (Jewish Encyclopedia V.X. p.550).

(6). See tables of the merchant classes and artisans in the year 1800, and 1807 in Heesen's Jews in Russia pp.464-465.

The existing rights of settlement were modified in so far as manufacturers, merchants and skilled laborers were permitted to make their temporary residences in the inner governments and in the capitol cities. The Jews were permitted to acquire land, but such that was as yet unsettled, i.e. without serfs (in all the western and south-western provinces). They were permitted to engage Christian laborers, a right which they did not possess prior to that time. The Jewish agriculturists were freed from taxes for five years.¹ The government pledged itself to provide thirty thousand deciatins (one deciatin equals 2.70 acres) of land in the western and southern governments for those Jews who were without means to procure land. Each family desiring to engage in agriculture had to give proof of the possession of not less than four hundred rubles to pay for the land, implements and household necessities for settlement. In addition, all Jews wishing to become colonists were required to submit certificates of their physical fitness for agricultural pursuits.² These laws made the Jews more independent of the land-owners. They were freed from the jurisdiction of land-owners in whose territory they resided. However, in case of moving out of an estate they were re-^{had} quired to obtain a statement from the land-owner that they ^{had} fulfilled all their duties to him.

The failure of the work of the Commission is seen in the way it solved the problem of the Jews in the rural communities. Here they engaged in inn-keeping, in small-trade, in leasing estates or in managing rural industries. It was clear that the Jews as well as the peasants, were the victims of the existing conditions, because all the income of the leases and the liquor trade went to the land-owners and to the government. The committee was not ready to attack the root of the evil and

(1). Finn's Kirjah Ne'Emana-p. 50.

(2). J.E.V.1.-P.252.

consequently turned against the Jews by prohibiting them ~~xx~~ ^{farming} from the land-owner's income ^{and from} holding inns in villages and on central routes. The same law required that in course of two or three years all the Jews living in rural communities, numbering about sixty thousand families¹, remove to the towns of the Pale of Settlement or into the lands which the government intended to throw ^{open} free of charge, in the desert land of New Russia. Steps were taken to force the removal and they were accompanied by extreme barbarity. Thus began the migration into the small towns, where the new arrivals could find no shelter, nor occupation." Hundreds of families were left without shelter in the fields or on the squares of near-by cities, as there were not sufficient houses to accommodate them, and nothing was provided with which to feed them."² The government proved itself altogether unable ~~xx~~ to remove a large portion of the exiles into New Russia. Thus they moved from one place to the other; illness increased and death followed. The conditions became heartrending. In 1806 many Jewish families from Vitebsk and Mohilev on the Dnieper removed to Southern Russia, where they founded seven agricultural colonies in the Government of Kherson. They were named; Nahar-Tob, Har Shefer, Sede-Menuhah, Bobrov-Kut, Jeth-Nahar, Jaazer and Kamenka.³ The authorities in charge of colonization were directed to establish settlements in territories well adapted for agricultural pursuits. Unfortunately they selected lands more adapted for cattle-breeding and ^{for} agriculture on a large scale, than for small farms.⁴ Consequently the colonists who settled on their own account were left without the necessary means to purchase food and implements. Many of them exhausted by long travel, and unaccustomed to the steppes, fell ill and

(1). R. I. E. Art. Alexander I.

(2). Jewish Encyclopedia X. 559

(3). Ibid I. 252

(4). Ibid.

died. Others sold their estates for next to nothing and returned to their old homes. The poorest colonists remained. "Notwithstanding the drawbacks, one thousand six hundred and ninety families had been settled in these colonies up to the year 1810."¹ In view of these conditions the Czar sent the Senator Alexeyev (in 1807) to examine the state of affairs in the pale of settlement and to see whether it ^{were} ~~be~~ possible to carry out the removal measure and to find out what could be done for the improvement of their condition in the future. Consequently the Czar issued an order (December 29th, 1806) to discontinue temporarily the law forbidding the Jews to hold leases, and to engage in the liquor trade. He also permitted the Jews to remain on their places of residence till further arrangements.²

The failure of this law was evident. Not only did it not meet the conditions but resulted in much suffering and pecuniary losses for both the Jews and the Government. The Christian population also sustained many losses in consequence of the removal law. On the fifth of January 1809 a new Jewish commission was established under the presidency of Senator Popov³ for the purpose of solving the problem, created by the removal of the Jews from the rural communities, and of the re-examination of other laws of the enactment of 1804.

After a careful examination of the materials on the Jewish question, that were gathered in the course of twenty-five years the commission arrived at the conclusion that not only were the Jews harmless to the rural districts, but quite to the contrary they were active factors in the development of the country. Furthermore, "the exclusion of the

(1). Ibid-P.253.

(2). It is possible that this was done in order to eliminate restlessness among the Jewish masses in consequence of Napoleon's act of summoning a Jewish Synod. (Cp. Jewish Encyclopedia V.X.P.559).

(3). Alexeyev, also, took part in this Commission.

Jews from the manufacture of and traffic in spirits would not decrease drunkenness among the peasants, as the general economic conditions, and not the Jews, were accountable therefor.¹ Learning from the reports of the governors that the Jews were in a state of dire poverty, the commission found it absolutely necessary to discontinue the attempted expulsion of the Jews from the rural districts and to preserve their rights to lease estates and to engage in the liquor trade.² This project did not receive legal sanction, but since the law of 1808³ was left unaltered the Jews remained in the rural districts on their old places of residence. At this time, the government, for the lack of means, was compelled to discontinue the settlement of Jews in New Russia (by an edict of April 6th, 1810). The Commission proposed that the Jews incapable of agricultural pursuits should be removed from New Russia into the Pale of Settlement, but their plan failed to meet with the Czar's approval. The Commission rejected the petition of the Jewish Deputies to the effect that Jewish children should be trained in special Hebrew schools before admission to the general educational institutions and that the language requirement for municipal elections be postponed for ten years. At the same time the committee agreed to remove the double tax (which had already been changed by that time) and to free the Jews from the land-owners' interference in cases of removals. The Committee was also satisfied to grant the Rabbis the right of inflicting penalties on the violators of the Jewish law; however they were not to exercise the right of excommunication.

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia P.560 V.X.

(2). Hessen, Law and Life Pp.50-55.

(3).P.40.

Chapter V. From the War of 1812 to the End of Alexander's Reign.

The Napoleonic wars which shook up the whole Russian Empire left their impress also on the conditions of the Jews. The work of the commission of 1809 came to an abrupt end and the Jewish problem was silenced for a number of years (1817). Indeed, the expulsion of the Jews was still continued, but it was not carried on on such a large scale as in the previous years. This time the Jews in the boundary zone were expelled in order to suppress contraband trade. This marked the beginning of the prohibitions of the Jews from ^{residence} ~~xxxx~~ within fifty verst from the boundary line. In 1812 the Jews living on the landed estates situated near the frontier of the government of Volhynia were removed. In 1816 a decree was issued ordering the removal of the Jews from the fifty verst boundary zone. This continued in the government of Volhynia until 1821, when the Jews began to return to their old homes. In 1825 another decree stated that only those Jews who owned real property in the fifty-verst zone were allowed to remain there.

The rise of Napoleon could not but stir the Jewish communities of Russia-Poland. In Poland the attitude of the Jews toward Napoleon was divided. Most of the Hasidic Rabbis were inclined favorably toward him, as for instance Rabbi Jacob Isaac of Lublin, Rabbi Elimelech of Lezeysk, Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Ruminov and Rabbi Jacob Isaac of Parshisha. However, a different attitude was taken by Rabbi Israel of Koznitz, known as the Preacher of Koznitz, and Rabbi Naphtali Rupshitzer.

This favorable attitude towards Napoleon can be explained on the ground of the historical conditions of the Jews in Poland.¹ The partition of Poland in 1793 did not bring about any change in their lives.

(1). See also Hazefira 1912 Nos. 14 ff. at s by M.N. Frank ("Lifne Ne'ah Shanah").

However, after the treaty of Tilsit (July 9th, 1807) a change came into their conditions. Napoleon wrested from Prussia that portion of Poland that fell to her lot in 1793 and 1795 and organized the Duchy of Warsaw, to which a number of other provinces were added after the Peace Treaty of Vienna (Oct. 14th, 1809) and gave it to Frederic Augustus of Saxony who was to rule it according to the constitution drawn by Napoleon, which granted civic equality to all the citizens, independent of creed or nationality. The Jews naturally expected to benefit by these conditions. Their hopes were somewhat shattered when the Jew-baiters of Poland endeavored to put off the civic equality granted to the Jews by the Napoleonic code, for ten years. The representatives of the Jewish community of Warsaw: Michael Isaac Rabski, Moses Aaron Fürstenberg, Nathan Zidirbaum, Joseph Landshanter and Baruch Herzfeld, petitioned the King in 1808 (November 30th) and to the Senate in 1809 (March 17th) not to deprive them of the rights granted to them by Napoleon. Their efforts were fruitless and resulted in some additional limitations. Nevertheless, the Jews did not cease regarding Napoleon as well intentioned towards them, and did not give up their faith that better days would ensue through Napoleon.

Matters stood differently in Russia. There the Jews suffered in consequence of the wild religious struggles. However the interest taken by Alexander I in Jewish affairs improved matters. While the enactment of 1804 was distasteful to the orthodox Jews on account of the weakening of the power of the Kahal and especially because of the measures of school reform, it did not fail to convince them that the Czar tried to improve their conditions and looked for their welfare. Thus as soon as Napoleon appeared upon Russian soil the Jews eagerly expressed their zeal for the government. In Schklov as well as in many other cities the Jews fasted and prayed for the downfall of Bonaparte. They put the Russian soldiers, wounded in war, into their own hospitals and nursed them. The Jews of

Yanovitz caught a French spy, who endeavored to bribe them, but they handed him over to the Government. Patriotic demonstrations were made by the Jews of Berditchev and other cities at the retreat of the French army.

Especially interesting was the attitude taken by Rabbi Zalman of Liadiy. In Napoleon he saw an enemy to Judaism, "a Satan who is opposed to the good and whose only delight is to do evil". He feared that "should France prevail, irreligiosity would increase in Israel". In Alexander I he saw a religious character that relied in all things upon God. In this spirit he tried to gain the hearts of his followers in behalf of Russia. When he learned that one of his adherents Rabbi Moshe Meizelsh of Wilna was favorably inclined towards Napoleon and worked for him¹, he implored him in a letter to give up his policy and remain loyal to the czar and to the Fatherland. Among others he wrote to him: "On the first day of Rosh Hashana before the Musaph service, it was revealed to me that should Bonaparte conquer wealth would increase in Israel and Israel's condition would improve (literally "and Israel's horn will be exalted") but the hearts of the people of Israel would be detached and removed from their Father in Heaven. On the other hand should Alexander, our Lord, prevail, then the hearts of the people of Israel would be united, attached and bound to their Father in Heaven, even though poverty would increase and the condition of the Jews would be deteriorated. And here is a sign for you, that soon your dear ones will be taken (literally "the things lovely in your eyes") and soon they will begin to take soldiers of our brethren, the sons of Israel"².

(1). One can hardly tell wherein such a man could render assistance to Napoleon.

(2). M. Leitelbaum, Horav Miliadi P. 156.

When the army of Napoleon drew near the city of Borissov, in the Government of Minsk, Rabbi Zalman left his house and all his property and escaped with his family, twenty-eight souls in all. In Krasni he was protected by the generals Ulanov and Nivirovsky and in Smolensk by General Tolstoy. On his rather circuitous journey he succeeded in ^{obtaining} ~~xxxxxx~~ many details about the French and communicated them to the Russian army.¹

The relation of the Jews to the government during the war seemed to have pleased the Czar. He was especially satisfied with the services rendered by Sundel Sonnenberg and Leiser Dillon, who were known as the "Jewish deputies" and accompanied the Czar's headquarters.² In 1813 Sundel Sonnenberg presented a petition to the Czar in behalf of the Jews to ^{so} ~~im-~~prove their conditions that they be ^{permitted} ~~xxxxxx~~ to engage in all trades that they be granted permission to distill liquors throughout Russia, that they be admitted to hold offices in city councils on terms of equality with the Christian population and that the Rabbis be granted their former right of inflicting penalties for the breaking of the Jewish law. On June 29th, 1814, while at Bruchsal, Alexander I ordered to announce his good will towards "all the Jewish Kahals for the hearty and earnest service of their deputies at the headquarters" of the Czar. He also commanded that the same deputation or a similar one should go to St. Petersburg to receive the Czar's expressions of good will to all the Jews residing in the Russian Empire and to receive a statement in regard to their petition concerning the improvement of their condition. However, not one of the demands of the Jews was granted.

At the close of the year 1817 the government called for the elec-

(1). The value of such information can only be doubted. However, it showed good spirit.

(2). Hessen, Law and Life---P.56.

tion of new Jewish Deputies. Eighteen elected representatives of ten governments belonging to the Pale of Settlement, met in Wilna, (August 19th, 1818) and chose Sundel Sonnenberg, Beinish Lapkovsky and Michael Eisenshtadt to represent the Jews at St. Petersburg. While this deputation was more official in character it failed to accomplish anything. This was probably due to the fact that Alexander I became inclined to conservative tendencies and the relation of the government to the Jews received a different aspect. In January 1817 the Czar handed over the more important Jewish matters to his personal friend Prince A.N. Golitzin, the Minister of Foreign Religious confessions. His first step in behalf of the Jews was made in relation to the Blood accusation of the Jews in Grodno. In his proclamation to the civil governor of Grodno he stated: "In consequence of there being many denunciations, even at the present time, levelled against the Jews in regard to their being guilty of such abominable practices as murdering Christian children, in several provinces which have been severed from Poland and incorporated with the Russian territory, his Imperial Majesty, considering that such accusations have been so often refuted as to render them absurd and exceedingly unjust, and wishing to throw around the Israelites of his dominion that safeguard from wanton outrage which they deserve, has deigned to command me to apprise all governors in this realm, that it is his Imperial will and pleasure that no Jews be henceforth executed for the murder of Christian children, unless there be stronger evidence to support such charge than the mere prejudice that the murder has been committed for the sake of the blood; and in case of a murder having been committed, of which suspicion shall have fallen on a Jew, the inquiry into the matter shall be conducted in a strictly legal manner, the same as is observed with men professing other creeds, who may lie under the imputation of having committed a murder.

"This Imperial Ukase your Excellency is required to see duly fulfilled."¹

Golitzin as well as Alexander I was a mystic and a pietist. In this spirit there appeared in 1817 the "Association of Israelite Christians" for the purpose of encouraging the conversion of Jews to Christianity. By an Imperial decree of March 25th, 1817, describing the hardships of converted Jews in consequence of the animosity of their former coreligionists, all administrative officers were ordered to protect such converts and form the "Association of Israelite Christians", to which land should be given in the northern or southern governments. Elaborate allowances were made to the converts. They were to be freed from all compulsory government service. The members of the Association were empowered to found settlements, engage in agriculture, trades, commerce and manufactures, and were to be exempted from the obligation to join a guild.² In 1818 the Committee of Guardians of Israelite Christians commissioned a certain Misko to select suitable land for the settlement of the Israelite-Christians. He decided on a tract near the cities Toganarog and Mariampol. In 1823 the Governor of New Russia reported that the settlement had not yet been established and in 1833 the Committee had ceased to exist. It appeared that not a single family converted itself. In 1823 the Governor General of New Russia made an investigation, concerning thirty-eight families of Israelite Christians, which "showed that their conversion was not proved and their petition was therefore not granted."³

A year after the organization of the Association of Israelite Christians Alexander brought up the question of the condition of the Jews at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. In that ^{action} he was influenced by the

(1). I. B. Levinsohn, Efes Dammim, tr. by Dr. L. Loewe, London 1841, Pp. 196-7.

(2). Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. VI. P. 672.

(3). Ibid.

English philanthropist and traveler Lewis Way who believed that if the Jews resettled on their old land in Palestine, they would accept the teachings of Christ. Thus with a Bible in hand Way fought for the civic equality of the Jews. He gained Alexander's confidence but the matter received no practical consideration.

In spite of this apparent interest in the Jewish condition, laws were issued against the employment of Christians by Jews in 1819 and prohibiting the Jews to have their Christian debtors remove their debts by labor. (1818) Golitzin spoke of the Jews (1820) as having as their aim the conversion of all people into Judaism and as spreading xxx their doctrines in the government of Vovonezsh. Repressions commenced anew. In 1821 the Czar authorized the removal of the Jews from the villages belonging to the government in Cheringov and in 1822 this measure was extended to the government of Poltava. In 1823 (April 11th) as ^{the} result of Senator Baranov's report that the Jews are the cause of the peasants impoverished condition, a law was issued that the Jews in the government of Mohilev and Vitebsk be given time until the first of January 1825 to remove from the rural districts into the cities and towns. About this time a new Jewish Committee was called into existence. However, this committee hardly entered upon its work before the death of Alexander I. In 1824 foreign Jews were prohibited settlement in Russia. This was the result of the reactionary forces of Russian society that regarded everything foreign as dangerous to Russian life. In December (19th) 1824 a law was passed that henceforth the Jews be not tolerated in government nor private possessions in the mountainous region of the Ural, and in Ekaterinoburg. The fifty-verst limitation was reinforced. The government of Astrakhan and the region of Caucasus were taken away from the Pale of Settlement. In 1825 an order was issued to remove all Jews without exception from the rural districts. In the same year the Czar authorized the limitation of Jewish commerce within the Pale of Settlement. In the same year, while passing through

had been
velizh where a ritual murder case ~~xxx~~ going on since 1823, he gave credence to the accusation contrary to his opinion of 1817 on the same subject. Such was the end of Alexander's reign. The condition of the Jews had hardly improved through his reforms and they suffered greatly in the closing years of his reign through repressive measures.



Chapter VI.--Inner Development.

Alexander's policy towards the Jews met with failure not only in the political and economic conditions but also in the educational lines. His efforts to promote secular culture among the Jews ended with disappointment. This was due to the general conditions of Russian intellectual life as well as to the policy of paternalism which was pursued in handling the Jewish problem. The reforms in the life of the Jews were planned and suggested by outsiders who knew very little concerning the actual needs of the Jews. The voice of Notkin was practically drowned in the discordant noises of the commissioners. The advice of Dr. Frank was too utopian for the Jews in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. To introduce reforms in their religious life was just as impossible as to convert them to another religion. Their religious fanaticism knew no limits. They were ready to cut their throats for what they regarded as the true observances of Judaism. In this spirit the Hasidim were excommunicated and persecuted by their opponents and in turn began to persecute others who manifested heretical tendencies. To reform their religious life was an impossibility. However, Dr. Frank modeled his plan according to the condition of the German Jews and especially of those who belonged to the Mendelssohnian circles and wished to impose his advanced views on fanatical masses. The suggestions of Russification of Nevahowitz were hardly feasible. In Germany the cry for amalgamation with the Germans had a great influence on the Jewish masses at large. In Russia, however, it passed away without any influence whatsoever. In Germany the Jews lived in less compact masses as compared with the Jews in Russia and in a higher sphere of culture. Thus they had an incentive power for amalgamation with a people that were superior to them spiritually and intellectually. In Russia, the situation was different. There the Jews lived a life of

their own; their communities were severed from the rest of the population which was very low spiritually and intellectually for it must be remembered that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Russia was learning its first steps of civilization. The first significant contact of Russia with European civilization - not to mention the feeble attempts under Catherine II - dates from the first quarter of the nineteenth century when Alexander I figured as one of the chief actors in the Napoleonic drama of Europe. Those who were influenced by European culture largely belonged to the upper classes, with which the Jews hardly came into contact. In the Western and Southern regions, where the Jews were permitted to reside there was no cultured middle class to speak of, during the first half of the nineteenth century. There the popular language was not Russian. In Kurland German and Latish were spoken; in Lithuania and White Russia - Polish, Lithuanian, Zhemudian and White Russian; in the South-western provinces - Polish and Little Russian formed the medium of conversation. There was no Russian culture worthy of the name during the reign of Alexander I. Now to move such a large body of Jews to change their form of life without substituting anything higher was out of the question. Russification may have meant something to Nevahowitz who moved in the circle of Russian literateurs and to Peretz who stood in close relations with high officials of St. Petersburg and to a number of other intellectuals, but to the Jewish masses who lived among the illiterate peasants and an ignorant clergy it was unintelligible. Those Jews who were interested in secular knowledge could not get it in Russia, but had to import it from Germany in its German dress. In this way even the most enlightened of the Jews during the first half of the nineteenth century, with very few exceptions, did not know the Russian language, although some of them mastered German. However, the imported tongue would not carry them very far in every day life. Accordingly, Yiddish, which was forced out by the popular language in Germany after the Mendelssohnian en-

lightenment, was preserved among the Russian intellectuals as a medium of conversation. While they used Hebrew for their literary purposes they soon discovered ~~that~~ ^{to be} Yiddish ~~as~~ a peculiarly fine instrument for the spread of culture among the masses. With this purpose in view were produced the earliest literary attempts in Yiddish.

Thus in imitation of Mendelssohn's translation of the Bible into German¹, Mendel Levin (or Lefin)² translated the book of Proverbs into Yiddish (Tarnopol, 1816). This innovation called forth Tobiah Feder's satirical work against him ("Kol Mehazezim", Berditchev, 1816). He also translated the book of Ecclesiastes into the same dialect. However, this work was not published until long after his death. (Odessa, 1873) Gottlob states that he saw Levin's manuscript translation of the Psalms and his disciples in Podolia claimed that he wrote a book in the same language "Der Ershter Hasid". These were lost.³

While the enlightenment from 'above' met with failure, there was another current flowing from the heart of the people that transformed the life of the Jews in Russia. This was the influence of Elijah of Wilna⁴

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia V.VII-P.309.

(2). Born in Satanov, Podolia, circ. 1741 and died in Mikolayev, in the same province in 1819. Levin became interested in secular knowledge through reading J.S.Delmedigo's "Elim". (It is important to note how large an influence was exerted by the older Jewish literature and especially by the philosophic and philologic works of the middle ages upon the development of the Haskala in Galicia as well as in Russia. Levin, for example, paraphrased the More-Nebukim into the popular Rabbinic phraseology. In the Hebrew translation of the work by Tibbon it was probably inaccessible to the large masses, because of its philosophic terminology.) He, consequently, went to Berlin and remained there in the Mendelssohnian circles for several years. He, then, came to Brodi where he exerted a great influence upon Perl and Krochmal. On his return to Russia he spent a great deal of time in Joshua Zeitlin's home in Ustye. Later on he removed to Mikolayev, where he was engaged by Prince Adam Chartorysky as teacher of his children. (Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.VIII P.41).

Levin seems to have been well versed in Arabic. He attempted a new Hebrew translation of the More Nebukim from the Arabic. ("Bikure Haitim", 1824 P.3 ff).

(3). Heassif, 1884-P.7.

(4). Firm in Kirja Ne'Emana Pp.133-164.

upon his immediate disciples and through them upon all the Russian Jewry. His activity falls in the last part of the eighteenth century, but its results belong to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Isaac Hirsch Weiss says of him: "I consider the Gaon of Wilna as the father of Talmudic criticism, who laid out paths in Mishna, Beraitha and the old Midrashim, by clearing the texts from the weeds of errors that grew up in consequence of the carelessness of the writers and copyists. Nevertheless, his criticism was not the product of arbitrary ideas, without clear proofs, nor the result of far-fetched hypotheses, but it grew out of the comparison of sources and texts.... He did not despise secular knowledge; quite to the contrary he himself engaged in it and implanted a love for it in the hearts of his sons, relatives and disciples, and urged his people to study Hebrew and its grammar."¹

While the immediate results of the Gaon's teachings were very slight they became more marked in the course of time. Without the Gaon of Wilna, the Russian Haskalah, at least in its earliest forms, is inconceivable. He laid out a system of Jewish education which in its essentials agrees with that of Vesseley's in his *Dibre Shalom Ve'Emeth*. To us his plan may appear as insignificant, but to his generation it was quite revolutionary. He stated that a child should first know the Bible and the Hebrew Grammar² before taking up the study of the Mishna, then the child is ready for Talmud. In the study of the Talmud he disliked the pilpulistic method and urged a clear common sense interpretation.³ His influence on the course of development of Judaism in Russia is seen in two different lines: in orthodoxy and in Haskala or enlightenment. However, these two widely separated streams converged into one under Isaac Beer Levinsohn.

(1). In Breinin's *Mimizrach Umima'arav* or "Reshith Zemitha-Haskalah be Russia" (Vol. I, P. 9-27). This expresses the opinion of other scholars like Yabitz (Kenesseth Yisrael, 1886) Breinin (*Mimizrah Umima'arav*) Magid (Toledoth Mishpahath Ginsburg P. 72) and Finn (Kirjah Ve'Emana V. IV-1839 P. 1 ff).

(2). The Gaon's treatise on Grammar was discovered and published in the Kenesseth Yisrael for 1886.

(3). Cp. Levinsohn's "Teuda Be Yisrael"-Chapter 1. Paragraph 13.

The Gaon encouraged his disciple Baruch of Schklov to translate Euclid's Geometry into Hebrew. This step was probably intended as help to the Talmudic scholars in the study of such portions of the Talmud that require the knowledge of Geometry.¹ However, this indirect method of introducing secular knowledge yielded abundant results. The harvest does not depend upon the motives the farmer had in mind while casting the seed in the ground. Baruch of Schklov also wrote on Anatomy and Hygiene and carried on experiments in the chemical laboratory furnished for him by the Mycenae of Jewish culture, Joshua Zeitlin. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Margolies published a work on Natural Science as far back as 1770. In his book "Beth Midoth" on ethics he speaks of the opponents of secular knowledge as "savages" and appealed to the faithful sons of Israel to promote secular learning as prerequisites of the "Knowledge of the Torah" as well as of Life". Another man of this group Mendel Levin² translated a popular treatise on medicine from the French by Tissot "Refu'ot ha-Am" (Zolkiev, 1794; 2nd edition Lemberg 1857). He also wrote on popular ethics "Heshbon ha-Nephesh", after Franklin (Lemberg 1809; Wilna 1844; Warsaw 1852) and "Masseot ha-Yan" (Zolkiev, 1818) travels on the sea, after Campe.

What is more important from the point of view of the Gaon's influence on Judaism is seen in the work of his son Abraham, who "developed a literary activity of a more scientific character than was usually found at that age or in that country"³. He edited the "Midrash Agahat Bereshit" with a number of other mostly pseudo-epigraphic works (Wilna 1802) of similar character, adding valuable notes. His preface to this work is an attempt, "for the first time so far as we know",⁴ to present a complete

(1). The Gaon himself wrote a treatise on mathematics. See Finn in Kirja Ne'Emana P.153-Paragraph 8, Vol.1.

(2). P.56 Note 1.

(3). Jewish Encyclopedia Vol.1 P.106.

(4). Ibid.

history of the Midrashic literature. In his "Rab-Po'alim" ("From Many Works"; Warsaw 1894) he continued this study and gave an alphabetical index of all the Midrashim known to him. It can hardly be expected from a man of that period to have a full idea of literary criticism, even though he was interested in literature and literary problems. For this reason his works are not free from many shortcomings. "Still, in spite of its shortcomings, the book is a very valuable one (even after Zunz has treated the same subject in his methodical manner), because the author has collected many references from rabbinical literature".¹ He edited Menahem Mendel's index to the Zohar² with an introduction and notes. His interests in secular studies were rare in his environment. He is the author of a Hebrew geography.³ The Gaon suggested that his son translate Josephus into Hebrew that thereby we may get at the full meaning of certain statements in the Talmud.⁴

In his struggle with the Hasidim the Gaon saw clearly that there was only one way by which the growing influence of this movement might be counteracted, and that was by a deeper interest in Talmudic learning. Thus he suggested that his chief disciple Rabbi Hayim of Volozhin establish a Yeshibah. "The reform movement on the one side and the ensnaring Hasidic tendencies on the other caused the disciples of the Wilna Gaon to deliberate as to how they might preserve the true Jewish learning and perpetuate the method and style of study inaugurated by the Gaon who was rather opposed to pilpul and the hilukim as practised in the Yeshibot of Poland".⁵ Consequently, six years after the Gaon's death Rabbi Hayim founded his school

(1). Ibid.

(2). "Tamim Yahdov" Wilna, 1808.

(3) "Gebulot Erez", Berlin, 1821 (published anonymously)

(4) Kenesseth Israel, 1886 P.13

(5) Jewish Encyclopedia V.XII-P.598.

at Volozhin (1803). In spite of the fact that each Russian town had a yeshibah of its own, this institution soon became the center of Jewish learning in Russia. It was started independently of the Kehal. Rabbi Hayim supported the scholars as long as their number was small. He started with ten students. But their number soon increased,¹ and he was not able to meet the financial needs. He issued appeals for aid which were promptly responded to. Students from all parts of Russia were gathered around this Yeshibah. While the school was intended primarily to check the spread of Hasidism, it appears that among the disciples there were some Hasidim. In fact Rabbi Hayim tried to make them feel at home. Due to this broad-mindedness of Rabbi Hayim, the Volozhin Yeshibah became a force in the life of the Jews in Russia. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century this yeshibah, as well as a good many others modeled after it, wielded a great influence upon the Jews, not only religiously but also intellectually. For most of the leading men of the Haskalah period studied in the Yeshibat, where they imbibed the first elements of European culture along with the Talmudic learning.

These tendencies of rigid orthodoxy combined with scientific procedure in research were fully expressed in one of the Vilna circle of scholars, Solomon Dubno.² He wrote fine didactic poetry and devoted himself to the study of the Massorah and Hebrew Grammar. He was the tutor to the son of Moses Mendelssohn³ and assisted Mendelssohn in the preparation of his Commentary to the Pentateuch.⁴ The fact that Dubno was connected with the Rier gave this work a certain sanction among the in-

(1). At the time of Rabbi Hayim's death in 1828 the number of students had reached one hundred.

(2). Dubno was born in the city of Dubno, Volhynia, October, 1738 and died at Amsterdam June 26th, 1813.

(3). General introduction to the Mevor Hayim P. 11 ff.

(4). Mendelssohn's commentaries to Genesis and Exodus contain many additions by Dubno (ibid p. 24). In the Pentateuch Dubno's "Kitzur Tikun Sofrim" is given. He also wrote a special commentary for Mendelssohn's translation of the Bible, but decided to publish it independently. Of this only a small portion was published under the title "Olim Vitruha" (Amsterdam 1778).

tellectual orthodoxy of Wilna. Thus, the Biur freely found its way among the more enlightened people without much protestation or opposition, for none of the orthodox elements of Russia suspected the Biur as yet. This event was of most profound importance in the development of Judaism in Russia. For thereby, the German Jewish enlightenment, slowly but surely, entered into the lives of the Russian Jews and yielded an abundant harvest. The consequences of this event are seen in more than one way. In the first place it brought before the people a correct version of the Bible in a fine, literary style. From this translation they not only learned to know the Bible, but also the German language which was the language of culture. There is one more way which makes the introduction of Mendelssohn's Bible into a Russia an event of great importance. The preface to the Pentateuch by Mendelssohn forms the first modern Hebrew prose composition of decided merit. Till that time Hebrew style in Russia-Poland had degenerated into a kind of pedantic 'short-hand' of thought. Its allusions to Talmudic and Midrashic literatures, its lack of clearness and fragmentary form, and above all its poor grammar rendered it a monstrous jargon¹ and here with the introduction of the Biur the intellectuals had before them a model of clear and lucid Hebrew, worthy of imitation. Thus the jargon of Maharsha's and of Mahram gave way to the precise and exact phrasing of Isaac Baer Levinsohn, M.A. Ginsburg and Abraham Mapu.

Solomon Dubno came in contact with Wesseley's "Songs of Glory". Consequently he too set out to write poetry. He was the first modern He-

(1). A simple illustration cited by I.B. Levinsohn in his "Teuda be Yisrael" will suffice. A collector of the commentaries to the Mahzor published in Russia closes his preface in the following way: "Ahath she'Elothi uvakoshothi me'Eth ha-bore asher 'boro'hi', male yemale mishe--alothai", etc. This is typical of the ignorance of the Russian Rabbis, of Hebrew.

brew poet in Russia. His verse is of didactic nature, skillfully wrought. The best known of his poems is his "Hymn to Hypocrisy." His example was imitated by many others, until genuine poets appeared who revived the language of the Psalmists and thrilled their people with new songs of faith and of hope. The rise of such poets as Adam ha-Cohen and his son Michael Lebenson could not have been fully explained without this contact with Wesseley through Dubno.

The craving on the part of some of the elite for culture was especially marked among the intellectuals of Schklov in the government of Moghilev. This town formed an important station on the route from St. Petersburg to Western Europe. This afforded the Jews the opportunity of entering into relations with men of mark who passed through on their way to the capital.¹ Thus a circle of Maskilim was formed, which planned to imitate Mendelssohn's enlightenment in still another way. They proposed to publish a popular weekly magazine in Hebrew, in the order of the 'Meassef' of 1784, for the promotion of enlightenment among the people. They published an appeal in an appendix to the lexicographical work "Zecher Rav" from which we learn that "even in the small towns there are many who thirst after knowledge". This statement helps us to understand the subsequent development of the Haskalah movement. It had not come down miraculously from heaven--even though the writers of that period were fond of invoking the "Haskalah Bath Hashamayim"---but grew out slowly and naturally from the very heart of the people. The longing for culture was widespread among many of the better classes of the Russian Jews of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The fuel was there. All that was necessary was for some one to kindle the fire. A group of such men appeared under the leadership of Isaac Baer Levinsohn. Their activity falls within the reign of Nicholas I.

(1). See above P.25, 32 and Cp.Slouschz. The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature.P.100 ff.

Reign of Nicholas I.



Chapter VII.-Russia under Nicholas I.

The last years of Alexander I were most fatal for Russia. His mental depression disabled him from active work. Consequently the government was in the hands of Count Araktscheff. It is said "that the Count had in his possession a quantity of blanks with the signature of Alexander, and was thus enabled to decide, publish and execute any law or any other disposition whatsoever."¹ This explains a great deal concerning the existing state of anarchy. There was no government and no administration and "Russia was kept together by an inward, inborn force of cohesion."² The dark forces of Russia were in full sway. The spirit of reaction set on. The spirit of protest against the inhuman administration was voiced by the best spirits of the age. The banner of revolt against despotism was raised by Pestel. Quietly he organized his recruits for the emancipation of Russia from cruel despots, for the abolition of serfdom, and for the establishment of a constitutional form of government. These political tendencies were strongly felt in St. Petersburg and Moscow, which ^{cities} formed the centers of these political societies.³ The revolutionary leaders pointed to "the desolate state⁴ of Russia caused by the imbecility displayed by Alexander in the last years of his reign; to the savage ferocity of his brother Constantine, and to the supposed entire incapacity of Nicholas" and claimed that on these grounds the form of government must be changed.

These opposing tendencies in Russian life resulted in the reactionary Regime of Nicholas I. As Alexander left no sons the throne

(1). Russia as It Is. Count A. De Garowsky. New York 1854 P.48.

(2). Ibid P.51.

(3). A short History of Russia. Mary Platt Parmele New York 1907/P.183.

(4). Russia as It Is. P.49.

of Russia fell to the lot of his next oldest brother Constantine, who resided in Cracow as Viceroy of Poland. However, he renounced his throne on account of his deep attachment to a Polish lady, -in favor of his brother Nicholas. There followed a "contest of generosity" which lasted about three weeks. Nicholas urged and protested and his brother refused. The revolutionary leaders seized this opportune time to destroy first the entire royal family and then to compel the Senate and Holy Synod to adopt the constitution, which had been prepared for the occasion. The hour for this performance was set on the day when the Senators and troops should assemble to take the Oath of Allegiance to Nicholas.

A bloody tragedy followed. The best and most intellectual forces of Russia were among the victims. The revolutionary attempt was drowned in blood. Autocracy triumphed. Nicholas ascended the throne after taking the leading part in a bloody drama and repeated his role again and again during his long reign of thirty years. Thus was inaugurated the reign of reaction. The leaders of the revolutionary spirit were condemned to capital punishment. But capital punishment had ^{been} abolished in Russia by the Empress Elizabeth with the exception of the sentences of court martial.¹ The Czar after three days of hesitation signed the condemnation restoring thereby the old measure. "A hangman was imported from Stockholm, as there was none in Russia. The execution of five of the condemned took place publicly in St. Petersburg. The Governor-General of the capital presided on the occasion. Four were executed one after another. The fifth and last in order was Ryleef, a beloved and popular poet. The rope broke, and he fell to the ground hurt slightly and alive. The crowd echoed a simultaneous, thunder-like groan. The Governor-General hesitated and sent for orders to the Emperor. The answer was, to

(1) Russia As It Is. P.50

"take a stronger rope and proceed with the execution".¹ This incident is characteristic of the Czar's cold-blooded heart and tyrannic disposition. He was merciless in his treatment of political exiles and was unsympathetic in his dealing with his faithful followers. He was a born ^{de} despot. Count A. Gurowsky describes his appearance: "The glance of his large, blue-greenish, crystal-like, limpid eyes, pierces through and through as with the points of two freezing icicles. A cold pang seized one's whole being on receiving their full glare". He was vain-glorious of his appearance and thought that he captivated all his beholders. The courtiers and other flatterers harped on this theme. Another one of his hobbies was his belief in his own military skill. This was implanted in him from childhood. His education was very meager. Other studies were neglected for the sake of military training. "There is a kind of mental disease in this family", remarks Gurowsky, "especially since the unhappy Peter III like whom xxx they all regard it as their vocation to be good corporals...But not one of the family has ^{ever} displayed any higher military capacity whatever. Nicholas, however able he may (have been) as was his father and his three brothers, to detect a button which was not in its proper place on the uniform of a simple soldier drawn in line with hundreds of others, or an other fault in the equipment--could never measure by his eye the reach of a gun, or the distance accomplished by a bullet".² This military hobby left its stamp on all the activity of Nicholas I. The high schools for law and surgery in St. Petersburg became military institutions. The Empire was divided into University Districts, under the Secretary of Public Instruction. The heads of these districts as well as the director of public instruction and even the

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid-P.46

minister were recruited from the army or navy, since they though not adepts in scholarship were most fit to maintain an iron rule¹. A detective system was inaugurated and the Police became an elevated branch of the administration. All forces that were suspected either by the government or by the Greek church were broken. The branches of the Bible Society established under Alexander's patronage were abolished. As the head of the Church, he regarded sedition and non-conformity as one and the same thing. It was his purpose, therefore, to establish a more uniform religion among his subjects. He was outraged by the various sects that were not attached to the orthodox faith, of the Old Believers, who were divided into sections such as: the Milk Drinkers, communists, Leapers, Runners, Flagellants and Castrates. He installed an orthodox bishop in Riga (1839) in order to weaken Lutheranism, which was prevalent in the Baltic Provinces. The army of proselytisers took advantage of the famine of 1841 to bring thousands of peasants within the pale of the Greek Church. In Poland, Roman Catholic churches were despoiled. Convents were suppressed. Conformity to the Greek Church secured liberation to the worst criminals. These religious suppressions lead, to a great extent, to the second Polish Insurrection of 1863.

Nicholas suspected everything foreign especially since the ~~after~~ ~~fixix~~ abdication of Charles X in 1830. The epidemic of revolt which spread from France to Belgium and Italy and then invaded Russia-Poland where it broke out in the insurrection of 1831, shook Russia to its foundations. In the subsequent struggle Polish independence was wiped out of existence. The Polish army and Diet were effaced. The policy of Russofication of Poland commenced. Russian systems of taxes, justice and coinage, and the metric system of weights and measures used in Russia were introduced.

(1). Ibid P.56.

The University of Warsaw was carried to Moscow and the University of Wilna was suppressed. The Polish language was prohibited to be taught in the schools and was replaced by the Russian. In order to avoid further troubles of the same kind Nicholas "was going to establish a sort of political quarantine to keep out European influences".¹ Thus he forbade to send young men to Western Universities and limited the term of residence in foreign countries to five years for nobles and three for other Russian subjects. He also endeavored to give prominence to the Russian language, literature and history over all studies in the schools. This gave an impulse to the development of Russian literature during his reign; much against his intentions the foundations of a new Russia were laid by Pushkin, ^Yermontoff, Dostoyevsky, Turgeniev and Gogol. He disliked German free-thought and excluded philosophy from the Universities permitting it to be taught only by ecclesiastics. The universities he regarded as hot-beds of the revolutionary spirit and therefore tried to disarm this tendency by imposing high fees and limiting the number of students. An average of three hundred students a year in each university were sufficient, in his mind, to maintain a supply of public servants. There were six universities in Russia. Consequently the yearly number of students was eighteen hundred and these were taken from the nobility alone. The burghers forming the first and second guild were forbidden to give their children a higher education, "because, as the ukase explains, it would contribute to arouse wishes and aspirations not to be reached and realized by that class in Russia, and thus would spread dissatisfaction with the real position of the individuals and the class".² Thus public instruction also became a tool in the hands of absolutism. Under Vvarov, President of the Academy of Sciences, the

(1). A Short History of Russia.

(2). Russia As It Is. P.57.

status of the universities improved, Normal Schools increased and education became more wide-spread.

The censorship became a menace to free speech and to free thought. Editors of newspapers were regarded as agents of the government. "They were forbidden to animadvert on any measure adopted by the Tzar; to reflect, however obliquely, on dynasties allied with the imperial House".¹ Moreover, officials and professors were prohibited to mention the name Pan-Slavism, which reminded the people that Tzarism is comparatively modern and that communal equality was the cradle of Slavic life for ages, under the severest penalties, such as expulsion from the service or imprisonment. Similar penalties were imposed on the writing of the history of modern times or on the reign of the Tzar. Nicholas fulfilled the prophecy of *Hermetov*: "He said to the mind:

"Go into darkness";

And signed it

'Be it so'

Tzar Nicholas."

This blind rule was characteristic of all branches of the internal administration. Corruption and venality prevailed. The Tzar was all in all; and the seventy millions of human beings "lived for him and through his imperial concession".

It was during the reign of Nicholas I that the theory of "Official Nationalism" came to light. This doctrine, which has never since been questioned by the government, was founded by Count Uvarev. In a report to the Tzar (1833) he defines it as follows: "Russia has preserved a warm faith in the salutary principles without which it cannot prosper, grow stronger, nay, even live...A Russian who is devoted to his native country

(1). Skrine, Russia (1815-1900)

would not acquiesce to the loss of any of the dogmas of our orthodoxy, or agree to be robbed of one of the pearls in the diadem of Monomach. Autocracy is the chief condition of the political existence of Russia. The Russian giant rests on it, as on the corner-stone of his greatness. And besides these two national principles, there is a third not less important: that of nationality." This doctrine was according to the heart of Nicholas I. His policy in general was in full accord with this doctrine. This was especially true of his policy towards the Jews.



Chapter VIII. Special Legislation.

The reactionary policy adopted by the Government, in dealing with the Jews during the last years of Alexander, I, reached its culmination under Nicholas I, whose reign of thirty years bears the characteristic marks of mediocrity. His narrow-mindedness prevented him from seeing how his subjects could be loyal to him while they differed from him in religion. Consequently, he looked upon all those who did not belong to the Greek Orthodox Church with suspicion and hatred. This attitude was especially marked in the case of the Jews. He despised them as "the enemies of Christ" and took a special interest in bringing them into the bosom of the Greek Church. His methods were in keeping with his tyrannical disposition. Thus, he tried to force the Jews into Christianity through hostile legislation. During his reign, largely under his personal supervision, about six hundred legal enactments concerning the Jews were framed---these constituting one half of all ^{the laws} ~~enactments~~ between 1699 and 1881. The laws were enacted against the Jews simply because they ~~were~~ were Jews. As soon, however, as a Jew embraced Christianity, he gained equal rights with the rest of the ~~people~~ population. Nicholas I suspected the Jews of trying to convert Christians to Judaism. Hence, when the "Judaizing Sect" appeared, all the Jews were expelled from the districts in which members of that sect resided (1825). In 1827, a law was issued, in connection with the rights of temporary residence in cities of the interior, ordering that, "discovering rabbis and other persons necessary for religion, the police must remove them immediately." That action purposed to prevent the "heretical sect" from coming in contact with the Jews.² For the same reason, the Jews were forbidden to

(1). Mynch, Rukovodstvo P.4.

(2). R.J.E. VII. 584.

engage Christian servants.

This hostile legislation was urged also by the merchants, who keenly felt the Jewish rivalry in business. They fought the Jews as their competitors; but they disguised themselves in the cloak of religion. The case of Moscow¹ was repeated in many cities. The Governor-general of Kiev, Bucharin, in accordance with the wishes of the merchant population, raised the question concerning the expulsion of the Jews from the city. He pointed out that the Kahal and the Synagogue were not in keeping with the spirit of the holy place as well as with the privileges of the city. Prince Golitzen had no difficulty in proving that the law of 1794, including Kiev in the Pale of Settlement did not refer to permanent residence but only to trade. In either case, he insisted, the privileges were granted only to the Jews of that time. However, the committee of ministers wished to postpone the expulsion of the Jews. Then Nicholas I stepped in and urged that the opinion of the Governor General of Kiev be asked at once, in order not to delay matters. The Governor interpreted the law of 1794 as referring not to the city but to the Government of Kiev. He added that if the special privileges of Riga were sufficient for the removal of the Jews from that city, "then it would be entirely correct to act in the same manner in the case of Kiev also, in order to show the rigidity of the royal ordinances."² Accordingly a law was issued (1827) prohibiting the Jews from residing in that city. Exceptions were made in the case of ~~officers~~ of the first and second guild merchants, who were allowed to visit the city for certain periods of time. The local administration was charged with strict orders that not a single Jewish house of worship be allowed in the city. The Jews began to sell their houses; but the Christian population wished to take further advantage of their helpless condition and refused to pay them reasonable prices for their property. General F.V. Saken interceded in behalf of the Jews. However, the Tzar agreed only to postpone their removal for three years (1831). Soon after, The Governor General ~~the~~ ~~General~~

(1). See above Chapter II.

(2). R.J.E. IX 520.

Levashev appealed that the Jews be permitted to settle in a separate suburb in Kiev, on the left bank of the Tybed river. He called attention to the fact that the city would suffer economically through the expulsion of the Jews and that the merchants of the city were not so anxious to preserve the old privileges of Kiev as to rid themselves of their competitors. He showed that as soon as the Jews began to move out, the prices of commodities began to rise. Nevertheless, the regulations of 1835 sanctioned the ~~expans~~ expulsion of the Jews from Kiev.¹ However, in view of the economic depression that resulted from the expulsion of the Jews, attempts were made to secure the re-admittance of certain classes of Jews besides the first and second guild merchants.

The example of Kiev was followed by Kamenetz Podolsk. There, the Governor was unable to demand the removal of the Jews because the ancient privileges of the city had been annulled by Paul I. Therefore he determined at least to create a ghetto for the Jews, but his plan failed. ~~prohibited~~ ~~but his plan failed~~. In Kovna, some restrictions were placed upon the right of residence of the Jews. In Zaitomir, they were prohibited from residing in the leading streets (1854).² Even the Karaites in the city of Trok, in the government of Wilna, were anxious to preserve the ancient privileges of their city, granted by the Polish Kings. In reality, they wanted to get rid of their competitors. In 1809, they began to urge that, according to the special privileges of that city, the Jews were not allowed to live there. But their petitions were rejected. Under Nicholas I, they renewed their complaints with the result that ~~as~~ one hundred and ninety-two Jewish fami-

(1). Yet the statistics of 1847 show that about five thousand, four hundred and seventy-six Jewish souls resided in the government of Kiev. (R.J.E. IX-579).

(2). In 1823, the Jews were prohibited from living in certain streets in the city of Wilna. (Perezhitoye I-2nd part P.7 ff.

ilies had to leave the city to accomodate the one hundred and seventy-four resident Karaites (1835). On similar grounds, only those Jews were allowed to reside in Schlok (in Lievland) who had registered there before 1835; and, in Riga, all those who registered before 1841. In Poland, various restrictions were placed upon the rights of residence in Warsaw and other cities. At the time of the formation of the Kingdom of Poland (1815), there were eighty-three cities which had the right to forbid Jews to settle in them. In the twenties, the Grand Duke added thirty more cities to the list. In 1856, the Jews were allowed to live in two hundred and forty-six out of four hundred and fifty-three cities. In thirty-one cities, special districts, on the model of the one in Warsaw, existed for Jewish settlement. In ninety cities, they were either forbidden to reside altogether, or permitted only in parts. The law was not observed in all cases.

If economic motives entered into the expulsion of the Jews from certain cities, they also entered into the permitting of their residence in specified places. In all cases, the Jews were permitted to live where the population could not get along without them, or where they rendered great help to certain classes of people. This utilitarian motive of the Government appeared in striking forms. Thus, according to the laws of 1819 and 1827, Jewish distillers were allowed to reside everywhere in the interior of Russia and also in Irkutsk, Siberia. That permission was due to the fact that the Russian estate-owners stood in great need of Jewish distillers.

In 1825, the Minister of Finance, Kankrin, insisted on refusing the Jews the right of residence in the Caucasus. Consequently, they were ordered to remove (1827). Their departure resulted in a rise of the prices of certain products. In 1831, new Jewish artisans appeared under the protection of the local authorities. The viceroy of the Caucasus explained

to the Ministry of the Interior that there had been Jewish Settlement in the Caucasus from the olden times and that the Jews had enjoyed equal rights with the other inhabitants. Nevertheless, the regulations of 1835 excluded the Caucasus from the regions where the Jews might reside, and made it necessary to remove all the Jews ~~from that region~~ ^{from that region}. But the Viceroy remitted to St. Petersburg, data concerning the Jews in the Caucasus, who numbered about twelve thousand. When that attempt proved of no avail, he categorically announced that the expulsion of the original Jewish inhabitants was absolutely impossible, since they owned real property, and engaged in agriculture and trades.¹ Accordingly, a law followed (1837) permitting the Jewish mountaineers to remain; and of all the other Jews, only artisans were allowed to reside in that region. In 1852, twenty-six families from other places were permitted to register in the Jewish communities of the Caucasus; and, in 1869, two hundred and sixty-six more families were granted the ^{same} privilege. Similar motives led to the permission of Jewish artisans to settle in Tula, Voronezh, Saratov, etc.

The case was different in Nikolayev and in Sebastopol. In 1829, all the Jews, with the exception of those who served in the army or navy, were expelled from these cities. The military governor of Sebastopol, in accord with the sentiment of the population, the police, and the city council, applied to the Ministry of the Interior for the retention of the Jews (1830); but his petition was refused. In 1832 he applied again for the postponement of the expulsion. At first, two years were granted and later a third.

The economic motive worked both ways also in regard to the expulsion of the Jews from the rural communities. While the regulations of 1835 were in preparation, numerous attempts were made to expel the Jews from certain rural districts on the ground of the supposed harm the Jews caused the peasantry. These demonstrations began at Grodno and spread to

(1). Russian Jewish Encyclopedia IX-74 ff.

Podolia and Volhynia. A protest was raised by Count M.N. Muravyev, Governor of Grodno. He stated that, before expelling the Jews from the rural communities, ascertainment ought first have been made in all truth "wherefrom the present miserable condition of the peasants proceeded, and whether the exploitation of the Jews transcended other depressing causes, resulting from the landlords' management itself". He suggested that "as long as there existed the unrestricted sale of liquor in numberless inns, whether in the hands of Jews or Christians, and as long as the landlords would not attain that degree of actual education, that would make them realize the necessity of their caring for their peasants, so long the very best soil, all means of trade, and the very expulsion of the Jews, could not further the real improvement of the conditions of the inhabitants".¹ Somewhat similar views were expressed by other influential men. And Kan-krin, the Minister of Finance, pointed out the great difficulties in carrying out such measures. To this Nicholas I added: "Wherever the measure (of removal) has been already undertaken, it would not be well to alter it. however, let it be postponed in those places where it had not yet been started."² Meanwhile, restrictions were placed upon the Jews of Poltava and Chernigov. They were allowed to remain only in those places where the serfs that belonged to the Crown and the Cossacks constituted less than one tenth part of the population. However, Nicholas I permitted all those Jews to remain, who would enlist their sons under fifteen years of age as Cantonists.

In 1845, the Jews were forbidden to sell liquors in rural districts. Further restrictions followed in 1853 concerning the rights of residence in villages and hamlets. However, this time the law touched the vital interests of the state as well. The Governor-general of Kiev pointed out that under such conditions the postal stations, which were almost en-

(1). J. Hessen, *Zakon*; Zhign P.61.

(2). *Ibid* P.63.

tirely in the hands of the Jews, would suffer. The administrator of the Postal Department advised that the law be changed. His suggestion was carried out during the reign of Alexander II.

It must be added, in this connection, that not only was the presence of the Jews in the villages not pernicious to the peasants, but that it promoted their welfare. ^{Moses} Sir Montefiore writes: "My information assured me that, since the Israelites were obliged to leave the guberniums of White Russia and Little Russia, the peasants have found themselves in a most deplorable state, and are in such an unfortunate condition that they are even without the seeds necessary for the future crops, a situation which never occurred while the Israelites were amongst them."¹

When once the Jews were recognized as a pernicious class and treated, by the high authorities, in a hostile spirit, corrupt officials were encouraged to utilize the helplessness of the Jews as a source of revenue. They exacted bribes from the Jews in a most shameful manner. Thus, the special legislation against the Jews became as a demoralizing factor in the life of the Russian officials. Some of the Jews were forced into contraband trades. While they divided the profits with the officers, they alone were regarded as the guilty persons. Consequently, a series of restrictive laws was enacted, for the purpose of protecting the government from smuggling. The law of 1825 permitting only those Jews who owned real property, to remain in the fifty verst western boundary zone was extended, in 1839, to the territory of Bessarabia. In 1843, a royal decree was issued ordering all Jews who lived in the fifty verst boundary zone adjacent to Prussia and Austria to move into the interior parts of the governments. The owners of houses were allowed two years time in which to sell them. An extension of time was granted "but the removal was not carried out in its entirety."²

(1). Diaries of Sir M. and Lady Montefiore I P.367

(2). Jewish Encyclopedia X. 560

Legislating against the Jews on fiscal grounds served merely as an excuse for more hostile legislation. Thus, when the fifty verst regulation was extended to Bessarabia, the Jews residing in the rural communities around Kagul, asked for permission to settle in the city. The Governor-general recommended to the Ministry of the Interior that this privilege be granted them, since there was no possibility of the Jews' engaging in contraband trade. The committee of ministers approved the governor's recommendation; but the Czar rejected it (1840). The same attitude was displayed in the expulsion of the Jews from Astrakhan. The laws of 1804 had encouraged the Jews to settle in Astrakhan. But Kankrin insisted (1824) on forbidding them the rights of permanent residence in the Government of Astrakhan, on the ground that they might bring harm to the trade with Asia. In the regulations of 1835, Astrakhan was excluded from the Pale of Settlement. The Governor General Timiryazev tried to secure permission for the forty-nine Jewish families residing in the city, to remain there, on the ground that their permanent residence would be of great help to the government in the spread of trades, etc. He also showed that they could hardly cause any harm, since their number was so small. However, the petition was rejected, and the Jews were ordered to remove in the course of two-three years. (No sooner were they expelled than new communities began to spring up. In the city of Astrakhan there was a common house of prayer in 1844 and cemetery in 1845¹.)

It is interesting to note that the special legislation concerning the Jews did not extend to the Karaites. The government did not consider that sect dangerous, since its members were not adherents of Talmudical Judaism, which was like a thorn in the side of the Tzar and of the government. Thus, while the regulations of 1835 spoke of the Karaites

(1). R.J.E. III-359.

as devoid of equal rights, that group attained full equality during the reign of Nicholas I. In 1839, the Karaites were permitted to engage Christian servants; and those of the sect who came from other countries were permitted to become Russian subjects. In 1843, the general regulations concerning honorary citizenship were extended to them. In 1850, they were allowed to sell liquors in villages and hamlets. In 1852, in consequence of the question as to whether or not the Karaites were included under the general laws concerning the Jews' ⁱⁿ rights to visit the capitals and the cities of the interior, a statement was issued ~~and~~ declaring the Karaites free from all the limitations placed upon the Jews. About a year later, they were permitted to reside in the harbor-cities on the north-eastern shore of the Black Sea. In 1855, all the limitations concerning admission into government service were removed from them.¹

On the other hand, the Jews of Poland suffered greatly under the burden of special legislation. There they had to endure the oppression of the Polish aristocracy in addition to the inhuman treatment of the Russian government. The introduction of the "patent" (license) for the sale of liquor and the orders of Yubetski (1821) concerning the trade in spirits, resulted in the ruin of a great part of the Jewish population. In 1823 General Zaionchik was instrumental in introducing a law compelling the Jews to move out of certain parts of Warsaw. Since ¹⁷⁹⁷ ~~1817~~, the "Geleit Zoll", a tax imposed on foreign Jews entering the realms of Poland, became a new burden to the people. In 1819, Sundel Zonnenberg attempted to have this tax removed from the Russian Jews, ^{Since} ~~declaring that~~ they could no longer be regarded as foreigners in Poland. However, his petition was rejected. In 1826, the Jews of Kovna urged anew the abolition of this tax on the ground of reciprocity; ^{for} ~~i.e.~~, the Jews of Poland were not required to pay a similar tax on entering Russia. Instead of granting this petition, Grand Duke Constantin suggested that a similar tax be imposed (1). Nysch, Rukovodstvo P.7-ff.

upon the Polish Jews also. Nicholas I was only too glad to accept such a suggestion. Kankrin lowered the tax by one-half. The "Geleit Zoll" existed till 1850. In addition the Polish Jews had to pay the so-called "Tag-Zettel", a tax for the maintenance of schools, etc. The Kahal was abolished in Poland in 1822 and an "ecclesiastical supervision" (Bozhnichni Dozor) instituted instead. However, conditions were hardly improved by this change. The conscription measures of 1827 were of even greater horror to the Jews of Poland than to those of Russia, because the laws of 1808, 1812, and 1816 had permitted a money substitution for personal service.¹ Thus, the Russian rule brought a worse condition to the Jews in Poland. No wonder that the more enlightened were very zealous in behalf of the liberation of Poland, during the insurrection of 1831. For, under an independent Poland, they could at least expect human treatment; while under Russian rule, there could be no such hope.

Their share of suffering was necessarily greater than that of ~~xxxx~~ the rest of the population when General Paskievich drowned the revolution in Polish blood. For both the Poles and the Russians suspected them of disloyalty. Thus, theirs was a position between the hammer and the anvil.

To complete the sketch of the special legislation concerning the Jews during the reign of Alexander, a survey must be made of the conscription measures, the abolition of the Kahal, the laws concerning the change of attire, and the attempted reforms in ~~in~~ the economic and educational sphere of Jewish life.

(1). Yevreyskaya Starina II 65.

Chapter IX-Conscription Measures.

While there were some Jews in the Russian army during the reign of Alexander I¹ they were officially exempt from military service. Like the merchant and burgher classes they paid a certain amount for relief from conscription. Only while the non-Jewish burgher paid three hundred and sixty rubles for each soldier, the Jews, rich and poor paid five hundred rubles, the same as the merchant classes. This exception made for the Jews evoked hostile comments in Russian society. Consequently Nicholas I issued an ukase on August 26th (September 7th) 1827, demanding that the Jews serve in the army like the other citizens of the Empire.² This ordinance fell like a death-blow upon the Jewish population. The twenty-five year term of military service as well as the severity of executing the law was too heavy for them to bear. The burden was made heavier for the Jews by demanding from them ten recruits per thousand each conscription term, whereas the non-Jews furnished seven recruits per thousand on the alternate conscription term. For arrears of taxes the Jews were required to furnish one additional recruit for every two thousand rubles.² The age of recruits was from twelve to twenty-five and "supernumerary" recruits even to the age of 35. In view of the greater number of conscripts required from the Jews in comparison with the non-Jews their arrears were on the increase. "For the lack of able bodied men (many fled, fearing the miseries of war and compulsory baptism) the Jewish communities represented by the Kahals, were unable to furnish such an excessive number of recruits; and yet for every conscript that was not furnished at the proper time two new conscripts were required demanded. Thus it became necessary to recruit cripples, invalids and old men, who were

(1). R.J.E. III 160

(2). The Caraites were exempt from military service in 1828 (Jewish Encyclopedia II-128.

placed in the auxiliary companies; at times even members of the Kahal were impressed into service, notwithstanding their advanced years. The sole supporters of families were also taken, and, finally, boys only eight years old."¹

The duty of supplying the government with recruits the quota of recruits fell upon the Kahal. Thereby the Kahal gained extensive powers. It was empowered to draft as a conscript any Jew in arrears with his taxes or guilty of vagrancy or any other offense.² Owing to the heartrending conditions under which the task had to be carried out the Kahal made itself obnoxious in the eyes of the Jews. Many outrages were committed by its officials in obtaining the recruits. The Kahal was supposed to keep a list of the births and deaths of the members of the community. The recruits were to be chosen from these lists. However, not infrequently the Kahal would omit to register the births of the children of the wealthier families and thereby save them from military service. The quota had to be supplied with the children of the poor. Thus the weight of the military laws fell chiefly upon the poorer population. This discrimination between the rich and the poor in discharging the duties of the state formed one of the greatest crimes of the Kahal, which led to endless strife in the life of the Jews. The Kahal official in charge of the conscription, was the most despised individual in the community. The curses and sometimes even blows ~~affix~~ of the recruits' parents fell upon his head. The outraged mothers would resort to interruption of the divine services in the synagogues on Saturday and in their desperate condition protested against the Kahal officials. This additional friction between the Kahal and the population on account of the conscription measures, contributed to the abolition of this institution (in 1844).

On one occasion when the Kahal of Kletzk, in the government of Minsk, sent the only son of a poor widow into the army, Benjamin Goldberg,

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia X-52.
 (2). Jewish Encyclopedia VII-411.

a resident of the same city wrote to the Governor of the state concerning that case. The matter was examined and the Kahal official summoned for trial. The Kahal succeeded in bribing the judges and in sending Goldberg instead of the official into prison. From there he wrote again to the Governor and appeared before him in person. Consequently he was released and the official put in his place. Soon after the Kahal again prevailed and Goldberg took the place of the official. A number of times these two men changed places, until Goldberg was exiled to Siberia, where he died.¹

That is one example of the iron hand of the Kahal and of the conflicts it had to encounter. But there was even greater hardship ^{in the} for the Jews in consequence of the denunciations of renegade Jews, who found in the actions of the Kahal a sufficient ground for their attacks on the Jews in general, as well as some Jews who for the sake of their personal advantages reported to the government the attempts on the part of some individuals or of the Kahal in contriving schemes for evading military service. Denunciations of this kind were seldom left unavenged by the Jews. But thereby they added to their own misery. For in such cases the communities were involved in Court procedures. In a case that came up in Podolia (1838-40) in consequence of the murder of two Jewish *informers* eighty prominent Jews were tried before criminal court.²

Thus through the conscription measures the Kahal evoked hatred on the part of the Jewish people as well as distrust on the part of the government. In the abovementioned city of Kletzk where the Kahal resorted to various outrageous measures, grew up the bitter opponent of the Kahal as well as of Judaism in general - Jacob Brafman. Early, he was singled out as a recruit. He, therefore, fled from his native city and spent a long time as a teacher in Hebrew in small villages. All the time he had to hide himself from the detection of the Kahal as well as from the gov-

(1). Paperna-Perezhitoye II.

(2). Dubnov, Perezhitoye I-2nd part P.1-ff.

ernment officials. Like a hunted animal he had to escape for his life until an idea dawned on him. He embraced Christianity and for the first time in his life inhaled the free air. Henceforth he was out of the jurisdiction of the Kahal. But he was resolved to take vengeance for his persecutions. He started out as a Protestant Missionary in the city of Minsk. Soon after he came to Wilna where he became the censor of Hebrew books and announced the publication of his "Book of the Kahal" (1869) wherein, by various forgeries he tried to expose the mysteries of the Kahal before the Christian world. This book added new fuel to the fire of antisemitism in Russia. There can be no doubt that a great deal of his bitterness was caused by the abuses of the Kahal in the carrying out of the conscription measures.

After the recruits were turned over to the government, those under eighteen years were sent to "Canton Schools" of far distant provinces for their military education. They were known as the "Cantonists". There they were raised with the children of the lower strata of Russian society like gypsies, criminals, rebels etc. While officially the Jewish soldiers were to be free to keep their religion, they were driven by the officers to compulsory conversion. The wish of the Tsar was well known to the officers and that was sufficient to make them zealous proselytizers. For they knew that the more conversions they could report the higher would be their rewards. Thus they began every review of the recruits with the call for those who would like to embrace Christianity.¹ The young children were sent for thousands of miles away from their homes, into provinces where there were no Jews - Perm, Vyatka, Kazan, Nizhegorad etc. There they were subjected to the most inhuman treatment in order to force them to info the orthodox church. They were not allowed to write their parents; and were forbidden to see other Jewish soldiers. They were forced to stand in the burning frost almost naked, and were subjected to corporal punishment. Similar tortures were inflicted on those Cantonists who were

sent on Christian farms where they were forced to perform the hardest tasks. They had to sleep in barns and feed on husks, etc.

However those who accepted Christianity enjoyed many privileges in the army and were employed, in time, to attract other Jewish Cantonists to follow their examples. Few of the Cantonists succeeded in remaining Jews. The greatest part of them succumbed to the hardships of their new life and died either on the way to their destination or in the schools. Some of them managed to escape on the way; in such cases the remaining soldiers were severely punished. Of the remaining many embraced Christianity. The large number of conversions can be seen from the following table: In 1843 the number of converts in Russia was 1,874¹; but in 1854 their number increased to 4,439. "However, many of the converted Cantonists secretly remained faithful to their former religion, and some of them subsequently returned to Judaism; that resulted in a series of court trials in the seventies and eighties (the case of Katzman in 1871, especially that of Aisenberg in 1880, of Terentyev in 1881 etc.)".²

The martyrdom of the Cantonists produced many legends among the people. One of them stated that once at a military parade where the Tzar was present the Jewish soldiers who were forced into the river for baptism drowned themselves in order to escape conversion. This legend was based on a well established incident;³ that, once when eight hundred Jewish Cantonists were forced into the water for baptism, two of them drowned themselves. Similar legends are current among the Jews in Russia. Their folk songs were full of complaint concerning the horrors to which the Cantonists were subjected.

At the age of eighteen the Cantonists entered upon their twenty-five year term of service. On this occasion they had to take the follow-

- (1). This number is rather at variance with the one given by Dr. Max Lilienthal.
- (2). R.J.E. IX 243.
- (3). Allg. Zeit. d. Jud. 1845 P. 694.

ing oath: "In the name of the Lord, the living God of Israel, I swear, that I am willing to and that I shall serve the Tzar of Russia and the Russian government where or however I shall be commanded during all the term of my service, in full submission to the officers, even as faithfully as if I were obliged to serve for the protection of our own land (of Israel) and of our holy Torah.

"The words of this oath I do not annul in my heart. But I take it in accordance with the intention of those that lead me to take the oath; declare void all statements which I either made or shall make concerning the annulment of this oath. In one word, far be it from me to seek personally or to receive from another person any means in order to annul this oath.

"However, should I sin either on account of my own failing or should I, on account of someone's influence, transgress this oath, which I take this day, to serve faithfully as a soldier may I and my family be cursed in this world and in the future world. Amen."¹

The offensive form of this oath may serve as a commentary on the attitude of the government towards the Jews. They were distrusted before they weretaken onto the army and remained in the same state even after they had distinguished themselves in military service. The question soon came up concerning the promotion of some Jewish soldiers. In 1832 the Tzar Nicholas permitted the promotion of the Jews into the rank of 'unter-offizer', however "only for distinction in fighting against the enemy". Of course he did not expect to be involved in war. In 1837 a committee of ministers wished to permit the right of settlement in Nikolayev and Sebastopol to the aged parents of Jewish sailors who served there, but the Tzar laid down the law; "to permit widowed mothers only".² However, by the irony of history, a memorial erected on the grave of five hundred

(1). Perezhitoye II 286 ff.

(2). R.J.E. III-162.

Jewish soldiers who fell, defending Sebastopol (1854-5), points out that they were granted full rights to die where they were prohibited to live.

The government took all measures to increase the number of Jewish recruits. Thus in 1837 an ukase was issued ordering that the sons of exiles into Siberia were to become Cantonists and in 1844 the law included the children of all criminals. In 1843 when the question came up ^{concerning} ~~the~~ the expulsion of the Jews from the military districts of Kiev and Podolia the Tzar permitted those families to remain that would send their children under fifteen years of age into Canton-schools.¹ The same applied to all Jews who would settle in Siberia.² In 1841 in view of the division of the Jews into "useful" and "unuseful" planned by the Jewish committee it was proposed that three times the usual number of soldiers be taken from the class of "unuseful" Jews. But the Tzar found that the increase was insufficient and suggested that five times the usual number be taken. In 1843 when the Jews of Mstislavl, in the government of Moghilev, were accused of attacking the soldiers the Tzar ordered that one out of every ten Jews of the whole city be enlisted as soldiers. While this punishment was not carried out in consequence of the vindication of the community³ it shows the attitude of the Tzar towards drafting the Jews into military service. He regarded it as a penalty and certainly the Jews had good reason to look upon it in the same light. In order to increase their number the Jewish soldiers were permitted to marry, but their sons were to become Cantonists. "The sons of Jewish soldiers were at this period regarded as government property and were educated by the authorities, who, during the reign of Nicholas I of Russia, had a special regard for the Jewish Cantonists, as it was easier to convert them to the Greek Orthodox Church than it was to convert their elders, whose religious principles

(1). R.J.E. IX 242.

(2). R.J.E. III/162

(3). Perezhitoye II Pp. 54-ff and pp. 248 ff.

had been firmly established."¹

Thus through the conscription measures, the government expected to carry out, in part, its proselytical aims.² The Jews knew of that and looked upon military service as compulsory apostasy from Judaism. Hence the evasion of serving in the army was coupled with steadfast religious steadfastness. Parents tried all possible means to save their children from conscription. However, the arrears were yearly increasing. In 1850 it was ordered to take as many recruits as possible to cover the shortage. In 1853 the horrors of the conscription measures reached the climax. In order to recruit the full quota of Jewish Soldiers the government issued a law permitting the communities as well as private individuals to place instead of their own children any Jew belonging to another community without a passport. That produced a special class of "lovchiki" ('catchers'). These men perpetrated the greatest outrages upon the people. "The Jews fell ^{upon} their own brethren like wolves and deprived them of their passports, captured them and placed them as substitutes for the souls of their own families and even gathered them in flocks for merchandise."³ A traffic in human beings set on. From motives of pure selfishness certain individuals literally hunted for helpless Jews, known as "poimaniki". Their passports were destroyed and they were bartered to families who needed a substitute for their own children in military service. It was too dangerous for a Jew to leave his home even in broad daylight. On public roads as well as in city limits the "lovchiki" reyed upon ^{their} ~~its~~ victims. Raids were made at night in the houses of Jews and children were taken away from the arms of their mothers. Soon the Russo-Turkish war followed and the quota of soldiers increased anew. While the number of recruits of each thousand Christian inhabitants of the western zone was -nineteen, and of the eastern zone-nine, the number of Jewish recruits per thousand was-thirty.

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia III-549.
 (2). In 1841 the Governor General of Wilna Mirkovitch characteristically proposed to the Jewish commission that in order to remove all fanaticism from the Jews all boys of the age of fifteen be taken into the army. His plan was rejected. (Hessen-Perezhitoye I-146). (3). Nathansohn, Gefeth Em-

Thus in the last year of Nicholas' reign the anguish of the Jewish population reached its culminating point. The outrages due to the law concerning Jews without passports, the Crimean War and the failure in crops resulted in a stand-still in business. Thus, to the list of other sufferings was added starvation.

eth-P.9-Note 1.

Chapter X. The Economic Conditions of the Jews.

In consequence of the special legislation, the severe conscription measures and the heavy taxation, the economic condition of the Jews was in a very deplorable state. The restrictions were felt by all classes of people. The law of 1835 permitted the Jews to engage in commerce and mechanical trades, to keep taverns and post offices and to furnish all articles, to be delivered under contract with the crown, for army supplies etc. However, only seventeen out of the fifty-two provinces of the Russian Empire were open to them.

The Jewish merchants were not permitted to travel into the interior of Russia, with the exception of those of the first and or second guilds whose privilege was restricted to making one journey, to buy goods, in the course of the year, to Moscow. The sojourn of the first guild merchants was limited to six months and those of the second guild to three months. Such a period of time would have been sufficient for the replenishment of their warehouses with the newest fashions in proper season during the year, but they were not allowed to go there when their business required. Thus by the time the purchased goods arrived at their destination they were out of fashion. The Jewish merchant had to go to Moscow in person and dared not send ~~xxxx~~ his agent to transact his business. It was, therefore, practically impossible for a Jew to compete with the Christian merchant. The city of St. Petersburg could not be visited by a Jew on commercial business. He was allowed to appear there in connection with a law suit or similar occasion. Thus the Jewish merchants had to import their goods from abroad. However the duties on the imported articles were high. Montefiore sums up the situation in the following statement: "These disadvantages have reduced the commerce of the Israelites to a deplorably low ebb, and are banishing prosperity amongst them.

And it is a fact that in one of the principal cities where formerly there were thirty Hebrew Moscow Merchants, there are at present only two, and these can only preserve their commercial standing ^{with} ~~by~~ extreme difficulty".¹

They were engaged not only in retail trade business but also in export trade of Russian products. Riga, as a seaport, has the exporting trade to Holland and Great Britain. Annually this city was visited by a great Number of Jewish merchants from White Russia to make contracts for the delivery of produce "and when the ice has disappeared from the Dwina, a fleet of Jewish vessels appears loaded with flax, hemp, flaxseed, wheat and the products of the forest trees, to be again reshipped to foreign countries."² The Jewish merchants of Lithuania send their agents with the country products to Dantzic, on the Baltic Sea, where they do a considerable business. In the south is Berditchev, in Volhynia, the Moscow of Russian commerce, where the Jews buy up the products of Volhynia, Podolia and Kiev; the grain growing provinces, and carry them to Odessa, on the Black Sea, whence they are transported to all the ports on the Mediterranean.

However, only a small fraction of the Jewish population engaged in commerce on a large scale. Most of them ~~are~~ were confined to a petty trade with the peasants etc. In the cities of the Pale of Settlement the Jews controlled a large part of the commerce. For example in the city of Wilna, (1840) according to Lilienthal, the Jews owned "all the numerous stores". "The women tend to that business and their black-raven eyes spy anxiously for customers. Lively and endowed with a commercial spirit, they talk and discuss zealously their business speculations, and the shrewdest man finds a fair match in them. The men are more engaged in the outdoor business, in large enterprises, and with their large cloaks over their Shubetze (Jewish coat) you see them restlessly and continuously moving to and fro."³

(1). Diaries of Sir M. Montefiore-P.363-4.

(2). Occident V.P.445.

(3). Israelite II-138.

The Jews were not confined to commerce only. In the south they established, in the period under our consideration, a number of factories. In Podolia they manufactured broadcloths, in a number of cities shawls and talethim (prayer shawls) of high quality; dress shawls, worked after Turkish patterns, were produced in Mohilev. There were also a paper factory at Minkowey, and a ~~paper~~ factory at Miedshiboshe. In addition there were quite a number of factories for the production of heavy linen, soap, candles etc. There were also a number of stationers and publishers, before the law prohibited printing of Jewish books in all cities with the sole exception of Wilna and Kiev. (the latter was changed to Zhitomir).¹ The distilleries gave employment to hundreds of families, including those of the wholesalers, brokers and retail dealers.

The Jews did a considerable business as contractors to the government. The Russian government did not build directly its own roads and keep ~~them~~ in repair the public highways. Neither did it supply directly food or clothing for the army. It published proposals and assigned them to one of the bidders, known as "podradshik". "The government, knowing the cupidity and greediness of the officers, declined to provide the supplies, itself; and it therefore entrusted this branch of its administration to the hands of men who had to satisfy the thirst for money on the part of the officers from their own purses; and they had to lose on their contracts if they had not calculated all these expenses before hand."² The Jews were allowed to send in bids in the provinces where they were allowed to reside. However, the expenses were considerable, and consequently only the wealthy could participate. In Courland the Jews even of the first and second guilds were not allowed to become contractors to the crown or to undertake the erection of any government building.³ In all

(1). Israelite II-492.

(2). Israelite II-P. 446.

(3). Diaries of Sir M. Montefiore V. I. P. 362 ff).

the provinces where the Jews were allowed to reside they had the mail-contracts. They were obliged to keep a certain number of horses. In return they received a stipulated sum from the government, beside the usual traveling fees from the passengers.

The Jews also engaged in mechanical trades. That was the time of the Jews' residing in the Caucasus, Nikolaiev, Sebastopol etc. But also in the Pale of Settlement great numbers derived their means of livelihood from hand labor or some trade. It is true labor was not looked upon as a high calling, but the necessities of life prevailed. In his report to Kisselev (in 1846) Montefiore states: "In all those guberniums where Israelites have the privilege of settling, there are some of them who are tailors, shoemakers, farmers, glaziers, &c, &c, others who employ themselves with a more laborious occupation, as that of a blacksmith, locksmith, bricklayer, carpenter &c. There is a class which may be reckoned among the artisans, such as watchmakers and goldsmiths, and another, which may be considered as a most numerous one, is that which consists of people who break stones on the chaussees, cut wood for fuel, or dig the ground and carry water, or remove heavy loads from one place to another".¹

In the city of Wilna during the forties almost all trades were in the hands of the Jews. Lilienthal writes: "At every new building there were Jewish masons and carpenters, working as hard and as skillfully as the best mechanics in Germany; there was no hard trade whatever, as copper-smiths etc., etc., which was not practised by the Jews, and the lighter ones as tailors, shoemakers, were so over crowded, that the poor fellows, working day and night, hardly could make a living."² There were over two thousand tailors and shoemakers in the city of Wilna alone, which could hardly support such a host of competitors. "Cartmen, day laborers are Jews, and all other business of this kind, requiring athletic powerful men, is in the hands of the Israelites".³

(1). Diaries of Sir. M. Montefiore I.p.365.

(2). Israelite II-P.138.

(3). Ibid.

Some restrictions were enjoined upon the Jewish tradesmen in the Baltic provinces.

In Courland only those Jews who were present in the year 1799 and their families were permitted to remain. The ukase of 1835 declared the Jews - in consequence of a privilege granted to the Christians of that city in 1785 - disqualified to be received into the Christian corporations of the body of tradesmen or mechanics. Consequently a Jew could not be regarded as a master tradesman and on this account was debarred from the right to employ in his service a journeyman, Christian or Jewish. Nor could he keep apprentices of his own faith. "Thus the Israelite is prevented from following any trade that requires particular assistants; he cannot with any prospect of success become a joiner, locksmith, blacksmith, or bricklayer, nor can he do the work of any mechanic where the aid of other persons is absolutely requisite."¹

In 1820 the Governor General Marquis Palucci tried to obtain permission that in the future Jews should enjoy the right xxx to teach their children their respective trades. But this privilege was again xxxx taken away from them. In 1835 an imperial ukase permitted the Jews in Courland the right of keeping, either by rent or obrok, farms, inns or baiting stables. This privilege was soon recalled. Under such conditions the working class became so poor that the community ^{was often} ~~was~~ obliged to furnish them with the necessaries of life. The poorer ones were ordered to leave Courland. § The poverty of the greatest part of the ^{Jewish} population ^{of Russia} was terrible. Left without any source of income they had to resort to begging, etc. The more learned took up teaching, preaching etc. But with all that they could hardly support their families. Some families were forced to live the whole week on bread and potatoes. On Friday the wealthier ones would bake a number of small loaves, which they distributed among the indigents, in order to enable them to celebrate the Sabbath. But it is surprising

(1). Diaries of Sir M. Montefiore P.362.

that the poorest Jews regarded it as their duty to offer charity, no matter how little. The congregations themselves provided enormous sums for the maintenance of the poor and the indigent. But something more had to be done to change the abnormal conditions of the Jews. This was attempted by the government.

Chapter XI-Attempted Reforms.

In 1840 a committee was organized for the purpose of devising measures for the reorganization of the Jews. The committee was presided over by Kiselev, ^{at the time} the Minister of Royal Domains. The full aim which the committee set up for itself as stated in the Journal for January 11th, 1841 expresses the policy of ^{whole} reform; ^{the attempted} "(1) To influence the moral education of the new generation of Jews through the establishment of schools in a spirit, opposed to the present Talmudical training; (2) to destroy the Kahals and to subject the Jews to the general administration; (3) to establish government rabbis, who, receiving their salaries from the royal treasury, might through their influence act in accord with the view of the administration; (4) to prohibit the use of the special Jewish clothes, (5) to open for the Jews the means of engaging in agriculture, (6) to bring in order the basket taxes collected from the Jews and set aside the necessary sums for the maintenance of schools, rabbis and for their removals on government lands. Then, (7) dividing the Jews, in accord with the nature of their occupation, into useful, as; merchants, artisans and agriculturists, and into those that have no regular, so to say, productive occupations contributing to the common wealth and weal; to subject the latter to various limitation measures, including a conscription three times the usual number, and when freed from service to be registered in an artisan guild or in the class of agriculturists, and in this manner diminish the number of useless people, by turning them gradually into activity."¹ The last point presented some difficulties. The division of the Jews into useful and unuseful was practically impossible. That was made especially clear in the memorandum of Count M.S. Voranzov, the Governor General of New Russia, (dated October 16th 1843). He pointed out

(1). Perezhitoye I.P. 144-5).

that the category of "unuseful" citizens would embrace eighty percent of the population. For this class would include all the small traders etc., which are necessary for the well-being of the country. The new situations into which they would be led could hardly offer them an improvement. Hence such a measure would only increase their misery. He advised that no special measures against the Jews were necessary. "I should think," he remarked, "that the already existing measures are sufficient and that it would be enough and altogether more useful to engage at present in the establishment of schools both for men and for women, wherever the Jews reside" on the model of general educational institutions existing in Odessa and in Kishinev.¹ This question concerning the division of the Jews into useful and unuseful classes was left undecided during the reign of Nicholas I.

Matters stood differently in the case of school reform. Count Uvarev was busily engaged carrying out his proposed plans (Cf. Chapter 12). The change in attire was likewise carried out. In 1845 a law was issued compelling all the Jews of Russia to assume the German dress. The orthodox regarded this law as a new measure of converting them into Christianity. The law provided that in exemption of this regulation a special tax must be paid. Thus in 1848 by a special decree a tax of five rubles annually was placed upon those who would wear the jarmulka (skull cap) and similar taxes on the long coat etc. However the Jews above sixty were exempt from this regulation.² The Maskilin hailed this law.

Great difficulty was presented in the case of the abolition of the Kahal. This institution occupied an important place in the life of the Jews. While on the one hand, its function of guarding the inner life of the Jews was discharged by the Rabbis, it was the only institution to mediate between the Jews and the government in the collection of taxes etc.

(1). Hessen, Perezhitoye I.P. 150. (2). Perezhitoye I. 2nd. part P. 10 ff.

The population was mostly poor. About twenty percent of the population could not pay any taxes at all. To these belonged the class of Schnorrers traveling Maggidim (preachers), melamidim (teachers) etc. These were not at home most of the time and the local Kahal could not collect taxes from them. Of the rest of the population there were many who were not in a position to pay on account of the lack of income. Consequently the Kahal had a good deal of difficulty in gathering the necessary funds. In 1830 the government took very harsh measures in collecting the taxes in the governments of Minsk, Grodno, Wilna and Podolia. The Jews were impressed into military service with the provision that each community furnishing recruits should be credited with one thousand rubles for every recruit about twenty years of age and with five hundred rubles for every recruit under that age. This regulation was abolished in the same year, but was revived in 1851 and abolished ^{finally} in 1857. In 1831 the law called for an additional payment by Jewish merchants in case their townspeople failed to pay the full amount. This tax was in operation during the whole ~~year~~ reign of Nicholas I and was abolished in 1866. Beside the taxes to the government there were taxes for the maintenance of the Jewish institutions. The Kahal managed these affairs. When the meat and candle (1844) tax were introduced the Kahals sold out the income of these indirect taxes to private individuals. While these taxes were a great burden on the population they furnished the means for defraying the various expenses of communal nature.

The Kahal was, therefore, an indispensable institution in the life of the Jews. The conscription laws of 1827 strengthened its power among the people. A movement in the same direction was made by the regulations of 1835. The Kahal was charged with the exact registration of the Jews. Every Jew, though living in a village or hamlet was compelled to register in the Jewish community of his township. The members of the Kahal, which were to be elected for a period of three years, were recognized by the

government institutions and were granted the privileges of honorary second guild merchants (but ~~not~~ ^{without} commercial rights) during their period of service.¹

However the additional duties and prerogatives of the Kahal led to many abuses. That was especially striking in the execution of the conscription measures. Thereby the Kahal evoked hatred on the part of the Jews and distrust on the part of the government. Thus the abolition of the Kahal in 1844, ^{was} met with the greatest joy on the part of the Jews in Russia. However that did not in reality change the situation. The indignation of the people was great when the much despised leaders of the old Kahal appeared in their new roles to collect taxes and recruit soldiers.²

After the abolition of the Kahal the city administrations took over ^{to} all matters affecting the Jews. According ^{to} the law of 1835 the Jews were placed on equality with the Christians in electoral rights. The law read: "The Jewish town classes may take part in the election for municipal offices; and any Jews knowing how to read and write Russian may be elected as members of the city councils, town-councils, and magistrates under the same conditions as prevail in the election to these offices of persons of other religious beliefs."³ However this regulation was attacked by Prince Dolgoruki, administrator at the time of the Government of Lithuania, White Russia and Minsk. He insisted "that the election of Jews as presidents of the Boards of Aldermen and the city mayors would hardly be permissible since the president is the presiding officer in the courts, and the city mayor, as the representative of the entire municipality, is obliged at the opening of the elections....to lead the townspeople to church for religious service and is then admitted to take the oath"; and that in general

(1). R.J.E. IX P.94

(2). R.J.E. IX-P.94

(3). Jewish Encyclopedia X-P.555.

"the election of Jews even as members of city magistracies and town councils is in a manner inappropriate to the decorum and sacredness of the courts, where frequently the oath is taken with cross and mirror; moreover the judges should be drawn from men whose integrity and uprightness could be guaranteed at least by the morality instilled into them by education and religious precepts".¹

In 1836 an independent enactment appeared limiting the election of Jews in the western provinces governments to one-third of the total number of municipal officers. In addition to this law as result of Prince Dalgorki's representations another law was issued (1839) denying the Jews the right to act as chairman, borough president, city mayor etc. and to hold "municipal positions which either are entirely reserved for Christians, or by virtue of their duties could not with convenience and propriety be entrusted to Jews".² The statement that these laws were to operate in the western provinces only was omitted from the code of laws published in 1842. Consequently similar limitations were placed upon the Jews in other governments also. They were allowed to serve as aldermen, as deputies of house commissions etc. The election of Jewish and Christian representatives had to be carried on separately. The Jews, contrary to the law, were practically excluded from participation in the elections of officers to positions which were reserved for the Christians alone. Thereby the Jewish population was deprived of its influence in the election of higher officials.

Not much more successful was the attempt to attract the Jews to agricultural pursuits. The Jews were only too glad to become agriculturists, but the policy of the government repulsed them. In 1826 it was proposed that incompetent agriculturists be enlisted in military labor-

(1). Ibid.

(2). Ibid.

battalions and in 1829 they were ordered to become soldiers or exiled to Siberia. In 1830 the colonists were forbidden to enter into other occupations. These laws resulted in the increased desertions of the colonists of Cherson.¹

The law of 1835 permitted the Jews to own all kinds of real property within their places of residence. An exception was made in the case of "inhabited estates" which were entirely forbidden to the Jews.² The law of May 31st, 1835 was intended to encourage agricultural pursuits among the Jews. It promised to everyone who would engage in tilling the soil an exemption from all military duty^{ies} for twenty-five years, and in 1839 the term was extended to fifty years; and to the wealthy Jews who would establish Jewish colonies, the personal and hereditary right of honorary citizenship. The government of Nicholas determined to apply this law also to Siberia. Consequently on November 20th, 1836 an imperial edict was published, declaring that fifteen thousand, one hundred and fifty-four dessjatins (one dessjatine equals 2.7 acres) of land should be measured off in the province of Western Siberia in the departments of Tobolsk and Omsk for Jewish colonization. The government promised every financial support to the future colonists. Each man was to receive fifteen dessjatines of land, and a house should be built for him before his arrival, and ~~stock~~ all the agricultural implements as well as live-stock should be provided. Transportation to Siberia and the first year of support was to be supplied by the government. A few weeks after the publication of the edict thirteen hundred and seventeen Jews were already enlisted as future Siberian settlers. In view of this success, the Minister of Finance, Count Kankrim, proposed in December of the same year that thirteen thousand, three hundred and sixty-three dessja-

(1). R.J.E. VII-755.

(2) R.J.E. VII-733.

tins in the department of Omsk should be set aside for Jewish colonization. When the proposal was presented to the Czar he signed the decree, that the "settlement of the Jews in Siberia should cease". The following year (1837) an edict was issued putting an end to this experiment. The law ran as follows: "(1) The emigration of the Jews to Siberia is to cease completely forever. (2) The land already meted out shall be put to other use. (3) Those Jews already on their way to Siberia shall be brought back and settled in the Jewish colonies of South Russia." Measures were also taken to reduce the number of Jews who having started in advance, had already reached Siberia. "Still, thirteen hundred and seventeen Jews had settled in Siberia at the beginning of 1837, and they were enabled to remain there".¹ Siberia was too good a land to be settled by Jews. Jewish criminals after their term of banishment had expired, who desired to remain there, were forced to return to their former homes, even though they had not the least prospect of earning there an honest living.² When the Grand Duke visited Siberia and pardoned all the criminals whose terms of punishment was ~~exp~~ near expiring the Jews, who felt at home in their place of exile, begged for permission to remain there; but the Governor General refused them.

Soon after, the government assigned the level country of Cherson for Jewish Colonization. From the single province of Courland, according to Lilienthal, fifteen hundred Jews applied immediately to be sent hither and sold all their landed property to get ready for emigration. "But their petition remained unanswered; till at length the Tzar and his son were passing in one of their journeys through Mitau, when a Jewish tailoress boldly approached the carriage of the Emperor, and applied to him, taking him for a person attached to the Imperial Court, not know-

(1) M. Novomejsky in Jewish Review V.II No. 8 on "The Jews in Siberia" P. 132-3.

(2). Lilienthal in The Occident II-P. 494.

ing it was the Tzar himself she was addressing, to intercede with the Emperor in their behalf." ¹ An order was soon given to appropriate a large sum of money to defray the expenses of the transportation of the emigrants, promising them also houses, cattle, agricultural implements, and seed for the first year. The general joy of the people of Mitau was embittered by the news that one third of the emigrants had died through the neglect of the officers who conducted the removal and that the others found Cherson to be a dreary country, where from the absence of forests, rains were scarce and that they had found neither houses nor anything that was promised them. Sir Moses Montefiore's report to Count Kisselev states that the following concerning their transportation: "They were most kindly treated, it is true, by His Excellency, the Governor of Wilna. Every adult received forty-eight kopecks banco assignments, and every child half that sum. They were also provided with the necessary vehicles for their conveyance, one being assigned to each family; but as they proceeded thence into the other Guberniâs the adults received only twenty-four kopecks and the children twelve kopecks banco each, and the number of vehicles was reduced to one for every two families. The emigrants had to wait several days before the vehicles were ready for their use, during which time they were not provided with the necessary diet money. They were further furnished with boats for the purpose of performing part of their journey on the river Berezina and Dnieper. The money requisite to pay the hire of these boats was deducted from the amount collected for their diet. The Israelites were assured that it would take them only a fortnight's time to make the passage on the rivers, and for this money reason only received money to defray the expenses of their diet during that period; but the passage occupied seven weeks, and they had to sustain themselves out of their own

(1) Ibid P.495.

means. Many of them were great sufferers from severe cold and hunger, and a considerable number who had not even the smallest coin beyond that which they received from the government, being left without food, whilst they had to endure the inclemency of the season, necessarily perished.

"The survivors, on arriving at the places of their destination, found that they could not obtain possession of the houses, agricultural implements and cattle assigned for them in the month of May in accordance with the decree of His Majesty's Government, but had to wait for them until the month of August, and for the articles furnished to them which were of a very bad description, they were subject to a charge considerably exceeding their value.

"The rye seed which the Israelites ought to have received in the month of August, was not given to them before the month of October; the consequence was, that the crops of the first year did not prosper, and they were obliged to take provisions from the government for the next year also. The seed for the summer crops which ought to have been given them in the month of March, they did not receive before the month of May; thus they were obliged to put the seed into the ground very late in the season, and heavy rains which followed again caused the crops to fail. The habitations assigned for their occupation being of very bad materials and badly constructed, most of them soon fell to the ground".¹ Then followed an epidemic disease among the cattle and the Jews suffered great losses. Consequently the government ordered passports to be granted to them that they might repair to other places where they might find sustenance. But they often had to pay exorbitant prices for the passports. In view of such conditions the indignation of all Jews in Russia was aroused and produced a settled aversion to agriculture, for they began to look upon it as a new bait to lure them to destruction."²

(1) Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore edited by Dr. Loewe-V I P.365-6.
 (2) Lilienthal, Occident, P.495.

Of all the colonies commenced under the law of 1835 only those of Volhynia and Witebsk met with success, for they were located on good land, in the neighborhood of cities. Nevertheless when in 1844 another imperial ukase was issued concerning the Jewish colonization, with a grant of support out of the basket tax the numerous Jews desirous of availing themselves of the opportunity voluntarily offered to defray the necessary expenses from their own means.¹ In Cherson five new colonies were established during 1840-41 and four around 1850 and two more in 1857-58. In 1846 the first colonists appeared in the government of Ekaterinoslov and by 1855 there were organized about seventeen colonies. In Bessarabia nine colonies were organized during 1833-53. Attempts were also made to establish colonies in Grodno and in Podolia. However the law of 1847 threatening all those who will not develop sufficiently their estates kept away a good many people from colonizing. The more lenient laws of 1852 increased the growth of colonies in the western regions. In 1847 special funds were produced for removal purposes and the norm was set providing each family with thirty desjatines and ten desjatins in provision in New Russia and twenty desjatins without any provisional land in all other regions. The support of the Jewish emigrants was put upon the Jewish communities, from the funds of the 'basket tax' (one hundred and seventy rubles for each family).²

(1). Diaries of Sir Moses Montefiore V.I P.366.

(2). R.J.E.VII. 755-6.

Chapter XII. Inner Life of the Jews (1825-55).

The inner life of the Jews during the reign of Nicholas I assumed ^{than in the preceding age.} a more turbulent character. To the old feud between the Mithnagdim and the Hasidim was added the struggle of the Maskilim for a change in Jewish life, manners and education. For a while the hostile camps of the orthodox wing laid aside their grievances in order to deal a death blow to their common enemy. But their efforts were in vain. The new currents in Jewish life were too powerful. They were the product of the age and therefore irresistible. The future belonged to the Maskilim.

The center of the Mithnagdim was in the North-western provinces. Talmudic learning was cultivated in the Yeshiboth which were found in almost every city of the Pale of Settlement. These Yeshiboth were intended for the higher instruction of children beyond the heder. In the local Yeshiboth there were also students from neighboring cities who preferred to study away from home. They were supported by the residents, who would volunteer to offer food to a student one day a week. ("Tag Essen") Thus the poorest Jew felt it his duty to have at his table at least one student for one day in the week. This enabled the poor students to carry on their studies. Beside the local Yeshiboth there were a number of leading Yeshiboth of national character. Of these the one at Volozhin was preeminent. Under its new rector, Rabbi Yitzhok, who succeeded ~~in~~ his father in 1828, the school made remarkable progress. His fame as the foremost talmudical scholar in Russia attracted many eager disciples. Their number grew to three hundred. Most of them came from

(1). The description of the order of lessons pursued in the Yeshibah is of great interest. In Rabbi Yitzhok's own words; "We say prayer in the morning as early as possible; all the students have to be present during the service. After the service I explain to them some chapters of the Sidrah of the week, and the Haphtorah with the commentary of Rashi, adding some free explanation of my own, into which I am interweaving some

the north-western provinces and but few from the south, where Hasidism took strong hold on the people. The students did not have to resort to "Tag Essen" as in the local Yeshiboth, but the authorities provided for them. "Each student received a subsidy of thirty-five kopecks a week".¹ While that could hardly cover their expenses they managed to get along as best they could. This money was collected by special agents ("Meschulim") from the Jews in Russia. During R. Yitzhak's Visit to St. Petersburg as a member of the Rabbinical Commission of 1843 he succeeded in having the existence of his Yeshibah recognized by law. In 1854 he was succeeded by his son-in-law Rabbi Naphtali Zebi Berlin (1854)² and Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitzik. However, a schism resulted on the ground of the method of instruction. Rabbi Berlin as a faithful disciple of the Gaon of Wilna was opposed to pilpul; whereas Rabbi Soloveitzik was an exponent of pilpulistic study. A special deputation of Russian Rabbis brought the matter to an end by recognizing Rabbi Berlin as the head of the institution.³

Other Yeshiboth existed in Telz, where a special kind of pilpulism was cultivated (known among the students as "higayon" (logic)), in

remarks of the commentary of Mosheh Dessau (Mendelssohn). Then the students have to prepare themselves for the regular Shiur (section of the Talmud) which is explained to them from ten to twelve o'clock A.M. by Rabbi Lebele. In the afternoon they are studying for themselves till Minchah, when they get instructed in the Poskim (Codes of Jewish Law). After supper they are continuing their private studies till after midnight, some of them remaining in the Yeshibah all the night, sleeping upon the hard benches in the rooms." Lilienthal, Isr.V.III.P.2.

(1). R.J.E. W.VII.p.724.

(2). Before Berlin Rabbi Eliezer Itzbok another son-in-law held the office for a short time period. He died in 1854. (Ibid)

(3). Ibid.

Eishibok, Mir Lomzha and Wilna.¹ The main studies in the Yeshiboth were the Halachic portions of the Talmud and the Poskim. The sources of Halacha, like the Mechilta Sifra, Sifre and Beraitha were not studied. Nor was there any attention paid to the Jersualmi. The sharp dialectics of the Babylonian Talmud engaged all their attention. The Haggadah (the Homiletical portions of the Talmud) did not enter into the curriculum of instruction. Nor was the Bible studied in the Yeshiboth. Even the prayers were pushed into the background and were recited in a slipshod manner. This resulted in a reaction. "In the Yeshiboth there began to develop mystical and ascetic tendencies. One such sect appeared in Mir. Its adherents prayed more heartily than the rest, cried during prayer, fasted for a few days in succession, shaved their heads, bathed in man-holes of icy rivers, stood for days barefooted on dry peas, kept silence for months. However, at the same time there began to appear in the Yeshiboth a longing for enlightenment. In society and in the press it was maintained that the Yeshiboth serve as agencies of ignorance and ^{that they} prepare moral as well as physical cripples".² In 1851 the government demanded that Russian be taught in the Yeshiboth. However that law was not fulfilled.

The students of the Yeshiboth filled the Rabbinical positions of Russia. As rabbis their chief function did not consist in preaching. There was a special class of Maggidim for that purpose. Some of them enjoyed wide reputation. Especially prominent in the period under our consideration, were Rabbi Yisrael of Minsk³ and Rabbi Hayim Zedek, known

(1). The Yeshibah of Wilna (called "Ramayles Klaus") was organized by workmen. Especial interest in this institution was taken by a childless chimney-sweep R. Shabse who gave his last penny to the students and his wife washed their underwear. That is a single case of the many instances of self-sacrifice for the promotion of learning. (R.J.E.V.VIII-739)

(2). Ibid P.735

(3) Paperna gives an account of one of his sermons on the text "Thou Art One and Thy Name Is One, and Who Like Israel, Thy People Is One Nation On Earth". He explained the unity of Israel to consist in purity and racial oneness but not in the religious sense. He proved from Jewish

as the "Runshchik". Later on R. Moses Isaac ben Noah Darshaul (1828-1900), known as the "Kälmer", became the most celebrated Maggid of the nineteenth century. The rabbis' main duty consisted in rendering decisions on religious as well as on civil matters.

While the government did not recognize their decisions on civil matters they were often consulted even by non-Jews. Their decisions were preferable to those of the corrupt Russian courts. The procedure was very simple. At the complaint of one party the Rabbi would send his attendant ('Shamus') for the other party. When the arguments on both sides were stated the rabbi would offer his decision on the basis of the Rabbinical codes. The great control of the public mind lay in the awful sentence of excommunication. Although the government prohibited the use of the 'herem' to the Kahal and to the Rabbis, it was still practiced. The anathema of the synagogue cut off the offender from the house of Israel and he became an outcast. This proved to be a powerful weapon in the hands of the orthodox Jews. Hence it worked with wonderful efficacy in cases of infringement upon certain privileges as well as of extreme difficulties of disregard for the law.

literature that such a unity did not exist among us: "The religion of Abraham", he said, "is utterly unlike ~~xx~~ that of Moses, the religion of Moses, ~~xx~~ that of the prophets Micha, Isaiah, Habakuk, and the later ones among them, and even here among us, who are here, each one of us has his own conception of God, of faith, of good and evil, of truth and falsehoods; and in the main there are no two persons of the same religion in the full sense of the word. If we are one, then it is as a nation, as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." In this sentiment Rabbi Visroel preceded Perez Smolenskin by some thirty years and can hardly be regarded behind times even at present.

(2). The Kelmer was "among the 'terror' maggids of the 'shebet Mussar' school and preached to crowded synagogues for over fifty years in almost every city in Russia-Poland." (Jewish Encyclopedia VIII-P.254). He raised a bitter campaign against the rising tide of the Haskalah; traveling from city to city he warned the people against the new danger to Judaism. Paperna tells that he heard him speak in Bobruysk in 1861. His subject was dishonesty in business with especial reference to false weights and measures. "He spoke, as usual, with deep inner feeling; and the impression produced by the address was such that as soon as it was finished all the shop-keepers, without waiting for the evening prayer, which was to follow the address, ran into their shops, verified their weights and scales and those which appeared inexact they broke at once". Perezhitoye-.II-23-ff.

Nevertheless while it served as a factor in economic matters to prevent unscrupulous business methods and the like, it no longer exercised any power in the struggle with the Maskilim. A typical example of the ~~xxx~~ means used by the Rabbis in the exercise of their authority in extreme cases is furnished by the following incident reported by Mat Lienthal. A case came before a rabbi in a small town in Poland. "Two members of his congregation once called upon him in a law-suit, the one a ~~rich~~ wealthy and influential man, the other a poor tradesman. Before opening the case, the Rabbi ordered them to pledge their word of honor, that they would abide by his decision, else he would not accept the case, knowing the quarrelsome character of the rich man. Both complied with his order, and the case having been pleaded on both sides, it was decided against the rich man. But he, instead of adhering to his pledge, brought the case before the court, where he hoped to carry it, by influence of his means. The rabbi could not do anything against this faithlessness; but on the Eve of the Day of Atonement the inhabitants of the town were astonished to see the Rabbi going to the Synagogue, a full hour before the service was commenced. They also hurried to the place of worship, and found their spiritual guide absorbed in deep meditation. He remained in this situation until the rich man came into the House of God, and then he arose from his seat, proclaiming with a stentor's voice, that he would not allow service to be commenced, before the rich man had left the synagogue. A man that injures his fellow-man, he said, retains what does not belong to him, cannot hope for divine mercy and the heavenly forgiveness of the holy day, sets but a bad example to the whole congregation, and we will not begin prayer till you, Mr. S----, will have left our company. The man was thunderstruck; the solemnity of the hour, the awe of the day, the fear of heavenly justice, the remorse of a bad conscience, the sternness of the Rabbi, the exposure before the congregation, made such an irresistible impression upon the man, that he hurried to the Rabbi's chair, acknowledged

his wrong, begged for his pardon, and promised that after Yom Kippur he surely ~~xxx~~ would redress the wrong he had done. "I cannot believe you", answered the Rabbi, "you once violated your pledge and I reiterate my verdict, that we shall not begin prayer, before you have left our synagogue." "Rabbi, good Rabbi, what shall I do, not to bring upon me the anger of God, and the scorn of the congregation, I cannot bear this menace", replied the man. "Go home", said the Rabbi, "and bring the money you owe to the poor tradesman". "I have got no money at home", answered he. "I today paid off all ~~xx~~, that I had on hand". "Then go and bring your silver ware, I shall take it and keep it for you in pawn, till you will pay the money". The man hurried home, brought silver ware twice the amount of the debt, and the Rabbi with a composed and satisfied countenance, deposited it in the Holy Ark with the Sefer Thora. Then ~~xxx~~ turning from the steps before the Holy Ark to the congregation he said, "According to the word of our sages, the most pious man cannot occupy the high station of a repenting sinner, I therefore beg Mr. S-----, ^{to} take, during this Yom Kippur my place in the Synagogue, while I with a heart full of heavenly joy, will retire to his pew". Notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mr. S----- he again had to comply with the desire of the Rabbi, and the day after Yom Kippur, the law suit was peaceably and amicably settled.] Almost all of the rabbis of Russia exercised the jurisdiction in civil law suits. Their verdicts were given according to the Jewish Code.¹

In Wilna, for example there were two Jewish Courts (Beth Din) in which the Din Thora was practiced and where a great many law suits were decided. In addition there were twelve other Rabbis to decide all the religious questions. Similar practices were carried on in the Jewish communities of every Russian city.²

- (1). Lilienthal, My Travels in Russia--The Israelite, V.II P.58.
- (2). A.I.Paperna, Perezhitoye-V.II P.8.

However, the powers of the Rabbis were limited when compared with that of the Zaddikim (the leaders of the Hasidim). In Hasidism the belief in the Zaddik was a fundamental doctrine. Since Elimelech of Liazanka, the disciple of Baer of Meseritz, conveyed in his "No'am Elimelech" that the Zaddik is the mediator between God and the common people and that through him God sends to the faithful the blessings of life, livelihood and children, the power of the Zaddik became unlimited. "This teaching led to the contribution by the people of their last pennies towards the support of the Zaddik ("Rebbe"), and the Zaddik untiringly 'poured forth blessings on the earth, healed the sick, cured women of sterility' etc."¹. The Zaddik exercised demons and performed miracles. The crowds flocked around him with all their troubles. They brought him contributions ("pidyonim"), which were the conditions of obtaining divine grace. Some of the Zaddikim were accustomed to demand from the people that called upon them for help that they tax themselves with a certain amount, half of which they were to pay at once and to give a note for the remainder, which was payable in case God would be entreated of him.² Thus, Zaddikism became a profitable vocation. The grandson of Besht, Baruch of Tulchin, had an immense income and led the life of a Polish lord, with his own court, numerous suite and a court jester.³ Consequently, Zaddikism became a hereditary institution. "The most important dynasties were those of Chernobyl (consisting of the descendants of Nahum of Chernobyl) in Little Russia; that of Ruzhin--Sadagura (including the descendants of Baer of Meseritz) in Podolia, Volhynia, and Galicia; that of Tynbavich (composed of the descendants of Zalman, bearing the family name 'Schneersohn') in White Russia; and that of Liublin and Kotzk in the Kingdom of Poland. There were also individual Zaddikim not associated

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia V.VI-P.254

(2). Levinsohn, Megilah Apha P.16

(3). Jewish Encyclopedia V.VI-P.254.

with the dynasties. In the first half of the nineteenth century there were well known among them: Motel of Chernobyl, Nachman of Bratzlav¹, Jacob Isaac of Lublin, Mendel of Lynbavich, and Israel of Luzhin. The last named had such unlimited power over the Hasidim of the South-western region that the government found it necessary to send him out of Russia (1850). He established himself in the Galician village of Sadagura on the Austrian frontier, whither the Hasidim continued to make pilgrimages to him and to his successors.² The Zaddikim often engaged in bitter struggles against one another mainly out of financial motives. In such instances the Hasidim that belonged to the diocese of one Zaddik looked down upon the Hasidim of the diocese of the other Zaddik. Thus the Hasidic movement was torn into little fragments with no central spiritual organization. Nevertheless, the Hasidic movement spread enormously. In the first half of the nineteenth century about half of the Jewish population of Russia, Poland, Galicia, Roumania and Hungary professed Hasidic doctrine and acknowledged the power of the Zaddikim.

The Hasidim paid little attention to learning. Their ideal was piety and unbounded faith in the Zaddik, who was their idol. His word was law and could not be revoked. Lilienthal describes the Zaddik in the following words: "He has not the limited power of a rabbinical Talmud Chacham; but he is viewed as inspired by the divine spirit, and as in connection with angels; he is revered as a worker of miracles, who can see into futurity, and he is looked upon, although these men are very often but little learned, as the powerful mediator in the divine counsels".³ A more learned class of Hasidim were known as the "Ha BaDniki" (being formed of the first letters of the words "Hochma", "Binah", "De'ah" i.e. "Wisdom", "Understanding", "Knowledge"). A more rational type of Hasidism,

(1). Nachman of Bratzlav was born in 1772 and died in 1811. He is one of the most remarkable figures in Jewish history. His mysticism borders on poetic sublimity. Some of his utterances remind one of Nietzsche. (Cp Buber, *Die Geschlochten des Rabbi Nachman*; Horodetzki, *R. Nachman Ni Bratzlav*).

(2). *Jewish Encyclopedia*-V.VI-P.255.

(3). *The Occident*, 1847-P.254.

founded by Rabbi Zalman of Liozna (or Liadi). He advocated an intelligent and not a blind faith and assigned the Zaddik a more modest place. The "MaBaDniki" were more learned in Kabbalistic lore. However, with few exceptions,¹ the Hasidim had no taste for Rabbinic knowledge and were adverse to all secular learning.

The orthodox parties began to lose ground with the rise of the Maskalah movement. The Maskilim increased in number and threatened the well-being of Rabbinism and Zaddikism. The introduction of Mendelssohn's Version of the Bible into Russia gradually leavened the lump of the Russian Jewry. Numbers of young men acquired their knowledge of German through this Bible translation² and were thus enabled to continue their studies of German literature and of the sciences available in that language. The *Biur* paved a way for other works on the science of Judaism which was developing at that time in Western Europe. Thus in a short time the foremost of the Maskilim in the leading cities of Russia were familiar with the works of Zunz, Rapaport, Krochmal, Reggie and Geiger. Little by little the science of Judaism began to recruit votaries and even leaders from among the Jews in Russia. Thus the philological and historical-religious works of Levinsohn, the lexicographical ~~and~~ works of Ben Yacob were soon followed by the historical studies of R. Simcha Pinsker³, (1801-64), S.I. Fim, Basilius Stern (1798-1853) and A.B. Gottlober (1811-99). In this way the wall that separated the Jews in Eastern Europe from their brethren in the West had been removed and the Jew of Russia could freely participate in the intellectual development of Judaism.

The term Maskilim became known as "Berliner". Every city and town

(1). R. Menahem Mendel of Lynbavich organized the Society "Tomeke Temimin" which supported four Yeshiboth: at Lynbavich, Zemlein, Dokshitz (in the government of Minsk, and Horoditch (in the government of Vitebsk). (Jewish Encyclopedia XII-P. 599; Knesseth Israel, 1838 pp. 213 ff).

(2). Two editions of the *Biur* appeared in Russia: one under Lebensohn and Ben-Yakob (1848-53) and one under Mandelshtam, see below pp. 17.

(3). His main work lies in the field of Karaism called forth by the discovery of the Karaite Abraham Firkovich. To his *Likute Kadmoniyoth*, Yost and Graetz avowed their indebtedness.

had some votaries to the new tendencies of enlightenment. The new generation of Maskilim differed widely from that earlier generation that were centered around the Wilna Gaon's disciples. Those were men of sound Talmudical knowledge and were observant Jews. Secular knowledge served their Queen Theology. Consequently the orthodox Jews did not suspect their faith and they continued their work with a great deal of freedom. It is true, their center of activity was very limited, they built upon a solid foundation. However, the new type of Maskil was a peculiar kind of mixture. He was somewhat of a Talmudist and more of a dilettante. While he was often opposed to Talmud altogether, he used it in defense of his new notions. He shook off the authority of the Kahal. Among Hasidim he was a Mithnagid and among Mithnagdim a Hasid. Thereby he was justifying himself in not observing the customs and rites of either sect.¹

The danger involved in a little learning began to manifest itself. The Maskilim were of the opinion that culture was impaired by the old fashioned dress which their brethren wore. They saw the cause of all anomalies of Jewish life in the power of the Rabbis and the Zaddikim. The trouble was not without but within the Jewish camps. The ignorance of the people was their worst enemy. In the government they saw the friend of the people. They, therefore turned to the government with all their complaints and plans of forced reform. The Government stood by the Maskilim, but it carried out the reforms in military fashion, by compulsion.² The Maskilim spent all their energy in the campaign against the long-coat, skull-cap and in trying to introduce German manners and fashions. Thereby they encountered the opposition of the orthodox elements who persecuted them as 'Epicorsim' ('infidels')³. Thus the Maskilim were left to themselves and their influence waned. The masses were estranged from them.

(1). A.B. Gottlober, HeAssif, 1884-P.5.

(2). Paperna, Perezhitoye III-P.352-Note.

(3). When Gottlober was found to be a Maskil he was forced to grant his wife a divorce. (HeAssif, 1886-P.431).

Every Jew of culture was taken as an infidel and was distrusted. The only orthodox Jew who advocated reforms in education was Manasseh ben Yoseph of Ilye (1767-1831), a disciple of the Wilna Gaon, but he was discredited by the people. He was man of deep insight into Jewish Scholarship, as well as in higher mathematics, mechanics and Strategics.¹ He did not hesitate to criticise some of the decisions of the Schulchan Aruk and the commentaries of Rashi and Tosaphat². He also pointed out that the Gemara at times misunderstood the text of the Mishna. His chief work is the "Alfe-Menashshe". When the printer became acquainted with the radical spirit of the work he threw both proofs and manuscript into the fire. Manasseh at once proceeded to rewrite his work book, and owing to his remarkable memory was able to complete it; he published it in Wilna in 1827 (republished in Warsaw in 1860). In his work Manasseh demonstrated that in accordance with the rabbinical teachings the Rabbis have the power to amend certain Jewish legal decisions when there is a necessity for it. Manasseh was compelled to suppress the paragraph containing this (Paragraph 20) because Samuel Katzenellenbogen threatened that if it were not withdrawn he would order the work publicly burned in the Synagogue yard.³ However, the book was burned just the same on the Wilna 'Schulhof' as a heretical work⁴. As far back as 1807, in his 'Peshet Dabar' he complained that "the Jews are divorced from real life and its practical needs and demands, that the leaders of the Jews are short-sighted men who, instead of

(1). When the Russian government ordered the establishment of rabbinical schools, Manassah wrote a work of higher mathematics, mechanics and strategies and asked his friends to induce some scholar to translate his work into Russian in order to show the government what a Jew could produce on those lines. His friend Joseph Wyazyn feared, however, the unfavorable comment of the officials, who might say that the Jews instead of working on farms, were preparing war plans. It was resolved therefore to burn the manuscript. (Jewish Encyclopedia VIII-P.285). This curious incident gives an idea of the time.

(2). Cp. Nathansohn's Sefath Emeth P.32-ff.

(3). Jewish Encyclopedia VIII.P.285.

(4). Paperna, Perezhitoye III-P.269 ^{and} Note.

enlightening their followers, darken their intellect with casuistic restrictions, in which each rabbi tries to outdo his predecessors and contemporaries. The wealthy class thinks only of its profits, and is not scrupulous in regard to the means of getting money. Even those who are honest and endeavor to help their poorer brethren do it in such an unintelligent way that they do harm rather than good. Instead of educating the children of the poor to become artisans, they add to the number of idlers, and are thus responsible for the dangerous consequences of such an education".¹ His daring appeal to the rabbis resulted in a condemnation of his works. He was one of the few who recognized the value of Yiddish as a medium of reaching the people. Thus he translated his *Samma-de-Hayye* into that language (Schklov, 1823).

While his views were rejected by the orthodox elements², they found adherents among the Maskilim. The intellectuals were in a small minority and scattered all over the country. The carelessness of some of the Maskilim resulted in the general antagonism of the great bulk of Jews against all the Maskilim. The term Maskil became synonymous with that of atheist. To this day the *Maskalah* is misunderstood. The name is somewhat misleading on account of the fact that it is often confused with the French Enlightenment, in which atheistic tendencies were uppermost. However, here, if a movement is to be judged by its leading spirits, it meant enlightened Judaism, pure from all superstitions. Thus the exponents of the movement, like Lebensohn, etc., carried on their campaign with a Bible in hand. Their motto was 'Torah ve-Chochma'--"learning and wisdom" (Cf. "Emeth ve-Emum'a" of Lebensohn)--these two not hostile but like sisters, ready to assist each other. Levinsohn called for enlightenment in the name of

(1). Cited in the Jewish Encyclopedia VIII-P.285.

(2). He had a number of followers like Mordecai Plungyanski (his biographer who published the 'Ben Peroth' in 1858), the head teacher of the Wilna Rabbinical Seminary; and R. Baer of Kopyl, etc. (Paperna, Perezhitoye, III 269-note).
and

the Talmud and the leading Rabbis. However, the masses had no confidence in the Maskilim. In order to organize the Maskilim for united effort a certain Dr. Rotenberg of Berditchev made an effort to organize the scattered Maskilim. In 1832 the Berditchev Maskilim organized the society of "Seekers of Light and of Knowledge" (Shohare Or ve-Haskalah). In 1830 a literary circle known as "Berliners" was formed in Wilna. Similar societies were founded in Volhynia, Brest-Litovsk, etc. All of them were devoted to Hebrew literature and secular knowledge. These societies were powerful agencies in the promotion of culture among the Jews of Russia.

The Wilna circle had a number of members who were destined to become the moulders of Jewish life. Abraham Bar Lebensohn¹ (Adam ha Kohen, 1794-1880) became the father of new Hebrew poetry in Russia; Mordecai Aaron Ginzburg² (1795-1846) created the new realistic Hebrew prose style. Isaac Meyer Dick (1808-1893)³ was the first to write short stories in Yiddish and thereby laid the foundations of Yiddish Literature. The main object in the literary activity of the three men was enlightenment. According to Abraham Bar Lebensohn the degradation of the Jews was due to four main causes: (1) Absence of Haskalah, i.e. of rational education in

(1). HeAssif V.3-P.417. His Shire Sefath Kodesh was published in 1842.

(2). Magid, Toledot Mishpaha th Ginzburg.

(3). Wiener, History of Yiddish Literature-PP/169-ff.

Although Dick mastered the Hebrew language he wrote mainly in Yiddish. His few Hebrew compositions are "Ha Oreach", a description of Sir Moses Montefiore's visit to Wilna, "Machseh mul Machseh" (1861), "Sifronoth" (1868) and "Masecheth Aniyuth". The last named is a parody on the Babylonian Talmud. It was published in Senior Sachs' "Kanfe Jona" (Berlin 1848). It was published in Wilna 1878. Dick received the reputation on account of this parody as a dangerous 'epikoros'. He was more successful in his Yiddish writings. S.I. Finn stated that Dick was the most popular author in Wilna. He was a prolific writer and most widely read. While there was a strict "index" on Hebrew books the Yiddish works passed without much attention on the part of the orthodox Jews. That offered Dick a wonderful opportunity to preach the doctrines of Haskalah without hindrance.

the language of the land¹; (2) the ignorance of the rabbis and preachers on all subjects outside of religion; (3) the marriages of children of premature age; (4) indulgence in luxuries, especially of table and dress. Mordecai Aaron Ginzburg likewise believed that the people suffer in consequence of their ignorance of secular learning. His opposition to the rabbis of the time is typical of his contemporaries. He insisted that instead of their indulgence in the casuistry of the Talmud they should look for the people's welfare. The same sentiment was expressed by Adam ha-Kohen Lebensohn. Lebensohn devoted his time to Hebrew Grammar and Exegesis. With the co-operation of Ben-Yakob he published Mendelssohn's Bible translation ("Mikrae Kodesh", Wilna 1848-53) with additional commentaries. This was hailed by the Maskilim as a most significant event in the intellectual development of the Russian Jews. This edition was sold in thousands of copies and thereby implanted a more exact knowledge of the Bible as well as of the German Language among the masses. Mordecai Aaron Ginzburg was guided by the principle: "Never chase darkness, your effort will be vain and fruitless; introduce light and darkness will be forced out". In harmony with this spirit he set out to write on historical themes: on "General History", on "Russian History"; "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte", "The Embassy of Philo Judaeus", etc. Thereby he showed his contemporaries that the rabbinical literature is not the alpha and the Omega of wisdom and that there exist problems other than Talmudic dialectics. His writings possess a brilliancy of style which renders them classics of Hebrew prose. Under his influence ~~many~~ developed the new-Hebrew prose literature of the nineteenth century. Kolman Shulman (1826-1900) continued the same line of work as author of a History of the World (in ten volumes), a Geography (in ten volumes), four volumes of biographical and literary essays on the Jewish writers of the Middle Ages, and translator of the "Jewish Wars" of Josephus. Aside from this work he introduced the romantic movement among the Jews and at the same time the

(1) Slouschz, p. 113 ff. C. . HeAssif V. III-P. 420.

novel into Hebrew Literature, through his translation of Eugene Sue's 'Les Mysteres Paris' (Wilna, 1847-8). "His books were spread broad-cast, by millions of copies, and they fostered love of Hebrew, of Science and knowledge in general among the people. By this token, Schulman was a civilizing agent of the first rank, his work is the portal through which the Maskil had to pass, and sometimes passes to this day, on the path of development toward modern civilization."¹

The Haskalah movement found full expression in the city of Warsaw.² In 1823 Anton Eisenbaum published a weekly in Yiddish and in Polish under the name "Der Bevobachter an der Weichsel" (Polish Title "Dostezegacz Nadwisianski")³. He also organized a rabbinical seminary in 1826. However, as its main object was the promotion of secular culture, it did not prepare any rabbis. The reform movement of the early forties affected the community of Warsaw. Abraham Meyer Goldschmidt was its first German preacher (1842). He came to Warsaw from Leipzig as tutor to Meyer Berson's children. He endeavored to raise the educational standard of the Jews in Poland by advocating the establishment of schools on the German model and to train the children in industrial lines. His house became the center of the intellectual life of the community. And even after he left for his new position at Leipzig, he still exerted a great influence on a number of prominent families.⁴ Mathias Rosen did much for the education of the younger Jewish generation of Warsaw. Abraham Stern (1769-1842), the astronomer and mathematician held a foremost place in the scholarly circles of Warsaw. His son-in-law, Hayim Selig Slonimsky (1810-1904) exerted a great influence on the Jews of Russian Poland through his works on Science and mathematics. He was widely read by all classes of people.⁵

(1). Slouschz-P.130.

(2). For the liberal tendencies in Odessa, Riga, etc. see next chapter.

(3). In Russia the first Hebrew periodical appeared in 1841 under the title 'Pirhe Zafon' (Wilna 1841-1844). It was edited by S.I.Finn. The first Yiddish paper was Zederbaum's "Kol me-Vasser" a supplement to the Hamelitz (Odessa-1863).

(4). Hazefira, 1912-No.18. (5). In 1862 Slominsky became editor of the Hazefira

While there were many leading spirits in the struggle for enlightenment none stand out as prominently as that of Isaac Ben Levinsohn (1788-1860) of Kremenitz, who may rightly be regarded as one of the leading Jews of the nineteenth century. As reformer of the life of the Russian Jews he has no peer. He was born into a well-to-do family. His father was a merchant. But like most business men of that day he was well-versed in Talmudic lore. In addition he mastered the Polish language and wrote fluently in classical Hebrew, which was a rare accomplishment, indeed, for a 'landman' in his day. The young Isaac Baer was sent to Heder at the age of three. As a child of nine he already dabbled in Cabala and curiously enough tried to compose a cabalistic work. At the age of ten he was well-versed in Talmudic lore and knew the old Testament by heart.¹ He applied himself to the study of the Russian language. However, his main studies were still in the line of Rabbinical literature. In accordance with the custom of his day he married young, but the marriage was an unhappy one and had to be dissolved. Broken down in health on account of excessive study Levinsohn went to Brodi to consult the local physicians. There he made the acquaintance of Dr. Isaac Erter and of Solomon Loh Rapaport. He was soon appointed teacher at the gymnasium of Tarnopol, where he became intimate with Joseph Pearl. He then returned to Brodi as instructor of the Hebrew College. His new position brought him into contact with Nachman Krochmal. From these men he learned many a lesson that was very useful to him in his later activity. Therein he was preeminent to all the other leaders of the Haskalah. For not only did he diffuse knowledge but he also learned the methods for this work. He realized that while he may expect the opposition of the orthodox elements he would be safe if he would get the government on his side. Thus while his first literary effort (a poem in Hebrew at the occasion of the defeat of the French) in which he already displayed his

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia VIII-42.

patriotic feelings and which was presented to the Minister of the Interior Kozodavlev by commander Girs¹ may have been accidental his other works bear signs of conscious efforts to please the government. Probably with this motive he translated (1818) into Yiddish the Tariff laws (Luach hameches) the ignorance of which gave quite a good deal of trouble to the government. In 1822 he prepared a plan (in German) for the organization of Jewish Schools and seminaries and a description of the 'new Jewish Sects' which he presented to the Crown Prince Konstantin through Zass. The following year he wrote a satire on the Hasidim "Emek Refaim" which circulated in manuscript among the Jews of Russia and Austria.² In 1820 on his return from Galicia into Kremenitz he wrote in Hebrew a grammar of the Russian Language ("Yessde Lashov Russya").

His Grammar was not published nor was the plan of Jewish Schools realized. However, his first efforts showed just what were his aims and methods of enlightening the people. It came out more fully in his "Teudo Be-Visroel". From 1817³ he labored xxx on this work which he completed in 1822⁴ but on account of ill health was unable to publish it in 1823. Although he wrote his book in a most careful way in order not to offend the orthodox elements he still feared lest it be condemned by them. In 1827 he sent a manuscript copy of the 'Teudo' to Admiral Shishkov who was the Minister of Public Instruction and Foreign Denominations, with a long letter explaining the object of the book, its patriotic motives, and the deep felt need of such a work among the masses. He asked for permission to dedicate the 'Teudo' to Admiral Shishkov, in order to protect it against the attacks of the orthodox⁵, and for financial help to

(1). Hessen, Perezhitoye IIIP.6.

(2). Of his other Anti-Hasidic works are 'Dibre Zaddikim', (1832) and "Megilah A'fah" (Ed. Dynard-1904).

(3). Hessen-ibid P.7.

(4). Zinberg, Perezhitoye II-P.319-20 Cp. J. Hessen, Perezhitoye I-second part P.24 ff. & Note 2.

(5). This was a method frequently resorted to in Western Europe.

enable him to publish his work. The book was handed over to the convert Zandberg for examination, "who expressed himself in favor of publishing the work, but on the condition, that all passages which were 'unfavorable to the Hasidim' be omitted, that it might be approved by the Russian-Polish rabbis and, finally, it should not be dedicated to the minister, since in that case the Jews would not read the book".¹ The new Minister of Public Instruction Bludov recommended to the Tzar that Levinsohn be awarded a prize of onethousand rubles and that the book be published later on. As soon as Levinsohn received the thousand rubles he published the book at his own expense (1828).

The impression which this book produced on the Jews in Russia was tremendous. Its respectful tone towards orthodoxy, its convincing arguments and copious references to rabbinical authorities won the good will of the orthodox Jews. They looked upon the 'Teudo' with great reverence. Rabbi Abeli of Wilna remarked that the only fault he could find with the book was that it had not been written by Elijah Gaon himself.

In the "Teudo" Levinsohn pointed out the defects in Jewish education and life. A radical change was necessary in the instruction of the young. Every Jew must study the Torah systematically and study Hebrew grammatically. He must also acquire other languages beside Hebrew, and especially the language of his country. Beside Jewish learning every Jew must possess some secular knowledge. He adduced proofs from Jewish History to support his plea for the promotion of culture among the Jews in Russia. In addition he aimed to direct the Jews to trades² and to

(1). Hessen-Perezhitoye III P.11.

(2). The attitude of the Jews toward labor was rather peculiar. A.I. Paperna writes that his mother used to repeat frequently: "Praise be unto God in our family there is not one convert and not one laborer". (Perezhitoye II P.19). This remark is characteristic of the time of which Isaac Baer Levinsohn wrote his Teudah Be Yisrael. A respectable Jew would not care to give his daughter in marriage to a tailor or shoemaker. In the Synagogues the last seats only were left for them. Thus they were forced

agriculture. For this reason he tried to show the esteem in which trades were held in Talmudic times and pointed to the golden period of Jewish History in which agriculture was the main stay.

This book more than any other work paved the way for the school reform of the forties. In 1830 Levinsohn wrote in Yiddish ("Hephker Welt") in which he pointed out the defects in Russian Jewish life and advocated the establishment of Jewish schools and tried to attract the Jews to agriculture and to trades. In 1831 Levinsohn sent to the new Minister of Education Prince Emanuel Lievin, an elaborate tract (in German) on the need of Jewish Schools.¹ In 1834 Levinsohn succeeded in persuading a large number of Jewish families (fifty-two) of Kremenitz to take up agricultural pursuits, but not one of them carried out the plan.² In 1833 Levinsohn worked out a plan for the removal of Jewish printing presses from all cities, save those in which there was a censor, and for the censorship of all Jewish books that were in circulation. He also drew up a list of books which he regarded as useful and which he regarded as harmful. This project was presented to the Minister of the Interior and in 1836 an ukase was issued regarding the closing of the Jewish printing presses and the censorship of even old books³. However, he soon realized

to have their own houses of worship and select their own officers and even their own "rebe", who explained to them the weekly portion of the Pentateuch and some of the moralistic works. However, even in their own synagogues no perfect equality was maintained. Thus for example the "Prizisch Schneider" (I.E. the tailors who worked for the Polish nobles) and the wealthier ones would look down upon the less fortunate of their brethren.

(1). It is interesting to point out in this connection that a few years later when Levinsohn finished the Beth-Yehudah he was compelled to give it the character as if it appeared as an answer to questions propounded to him ~~only~~ by Lievin - otherwise he could not secure the consent of the printers to publish it.

(2). Hessen-Perezhitoye-III-P.15-Note.

(3). Ibid P.16.

his unfortunate error. The censorship was in the hands of the rabbis and Levinsohn himself was compelled to try to mitigate their severe censorship measures.

However, the unpardonable blunders of his communal activity were not known to his contemporaries. They knew Levinsohn through his books. And there he appeared as a great master. Beside the 'Teudo' he wrote his "Beth-Yehuda" in which he presented in a systematic way the development of Judaism from earliest times down to his own day.¹ This book was hailed by the Russian Jews.² Abraham Geiger and Yost highly commended it; but Reggio attacked it on the ground of its conservatism and found fault with Levinsohn for having defended the belief in evil spirits. To this Levinsohn offered the following reply: "It appears to me that it was very prudent of me to have written as I did, in order not to cast reflection upon the sages of the Talmud, who believed in them. A wise man and a great scholar as Reggio undoubtedly is, ought to know that it was my purpose to teach the people and I dared not destroy the good effects of my teachings by paying too much attention to petty matters which are apt to cause division of opinion and even schisms. And if he will study my book from beginning to end he will not fail to see my standpoint in the matter, as other scholars have done."³ Little doubt is left to the reader of Beth Yehudah of the splendid presentation of Judaism, though in places it is rather too conservative. However, this book was not written as a scientific exposition of Judaism. It was a mere tract for popular usage. That it met the requirement can be seen from the profound impression it left upon Russian Jewry. Levinsohn was a born leader and knew how to gain the hearts of the people. While he showed the shortcomings of the

(1). This book appeared in two volumes (1838) and ^{had} appeared since in several editions.

(2). The Teudo and Beth Yehudah were adopted for use in the Government Schools in 1854.

(3). Quoted by Julius Greenstone in the Jewish Exponent, February 25th, 1910.

old forms of Jewish Life, he did not extol the new forms advocated by the leaders of the Haskalah. He was guided by the principle that too hasty a condemnation of the old would result in a destructive reaction.

Meanwhile the Jewish Community of Zaslavl¹ in Volhynia was accused of ritual murder. Many families were imprisoned and the community was in despair. In defense of the Jews Levinsohn wrote his "Efes Damin".² However his Magnus Opus is the "Zerubabel" a book called forth on the occasion of A.C. McCaul's book against the Talmud and Rabbinitism, known as "The Old Paths", or "A Comparison of the Principles and Doctrines of Modern Judaism with the Religion of Moses and the Prophets". The book was translated into Hebrew by a converted Jew S. Hoza (1839) and was widely circulated amongst the Jews in Russia. Sir Moses Montefiore consequently turned to Isaac Baer Levinsohn to write a book in answer to McCaul. In spite of his sickness Levinsohn undertook the task. After twelve years of labor he completed the book under the title "Zerubabel" (1853), which he regarded as an elaboration of his former work, "Beth Yehudah".

Thus Levinsohn united the orthodox as well as the intellectual tendencies of his day. His gentle nature, ~~and his few blunders~~ tactful manner, in spite of his few blunders and vast learning in Rabbinical as well as in classical literatures gained for him the confidence of all classes of Jews. He knew the wants of the people and, he admired their excellencies, he recognized their failings, he felt with them, lived with them and was therefore always honored and respected by them. In one of his letters, dated 1857, only three years before his death, discussing the measures taken by the government to establish schools and the efforts of the Maskilim in that direction, Levinsohn says: "The people wish to

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia VIII P.44.

(2). It was completed in 1834 and published in 1837. A translation into English by Dr. Loewe appeared in 1840 at the time of the Damascus affair. It was also translated into Russian (1883) and German (1884 and in 1892).

remain with the old, and we must therefore not be surprised to see them struggle against any innovation. But you must know that there are many among them who are students of the law and even the humblest frequently read Midrash or some pious books and the great mass conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of morality and possess high qualities of character, the lowliest doing charity and helping those poorer than themselves. It is the duty of the wise men of our generation to lead the people in a golden mean, not with violence and compulsion, but with patience and love. The old system of things has many faults, I admit, but the new Haskalah is also not free from blemishes. If you are too hasty in condemning the old you will cause a reaction, destructive in character, which you will later regret".¹

His policy toward the government was the product of his age. Characteristic of the man are the words inscribed at his own request, on his tombstone: "Out of nothing God called me to life. Alas, earthly life has passed, and I shall sleep again on the bosom of Mother-Nature, as this stone testifies. I have fought the enemies of God not with the sharp sword but with the word. That I have fought for truth and justice before the nations, "Zerubabel" and "Efes Danim" bear witness". He was one of the noblest of Israel's sons.

(1). Greenstone in The Jewish Exponent February 25th, '10.

Chapter XIII. School Reforms

The activity of the Maskilim was of special significance in the school reform. The old forms of instruction were very inadequate. In dingy rooms without air and without light crowds of little children were huddled together. There they remained from early morning till late in the evening. The instruction consisted of the Pentateuch and Talmud. No attempt was made at a systematic study of Hebrew or of Jewish History. The Bible with the exception of the first five Books of Moses¹ was studied by few who were under suspicion of being 'epikorsim'. At a very tender age the children were initiated into the dialectics of the Talmud. They were taught the sections of the Talmud dealing with the laws of damages etc., with the idea that this study would help develop their mental faculties. The instruction was disorderly. A number of assistant instructors taught in the same room. All spoke at the same time. The noise of the children and of the teachers was deafening. In a plaintive sing-song the children prepared their lessons. The penalty of the less diligent and disorderly children was the rod of the Melamed. In some 'hedarim' (schools) it was customary to give the boys some lashes on Friday afternoon before being dismissed in anticipation of the mischief they would commit next Saturday. Every move of the child was watched and punished severely. For it was believed that 'he who withholds the rod hatheth his son'. The rod was regarded as a factor in the moulding of the child's character.

The men who were in charge of the child's mental and moral development were hardly capable of performing their task conscientiously. Though skilled in Rabbinical lore, they were ignorant in other fields of learning. Thus, at times they were detrimental to the best development of

(1). The children began with the book of Leviticus, the least interesting for that age.

the child. They were in great numbers in each city. According to Lilienthal there were, during his travels in Russia, at least twenty thousand melandim.¹ "The three cities of Kaminiec, Balta and Mohilev, in Podolia, alone give employment, according to strictly authentic records, to one hundred and twenty-six melandim, who teach over sixteen hundred children at an annual expense of ten thousand, three hundred and ninety-two silver rubles. The most popular cities, such as Wilna and Berditchev, employ each over two hundred melandim."² Although the money spent annually by the Russian Jews for the education of their children reached the enormous sum of between two and three million ~~ruble~~ silver rubles, still every individual teacher received barely more than eighty rubles salary per annum, wherewith he had to support his family. Under such conditions an inferior grade of men entered into the teaching profession. When a man failed in everything else he became a Melamed. The name 'melamed' came to mean 'a good-for-nothing'.

Consequently the schools were inadequate for the purpose for which they were intended. The Maskilim saw these short-comings and turned all their efforts upon the reform of the education of the Jews in Russia. At first they worked single-handed, but soon they were enforced by Uvarov's plans of school reform.

Attempts were made during the last years of Alexander's reign to organize schools following the Mendelssohnian system. The first school of this kind was organized in Uman by Hirsch Hurwitz in 1822. However, most of these schools were founded during the reign of Nicholas I. In Odessa there was a colony of settlers from Brodi and Tarnopol. Some of them were disciples of the schools of Pearl. This city had the highest state of culture. The Hasidic Rabbi Visrolzi said that he ~~saw~~ around Odessa the flames of the Gehinom. The Jews of Odessa organized a modern

(1). The number seems rather extravagant.

(2). See Occident, 1847.

school in 1826 through the initiative of Jacob Nathansohn, Leon Landau, H. Herzenstein and Joseph Schwefelberg, and was supported by the Jewish community. Besides Jewish subjects, Russian, German, Mathematics and Calligraphy were taught. The principal was a German Jew by the name of Sittenfeld.¹ All instructors with the exception of one were German or Austrian. The text books used were all in German. Even Karamain's "History of Russia" was read in a German translation. Such instruction could accomplish little towards making the Jews useful Russian citizens. The number of students increased from year to year until it became necessary to provide additional funds for the maintenance of the School. This difficulty was met by imposing a special tax on Kosher meat, the first tax of its kind in Russia, which was not introduced elsewhere until 1844. The orthodox elements of Russia looked upon such schools as a menace to Judaism and regarded the additional tax as an outrage. But their protestations were of no avail, for the government favored the plan.

The example of Odessa was followed in Kishineff. There the school was placed under the direction of Jacob Goldenthal, the Austrian Orientalist². In Wilna a modern school was organized in 1830. The schools in Wilna differed from the schools in other cities in that they were conducted by Russian Jews. They were under the care of Klatzcke and Rosenthal. "The teachers were all self-made men; in hidden nooks, unobserved perhaps by their own wives at the late hour of midnight when all were asleep, they had to study for themselves the primary branches of the German and French languages and by laborious self-study to acquire the knowledge, by the instruction of which they became so eminently useful to the rising generation"³. The children were instructed in Hebrew Grammar and in Bible in German and French.

(1). Sittenfeld was succeeded by Basilus Stern in 1828.

(2). Goldenthal became principal in 1843.

(3). Max Lilienthal, Isr. II P.186.

In Riga a school was established on the Odessa model in 1838. The Jewish population in the Baltic Provinces were of an advanced stage of culture. They lived in Riga, Livonia and in the state of Courland. As these provinces formerly belonged to Germany they were full of German civilization. Lillienthal states¹ that the Jews who lived there approximated "the nearest to the German Jews in their religious ideas. Long ago before the peculiar Jewish dress was prohibited, a great many could be seen here dressed after the German fashion, speaking pure German, and having their whole house arranged after the German custom. The works of Mendelssohn were here 'Terepha passul', the children visited the public schools, the academies, and the universities; but, again, it is true enough, that from the thirty thousand apostates,² who live in Petersburg and Moscow, the greater part hails from the Baltic Provinces." The Russian government tried to Russify the Baltic Provinces. For this reason the Greek Church tried to gain a firm hold in Livonia. In order to make another breach in the bulwark of Livonian privileges the Bishop of the Greek Church advocated with all his power the establishment of a Jewish School in Riga. Thus the Jews received the privilege of establishing a school long before they had the right of permanent settlement in that city. They hoped as soon as they would gain a firm foot-hold in the city, they would obtain the other privileges as well. According to the program of the school in Riga the principal was to be an alien of Jewish faith, "educated in the spirit of true learning". In 1839 at the recommendation of Ludwig Phillipsohn they called Dr. Max Lillienthal, a graduate of the University of Munich, as their first teacher and preacher. The school was opened January 15th, 1840.

Lillienthal came well-recommended by Count Malitz, the Russian Ambassador to Holland to Count Uvarov, Minister of Public Instruction. Uvarov was concerned at that time with the reorganization of the Jewish educational system. He needed a man who could help him in this work.

(1). The Occident, 1847.2/The number seems rather extravagant.

For some reason Uvarov was not favorably inclined toward Levinsohn. That may have been due to Levinsohn's defensive attitude towards the Talmud, which may have displeased Uvarov who was of the opinion that the Talmud was the source of Jewish superstitions etc. It also seems likely that he could not reconcile himself with ^{placing} much confidence in a man who appealed to the government for financial help a number of times.¹ Uvarov's predecessor in the ministry, ~~at~~ Bludov, who first recommended Levinsohn's 'Teudo' to the Tsar² in 1828 changed his attitude towards Levinsohn after he published his *Hfes Damin*.³ He found another man who was of greater use to him. Herman Yezeevsky, a teacher at the Warsaw Rabbinical Seminary, was known to Bludov (in 1833) who entrusted him with the task of drawing up a plan for Jewish schools. In his program there was no room for the instruction of the Talmud. Hessen remarks that from Yezeevsky's comments the minister was right in concluding that the Talmud was the cause of Jewish ~~superstitions~~ exclusiveness as well as of their aversion to secular knowledge.⁴ Yezeevsky was a more desirable man for Bludov than Levinsohn. For his views on the Talmud suited him excellently. Uvarov likewise needed a man according to this spirit. But Levinsohn was not the man for him. And he chose Lilienthal. He had made a success of his school in Riga, was well educated and had a commanding personality. He was young but that was an additional quality in his favor. For he would let himself be ruled by the authorities on essential matters.

However the people thought differently of Uvarov's choice. Lilienthal himself states that the Jews were much displeased at his having been called to St. Petersburg to participate in the deliberation of the Jewish affairs of Russia. In the first place he was too young for this

(1). In 1836, 1846, 1847.

(2). Supra P. 21

(3). Hessen-Perezhitoye III P. 16.

(4). Ibid P. 17.

task¹, especially since he was a foreigner, totally unacquainted with the life of the Jews in Russia as well as with the cunning diplomacy of the Russian government. In the second place the Jews suspected that he would try to Germanize them, "would trust to and believe every insinuation of the authorities, and these, under pretext of having obtained the consent of a Jewish Rabbi, could dare to justify any of their proselytical schemes. And they were not entirely wrong xxx in their mode of reasoning."² The cruel and barbarous measures the Tsar had taken against the Catholics in confiscating and destroying their monasteries as well as the inhuman treatment of the 'Staroverzhi' (the 'old Believers') in bringing them into the Established Church were sufficient to make the Jews skeptical as to the Government's good intentions towards them.³ In addition the Jews had positive proofs that the Government was not concerned with their welfare but aimed primarily to educate them for the purpose of conversion. Instead of encouraging the Jews in their ~~study~~ study Nicholas ordered, on the contrary, that all Jews who held offices and insignia of distinction under Alexander I should either resign them or become Christians. Lilienthal says: "I know, myself, several collegiate counsellors and men attached to the court, who went to the Synagogue on the Day of Atonement, with the insignia of the order of St. Anna around their necks, and prayed there with devotion and fervor, who still were forced into apostasy. Such instances are not calculated to encourage Jewish parents to let their children study; and it is but too true that many whose inclination led them to study were carried thereby into the bosom of the Christian Church."⁴ The apostasy of so many Jews did not result out of indifference (1). He was but twenty-four years of age when he was called from Riga to St. Petersburg.

(2). Lilienthal, *Israelite* II P. 106.

(3). The intellectual standing of the Jews was on a much higher level than that of the non-Jews. While they had 'chedarim' the others had no schools whatever. (In the Pale of Settlement). It therefore looked suspicious that the Government should begin to provide the Jews before it provided the Christians with enlightenment.

(4). *The Occident*, 1847 P. 496.

to Judaism, but out of despair. Those who tried to open for themselves a way in life through the knowledge they obtained, ~~xxx~~ finding that every prospect was frustrated by laws hostile to them only, as Jews," ran from mere despair into the bosom of the Greek Church."¹

It is true the government promised not to interfere with the religious beliefs of the students, but that was not carried out. The first Jew in a Russian University² Yakim Zimmerman (registered at the ~~Kiav~~ University of Kiev in 1836) was converted a year later.³ According to (1). Ibid.

(2). There were medical students before that time. Thus Samuel Kushel-ovsky completed his course in medicine at the University of Wilna in 1824. He practised in Nesvizh and enjoyed a wide reputation in Lithuania. Many legends were current concerning his wonderful cures. He was an adherent of the Lyubavicher Rebe. About the same time Zeiberling and Rosensohn also graduated from Russian Universities as physicians. Perezhitoye Pp.37-8.

(3). Zimmerman became professor of Jurisprudence at Prince Bezborodko's Lyceum in Mezhl. In 1842 at the request of Count Uvarov the faculty of Jurisprudence of the University of Kiev supplied him with a list of the more capable students that completed their course of studies at that university in order to send them into foreign universities for the preparation of taking up the vacant professorial positions at Kiev. Zimmerman's name was recommended among the first. However the faculty added that Zimmerman "descending from Jews and being married to a person of the same descent might, in spite of the conversion of both of them, continue, even hereafter, to come into relation and acquaintance with persons of the same descent". Thus he was excluded from the list of recommended students. In 1846 Zimmerman received the grade of Magister and continued as teacher in the Lyceum for a long time and was very popular with the students. Perezhitoye IP.2-note 2. Another Jew registered at the University of Kiev in 1839, but he does not appear in the list of 1840. It is not known whether he followed Zimmerman's example or whether he was removed in consequence of the reorganization of the university in 1839. Yakim Zimmerman became later on director of the Rabbinical school at Zhitomir where he continued till 1865. While he was on good terms with the pupils and teachers he tried to hide his Jewish descent. However when the edict of Alexander II concerning the right of settlement of the various classes of Jews ~~xxxx~~ was issued, Zimmerman came into the school and gathered round him all the teachers and pupils and began to read out loud with enthusiastic joy the ukase, but all of a sudden he began to sob like a child: "I cannot, I cannot!" He said in tears to the inspector of the school J. Eichenbaum - "You read on"... Zimmerman's wife who embraced Christianity together with him, subsequently became subject to fits of melancholy and hanged herself in Zhitomir. Paperna, Perezhitoye P.319.

Professor Vladimirski-Budanov the number of Jewish students in the medical department of the University of Kiev began to increase with the re-opening of the University. However, conversion became an ordinary occurrence. For it was practically impossible for a Jew to make any headway. In 1836, a Jewish physician, Joseph Bertensohn, applied to the ministry of the Interior for an appointment to a government position. The matter was referred to a committee of ministers and the Tzar sanctioned the appointment, but "in the western provinces only".

In view of such conditions the Jews could expect little good from Lilienthal's visit to the capital. Lilienthal himself was aware of the motives of the government. During his short stay in Riga he learned the Tzar's true intentions. When Uvarov asked him to draw up a plan for Jewish primary and higher schools and to define the subjects of instruction as well as the methods to be pursued, Lilienthal stated that the policy of the government towards the Jews aroused their distrust. For even those who entered the colleges, visited the universities when "they applied for an appointment, it was granted but upon the condition of becoming a convert to Christianity. Therefore the Jews see in the whole undertaking but a plan of wholesale proselytism, and do not greet it with that sincere joy, which I expected on their part."¹ He urged the minister that the only way to remove all doubts from the minds of the Jews was "to grant that once their emancipation, or if the government considers this step a hasty one, to grant them at least some favors, that their religious rights will not be infringed upon, that their liberties will not be rescinded, and that they will see a bright hopeful future is in store for them."²

Lilienthal drew up a plan for three higher seminaries, forty-eight higher and some one hundred and fifty elementary schools. Somewhat later

(1). Lilienthal Isr. II P. 106. Of course these facts rest upon his own testimony.

(2). Ibid.

Lilienthal was commissioned to visit Wilna in the interests of school reform. His first tour met with disappointment. In Wilna he received the following objections on the part of the orthodox people, that "the government intends to have but one church in the whole empire; that it has in view but its own future strength and greatness, but not our own future prosperity".¹ Another consideration was brought up: "In Germany where they have neglected these last thirty years the study of the Talmud, and have indulged in the study of all kinds of profane sciences our Jewish religion has been greatly wronged, the ties of the heavenly yoke have been loosened; the old respect for our sacred ordinances ^{is} gone, and many of our brethren have embraced Christianity. Is it not in the interest of our creed to keep away from all these innovations, to adhere to our ancient mode of life, to educate our children as we have been educated, finding in the past a safer guarantee for our existence and ~~xx~~ our preservation than in the new, wild schemes of our present innovators?"²

When after a stay of three weeks in Wilna the object of his mission did not advance, Lilienthal decided to visit another city of importance, thinking that if he should succeed in obtaining the cooperation of another community Wilna would follow likewise. He, therefore, went to Minsk. This city in 1841 "was one of the strongholds ~~of the xxx xxxxxxxxxx~~ of Rabbinitism in Russia. The first rays of civilization had not yet begun to dawn over this congregation; whilst Wilna was numbering hundreds of young men, well-versed in the modern literature, and favoring a reform of the educational system, in Minsk could be found not ten men, inclined to promote the subject of my endeavors. The study of the Talmud was reigning with omnipotent sway, and the visitors of the richly endowed Beth Hamidrash were exercising an unbounded influence. The Melamidim (teachers)

(1). Ibid P.146.

(2). Ibid.

and lamdim (scholars), who considered their existence endangered by any change in the system of instruction, like a phalanx were ready, to front against my scheme and to stir up all the hostile elements under their rule, to frustrate at once any overture, made by me for this end. Truly the Hasidim had crept into Minsk, established their 'Hasidim Stuebel' (Synagogues) and were trying to promulgate their party, an undertaking in which heretofore they had not yet succeeded in Wilna. But instead of opposing the Mithnagdlim (Rabbinists), as they were wont to do in all other cases, they soon made common cause with them, to defeat me, who was considered their common enemy. Sound Talmudical study, accompanied by Pilpul and all its extravagancies, a hatred against all, even the most useful innovations, strict observance of all kinds of religious commands and ittin hagim?, unstained morality throughout all the classes (a fact, Wilna could not boast of); more wealth, by far less poverty, and hence also more independence and self-reliance - these were the characteristics of the congregation I now had to deal with."¹

There were only two men in the city who favored a change in the system of education. One was Susele Rapaport, one of the wealthiest Jews in Minsk, who understood the value of culture; and the other was Rabbi Israel Michael Jeshurum, a man of thorough Rabbinical learning and of some general education. However the rest of the population was bitterly opposed to any change. In response to Lilienthal's appeal to organize schools for their youth the authorities of the Jewish community stated: "If equal rights were given to the Jews, we should embrace the opportunity gladly, for civilization will stir up a desire which will be amply gratified by the liberty given to its adherents. But as long as equal rights have not yet been given us, we know that many will seek to quench their thirst for liberty, aroused by culture, in the waters of baptism."²

(1). Ibid P.250.

(2). Cited by Greenstone, Jewish Exponent, February 25th, '10.

The plan was defeated at a public meeting.¹ The joy over the defeat was intense. Lilienthal says: "I was shunned everywhere in the streets; not one greeted me, everyone being afraid of coming into contact with him who was considered almost an outlaw, and when three days afterward I left the city none of my friends were with me to bid me a farewell; the scorn and derision of wanton children were the last sounds that reached me from the city of Minsk."²

Lilienthal returned to Wilna, but the news of his defeat in Minsk preceded him. The fanatics encouraged by the action taken by their friends in Minsk resolved upon a strong opposition also in Wilna.³ Finally the day came upon which a meeting was to be held to arrive at a final decision on the proposition laid before them three months previously. Here is Lilienthal's description of this meeting: "The vestry room was crowded to the utmost; the Schulhof was filled in every corner; over forty thousand men were present, ready to dictate by force and not to listen to any reasoning argument, the glorious example of the steadfast city of Minsk had to be imitated, whatever the consequences might be. The president of the congregation presided; the chief of police was present, accompanied by one of his cossacks, to be sent ~~xxxxxxxx~~ where emergency would require his services. But it was impossible to uphold any order in the debate; propositions were made and carried; the excitement continually increased; no speaker could make himself heard, my scheme was denounced as godless and sinful; threatenings of the most daring kind were uttered, and even the chief of police grossly insulted. Though fully resolved to show the greatest forbearance to the mass, infuriated by religious fanaticism and prejudice he soon perceived, that he had to take energetic measures to stop the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ^{excitement} if he should not be found guilty of allowing a revolution."

(1). Lilienthal omits to say in his account that in Minsk he resorted to the aid of the governor who summoned some of the most representative men to make them approximate funds for government schools. But they refused. Hessen-Perezhitoye III-25).

(2). Isr. II-P.266.

(3). Lilienthal omits a very interesting point which no doubt contributed largely to the opposition aroused against him. He suggested that the tax

tionary uproar. In order to set an example, he therefore arrested the parnass, whose dissimulation he had penetrated, and ordered the fire companies to come and disperse the crowd by the streams of water from their powerful engines. The cold water appeased the inflamed fury, the people fled in all directions; in half an hour the place was vacated, but in Wilna too for the present my case was irretrievably lost."¹

Lilienthal's first tour resulted in failure. On his return to St. Petersburg he suggested to Uvarov that the failure of his plans was due to the fact that the Jews did not put any confidence in him, because of his youth and lack of experience and especially because he was a foreigner and even suspected of proselytical schemes. He, therefore, advised Uvarov to convene an assembly of representative Russian Rabbis to St. Petersburg. This plan was approved by the Council of Ministers. However, when the memorandum was presented to the Tzar he limited the number of representatives to four. The election of delegates was left to the Jews themselves. Immediately after the approval of this plan Uvarov commissioned Lilienthal (1842) to undertake a second tour through all the provinces where the Jews resided to inform the people of the government's plan and to gain their assistance in behalf of it, as well as to superintend the election of delegates representatives.

Lilienthal's second journey met with great success. The idea of a Rabbinical conference appealed to the people. The fact that the Tzar himself ordered the school reform was enough to make the people submissive. The Jews of Wilna, though greatly surprised at his return and fearing that he came to take vengeance on all those who resisted him during

which the Melamdim were paying since the beginning of the forties for the maintenance of the Talmud Torahs should be renewed for the purpose of the reformed schools of Wilna. (See Hessen, Perezhitoye III-23 ff.)

(1). Ibid P.274.

the last visit, were soon won over by his tactful ways. The failure of his first tour taught him ^{the} a very valuable lesson, to be more careful. They approved his plans and selected Rabbi Yitzhok of Volozhin as their representative. He was one of the most foremost Talmudical scholars in Russia and commanded great respect among the Jews. In addition he was "a man of great worldly tact and experience; a man of rare penetration, who many years ago had foreseen the intended reforms and always advocated the necessity of sending a number of Jewish boys to the imperial schools."¹ He spoke the German, Russian and Polish languages fluently and though unacquainted with the literature of any of them he understood full well that the school reform could not be delayed any longer.

The example of Wilna was followed by the Jewish community of Minsk. He was cordially received and his plans were endorsed. In Berdychev he was awaited impatiently and his message was enthusiastically listened to. He was joyously received in New Russia, in Kherson and in Kishineff. The three other representatives to the rabbinical conference were: Menahem Mendel of Lyubavich, one of the leading figures in the Hasidic movement, Israel Halperin, a banker of Berdychev, and Basilius Stern, director of the Odessa school. The only one who was familiar with the problems of education was Basilius Stern. However, Stern did not render the best service at the conference on account of his jealousy of Dr. Lilienthal. He was the councillor of Governor Woronzew in Jewish matters and expected to be entrusted by the government with the plans of school reform. This personal element entered into the transactions of the conference.² There was little work for the commission of Jewish representatives save that of approving the plans of Uvarov.³ It was passed

(1). Isr. II P. 402/

(2). Zederbaum, Koheleth 1881 P. 12 ff.

(3). Menahem ~~of~~ Mendel of Lyubavich did not sign the document. He could not approve ~~such~~ a measure which meant the death-blow to Hasidism. Cp. Kenesseth Israel, 1888 P. 217.

that graded schools should be established in all places where the Jews reside, which were to be maintained by the income from the new tax to be imposed upon candles. The ukase of November 13th, 1844 stated that in addition to the privileges granted to the Jews to attend the general Christian schools, two kinds of schools ^{should} ~~xxxx~~ be organized for the instruction of Jewish children: viz. Primary schools, and higher schools where all trades should be taught. There ^{should} ~~xxxx~~ also be ~~xxxx~~ Rabbinical schools for the preparation of teachers and rabbis. The students in the Jewish schools were to enjoy the same privileges as the students of all other institutions. Those who ^{would} ~~xxxx~~ have completed a course of studies corresponding to that of the county schools would shorten their term of military service by ten years; and those who ^{would} ~~xxxx~~ have completed the course of instruction of the gymnasium - by fifteen years. Whereas those who will have completed the course of the gymnasium with distinction, in conduct and in the Russian language and literature, should be freed entirely from military service.¹ The Jewish instructors in the government schools were likewise freed from serving in the army.

The government decision regarding school reform was welcomed by the intellectuals not out of idealistic motives only. Some of them expected to obtain positions in the new schools. Lilienthal was swarmed with petitions for appointments as teachers and he evoked the wrath of the maskilim when he proposed to invite Germans to teach in the Government schools of which he was in charge. The orthodox elements, on the other hand, looked upon the school reform as an evil decree just like the conscription measures and tried to keep their children away from them. "Orphans, artisans' children and beggars were forced by the influential members of the community into constituting the school contingent; the school was recruited in fact from the dregs of the Jewish population; At times parents were paid for sending their children to the school".²

(1). Ukase of Nicholas I (Yiddish) Wilna, 1844.
 (2). Jewish Encyclopedia X 544.

Lilienthal finding opposition on all sides left in 1844 for America. His place was filled by L.I. Mandelshtam.¹ Mandelshtam exerted a great influence upon the Jews in Russia as translator of the Bible into Russian and as author of Hebrew Russian and Russo-Hebrew dictionaries. He remained in the position of "learned Jew" till 1857. He wrote text books in Hebrew, German and Russian Grammars to be used in the government schools.²

However the government schools were a complete failure. The distrust of the Jewish population could not be overcome. The teachers though well paid for that time (two hundred and fifty rubles a year to the principals and two hundred and twenty-five rubles to the instructors) were often left almost destitute on account of the frequent postponement of payments for months. The government was of the opinion that the Jews should be freed from the burden of the Talmud. The Maskilim were probably instrumental in this attitude. Thus in 1853 the authorities of the government of Minsk ordered that the teaching of the Mishna should be discontinued. In 1854 the same authorities replaced the Schulchan Aruk with the Hage Adam and pointed out certain passages to be omitted. The ministry made obligatory upon the schools to use the Ashkenazie prayer book with

(1). He entered the University of Moscow in 1840, the same year in which Ossip A. Rabinovich entered the University of Kharkov (Medical college). Soon after he went to the University of St. Petersburg, where he completed his course in 1849. (See Perezhitoye VI P.1 ff.)

(2). Mandelshtam began to publish text books for the schools at the expense of the community. He did not hesitate to publish even such books as had no connection with the schools. Thus he published a new edition of the Biur which was unnecessary since Lebenshn had just published his "Mikroo Kodesh". The Bible was thrown upon the Melamdin but as the price - twenty rubles - was too much for the poor teachers who hardly saved that much per semester the community had to pay for them. Some communities sent in the money but did not even take the books. Mandelshtam also published the works of Kimonides (four volumes) and the "Yad Hachazakah" with a German translation for which there was no call. Even some of the Yeshuboth (of R. Yechiel Heller) he published with a German translation. There was no need for his Hebrew Grammars since Ben Zeeb's and Herz Homberg's works were circulating among the people. Frequently the same subjects would be repeated in a number of his text books. Tugendhold, the censor, remarked to him: "I always wondered concerning the repetition of phrases in the Pentateuch, but now seeing your works I can understand it quite well; Moses must have been paid by the page." Perezhitoye II p.33-ff.-Note.

its German translation.¹ This naturally antagonized the Hasidim. The principals of the schools were non-Jews. Often converts were engaged as instructors in the Jewish schools. Consequently the Jews could not put much confidence in them.

The school reform only widened the breach between the Maskilim and the orthodox Jews. It must also be stated that the Maskilim were very tactless and intolerant in their relation to the orthodox elements. They were just as fanatical in their ways as their opponents. For instance they proposed that every Melamed and Zaddik be compelled to send his children to the government schools in order to set an example for others as well as to increase the number of pupils. The Maskilim paid too much attention to trifles, like the change of attire, believing that such reforms would lead to the promotion of education among Jews. Similar petty things were regarded as fundamental, often without realizing the graver problems of the Russian Jewry such as their civic inequality and their economic condition. At the same time the orthodox Jews were aware of the fact that the candle tax went to support the "godless" ~~school~~ teachers of these schools and to subsidize their harmful publications. The ill feeling existing between the Maskilim and the orthodox elements contributed in no small degree to the failure of the educational reforms planned by the government.

(1). Jewish Encyclopedia X.544.

Appendix

Department of Public Instruction.

Division III. Table L.

No. 7206

July 22nd, 1842.

To the Director of the Hebrew School of Riga,

Rabbi Dr. Lillienthal:

As by order of the department you are going to set out on a journey through the provinces inhabited by the Jews, I request you to have regard to the following points:

1. The line of your journey goes through Riga, Mitaw, Kowno, Milna, Minsk, Grodno, Bialstock, Shitomir, Berditcheff, Kaminiecz Podolsk, Kishineff, Odessa, Cherson, from there you will go to the province of Kiev, pass from there to the city of Kiev, and further to Tshernigov, Mohileff and Witebsk back to St. Petersburg. Moreover, here are pointed out but the principal places you have to visit; but it ^{is} left to you, if you deem it necessary to stop also at other places on your way, but without leaving the route hereby designated to you.

2. You will receive a free passport, and eight hundred rubles silver towards defraying your expenses.

3. You will not neglect in every place, where you will have to stop, to inform immediately of your arrival the civil and school authorities, who have been informed of your journey; to enter into communication with the Jews, living in those places, and to confer with the congregations.

4. You will explain to the Jews, that the intent of the order of his Majesty - by virtue of which the Jewish schools and academies will be put under the superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction, and new schools will be established at the expense of

the government - be no other one, but, without infringing upon their religion, to prepare them for a truly civil and moral life, which consists merely in the approachment to the universally acknowledged civilization. With this intention you will confer with the Rabbis and Jewish congregations, and by sermons and lectures you will endeavor to confirm them in their readiness, to accomplish the will of His Majesty.

5. You will try, to discover the public opinion in regard to the intended reform, and to learn, where and of whom the government may expect some assistance, and in whom the spirit of resistance is lurking - you will note down those of the Rabbis and the most prominent Jews, who deserve of a greater confidence of the government, and hand me a list of their names.

6. You will not omit visiting those Jews, who are respected by the congregations, and explaining to them minutely, what influence upon the weal of their coreligionists a prompt compliance with the good intentions of His Majesty must exercise.

7. As far as possible, both in point of morals and pedagogics you will visit and examine at least the most important schools and academies of the Jews, and gather information respecting the number of scholars, the number and abilities of teachers, the organization of the schools, and the means by which they are supported.

8. As far as possible, you will investigate the domestic education of the Jews, inquire of the number, views, abilities and present position of the Melamdim, and take the names of those, who are distinguished by their learning and moral deportment.

9. You will direct your particular attention to the young people, who by praiseworthy study, have already acquired some progress in the sciences and will be able by their laudable endeavors for the prosperity of their coreligionists, to contribute to the realization of the intentions of the government. They may thither be appointed teachers, or be prepared for

the pedagogical career, in the public institutions.

10. After your return to St. Petersburg, you will hand me your report on all the subjects, above mentioned. Moreover you will not omit, even during your travels, from time to time, to inform the Department of Public Instruction of the success of your mission.

11. The great variety of the subjects, entrusted to your charge, makes it impossible to fix the term of your journey, but I hope that you will try to be back at least on the 18th of October O.C.

12. Fulfilling this mission, without doubt, you will fully consider its importance, and justify the confidence the Department puts in your abilities, both by considerate and circumspect activity and the profoundness of your reports.

The Minister of Public Instruction

Uvarov.

The Director of the Department and Vice-Minister

Prince Shirinski-Schichmatov.

The Director of the 3rd division of the Department

Dukzta-Dukshinsky.

From the Israelite V.II-P.362.