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PERETZ SMOLENSKIN
AND THE
EMERGENCE OF JEWISH NATIONALISM

by

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SUMMARY

The study of the emergence of a nationalist movement among the Jews of nineteenth century Europe requires more than a consideration of the economic, social, and intellectual status of the Jew in that period of his history. It is necessary to consider also the dynamic forces at work in the history of all nationalist movements, and to see the extent to which such a dynamism was present in Jewish nationalism. We learn by consideration of the phenomenon of nationalism per se that a certain mode of development is always present, and by examining Jewish nationalism in this light we gain an insight into the processes at work in this area of Jewish history.

It is the task of the intellectuals who formulate the doctrine of nationalism to seek out from the background of their people those elements which may aid them in making the people into a nationality. These elements may be divided into six general categories, or bonds of national unity: Common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, and religion. Each of these bonds can be developed by the nationalist writer as he seeks to encourage a sense of national identity among his people. It should not be surprising, therefore, to see this happening in the emergence of Jewish nationalism as well, since it grew up on the soil and in the atmosphere of a period of most intensive nationalism, in the milieu of nineteenth century Europe.

The choice of Peretz Smolenskin as a representative of the early writers for Jewish nationalism is made because in the course of Smolenskin's fifteen year journalistic career we see the changes and developments that occurred in the early movement toward Jewish nationalism. In this period of time Smolenskin moved from an undefined position of diffuse "dissatisfaction" with Haskalah into the realm of spiritual or cultural nationalism, and finally into the area generally known as political nationalism. By viewing some of Smolenskin's works in the light of the general dynamics present in the growth of nationalism, we see that he was fully aware of the task he faced in seeking to awaken the national consciousness of the Jews. Smolenskin's writings reveal a close correspondence between his major categories of thought and the six bonds of national unity mentioned above, and thus give us specific examples of how these bonds of unity were used in stimulating the growth of Jewish nationalism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
Chapter I. Introduction to the Problem of Nationalism...	1-6
Chapter II. The Historical Background to Jewish Nationalism....	7-17
Chapter III. The Life of Peretz ben Moshe Smolenskin....	18-25
Chapter IV. An Analysis of the Nationalism of Smolenskin....	26-70
A. Common Descent.....	27-33
B. Language.....	33-42
C. Territory.....	42-50
D. Political Entity.....	50-55
E. Customs and Traditions....	55-63
F. Religion.....	63-70

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF NATIONALISM

"Nationalism is a product of historical, social, and intellectual conditions; its rise in different countries varies, therefore, according to the conditions prevailing then and there. In its individual and concrete expressions nationalism carries a different meaning with different peoples and at different ages. But an understanding of nationalism can be gained only by comparing similar developments among different peoples; only a universal history of nationalism will enable the student to see each individual case in its proper perspective and in its conditional nature." (1)

It is the task of Hans Kohn's The Idea of Nationalism, from which this paragraph is quoted, to provide the reader with that universal background in the development of modern nationalism which will enable him to understand the phenomenon of nationalism wherever and whenever it may occur. In the course of providing this universal history Kohn enters into the particulars of the growth of the many nationalist movements in Europe, thus providing numerous examples by which the reader can see the universal factors operative in every nationalist movement. It is the purpose of this dissertation to examine the emergence of a national movement among the Jews during the nineteenth century in order to see the manner in which these universal factors are also operative in the growth of Jewish nationalism. The subject will be approached through an analysis of certain of the writings of Peretz ben Moshe Smolenskin (1842-1885), one of the first writers to devote his energies exclusively to the creation of a Jewish nationalism. Smolenskin's essays and novels, published in his Hebrew journal Ha-Shahar (The Dawn) between 1868 and 1884, reached a reading audience all over Europe, but they were received with a special

enthusiasm by the Jews of Eastern Europe. Although Smolenskin was in a constant struggle to keep his head above water financially, his works served as primary readings in stimulating the national consciousness of a whole generation of Polish and Russian Jews. His writings, therefore, serve well as an excellent example of the thought of nineteenth century Jewish nationalism.

In surveying the emergence of a nationalist movement there are certain basic concepts which must be employed in order to give form and definition to the historical phenomena being discussed. These concepts are drawn primarily from the material presented in the aforementioned book of Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, and in the definitive work of Carlton Hayes, Essays in Nationalism.

In the delineation of conceptual terminology it is of primary importance to differentiate between the terms "nation," "nationality," and "nationalism." Although these words have been abused through synonymous usage in the common parlance, each can serve to describe a certain element of the historical phenomenon under discussion. Thus, according to Hayes, the term "nation" is used "to describe the population of a sovereign political state, regardless of any racial or linguistic unity."⁽²⁾ The term "nationality" is used to "designate a group of people who speak either the same language or closely related dialects, who cherish common historical traditions, and who constitute or think they constitute a distinct cultural society."⁽³⁾ Thus a nationality can exist

without being a nation (i.e., without having political autonomy), and a nation can be made up of several nationalities (each a part of the population of a sovereign political state). The term "nationalism" has several shades of meaning:

"It stands in the first place for an actual historical process, that of establishing nationalities as political units, of building out of tribes and empires the modern institution of the national state. Secondly, the term indicates the theory, principle, or ideal implicit in the actual historical process. In this sense it signifies both an intensification of the consciousness of nationality and a political philosophy of the national state. Thirdly, it may mean, in such phrases as "Irish nationalism" or "Chinese nationalism," the activities of a particular political party, combining an historical process and a political theory....A fourth and final use of "nationalism" is to denote a condition of mind among members of a nationality...in which loyalty to the ideal or to the fact of one's national state is superior to all other loyalties." (4)

In the first two parts of this definition are mentioned the phases of "nationalism" which are presently under discussion, viz., the establishment of a group of people into a nationality, and the fact that a certain principle or theory is present in this process of establishment. Hayes notes that there have always been human entities which could technically be called "nationalities," but that nationalism, by contrast, is a modern phenomenon. For according to its definition, the term "nationality" might be used in a sociological sense (though it usually is not) to describe any group of people with certain elements in common ("same language,...common historical tradition,...distinct cultural society"). It is when awareness of these distinguishing common elements is deliberately and consciously impressed upon the minds of the "nationality," when the group's attention is focused upon the characteristics that set them apart, and most important, when

there is awakened within them the aspiration for national statehood, that the modern process of nationalism can be said to be at work. This process is what Hayes has called "the intensification of the consciousness of nationality."⁽⁵⁾ Kohn sharpens the focus on this point by refusing to apply the term "nationality" to a given group of people unless the process of nationalism has actually begun to work upon them. Prior to that we can only say that certain elements conducive to the development of a national feeling were present among that group of people.

"Nationality is formed by the decision to form a nationality. Thus the French nationality was born of the enthusiastic manifestation of will in 1789.....The population of the French kingdom existed before, as did some of the objective conditions necessary for the foundation of a nationality. But only the newly aroused consciousness and will made these elements active and effective, fused them into a source of immense centripetal power, and gave them a new importance and meaning." (6)

Thus it can be seen that nationalities are products of human culture, and that the forces of nationalism are brought into action by men, and not by nature. There must be present what Kohn calls the "voluntaristic element,"⁽⁷⁾ an active decision by a man or a group of men to seek out from the ethnic background of a given people those elements which will be most effective in awakening in that people the "spirit of nationhood," in convincing them that they do indeed constitute a nationality, and, ultimately, in showing that their true destiny is to achieve political independence in their own national state. This rules out any interjection of the popular belief that nationalism is a phenomenon of human nature, based upon some human "instinct" such as "gregariousness" or "clannishness."

It excludes the factor of race as a cause of nationalism, and denies the existence of some "group-soul" which inevitably draws people together. "It has been the power of an idea, not the call of blood, that has constituted and molded nationalities."⁽⁸⁾

What are the elements from which the builders of modern nationalities have chosen in their efforts to awaken in a given people the conscious awareness that they do indeed constitute a nationality? For nationalities come into existence only when certain objective bonds are present to delimit a social group. There is no single bond which can be considered a sine qua non for the determination of a nationality, and the strength of one bond may sometimes compensate for the weakness or absence of another. But if these bonds are not present in some form, perhaps only embryonic, the social group cannot be molded into a nationality. The characteristic bonds suggested by Hayes have already been mentioned is his definition of nationality, viz., "any group of persons who speak a common language, who cherish common historical traditions, and who constitute, or think they constitute, a distinct cultural society in which, among other factors, religion and politics may have played important though not necessarily continuous roles."⁽⁹⁾ Kohn lists as the most usual bonds these six: "common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, and religion."⁽¹⁰⁾ Here we have six rubrics through which to examine the development of any nationalist movement, this being in the present instance the

role of Peretz Smolenskin in the emergence of Jewish nationalism. The objective of this work is to see how Smolenskin, as an awakener of the national spirit of the Jews, chose from each of these six areas in order to build a consciousness of Jewish nationalism. Of course, he was limited in the manner of his choice by the degree to which each of these characteristics, the "raw materials" of nationalism, had been or was currently present in the history of the Jews. Also, as with a "national prophet" of any people, his selectivity was governed by events that occurred during the times in which he lived and by the influences which he felt from his contemporaries. Therefore, before entering into a discussion of the means by which Peretz Smolenskin promoted the cause of Jewish nationalism, it is important to survey the historical forces which were at work before and during his journalistic career.

II. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO JEWISH NATIONALISM

The influences which played upon Smolenskin and his contemporaries can be classified under two main headings, or "coordinates," each of which is important in determining the position which an individual thinker may possibly take. One such "ordinate" concerns the status of nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth century, and the nature of the social and political upheavals which were transpiring among the peoples of Europe. The second "ordinate" concerns the status of life in the "Jewish world," and the events which were happening within and among the Jewish people. The two co-ordinates thus help to show why a Smolenskin was apt to emphasize any one of the six characteristics found in the building of a nationality and give less stress to another. This is in accord with the approach to Jewish history used by Dubnow or the approach to Hebrew literature used by Klausner -- there are "external factors," which pertain to the world at large, and "internal factors," which refer to the Jewish milieu. One must consider both the external factors and the internal factors in order to see what motivated any particular event, in our case the manner in which Smolenskin thought and wrote. It is understood, of course, that there was a constant interaction between these two sets of influences, and any single event or idea undoubtedly had its roots in both spheres. In our discussion of the background setting for the work of Smolenskin, we shall see how these two types of forces continuously played on one another.

The history of nationalism in Europe must be divided into

two chief periods, with the turning point coming at the start of the nineteenth century. The first period concerns the development of the national movements in Western Europe; the second period concerns the national movements in Central and Eastern Europe. Although both are characterized as "nationalism," it is important to note as Kohn does, that there are certain contrasts between the two:

"In the Western world, in England and in France, in the Netherlands and in Switzerland, in the United States and in the British dominions, the rise of nationalism was a predominantly political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future national state, or, as in the case of the United States, coincided with it. Outside the Western world, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development; the frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism, there, grew in protest against and in conflict with existing state pattern -- not primarily to transform it into a people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands." (11)

Not only was there a contrast in the origins and goals of the two types of nationalism; there was also a crucial difference in their outlooks:

"While Western nationalism was, in its origin, connected with the concepts of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism current in the eighteenth century, the later nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia tended towards a contrary development." (12)

In other words, nationalism during the nineteenth century became highly particularistic, imbued with the new romanticism, and more concerned with the welfare of the state than with the rights of individuals. The nature of this transition has been described by Hayes in this graphic fashion:

"These spectacular flashes of cosmopolitan lightning did no damage, and served merely to herald a drenching down-pour of nationalism. For theories of cosmopolitanism and super-national humanitarianism were speedily dampened and extinguished by the storms in politics and society, in

industry and commerce, which swept western and central Europe at the close of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth century. In the French Revolution, in the Industrial Revolution, and likewise in the romanticism which succeeded rationalism, are discoverable the factors that finally resolved all doubts about the future of national states and the currents that ultimately galvanized national consciousness everywhere into the nationalism which we know." (13)

The downpour of nationalism most certainly did come during the nineteenth century, and by the time Peretz Smolenskin arrived in Vienna in 1868 he could look back over recent years to a summary of events such as this:

"In the 1820's appeared in Europe the embryonic national states of Greece and Serbia (Yugoslavia) and in America a group of Spanish-speaking republics. In the 1830's the Belgians successfully freed themselves from Dutch sovereignty, whilst the Poles unsuccessfully rebelled against Russia, and the Italians against Austria. In the 1840's the Germans attempted to erect a democratic national state. In the 1850's and 1860's the Italians and the Rumanians alike established their national independence." (14)

The city of Vienna, from which Smolenskin published his monthly journal, was itself a hot-bed of nationalist activity, for as capital of the multi-national Austro-Hungarian empire it was the focal point for the activities of various groups within that realm who were demanding rights for this or that nationality. Smolenskin could also look into the neighboring Turkish empire, itself multi-national, and see it too seething with nationalist discontent. In the Russian empire, the birth-place of Smolenskin, the nationalist spirit soared high, and the nineteenth century was marked by the tension between demands of the national minorities for certain privileges and the efforts of the Russian rulers to Russify the peoples of their domain. In short, the nineteenth century was for Central and Eastern

Europe the Century of Nationalism, when ethnic minorities which in some cases had virtually lost their identities came to life with new aspirations for national existence. It would not be surprising, therefore, to see the emergence of a national movement among the Jews as well, even if it is only considered as a response to these external factors.

There are, however, certain internal factors relating to the inner life of the Jewish people during the nineteenth century, and it is important that these too be examined in order to see how they are determinant in the emergence of Jewish nationalism. The relevant data here grows out of the story of the Haskalah movement among the Jews of Europe. It is a story which begins with the experience of certain individual Jews who, successful in a new economic role provided by the Commercial and Industrial Revolutions, sought to participate in the intellectual and cultural life of the new age of rationalism in Western Europe, the Age of Enlightenment. Gradually developing into a new program for Jewish life, Haskalah spread its influence into Eastern Europe; upon achieving maturity it led directly to the emergence of Jewish nationalism. Haskalah provided the Jews with the new orientation requisite for preparing them to accept this phenomenon of the modern age, nationalism. In his critical essay on Modern Hebrew Literature, Simon Halkin describes the change of orientation that came into Jewish life beginning with the era of European Enlightenment (c.a. 1750) and continuing on till the end of the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth:

"During many centuries the Jewish tradition, while at times absorbing certain alien cultural influences -- Hellenistic, Islamic, occidental -- remained fundamentally exclusive. Self-sufficiency was the keynote. However much they took over from other sources, or contributed to them, the Jews always felt themselves justified in their self-segregation from the rest of the world. But two hundred years ago this self-sufficiency was shaken. With the advent of the modern world Jewish life began to undergo a series of vicissitudes, unprecedented in all its history. It came out of its seclusion and began to reach out for Western culture, extending, broadening, and complicating its own vision and its relations with the modern world, sometimes gradually, sometimes with an almost shattering impact to its own deepest essence. In seeking to possess itself of the fruits of modern thought and experience, and fit itself into the new social-economic life which the French Revolution and the period of industrialization had initiated, it enlarged its horizon and increased its possibilities of development and influence; but it also found itself faced with a complex of new and disturbing problems, while many of its old tensions intensified in new forms. During these two hundred years the Jewish people has striven to break away from the traditional patterns of its self-contained existence, to normalize and humanize its life materially and spiritually, to achieve greater happiness in all aspects of worldly experience: political and economic, social and cultural." (15)

The goals of the Haskalah were, of course, shaped by the aforementioned development of events on the European scene. In order to see the close correlation we must here examine in greater detail the paragraphs in which Hayes describes the three factors which dominate the picture of nineteenth century nationalism in Europe: the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the movement of romanticism (see page 9).

"The French Revolution promulgated to Europe the dogma of national democracy. It asserted the right of individuals not only to determine their form of government but also to choose the state to which they would belong. In other words, it enunciated both the doctrine of popular sovereignty and doctrine of national self-determination." (16)

"It was a national state in which the Industrial Revolution had its beginnings, and it was chiefly to national states that the Revolution spread in the nineteenth

century, and in almost every instance these states were already imbued with traditions of mercantilism. By means of the new machinery production of goods was vastly augmented, but the organization of production remained on a national basis." (17)

"Romanticism....represented an intellectual and aesthetic reaction against the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both against its pseudo-cosmopolitanism and against its classicism. Romanticism was a protest against the dictum that man lives by reason alone; ...it tended to consecrate the peculiarities of national life." (18)

The aims of the Haskalah are in direct response to these three dominant factors. First, there were the efforts to win for the Jews the benefits of the new democracy in the form of full and equal civil rights. Secondly, there was the struggle to prepare the Jewish masses for the eastward-moving Industrial Revolution so that they might be more productive economically and enjoy a higher standard of living. Thirdly, there was the initiation of a cultural renaissance in the Hebrew language which would inspire the Jews to take their place as a nation among the enlightened nations of the modern world.

The first two objectives of the Haskalah program were oriented to correcting the immediate and present shortcomings of the Jews, and many Jews seized whatever opportunities were available in order to achieve them, in order to become more European in their ways. Within a single generation, following upon the example set by Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), the Jews of Germany and Austria had achieved such a degree of political and economic emancipation that for all intents and purposes these goals of Haskalah were deemed fulfilled. While Central Europe (symbolized by Berlin) remained as the

generative source of the Jewish Enlightenment, the light itself was now trained into the "dark corners" of Eastern Europe, off Russia and Poland. The problem of the Jew in Germany took on a different aspect -- that of fitting himself into the growing nationalist structure of the emerging German state. The Jews of Germany wished to participate in the German national culture, and therefore sought to stress those aspects of their Jewish past which permitted them to remain as Jews in religion and Germans in nationality. Since the nineteenth century German nationalists had not used the bond of religion in their striving for national unity (see page 66), this was entirely possible. In neither case did the tightening nationalist ideology allow the Jewish minority to stress any of the other potential "national" characteristics in their background. Nor was there a desire among the Jews themselves to do so. Therefore the third goal of a Haskalah program born during the more liberal Age of Enlightenment, the initiation of a Hebrew national literature, was dropped in Central Europe.

As the ideas of nationalism spread into Eastern Europe on the heels of the Industrial Revolution, the rulers of the multi-national Russian empire vacillated in their policies regarding the minority groups. At times there were all-out campaigns for nationalism designed to completely Russify the people of that great domain. At other times these ethnic minorities were encouraged to develop their potential in the cultural realm so long as their political and economic energies were devoted to benefit the Russian nation. At these times

the minorities were granted certain economic and educational privileges. Thus the success of the Haskalah program depended upon the prevailing policies of the czar and the current outlook of Russian nationalism.

For example, the liberal tendencies shown during the first part of the reign of czar Alexander I (1801-1825) had a correspondingly good effect on the status of the Haskalah program. Bearers of the light of German Haskalah were able to establish schools for teaching the Jews European languages and ideas, and for the introduction of the ideals of Moses Mendelssohn and his disciples. The reign of the next czar, Nicholas I (1825-1855), was marked by a much fiercer program of Russian nationalism, and for the Jews this was chiefly a time for bodily self-preservation. Nicholas I's program for Russification of the various ethnic minorities meant for the Jews forced conversions, conscription (or kidnapping) into the military service, dispersion or expulsion from certain areas, and various other social and economic disabilities. Such extremes threw the Haskalah program into disrepute among the Jews, for its goals were frequently identified with those of the cruel czarist policy. The Maskilim went underground during this era, for their interest in such a program encountered only hostility.

With the accession of Alexander II (1855-1881) another era of liberalism was begun. New areas of privilege were opened to the Jews, and total emancipation once again seemed within reach. During this period those who were attracted by

the program of Haskalah could openly express themselves, and the words of Isaac Baer Levinsohn, the "Russian Mendelssohn," fell upon responsive hearts. In a city like Odessa, always a center for liberal thought, there was a new burst of activity directed against obscurantism and in favor of modern culture. Trade schools and libraries were opened, and Jewish letters in every language -- Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew -- flooded the literary market. During the second half of Alexander II's reign, however, threatening symptoms began to trouble the Jewish literary leaders. Externally, there were unmistakable signs of a new policy of government oppression; internally there was too large a number of "enlightened" Jews who were becoming alienated from everything these leaders (19) thought of as Jewish culture, or even as Jewish identification. The apprehension of the men of letters proved correct, and with the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 a new period of darkness and reaction began. Whether the persecution came in the form of "illegal" acts, such as the pogroms of 1881, or in the form of "legal" acts, such as the May Laws of 1882, the net effect upon millions of Jews was the same: suffering, oppression, and despair.

For the Russian Jews there were several possible responses to these latest cruelties. Some sought to placate the wrath of the Russian government, hoping in some way to alleviate the suffering. Others, convinced that there was no future for the Jews in Russia, sought to pass through the open doors of America, and in the course of the next thirty years some two million Jews emigrated from Russia and Poland to the United States.

Still others linked the fate of the Jews with the programs of the various revolutionary movements afoot in Russia at that time, hopeful that the overthrow of the czar would herald a new era for the Jews as well. But for a few the only answer lay in the promulgation of a full-fledged Jewish nationalism, with political as well as cultural aims. Although nurtured by the ideals and goals of Haskalah, they were convinced that the program of Haskalah was only a partial answer to the problems of the Jews; the ultimate solution lay in the creation of a new national state on the soil of the ancient homeland of the Jews, in the land of Israel. The Love of Zion (אהבת ציון) movement was born, and a few hardy pioneers set out to begin the reclamation of the Holy Land with Jewish toil. One of the leaders of that movement, Moshe Lieb Lillienblum, proclaimed in a straight-forward manner their objective: "We must undertake the colonization of Palestine on so comprehensive a scale that in the course of one century the Jews may be able to leave inhospitable Europe almost entirely and settle in the land of our forefathers to which we are legally entitled." (20) In 1882, in his pamphlet "Auto-Emancipation," Leon Pinsker issued a call for national political restoration, including an appeal for a congress of European Jewry to effect such a program. The appeal became the watchword of the Lovers of Zion (אהבת ציון) in Eastern Europe, but it fell temporarily on deaf ears in Western Europe. It remained for one of their own number to kindle enthusiasm for such a program among the Jews of Western Europe, and fifteen years later the organizing abili-

ties of the Austrian Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) succeeded in producing this congress, the First Zionist Congress, gathered at Basel in 1897.

Peretz Smolenskin was one of the literary figures whose work bridges the era of Alexander II (before 1881) and the new era of Jewish political nationalism (after the pogroms of 1881). In the course of his journalistic career (1868-1884) one can see his development from a proponent of the Haskalah program to an advocate for a new cultural or "spiritual" nationalism, and ultimately his entry into the camp of Jewish political nationalism. We see here further reason for choosing him as one who is representative of the development of nineteenth century Jewish nationalism.

III. THE LIFE OF PERETZ BEN MOSHE SMOLENSKIN

The life of Peretz Smolenskin (1842-1885) typifies the career of many of the Maskilim in Russia and Poland during the second half of the nineteenth century. Included in the first ten years of his impoverished childhood were the loss of an elder brother, kidnapped into the Czar's army, and the death of his father. At the age of eleven he entered the yeshivah at Shklov, where he remained for five years. In the course of these years he learned Russian, and began to read in "forbidden" books, i. e., books concerning secular subjects. Ultimately he was forced to leave Shklov and its Mitnaged yeshivah, and he went over to Lyubavich to study with the Chasidim there. But the atmosphere of these Chasidim, filled with superstitions, was also repugnant to Smolenskin, and shortly thereafter he left them and set out on several years of wandering, during which he managed to sustain himself as a chazan, maggid, shochet, and teacher.

Finally, in 1862, he reached Odessa, the center of Russian Haskalah. Here he found a new atmosphere of modernity, and he set out preparing himself to participate in the intellectual life of this city. While giving lessons in Hebrew he was able to learn several other European languages, and to begin reading in the literature of the West. But in his contacts with the Maskilim of Odessa he sensed that something was lacking in the program of Haskalah, for it not only produced enlightened Jewish intellectuals; it also estranged these Maskilim from any identification with their Jewish past,

leaving them ignorant of the meaning of Judaism, and tied only to certain forms now emptied of content. Nevertheless, Smolenskin still wished to enlarge his own intellectual horizons, and in 1867 set out for Vienna in order to enter a university and study philosophy.

Before arriving in the Austrian capital he visited some cities in Germany, and saw at first-hand the results of the Reform movement. He encountered Jews who called themselves Germans of the Mosaic persuasion, who denied the existence of a Jewish people, who dropped Hebrew as the language of the Jews, who reformed the religious service in the image of the neighboring cathedral, and who disavowed any hope for the messianic redemption. He understood that individuals such as these represented the fulfillment of the program of Haskalah, and this strengthened Smolenskin in his conviction that something was lacking in such a program. Thus he was left a Jew without any group with whom he could identify emotionally or intellectually. Both the Orthodox, whether Mitnaged or Chasid, and the assimilating Maskil, whether Russian or German, were unacceptable to him; their beliefs and actions were incompatible with his opinions about the nature of Judaism and the Jewish people. When his plans to enter the university failed, Smolenskin determined to create a climate of opinion that would be more in keeping with his convictions.

To accomplish this he chose to publish a Hebrew periodical, and in 1868, with neither funds nor subscribers to back it, the first issue of Ha-Shahar was printed and distributed.

In the course of the next fifteen years Smolenskin managed to continue publishing his literary journal, producing it entirely by his own efforts -- he spared neither himself nor his family in his unilateral devotion to his journal.

"Like a tender mother who does not shrink from any labor or hardship for the sake of her offspring...I robbed myself of sleep, for years permitted myself no rest, only so that it might be kept up. I was author, proof-reader, and bookkeeper. I mailed out the issues on time, wrote letters, read letters, read articles. All these things were done by myself alone, not a soul was by to help me." (21)

Klausner estimates that one-third of the material in Ha-Shahar came from Smolenskin's pen. (22)

In the opening pages of the very first issue Smolenskin makes clear the program of his Hebrew periodical, a program to which he remained faithful until the very end. He was determined to battle both the obscurantism of the Orthodox and the assimilatory tendencies of the Maskilim.

"Know ye well: Just as I turn my hand against the Orthodox fanatics who cover themselves in a cloak of piety, so do I turn against the hypocritical enlightened who push away from the children of Israel the heritage of their fathers, the Hebrew language." (23)

Klausner correctly summarizes the goals of Smolenskin and his journal in this way:

"The program of Smolenskin is clear. It had three aims: 1) 'To open the eyes of the people concerning their ways' -- to clarify for them the terrible situation of the Jews internally and externally, and to instruct them in a new way, the way of Enlightenment, the way of individual and general knowledge; 2) To battle the "pious" and "saintly" frauds who were then dominating the multitudes of the people; 3) To battle also assimilated Maskilim who wished to abolish the unity of the people and even put an end to its particular life based on the ancient Torah of Israel and on the new literature, the two of which were created in their particular national language, Hebrew." (24)

Thus Smolenskin chose to tread neither of the paths down which the nineteenth century European Jew was wont to travel. In his rejection of the Orthodox position he was joined by fellow Maskilim all over Europe. But in his criticism of the shortcomings of Haskalah he was certainly an innovator. Only a very few of his contemporaries grasped the fact that in the acclimatization of Western ways and ideas there lay a danger that the ties to Judaism would be so weakened that the whole Jewish heritage would be in danger of disappearing. One of the few who joined Smolenskin in the realization that the program of Haskalah tended to be self-defeating was the Hebrew poet Judah Loeb Gordon, himself an early spokesman for Haskalah. In a work from his later years he asked wistfully, "For Whom Do I Toll?":

"The muse still furtively visits me; my heart still yearns, and my hand writes: it still writes poems in a language forgotten. What salvation is there for me? What craving yet left? What goal? For whom have I toiled all my best years, denying myself contentment and peace?....My parents, clinging to their God and their people, are busy trading all day and observing commandments; true knowledge they spurn, good taste they never acquired....My fellow Maskilim, possessed of true knowledge, once loosely attached to the idiom of their people, now but scorn the faithful old mother: 'Forsake the old language long grown decrepit, forsake its unsavory body of letters! Forsake it! -- the language of his land every Jew must adopt.'" (25)

But whereas Gordon was in the twilight of his career, Smolenskin felt himself to be at the dawn of a new approach. In place of Gordon's resignation to an unhappy fate, Smolenskin chose to promulgate a new program which would rescue the Jewish people from the present situation. His program was, in effect, to awaken within the Jewish people a consciousness of national

unity, so that they might take their place among the self-respecting nations of the world. The external and internal influences which were present at the time of this decision have already been considered, so that it can be clearly seen that such a decision was not made in a vacuum. The means by which Smolenskin set about achieving this task were determined to a great extent by these influences, but this in no way negates the importance of his own personality, which stamped these particular influences with his own individual interpretation. The idea of nationalism was present in the atmosphere. The seeds for nationalism were present in the history of the Jews. But it was Smolenskin who diligently set about to fuse the two in order to produce this new product, the consciousness of Jewish nationalism.

* * *

Prior to entering upon an analysis of Smolenskin's Jewish nationalism through use of Hans Kohn's six categories for the determination of a nationality (see page 5), it would be proper to insert some additional notes concerning the nature of nationalism. By doing this we can better determine Smolenskin's place in the over-all development of Jewish nationalism -- both the pre-Herzlian movement, Zionism, and the state of Israel.

The following characteristic is noted by Hayes:

"The doctrine of nationalism was primarily the work of intellectuals -- of scholars and litterateurs. But it was more than a closet philosophy for intellectuals. It was for the classes and for the masses." (26)

He goes on to show that the evolution of a nationalist movement generally shows three stages. First comes the exposition of the idea by the intellectuals -- philosophers, journalists, historians, and anthropologists. Next the idea is taken up by certain members of the middle class -- bankers, merchants, and professional men -- who may find it politically and economically expedient to support such a doctrine. The last stage is the propagation of the idea among the masses through the various mediums of propaganda -- national school systems, national press, etc. -- in order to win popular support for the idea. It is evident from this sort of analysis that we are concerned here only with the first stage of Jewish nationalism, the propagation of the doctrine by the intellectuals. To what extent Jewish nationalism reflects the latter two stages is not within the scope of this study, but keeping clear Smolenskin's position within this framework, as one of the intellectuals who formulated the idea, may aid us further in understanding his work.

Another matter which must be mentioned at this point is the fact that the external influences which played upon Smolenskin were those of Central and Eastern Europe. It has been mentioned elsewhere that there was a distinct contrast between the nationalism of Western Europe and that of Central and Eastern Europe (see page 8). Their characteristic differences must be borne in mind:

"In Germany, Italy, and among the Slavonic peoples, nationalism found its expression predominantly in the cultural field. Among these peoples, at the beginning it was not so much the nation-state as the volksgeist

and its manifestations in literature and folklore, in the mother tongue and in history, which became the center of attention of nationalism." (27)

The writings of Smolenskin are filled with similar allusions to the spirituality of the people of Israel. With the possibility for political realization being so very remote, a Jewish nationalist had to confine himself to the cultural or to the spiritual area in his efforts to awaken within his people a sense of national unity. As we shall see, Smolenskin was wont to speak of the unifying bonds as being of the spirit; any thought of these bonds being utilized in the near future for reconstituting Israel as a political state was believed to be thoroughly detached from all reality; at best this could only be a remote possibility. Although the following quotations from one of Smolenskin's works refers to elements of the national unity which will be more fully discussed in the six-part analysis, it serves to illustrate this point:

"As is true concerning the people of Israel, their faith, and their hope for redemption, so it is concerning their language; as all the ways of this people and their faith are based solely on the foundations of spirit, thought, and Torah -- for no one would teach to carry through this hope into action, nor would the people think or hope to actually be redeemed -- so also their language is solely of the spirit, thought, and Torah. Their teachers would not teach that this language should be made into one which all the people shall speak, nor would they wish to do this, for it is impossible; only as the language of the Torah do they deem to teach it." (28)

It would be incorrect to infer that the Jews or the other peoples of Central Europe simply had no desire to achieve political statehood. Only the fact that this was in most cases but a remote possibility impelled them to stress the spiritual or cultural aspects of their nationhood. As Kohn points out,

"it is always the memory of a past state and the aspiration toward statehood that characterizes nationalities in the period of nationalism." (29)

The impulse of any nationalist group must be pointed toward the creation of an independent national political state, and the stress on culture and spirit must be regarded as preliminary to this. "As long as a nationality is not able to attain this consumation, it satisfies itself with some form of autonomy or pre-state organization, which, however, always tends at a given moment, the moment of 'liberation,' to develop into a sovereign state." (30)

Here too we are made aware that Smolenskin represents only a first stage in the development of Jewish nationalism, the stage when the people had to be content with some form of non-political autonomy.

IV. AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONALISM OF SMOLENSKIN

We can now proceed in our study of the means by which Peretz Smolenskin sought to awaken within the Jewish people the spirit of nationalism. This writer does not claim that every element present in Smolenskin's writings can, with absolute certainty, be categorized under one of the six rubrics delineated by Hans Kohn. The intent of such a categorization is only to provide a means for gaining an insight into the goals of Smolenskin's own work. Since some of Smolenskin's ideas can with equal justice be classified under more than one rubric, the placing of an idea under one classification and not another is done by way of suggestion, and not arbitrarily. That Smolenskin was aware of the process by which nationalities are built there can be no doubt. He knew that there must be bonds to unify the group into a nationality, and from this came his criteria for judging the value of an idea or movement: From the negative side, he deplored and attacked anything that tended to produce divisiveness within the group; from the positive side he applauded and encouraged anything that tended to unify the Jews under a single banner. He was keenly aware of the limited number of ties which held Israel together, and those that were present he sought to preserve. This is clearly seen in the following statement made in opposition to the changes of a divisive nature made by the Reform movement in Germany:

"Since the religion of Israel is the one bond which binds and unites the heart of the children of Israel in all places where they may dwell, we must consider it not only as a religion of faith, but also as land, kingdom, and language, and all the other ties which draw together the hearts of other peoples to make them one

people; therefore in our making reforms, let us not touch upon the foundations lest it so weaken the entire structure that there will remain neither remnant nor name to this people, for we should then become traitors not only to the faith, but to the entire people." (31)

In other words, we have only a limited number of unifying resources at our disposal. Let us think carefully before risking their loss for the sake of some other gains.

A. Common Descent

The first of the six bonds of nationalist unity listed by Hans Kohn is that of common descent. In speaking of common descent as a factor which tends to unify people, there may be implied some sort of racial theory by means of which it can be proved that a particular group of people can actually claim to have a common ancestry, and therefore a true kinship to one another. There is no need at this point to enter into a long discussion of the validity of race as a scientific concept; Kohn correctly points out that "the great migratory movements of history and the mobility of modern life have led everywhere to an intermingling, so that few if any nationalities can at present claim anything approaching common descent." (32) That nation-building leaders have resorted to some kind of racial theory is too well-known a fact to need documentation, and we must concede that "an imaginary belief in blood relationship, that is, in race, has been an effective force in building and cementing nationalities." (33) There is, however, an intrinsic difference between the use of this technique and the use of the other bonds by which nationalities are built. The other bonds are usually present in some form

in the people's past, and are then reworked by the formulators of nationality to suit their own purposes. Racism, however, is pure fiction grounded in the imagination of certain pseudo-scientists, and although it may be invoked as proof of nationality, it lacks the substance which the other bonds have to a lesser or greater extent.

There is another means by which a people can be encouraged to believe that they have a common descent, and that is through the medium of history. It is possible to awaken within a given group the sense of a common historical past without making reference to any biological tie that binds them. In this there is some legitimacy, for it is incontrovertible that a given people may have certain things in common in their historical past; when the nationalist begins seeking out these common events and emphasizing their existence, he is using history as a means for creating a national feeling. In short, through the use of certain approaches in historiography, the writer can produce a nationalist history. This technique is very common among the writings of nationalists, and accounts for the appearance of a whole series of inspirational histories of countries and nations.

In order for this to have taken place, it was necessary to free the writing of history from the supervision of religious authorities, for the history-writing of the Middle Ages was primarily church history. One of the effects of the Renaissance was to produce such a freedom, and at the time of the Enlightenment this was exploited to produce newer and

more far-reaching histories than ever before. Representative of this change was an eighteenth century writer like Voltaire:

"Voltaire was one of the greatest historians of all ages. He widened consciously the frame of history to become world history, he wrote without hiding his moral judgments -- for he was not an aloof, ivory-tower observer -- but he rendered these judgments from the point of view of humanity and enlightened ethics, rather than from that of any national interest." (34)

With the approach of the nineteenth century, however, historians turned from this sort of cosmopolitan interest, and began to write from the point of view of specific nationalities.

As an example of the role historians can play in the building of a nationality, we may consider the example of the Czechs. The foundation for a Czech national renaissance was laid by the historians.

"The first generation of Czech patriots had the ambition to prove that by their history and cultural achievements the Czechs were equal to the Germans and the Western nations....They worked to establish Czech civilization as an equal partner within the universal civilization of Enlightenment....Their task was to unearth a Czech nation out of the documents of the past, to revive its memories and to present it as worthy of the love and efforts of enlightened men." (35)

In the execution of this task one name stands out, the name of František Palacký (1798-1876), a man whom Masaryk called the Father of the Czech Nation.

"Palacký's interpretation of Czech history dignified the past by an inspiring vision and justified the hard struggle which the Czechs had to fight for their national renaissance. Through his interpretation of the Czech past, he gave Czech nationalism a secure foundation in the liberal tradition of the West." (36)

It is the historian's task, therefore, to awaken within his people a historical consciousness, and to show through history how values and virtues peculiar to this people were present in their past. Knowledge of the past, it is hoped, will inspire pride in their present existence, and motivate them to work toward a future existence as a unified national people.

Smolenskin's interest in history as a means to unify the people is revealed in an essay which he wrote during the first year of publication of Ha-Shahar. Ostensibly the article was written as a critical review of an ethnologic study published by Adolf Jellinek, Der Juedische Stamm; however, this was only a vehicle which enabled Smolenskin to present some of his own ideas on the approach through which history should be written, as well as to present his analysis of the current ills besetting the Jewish people. He states that the purpose of history-writing is to find common characteristics and events which will describe a given people without resorting to gross over-simplification. For one who chooses to write a history of the Jewish people, this is admittedly an almost impossible task:

"They have no land or government; they are scattered to the ends of the earth, and they have no common tongue (for speaking). One cannot easily draw a line, to describe their ways with a compass." (37)

Nevertheless, Smolenskin goes on to criticize the manner in which Jellinek presents seeming contradictions in the characteristics of the Jews: Jellinek avers that some Jews are conservative, and some are progressive; some are optimists,

and some are pessimists; some judge ideas subjectively, and some judge ideas objectively. In writing thus Jellinek has not fulfilled the objective of history-writing, viz., to find the common and shared traits among the people. For there is no value in stressing the diversity of their traits unless there is also emphasis on the bonds which unify the people. The desired goal of the historian, states Smolenskin, is "to find the covert power which binds all of the people together."⁽³⁸⁾ Thus we see Smolenskin's awareness of the value of history as a means for seeking the common elements with which to create a unified group feeling. Smolenskin's all-inclusive answer regarding the nature of this "covert power" is to be found in the general term *Emet-Isra'el*: the "faith of Israel," but something more than religious faith; the term comes to mean the entire cultural heritage of Israel. Acknowledging that the Jew of Germany is certainly different from the Jew of Poland, and even that the Jews of one German city may be different from those of another, he declares that the Jews are nevertheless a single people. "They are one people from one end of the world to the other. The name Israel joins them together, and the spirit of their faith unites them."⁽³⁹⁾ Within this generalized concept of "faith" Smolenskin was able to find a number of elements which he could use in creating a national feeling. His task in each case was to adapt these elements to fit in with his program for national renaissance.

An example of Smolenskin's searching into history can be seen in parts of his book Am Olam (Eternal People). In these

parts, as Klausner points out, Smolenskin undertakes a specific task:

"He tries to base the idea of a Hebrew nationalism on the history of Israel from its beginning until the present....He throws a new light on the different phenomena of Israel's history which are necessary to prove that the people of Israel are different from other peoples; Israel is a 'people of the spirit,' 'a people of Torah,' a people of the prophets and teachers of the law, and it is neither possible nor proper for it to be assimilated among the nations." (40)

The reasons for Smolenskin's stress on the spiritual aspects of Israel's existence have been mentioned elsewhere (see page 24). Seeing the lack of a land they could call their own, or a means for self-government, or even a common spoken tongue, he had little choice other than to use these spiritual characteristics to prove Israel's place in history. In another work, Et Lataat (A Time to Plant), he resumes this same approach to prove how throughout Jewish history it has been the men of the spirit who have prevailed and have preserved Judaism: The prophets kept the spirit alive during the days of the First Temple; the Pharisees performed this task in the days of the Second Temple. During the Middle Ages men like Saadia, Bahia, Gabirol, Halevi, Ibn Ezra, and Maimonides were men of the spirit. Later on there were such dedicated figures as Menasseh ben Israel, Spinoza, and even Da Costa. But in these days, declares Smolenskin, we are lacking such men of the spirit, men who seek to preserve the unifying spirit of Israel.

From this it becomes evident what Smolenskin has sought to do in his historiography. By identifying the spirit of nationalism with a spirit that existed throughout Jewish

history, he is trying to show nationalism as a logical consequence of Jewish historical experience. We see how he injects this in a statement such as the following, directed against those who assert that Judaism is merely the observance of commandments:

"Only the national sense and the Torah -- the Torah of life, and not the commandments -- they alone keep this entire people alive; if they were dead, and their memory destroyed, then Israel would be thought of as a body without a soul, as dry bones without a spirit whose days will not be long, and whose revival will not be seen." (41)

Therefore we see that even though Smolenskin did not undertake the writing of a systematic "History of the Jewish People" in order to further the national feeling among his fellow Jews, he was fully aware of the value of history as a means for shaping their belief in a Jewish nationality. In line with this Klausner notes the following:

"Smolenskin was not a philosopher, nor even a historian, but he did have quick perception and a creative imagination, and by the strength of these he penetrated to a degree of understanding in matters of research which investigators possessed solely of a dry logic are not talented enough to achieve." (42)

B. Language

The second of the six bonds for the building of national unity is that of language. In spite of certain exceptions which shall be noted shortly, it is safe to make a generalization such as that made by Hayes, who writes:

"The formation of modern nationalities has been historically dependent upon the development of particular languages....The rise and decline of nationalities and tribes have always been closely paralleled by the rise and decline of their respective languages, and both processes still go on together....Uniformity of language

tends to promote like-mindedness, to provide an inclusive set of ideas as well as of words, and like-minded persons tend to develop group-consciousness, to experience a sense of common interest, to constitute a tribe or nationality." (43)

There are exceptions: Swiss nationalism has been preserved in spite of the presence of four language groups, and Belgium is a bi-lingual nation. In the Western Hemisphere there are many nations without a distinctive language, for the dialectic differences between European English, Spanish, or Portuguese and that of the Americas are hardly great enough to warrant their being called distinctive tongues. These exceptions, however, are true mainly in those parts of the world where the influence of Western European nationalism was felt, and where other bonds were present in sufficient strength to weld the people into a nation. In Central and Eastern Europe the bond of language played a much more important part, and since the external influences on Jewish nationalism originated here, we must consider language's effect in those areas. A good example of the importance of language can be seen in the role it played in the emergent German nationalism. The roots of this reach back as early as the seventeenth century. German scholars, witness to the superior civilization of Western Europe, seeing the disunited and splintered political situation among the German states, sought a kind of intellectual escape:

"They took refuge in the fantastic world of an imaginary past in which all greatness was due to the Germans. Their only certain heritage from the past was the German language, the instrument of their labor and effort. They invested it with a unique excellency and august rank, a capital language, a 'Hauptsprache,'

compared with which all the others were only 'bastard' languages....Justus Georg Schottliius (1612-1676) published in 1663 a book on the German 'capital language' in which he extolled its antiquity, purity, power, incomparability and fundamental excellence." (44)

Works such as these continued to appear throughout the eighteenth century as well, but it was not until the beginning of the Romantic movement that the outlooks they reflected began to play an active role in nationalism. This occurred as a direct result of Romanticism's emphasis on the particular virtues of peoples and nations as opposed to the universalistic tendencies of eighteenth century Rationalism. Representative of this change of outlook is the German romantic Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803).

"Herder was the first to insist that human civilization lives not in its general and universal, but in its national and peculiar manifestations; each cultural manifestation must be original, but its originality is that of the national community and the national language." (45)

In regard to the importance of language Herder wrote:

"Has a people anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought-domain, its tradition, history, religion, and basis of life, all its heart and soul." (46)

In 1812 Friedrich Schlegel, another romantic, wrote:

"Every important and independent nation has a right of possessing a literature peculiar to itself....It is mere prejudice which leads us to consider languages that have been neglected, or that are unknown to ourselves, as incapable of being brought to a higher perfection." (47)

The influence of such writings can be seen in virtually every national movement on the European continent. A Hungarian language enthusiast (John Ribinyi) could write like this:

"Italian is pleasant, French beautiful, German earnest; but all these qualities are so united in Magyar that it is difficult to say wherein its superiority consists." (48)

A Russian lexicographer (Michael Vasilievich Lomonosov) introduced this book on Russian grammar in this fashion:

"The Roman Emperor Charles V used to say that one should speak Spanish in addressing God, French in talking with friends, German in dealing with enemies, and Italian when conversing with women. But had he known Russian he would, no doubt, have added that one could talk to any and all of them in Russian. He would have found in Russian the grandeur of Spanish, the grace of French, the strength of German, the tenderness of Italian, besides the wealth and conciseness of Greek and Latin." (49)

In Portugal Marquez de Pombal wrote of the value of the national language:

"Its improvement is one of the most important means for the refinement of civilized nations, since on that depends the perspicuity, the energy, and the majesty with which the laws are written, the truths of religion manifested, and writings rendered both useful and agreeable. On the contrary, nothing more clearly demonstrates the ignorance of a people, than the barbarism of its language. It is certain that there are no better means for polishing and giving perfection to a language, than for youth to be instructed in the grammar of their own tongue, in order that they may be enabled to speak and write it with purity and elegance, avoiding those errors which so greatly disfigure the nobility of their ideas." (50)

In many cases the languages which the various nationalist writers sought to make the bearers of noble national ideals had never been more than spoken dialects; a literature in these tongues had never existed, and those who exhorted the people to preserve their distinctive tongue had to undertake the creation of a literature in that language. This was done initially through translations of the Bible and other religious writings, but ultimately original works on secular nationalist subjects also appeared. Philologists undertook the investiga-

tion of a language's roots in order to cleanse it of any foreign barbarisms; dictionaries and grammar books were prepared, and schools added formal language instruction to their programs.

Thus it can be seen that an interest in reviving national languages definitely preceded the appearance of nineteenth century Central European nationalism. We have seen an example of the glorification of the German tongue which appeared as early as the seventeenth century; Herder himself died but three years after the start of the nineteenth century, the era when his love for language became a part of the nationalist program. The initial interest in languages came as part of the intellectual reawakening of the Age of Enlightenment; this interest was then heightened by the romanticists so that by the nineteenth century it could be exploited and intensified for the purposes of nationalism.

The birth of Hebrew as the language of the Jewish nationalist movement followed a slightly different development. For the revival of Hebrew involved a language which had survived not by virtue of being a spoken tongue, but rather as the religious language of Jewish prayer and study. The early pioneers in secular Hebrew rarely contemplated the possibility of Hebrew's ever becoming the spoken tongue of the Jewish people. The successful efforts of Eliezer ben Yehudah to revive Hebrew as the spoken language as well as the literary language of the Jewish people came after more than a century of modern Hebrew activity. By the time of ben Yehudah (1858-1922), a

whole backlog of secular works -- novels, essays, poems, and treatises -- had been added to the great selection of religious literature -- law, history, prayer, and philosophy.

The modern Hebrew literary renaissance began in response to the intellectual activities of the European Enlightenment, and was the cultural wing of the Haskalah program. The first modern Hebrew periodical, Kohellet Musar, was published in Berlin in 1750 by none other than the embodiment of Jewish Enlightenment, Moses Mendelssohn. Smolenskin, growing up in the atmosphere of Haskalah, made Hebrew the means for expressing his literary creativity, and it became for him as for other Maskilim the symbol of Jewry's struggle to expand its cultural horizons. This is reflected in the opening pages of the first issue of Ha-Shahar, when Smolenskin defined the purposes and goals of his journal:

"The purpose of Ha-Shahar shall be to throw light on the ways of the children of Jacob, to open the blind eyes which have not seen the light of reason nor understood its value, to enhance the glory of the Hebrew language and to increase the number of those who support it." (51)

In this statement Smolenskin's goals are quite similar to those of his fellow Maskilim. It reflects his belief that the burden of the Jews will be lightened if only they accept reason, i. e., the new learning which the modern age offers.

"Haskalah prose writers displayed an implicit faith in reason, in the supremacy of reason in the new European world as well as in the Jew's own intellectual capacities to cure the ills from which he suffers. The.. assumption of the whole period was that if only the Jews in Eastern Europe consented to change their ghetto ways, they would automatically come to share in the blessings of progress with their non-Jewish neighbors." (52)

In the statement of purpose which appears at the start of the publication of Ha-Shahar there is found also Smolenskin's praise of the glories of Hebrew and the benefits which will accrue to its readers. We have already read a sampling of this sort of praise from the forerunners of other European nationalist movements, and even though the content here is directed to the Jewish people, the intent is parallel to that of the other selections:

"What shall the Hebrew language give us? Let them ask -- and I will proclaim to them what it will give us: It will give us honor and strength, it will tie us with the bonds that let us be called by the name Israel. All peoples have erected for themselves monuments of stone, they have built towers, they have shed their blood like water that the name of their people and its language not be blotted from the earth. They have all waited with yearning for the day of salvation, a time when their independence shall return to them; and if that day be far distant, they will not cease to wait. And as for us, who have neither monument nor land nor name nor remembrance, the one monument, the one memorial remaining to us from the ruins of our sacred places is the Hebrew tongue. And they are ashamed, or despise it -- indeed, those who despise the Hebrew language would despise the entire nation. For them shall be neither name nor remembrance in the household of Israel; they betray their nation and their faith! Here they say 'Let us be like all the nations.' And I repeat after them, 'Let us be like all the nations' -- to pursue and to achieve knowledge, to forsake the foolish wicked way, to be loyal citizens in the lands where they may be scattered. But let us also be like all the nations not to be ashamed of the source whence we were hewn; let us be like all nations in cherishing our language and the honor of our people." (53)

A pronouncement such as this clearly carries Smolenskin beyond the limits of those for whom the Hebrew language was to serve only as a vehicle for cultural enlightenment. He has also implied that the language must serve as a bond for the creation of a Jewish nationality. This is specifically

spelled out later in that first year of publication of

Ha-Shahar:

"Language -- and only language -- can strengthen the fortifications of a nationality, and it alone can tie in bonds of love the hearts of all who strengthen its place; without one language families would be separated from one another, and in a single household the spirit of one man would be estranged from that of his brother if they did not have one language. The power of language is greater even than the power of faith for bringing hearts together." (54)

The last sentence is especially important, for it signals Smolenskin's intention to make language the keystone of the nationalist structure he is building, more essential even than the faith of Israel.

In the face of statements such as these it is hard to believe that Smolenskin did not actually conceive of Hebrew as a spoken tongue. Yet, as we have seen, he considered it to be solely a language of the spirit, an intellectual and cultural bond for the Jewish people, but not one which could serve as a vehicle for spoken communication; the language of Israel is unique:

"It is solely of the spirit, thought, and Torah. Their teachers would not teach that this language should be made into one with which all the people shall speak, nor would they wish to do this, for it is impossible; only as the language of Torah do they deem to teach it. All the peoples whose independence has been taken from them and given to other rulers, as with the peoples of Poland, Bohemia (Czechs), and Ireland, etc., struggle with all their might to restore their independence as it once was and their language as it was previously....This is not true of Israel -- although firm in the hope of a future redemption, they will not abandon for its sake the land of their birth;...so also with Israel's language -- if they learn and understand the Hebrew language, they will not give up the other languages because of it." (55)

The finest testimony to Smolenskin's labors on behalf of

the Hebrew language is to be found in the devotion with which he poured out his soul to publish his Hebrew literary journal. He sought to encourage the writing of original Hebrew compositions, and refused to publish translations from other literature. He also was very strict in accepting manuscripts for publication, and refused to handle them if they were full of mistakes in language or grammar. Typical of his approach was the list of rules by which budding poets were asked to abide:

- "A) The poems shall not be mere imitations of psalms.
- B) The subject upon which the poem is built shall be something relevant to the people of Israel.
- C) They shall not be copies from another language.
- D) The most important condition: They shall be sweet to the palate, and free of errors or transgressions against the rules of language, etc." (56)

Smolenskin was also an advocate of increased Hebrew education for the young, boys and girls alike:

"This is something within our power to do, to instruct the younger generation in Bible;at the time when the children of other peoples are spending an hour each day in learning matters pertaining to their faith, let our youth learn Bible." (57)

In an exhortation to Reform and Orthodox alike Smolenskin called out:

"It is your task O leaders of Israel, teachers and preachers, to be eyes for all the people; it is your obligation, O rabbis, whether your intent is to reform or to hold fast to the old, to rise, step forth, and give your hand to this great matter, to speak to the heart of every man of Israel, to prepare schools in which they may teach the sons of Israel -- and their daughters -- Torah, i.e., the words of the prophets in the language in which they were spoken." (58)

Such was the two-part program for making Hebrew a bond which would unify all the people:

"To write and to teach -- only these shall we choose...

To write and to teach correctly is the objective of Ha-Shahar, to receive the true and the good from whoever said it, without looking to either faction (Reform or Orthodox)." (59)

In this facet of his program Smolenskin was preceded and followed by other literary pioneers; the success attained by those who sought to revive Hebrew as the cultural bond of the Jewish people could not have been had without the labors of other men endowed with a similar dedication to that of Smolenskin's. Nevertheless, his contribution was exceedingly important for the development of Jewish nationalism; it made the language factor operative in the stimulation of a national consciousness.

C. Territory

The third bond of national unity is that of territory. This would certainly seem to be one of the more important bonds for the building of a nationality, for it provides the cask in which the cultural and intellectual contents may be contained. It provides the means for delimiting the group in which the sense of nationality is being encouraged. It does not have to be present at the time the process is begun, however, and as proof there is the entire history of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. There the creation of a territory by which to delineate a given nationality was the end product of the national movement, coming many years after the impetus toward identification as a cultural and spiritual nationality had begun. Nevertheless, although the presence of a distinctive territory "need not be present when a nationality originates, as with the Czechs of the late

eighteenth century, it is always the memory of a past state and the aspiration toward statehood that characterizes nationalities in the period of nationalism." (60)

In the matter of Jewish nationalism the question of a territory takes on an additional dimension of analysis. Their case was not like that of the Czechs who, in spite of the lack of a defined territory, could aspire to territorial autonomy within some area where large numbers of Czechs were settled. Such aspirations -- that is, the achievement of territorial autonomy in the area where large numbers of Jews were presently residing -- never entered into the discussions of the formulators of Jewish nationalism. The first Jewish nationalists, builders of cultural and intellectual nationalism, never considered the possibility of a territorial site in Europe for the Jews. They partook of the opinion of the world about the status of the Jews, that they were at best sojourners, residents by sufferance in the place of their dwelling. When the question of securing a place where the Jews might become a cultural majority finally did arise, it was the shared opinion of Jews and interested Christians alike that this ought to be in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Hebrews. The only instance when there arose the possibility for a Jewish territory in a place other than Palestine was at the time of the Uganda question.

Theodore Herzl, convinced that the nationalism of the Jews had to be focused on a particular territory, had managed to secure from the British an offer to settle the Jews in

Uganda. But the violence with which the delegates to the Sixth Zionist Congress (1904) rejected this proposal confirmed with finality the fact that only in Palestine would the Jews be content to fulfill their national aspirations. The "territorial" movements which were active after this time were primarily rescue movements, and remained outside the mainstream of Jewish nationalism.

Smolenskin's attitude regarding the necessity of a territory for the development of Jewish nationalism reflected the political and social climate in Europe at the particular time in question. For the most part the status of the Jews in Eastern Europe remained in jeopardy, and pages of Ha-Shahar frequently reported of some new anti-Jewish disturbance:

"These many years we have heard a shattering cry from Rumania; day by day they beat, plunder, slay, and do all sorts of shameful deeds to the children of Israel who live in this land, and even now there is renewed against them each morning evil decrees and troubles the likes of those done four hundred years ago..... (61)

"This evil not yet being forgotten, news of a more recent one has come: In the city of Smyrna the Greeks, a murderous band from of old, have risen against the Jews and have plundered and even murdered them." (62)

In the light of reports like these, and in view of the deprivations he himself suffered, it is not surprising that Smolenskin should have thought of the possibility of seeing Jewish nationalism realized outside of Europe, on the soil of the "ancient homeland." Indeed, the opening statement in Ha-Shahar's first issue not only promulgates the program for Hebrew described earlier; it also makes this declaration:

"It is the language only which remains to us now to bring close the heart of all Israel to be one people in the land of Israel." (63)

Elsewhere, taking cognizance of the growing tide of nationalism among the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, he had this to say:

"Nothing in the world is impossible. There are things which one day seem impossible and in a few years have come into being through the powers of man. If someone had prophesied a hundred years ago that a small people, the Greeks, descendents of the remnant of the people of ancient Greece, scattered and separated about the world, would restore and reestablish their independence; or that the people of Serbia, a despised people, swineherds, would rise up and secure independence; or that the inhabitants of Montenegro, a wild and primitive people, would attain self-rule -- if someone had prophesied thus a hundred years ago, anyone hearing him would have laughed at him and said: 'What a fool of a prophet!' In spite of this, this thing has come into being, because the people sought this with all their heart. And if Israel had sought its land, then they too would have found it, for it is within their power to buy it at the full price and to settle there those who are persecuted daily in the different lands. And also those lands which now persecute them without mercy would have ceased doing this had they known that they have a land and a government of their own who has the power to deliver them from trouble; for only the poor and the weak are persecuted daily, as it is the manner of men to honor and respect one who has power in his hand. Therefore do they persecute Israel, because they are sojourners, and if they had a land and a government of their own then they would have given them the honor they give to the other peoples. But even if we do say that it would be impossible to restore independence to Israel, we are nevertheless obligated and commanded to hold fast to this hope, for it can be considered as a bond of our unity; after all, this hope does not stimulate us to act or deed, to gird strength to find what we seek with a raised hand, but only to wait for the day when God will perform a sign and a wonder." (64)

Smolenskin was not ready to issue a call for a physical return to Zion, for he saw in Zion a different sort of value. He saw in the belief in Israel as the Jewish land of the future a bond for securing loyalty to the nationality in the present.

He therefore invested this concept with the same sort of spirituality that he gave to the bond of the Hebrew language, a spirituality which has been mentioned previously in this connection:

"All the peoples whose independence has been taken from them and given to other rulers, as with the peoples of Poland, Bohemia (Czechs) and Ireland, etc., struggle with all their might to restore their independence as it once was.....This is not true of Israel -- although firm in the hope for a future redemption, they will not abandon for its sake the land of their birth, if the latter would only consider him a son to her...The hope for (national) redemption and the (Hebrew) language are the faith of Israel, the spirit of the entire nation." (65)

In the phrase "if the latter would only consider him a son to her" is a sign that there remained in Smolenskin a tinge of hope that the Jews of Europe might ultimately receive full and equal rights throughout Europe. In his understanding of the history of the Jews Smolenskin saw the land as playing only a secondary role. The essence of Israel's existence was as a people of the spirit, a basis fixed at Sinai when the Torah was given, an event that preceded their entrance into a land of their own. The spiritual values were preserved among the people long after they had ceased to have a government of their own on the soil of the Holy Land. Therefore, because he conceived of Israel as a people of the spirit, and because he permitted himself the hope, albeit a dim one, for equal rights in Europe, he could write in the following fashion:

"For we are a people, we are a people from of old and to this day; we did not stop being a people because our independence ended and we were exiled from our land, nor will anything else that might happen stop us

from being a people. It is true that we are not a people like all the other peoples: even as of old, when we were dwelling in our land, we were not like all the other peoples. We were not a people whose lives depended only on self-government, land, and laws; we were not a people born in a land we possessed, so that when it was taken from us we should lose the foundation of our nationality. For as we were in antiquity a people of the spirit, a people whose Torah became for it as land, government, and laws -- for thus believed the people even then since the Torah preceded their going forth to a settled land and government -- so are we now a people who in spirit and thought consider ourselves joined and bound to one another in bonds of brotherhood. And if the bonds grouping all the other peoples were not the bonds of our group, does this mean that we have stopped being a people? We have always thought of ourselves as a people, even though we knew that only Torah is the bond of our group; and therefore we have not ceased being a people to this very day, a people of the spirit, a people who shall be thought of in its spirituality and in its consideration of this peoplehood, and not in its actions or works. In deed or action we are children of every land wherein we dwell; we are loyal sons, and we have a duty to be thus. Every tax or duty of king and princes we must bear as do the sons of every land, for the land wherein we dwell is our land; we have no other land which has been the cornerstone of our unity, we have no other land the end of which would end our group; it is true we had a land, but it was not the bond which joined us. The "land" we possess that makes us a people is only our Torah, and it is solely for the sake of the spirit; in all the ways of life and in all the actions of man we are men like all other peoples." (66)

From the emphatic way in which this is stated, it must now be clear that Smolenskin's attitude to a territory was different from that which a nationalist is usually thought of as having. Although he may have looked forward to Palestine as the ultimate goal, he had a number of intermediate goals demanding prior achievement. Chief among these was to instill in the Jews the consciousness of their being a people, a people held together along spiritual and cultural lines. Peoplehood

was more important than territoriality. Consciousness of cultural unity was more important than a return to Palestine. The steps one must take in building an awareness of nationality must come in proper sequence, in logical order. This view is clearly seen in his reply to a letter from Eliezer ben Yehudah, when the latter charged Smolenskin with failure to state explicitly the logical consequence and ultimate objective of Jewish (as well as any other) nationalism, a return to life in a land of their own. Thus wrote ben Yehudah:

"If we have not despaired from being a living nation, then we must give attention to what this people shall be after it has risen to a new life. If today we seem dead, tomorrow we shall live; if today we dwell in a foreign land, tomorrow we shall dwell in the land of our fathers; if today we are speaking foreign tongues, tomorrow we shall speak Hebrew....and we cannot revive Hebrew except in a land where the number of Hebrew inhabitants will be greater than the number of non-Jews....Here is the land of our fathers before us; let us settle it, and let us Jews be its masters, and 'let us be a people like all the other peoples.' If we speak like this, then our words shall find attentive ears." (67)

And this was the reply of Smolenskin:

"If they would say to us today: Here is your land before you, take it and make of it as you will; establish in it a government according to your own disposition, set over yourselves a king from your own brethren, and be masters of your own land according to your own wishes, with none to interfere! All this on the one small condition that you exchange your faith for another faith -- what would you say, ben Yehudah my friend? Would we accept this great gift at the price of this condition? According to your approach, any man who would refuse to accept this would be a traitor; what use would we have for our faith, our Torah, and the spirit of Israel if our land would be in our hand? But I say to you, that the man who would accept this offer is a traitor, for if at the price of our faith and our Torah we would seek gifts, then indeed the 'land of Israel' could easily be 'spread out' over the entire world." (68)

It must be noted again that the word *אמונה*, "faith," was the word Smolenskin used to describe the entire cultural heritage of Israel. The word *דת*, "religion," was used to describe that part of the "faith" which concerned synagogue and worship. To place realization of the territory before realization of the cultural revival is no less than treason to the Jewish people. In this phase of Smolenskin's outlook we see in substance the approach adopted by Ahad Ha-Am and the entire school of "cultural Zionists" who came in the next generation, a group for whom Smolenskin must certainly be regarded as a spiritual forerunner. The people had to be spiritually prepared before they could take this next important step toward national fulfillment, settlement of the land.

How did Smolenskin intend to keep the ultimate goal, settlement in Palestine, before the eyes of the people? In the process of building loyalty for the Jewish people there was the danger that they might lose sight of the final objective. In order to prevent this, Smolenskin took a certain element of the "faith of Israel," the Jewish heritage, and made of it a doctrinal prerequisite for membership in the peoplehood. This element has been mentioned in certain of the previous citations, but must be clarified here. This element was belief in the eternal hope of Israel for a messianic redemption and return to the land of their fathers, *אמונה ביום המשיח*. Here too he was able to invest another of the bonds of national unity with the same spirituality he gave to history and language. Smolenskin describes this "hope for a future redemption" as one of the pillars of Israel's unity:

"From the time of the first exile until this day we have seen that this hope has united the heart of the people and made them into one people. It has given them the courage and strength to bear suffering, it has preserved their spirit that they might continue to live and not perish among the nations; it and the Torah have together accompanied them along their way, and together they were for him a protection against all the fierce storms which broke upon them to scatter them....Since this hope has been a firm pillar for the house of Israel, and since only good is in it, and no evil could come as a result of it -- for it exists only in the spirit, and would not stir us to action or deed, to assemble groups of rebels in their land and kingdom, to gather valiant men in order to go forth with an upraised hand to conquer for ourselves a land -- we therefore need not fear the angers of the peoples by our clinging to this hope." (69)

This then represents Smolenskin's stand on the question of territory. He held to this stand all through the 1870's, and it was only after the pogroms of 1881 that he took the step which will be described in the next section, advocacy of the resettlement and the political restoration of the Jews in Palestine.

D. Political Entity

The fourth bond of national unity is the presence of a political entity under whose banner a people can be identified. As has been pointed out previously, the role which this bond played in the growth and development of nationalities was different in Eastern and Central Europe than it was in Western Europe.

"In the Western world...the rise of nationalism was a predominantly political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future national state....In Central and Eastern Europe...nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development....Nationalism there (sought) to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands." (70)

Political realization was the ultimate objective of these Central and European nationalist movements, but because the forces at work in these areas were such as to retard the achievement of such a goal, other goals displaced this one in the attention of the nationalists. In many cases it took the upheavals of the first World War and the Russian Revolution to clear the way for political realization; it was only at Versailles in 1919 that the right of "national self-determination" could be implemented by the world powers. The whole history of nationalism in this part of Europe has shown the truth of the observation of Carlton Hayes, that "political independence is not always an indispensable condition of nationality." (71)

In the history of Jewish nationalism the achievement of political independence also came long after the beginning of the drive toward such a goal. Since this achievement did not come until 1948, prior to that date there could be no use of the means implicit in this bond of unity for the building of a feeling of nationality, and of peoplehood. Smolenskin was not present at the culmination of Jewish nationalist aspirations for statehood, but at the end of his career he did enter the camp of those who chose to aspire to such. Although it has become common practice to speak of Theodore Herzl as the founder of Jewish political nationalism, this must not obscure the fact that others before Herzl were concerned with this question.

The real turning point in the history of Jewish nationalism came in 1881, the time of the pogroms in southern Russia. The seeds of nationalism which Smolenskin and others with a similar outlook had planted bore fruit, and there sprang up the Love-of-Zion movement which had as its immediate objective the settlement of Jews in Palestine. In 1882 Pinsker published his pamphlet Auto-Emancipation, and from that date on a steady stream of immigrants trickled into Palestine. The number was not large, but this movement certainly symbolizes the turning-point in the history of Jewish nationalism, the turn from "spiritual nationalism" to more tangible pursuits.

In the writings of Smolenskin this turn can be clearly seen, and he readily admits on several occasions that his previous stand regarding the importance of a territory for Jewish peoplehood must now be modified considerably. From 1881 on he became a firm advocate of Jewish settlement in Palestine. The pages of Ha-Shahar are filled with articles concerning the need for such an immigration, and with advice to those who are taking such a step. There is a redefinition of the importance of the land of Israel as a unifying bond for the Jewish people. However, Smolenskin made this change-over in attitude most cautiously, seemingly uncertain that this new approach will meet with success:

"The idea of settling the land of Israel is very new. It is a child born just this moment, and we must be careful in our watching over it lest something come and ruin it. Any who believe that this idea is not new...are completely in error. The truth of the matter is that for around twenty years and more they have been speaking of settlement in the land of Israel, but it

never occurred to those who spoke thus...to make the land as a place of refuge...Had this been their intention, then the Rumanian Jews would not...have had to look to the ends of the earth to seek refuge." (72)

It is clear that Smolenskin's primary motivation is to provide a place of immediate refuge for the victims of the pogroms. He also wished to make the land of Israel into a permanent station of refuge, available whenever disasters would come upon Jews in any and all lands.

"Gradually our brethren in every land will learn to understand the value and the good of a "house" for Israel; they will learn to understand that there is no faithful and enduring peace for them any place, and even if there appears in some land the shadow of peace, we can say in advance and not err that without any doubt those days will not be long, and persecutions will be repeated and renewed like a phoenix from earlier days; there is not a place in the world which we can hope will be a place of refuge..except the land of Israel." (73)

Success in this venture is far from certain, but even in the striving for such a goal Smolenskin finds value, for a project of this sort can aid in further developing within the Jewish people feelings of national consciousness.

"Only a dog has no home, and for this he is despised; and the likes of a dog will always be considered the man who chooses to live all the days of his life like a stranger lodging for the night, and who does not pay attention to preparing for his children a permanent nest. We must seek this with all our heart and spirit and soul. There is no need to make calculations whether this wish will have success, for a wish can be put into action only when men labor in its behalf; and if we would seek to attain this objective without our lifting a hand, then we will never attain it. We must strive for it." (74)

Statements such as these should be compared to an earlier statement of Smolenskin's, when he declared that the people must "wait for the day when God will perform a sign and a wonder." (See page 45) Smolenskin continues:

"If we seek to restore and to prepare our house, then this shall come to be; whether today or tomorrow or after some time, it is all the same. For the wish itself will exalt our spirit and will give us honor in our own eyes....We must put life into the "hope for redemption" and teach it diligently to our children with all our strength and feelings, for then will our spirit be exalted and we shall again be considered normal human beings. And I repeat my words that even in the hope and the wish themselves we have accomplished much. Men who act for the general welfare are few among any people, but if all the people will seek this one thing, then there will be found men of action who either for the love of their people or for the receipt of high office will put this (wish) into action. But if there is no faithful wish in the heart of the people then there will also be neither deed nor doer; only if we can succeed in bringing to life this wish in the heart of all of us will we be justified in hoping that in the days to come there will arise from among the wishers some men of action, and that they will put the wish into action. We must raise the "hope for redemption" as a banner, and only those who hold fast to it shall belong to Israel, that is, those who wish to establish the house; for those who rise up against it would only be those whose intention is to destroy the house of Israel." (75)

In the closing sentence of this statement Smolenskin has defined advocacy of "rebuilding the house" as a tenet which any who would claim to belong to Israel must accept. Thus we see how Smolenskin has taken a potential bond of unity for the people and made it a necessary part of the structure of national solidarity. He had earlier declared this to be only a future and distant phase of his program. Now it has, through the force of external circumstances (the threat of physical destruction) become a matter demanding immediate loyalty and attention. Earlier he had not used this as a bond for unifying the people; now it has become an essential part of his outlook.

In this we see how the pattern of a nationalist movement

is always responsive to the times in which it is found. In the first part of Smolenskin's career the impulse toward settlement of the land of Israel was so weak that he did not see how it could be used to unify the people. When circumstances changed, and there did develop this movement toward actual settlement, he was quick to utilize it as a force for welding the structure of the Jewish people. The character of the national movement is thus developed through the selectivity of those who formulate it.

It would be a misreading of what Smolenskin wrote if we were to interpret his words to signify an advocacy of Jewish political independence on the soil of Palestine. At times there flickered in the hearts of these early Jewish nationalists the hope that the Turkish empire would grant some sort of autonomy to a revived Jewish community in Palestine; the influence for this came in part as a result of the rights granted by Turkey to other provinces within her empire. But it was only at the turn of the century that a grander goal than this was envisaged, and the real drive for statehood came only when the Zionists realized the unique opportunity implicit in the defeat and break-up of the Turkish Empire following the first World War

E. Customs and Traditions

The fifth bond by which a group may be led to identification as a distinct nationality is that of shared customs and traditions. This bond is closely related to the first

bond, the sense of having a common historical descent, for the objective in either case is the same: When the unity of a people is shown through the mutuality of their past, it is given a depth in past time. When such a unity is shown through the shared behavior of the present, it is given strength in present time. The sharing of common customs and traditions which govern contemporary practice helps to demonstrate to a people that their historical development is continuing, that as a people they are still alive and dynamic. The usual term for referring to these shared customs and traditions is "culture," a term applicable not only in describing behavior from an anthropological point of view, but also in viewing phenomena from a sociological standpoint.

"Every nationality has a culture-pattern of its own, a distinctive complex of institutions, customs, and art, and the same is true even more strikingly of primitive tribes. Certain types of family relationship and social organization, certain modes of artistic expression, certain religious tenets and observances, certain habits of work and play, certain forms of clothing and shelter, are found among primitive peoples in all the continents... " (76)

In the more advance parts of the world it might be assumed that the improvement of all kinds of communication would have led to a standardization of such cultural patterns, and had not the forces of nationality found it advantageous to preserve peculiar patterns of behavior, this might be fully correct.

"Certainly in modern times, improved means of travel and communication have given as impetus towards uniformity of culture throughout the world, and undoubtedly in all ages what had distinguished one nationality from another has been much less vital and valuable than what several nationalities have had in common. Yet it is true that each nationality still persistently regards

itself as the tabernacle of a unique civilization. Perhaps what any group thinks itself to be is quite as significant as what it really is. It is assuredly so with a nationality." (77)

A conscious concern for the customs and traditions of national groups can first be seen in the writings of Jean Jaques Rousseau (1712-1778), a concern growing out of his interest in a new contractual society in which the people are sovereign. In order to encourage a people's loyalty, a special patriotic pride in their fatherland had to be taught, and this in part included a pride in their cultural heritage. In Rousseau's projected constitution for Poland, he suggested the means by which such a pride could be inculcated.

"The program which he drafted for Poland put into the center of all educational affairs an intimate knowledge and love of all aspects of the fatherland. The child learning to read should read about his country; at ten he should know all its products; at twelve all its provinces, roads, and cities; at fifteen, its whole history; at sixteen, all its laws, so that no beautiful act nor famous man should exist in Poland's whole past that would not be alive in the child's heart." (78)

This element in Rousseau's outlook was more fully developed in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder. We have already referred to Herder as one who exalted the beauties and values of a national language (see page 35), and in the realm of a national culture he was equally enthusiastic. He was one of the first to make use of the concept of peoplehood (das Volk) and of the people's special unifying group-spirit (der Volksgeist). Writing in reaction to the broad universalism of the Enlightenment, he came out in favor of particularism among peoples, extolling the peculiar virtues

and values embodied in each people's volksgeist.

"Herder was the first to insist that human civilization lives not in its general and universal, but in its national and peculiar manifestations; each cultural manifestation must be original, but its originality is that of the national community and the national language....His emphasis on the folk community and its language soon was soon to give a new importance and dignity to the different ethnographic groups of Central and Eastern Europe and to create a national consciousness in them....Herder's appeal to the cultural creative forces of folk language and folk traditions aroused a new interest and a new pride not only in German, but in Czechs and Letts, Serbs and Finns." (79)

The effect of Herder's writings in the development of nineteenth century nationalism is readily evident, but this should not imply that Herder's understanding of the volksgeist coincided with that of those who adapted his ideas to suit their own ends.

"Herder was a true son of the Enlightenment, a liberal humanitarian, a rational cosmopolitan. His lasting contribution was his discovery of folk, a new perspective given to history and society, art and civilization." (80)

The Germans who raised his approach to the highest power of chauvinism and ultimately to racism were distorting the word of a teacher who in his own lifetime despised Prussianism with its military despotism and bureaucratic order.

"It was only later, in an age which professed to despise the rationalism of the Enlightenment, that the deep contradictions and dangerous implications of Herder's thought became manifest. Yet by then liberalism and humanitarianism had been abandoned by generations of Germans to whom aggression and domination, which Herder hated so strongly, came to mean the glorious essence of life and history." (81)

In the process of Herder's thought the concept of a volk was raised to a metaphysical level; it was something possessed

of a soul and a will; the individuals who were the component parts of this great volk were required to subordinate their own personal desires to the will of the greater and fully transcendent volksgeist. Thus one early German nationalist, Friedrich Karl von Moser (1723-1798), could write:

"I imagine the national spirit is a peculiar quality, or the aggregate of all the peculiar qualities, by which a people differentiates itself from all others. These distinguishing qualities express themselves in all actions of all the members of the people, in general, and in the public actions undertaken by the people as people in particular." (82)²

Through this it now becomes clear that those elements which have been previously described as "shared customs and traditions" or as a "cultural pattern" were subsumed under the single attribute of "national spirit," which was in turn contained in the "national body" of the people.

This approach is also present in the writings of Smolenskin. In his efforts to create a national consciousness among the Jews, he affirmed repeatedly that the "people of Israel" were the most important constituent to be considered, and all who would deny the peoplehood of Israel were no less than traitors, intent only upon destruction of the Jewish body and spirit together.

"Unification of the people is required for the separate parts of other peoples, as I have said, and this is true also concerning Israel; however, all the other peoples are unified and held together by the natural bonds which they have, but these Israel does not have; and if we do not become concerned about making a single union which will unify all the children of Israel, then those in one land will be torn from the others, and who knows if they will ever again be unified?" (83)

Smolenskin considered the sense of peoplehood to be the supreme factor in the unification of the Jews, more important than the bonds of law, and even those who stood outside the lines of rabbinic law were considered to be a part of Israel:

"The rabbinic laws do not unite us; even those who do not observe the laws, or who have never accepted them, such as those who dwell in China or India, and have never heard a whisper of the many laws, even they are our brethren, for we are one people from of old to this day; the bonds of nationality unify us, and anyone who denies this is a liar and a traitor and a violator of the covenant of brethren." (84)

Here we see again how Smolenskin has made acceptance of one of the bonds of national unity a matter of basic principle, so that anyone who excludes himself from this belief is in reality seeking to exclude himself from the house of Israel. This bond also contains the element of spirituality which Smolenskin was wont to emphasize in his approach to Jewish nationalism; we have pointed to this in discussing the other bonds.

"We must plant a seed of truth in the furrows of the heart of the younger generation, to tell them from the moment they can understand, that we are a people, a people of the spirit, a people who live by their Torah, whose Torah strengthens and joins them in bonds of brotherhood." (85)

Smolenskin's belief in the people as the true repository of culture is reflected in the attacks he made on the Reform movement in Germany. One of his chief criticisms of the reformers was that they dared to assemble in rabbinical conferences and change practices, customs, and beliefs, without first ascertaining the will of the people. He was quite vehement in his protest against a group of rabbis taking matters

into their own hands and seeking to impose unasked-for changes on a people whose will they had not sought to ascertain.

"If the people want reforms, they will make them, and no one shall hold them back..." (86)

Smolenskin is well aware that it is the dynamic of change that has preserved Israel through the ages, and declares that the people have always been wise enough to know when to make a change. If meaningless laws are piled on them so as to make an unreasonable burden, they will do something about it.

"Then there will awaken a desire in the heart of the people to remove their burden from their shoulder so that it should not be a stumbling block on their way through life." (87)

Smolenskin also points out the value of tradition in Jewish life, and mentions the rabbinic dictum *מנהג חסד*, "custom may nullify the law," as proof that when burdensome laws are heaped on the people, they will begin to ignore them, "and as time passes minhag will nullify them, and the minhag of Israel is like law." (88)

Smolenskin felt that this dynamic had not been operative in his own time because ignorance was so wide-spread that the people no longer knew how to put this medium of change into effect. He therefore called for holding in abeyance all change or reform until the time could come when the people would be educated concerning their heritage; then might changes be undertaken.

"To write and to teach! Let us choose only these, and not the action of innovating before the people know what they are reforming and what they are nullifying." (89)

Smolenskin also called for united action along another line, the line of mutual support and benefit between all Jews. The practical implimentation of the principle that all Jews are responsible for one another offered another means for unifying the Jewish people. For this reason Smolenskin praised the work of the Alliance Israélite Universelle whose headquarters were in Paris, and whose activities in aiding all Jews in distress, no matter where they might be, was in effect a support for Smolenskin's principle that the Jewish people are one people. In his praise of the Alliance Smolenskin showed that the spiritual unity of Israel could have practical values also:

"Indeed up to now I have spoken and have shown that there must be made a single union which will unite all the people, in order that the sons of different lands should not become separated, that they should know that they belong to Israel, even if in all the ways of their lives and their actions they seem to be children of a certain country; yet this gain is only a spiritual gain, for all its activity is only for the spirit of the people of Israel, that they should not be scattered and disappear....I know well that there are many for whom a solid piece of meat is better than all the psalms of David, and they would mock my words, for what does the spirit matter to them? So I shall add something, and try to show that there is also very great and distinguished practical gain which will emerge from this organization, and not just in the distant future, but right before our own eyes and in our own time...." (90)

Smolenskin later had a number of differences with the leadership of the Alliance; these stemmed originally from their failure to implement for the Jews of Rumania a program for education which Smolenskin had recommended after visiting there under their auspices; the final break, however, came when the Alliance refused to channel the streams of Jewish

refugees from the Russian pogroms toward Palestine. By then Smolenskin had become convinced that Jewish life in Palestine must be built up, and when the Alliance insisted on sending the refugees to America, he bitterly opposed them. He did so with mixed feelings, for he was deeply disappointed that the group whom he had once supported because they could serve to unify the Jews would now have a part in dispersing them to the other side of the world.

Smolenskin was firmly in favor of strengthening the customs and traditions of the Jewish people as a means by which he could promote a sense of national solidarity. In order to do this, he stressed those elements in the Jewish heritage which spoke of the people of Israel, and which emphasized the Jewish historical and cultural experience as an experience in which the people as a whole body participated. He frequently sought to show Judaism as a faith involving all the people, and not just a segment of them, the priestly class. His contribution to the concept of peoplehood as a working force in all realms of Jewish life was therefore an important one in the evolution of a philosophy of Jewish nationalism.

F. Religion

The sixth bond for promoting a sense of national unity among a people is the bond of religion. This is a bond that requires a certain amount of limiting definition, for in one sense the entire nationalist movement can be described as "religions" in nature because of the inspirational and revivalist character true of such a movement.

"As one looks back over the multifarious pages of man's history, one is struck by the frequency and force of human movements which have had their mainspring in religious emotion. Herein is a valuable clue for us. May it not be that we shall here find the most convincing explanation of the strength of modern nationalism, the zeal of its apostles, and the devotion of its disciples? Is it not a demonstrable fact that nationalism has become to a vast number of persons a veritable religion, capable of arousing that deep and compelling emotion which is essentially religious?" (91)

The correctness of such a statement can be shown not only from a psychological point of view; in the historical perspective as well we can see that the nationalist movements have frequently been the successors to religious bodies in attracting and holding the loyalties of groups of men. The widespread political and social controls held by the Church in medieval Europe were gradually taken over by secular-national movements, so that the Church's role became more and more circumscribed.

"At a given time in history, religion...had very fundamental and substantial political implications. It molded and dominated politics and society. At the present, the same is true of nationalism. When interminable and ferocious religious wars threatened to destroy human happiness and civilization, the movement of the Enlightenment, the wave of rationalism which started about 1680 and dominated the eighteenth century, led to the depolitization of religion." (92)

At that time the political and social concerns which had been in the province of religion passed over to the domain of the successor to religion, the secular-national state.

However, the dynamic of this changeover varied greatly with times and places, and it is impossible to say that every national movement was inevitably the successor to some religious organization in drawing together groups of men. Some-

times religion and religious bodies hindered the growth and development of national movements, challenging and competing with this new ideology that sought control over the minds and hearts of men.

"On the other hand, national churches have frequently been an important element in helping to arouse nationalism; and when conflicting nationalities were of different religions religion often played a large part in the defense mechanism of the weaker nationality, as Catholicism did in Ireland and in Prussian Poland." (93)

In the various split-offs from the world church of Rome (and the Roman empire) there can be seen factors which in later days came to make religion a unifying factor in the growth of modern nationalities.

"In the East, from an early date, the Christian churches had fallen under the direction and domination of temporal rulers and had become state or national churches with variations in belief and ceremony and with differences of liturgical language. Thus had arisen Armenian, Coptic, Greek, and Russian churches, employing its own national language and either contributing to the unity and distinctiveness of a national state in victory and success, as was the case with Russia, or as exemplified by the Armenian and Coptic churches, cementing and preserving a nationality in defeat and subjection." (94)

The same effect was to be seen in the divisions in the Church caused by the Reformation, with seeds for unity being planted that subsequently were nourished by those who sought to shape a new and modern sense of national oneness.

"The exaltation of nationality was in part the cause of the Protestant Revolution, and in turn the Protestant Revolution and the Catholic Reformation too were landmarks in the development of national patriotism. One cannot adequately understand why religious reformers secured the numerous and widespread popular following which they did secure unless one reads the national appeals which Luther addressed to Germans, Calvin to Frenchmen, and Knox to Scotsmen. Nor can one fully appreciate how the pope managed to retain a hold upon large numbers of Christians, except as one studies the

increased favors which he accorded to national sovereigns, notably to those of Spain, Portugal, and France, and the national appeals which were made in his name." (95)

There were instances when these bonds of a religious fellowship were not used as a means for uniting a new national fraternity. German nationalism, practically dormant at a time when other states in Western Europe were solidifying their national foundation, is an example of this.

"While in Western Europe religion became a major force in the awakening of a modern political and social consciousness, German Lutheranism led to political quietism: the Germans were satisfied to remain subjects, they did not strive to become citizens. The religious rift tore the country into two parts, growing more different as time went on; Catholics and Protestants not only met on battlefields as enemies for a century and a half, but with the ensuing re-theologizing of all life the difference of religion forbade all cultural contacts, and the intellectual life in the two Germanys developed along independent lines." (96)

This description of the religious cleavage in Germany is useful in our understanding of the attitude of Peretz Smolenskin toward religion as a unifying force in Jewish nationalism. On the one hand, he had grown up among the obscurantist Orthodox Jews of Eastern Europe, and shared the feelings of many of his fellow Maskilim: such religion is essentially a stumbling block along the way to Jewish Enlightenment and to the subsequent improvement of Jewish life from both an intellectual and an economic. Mordecai Kaplan characterizes this feeling very well:

"The human frailties and aggressions exhibited by the various churches in Christianity, the intransigence of the Roman Catholic, the Greek Orthodox, and the Fundamentalist and Evangelical Protestant clerics, their insistence upon the surrender of intellectual and per-

sonal freedom to ecclesiastical authority and their hostility to all moral and spiritual progress, persuaded Jews, harassed by their own religious and lay leaders, that religion held no hope whatever for improving the material or spiritual condition of the Jewish people." (97)

On the other side of the picture, in regard to German Reform Judaism, Smolenskin saw a sort of Jewish protestantism which in effect was separating Jews from one another, and whose divisive effect would be much more damaging and harmful to the cause of national unity than any gains which the Germans might claim to be receiving because of their reforms. Smolenskin clearly disavowed himself of sympathy with either group, and sought to show his fellow Jews a different way of life, a life bound up with national self-identity.

"Should it occur to a man to ask which is preferable, the bonds of nationality or the ties of religion, then the immediate answer would be this: If one would distinguish between them, then without a doubt the ties of religion are only secondary to the bonds of nationality, for the covenant of nationality is the primary force, and religion only strengthens this covenant." (98)

This declaration must not be interpreted as an off-hand dismissal of the role of religion in the life of the people. It should rather be understood as giving to each realm, religion and nationality, its proper place. Religion must now become the handmaid of nationalism, aiding in the development of a sense of unity that goes beyond that of purely "ecclesiastical" bounds, in the creation of the sense of national unity.

To accomplish this, Smolenskin took a concept basic to

the Jewish religion, the broad concept of Torah, and invested it with all the beliefs and values that were part of his nationalist ideology. This concept was raised to metaphysical level, and came to represent the volksgeist, the soul of the "national body" of the people Israel. Torah is the elan vital for the Jewish body. "Torah is the life-giving spirit of the people." (99) To define it merely as a complex of laws and religious regulations is a misunderstanding of the essential function and purpose of Torah. "Not on laws has the house of Israel been built, but solely and exclusively the Torah has been the spirit which always gives us life." (100) We must, in fact, disentangle the concept of law from the concept of Torah.

"Let us rise to teach in writing and by word of mouth, as best we can, to distinguish between the spirit of the people and the laws of religion, that they should not seem bound up and joined with one another, so that if one should fall the second would not stand." (101)

Furthermore, it is this spirit of Torah which has kept the people united through the centuries; in addition, it shall be the source of our future unity as well, for to allow it to die is tantamount to permitting Israel to die.

"Only the national sense and the Torah -- the Torah of life, and not the commandments -- they alone keep this entire people alive; if they were dead, and their memory destroyed, then Israel would be thought of as a body without a soul, as dry bones without a spirit whose days will not be long, and whose revival will not be seen." (102)

Because the spirit of Torah grows out of Holy Scriptures, it is important to begin to teach Bible to the youth.

"Torah alone is the rain which can freshen the spirit

of our youth...Without initial studies like this the heart of the youth cannot be opened." (103)

The Bible is therefore seen as "the treasure of our entire spiritual heritage, the memorial of our fathers, and the bond of our nationality." (104) Here then we see an additional value to be derived from studying the Bible, for it is the source not only for the unifying language, but also for the unifying spirit of Torah. All three are inextricably bound up with one another. "Without the Hebrew language there is no Torah, and where there is no Torah there is no people of Israel." (105)

At another place Smolenskin summarized his outlook on religion and its place in Israel's life in the form of a statement directed against those who claim that the Jews are only believers in a particular religious system. This statement actually is a fitting summary of the entirety of his nationalist program, for in it he makes specific mention of several of the bonds of national unity which we have considered. This is one of the rare occasions in the course of Smolenskin's writings when a summary even as concise as this can be found.

"We must call out with a loud voice: We are brethren, the children of one people, and not just the children of a certain faith; we are one people, and even if a man should transgress against the laws he shall not be regarded as a transgressor against his people; we are one people, but without government and land, and even if our expectation to find again government and land were to disappear, we would nevertheless be one people in spirit; and those who proclaim that we are only children of a certain faith err and mislead, for according to their words if we turn from the specific laws of the faith even a hairbreadth then we have

separated from the community, but who would set his hand on the two of us to say who is right, those who hold fast to or those who abandon the law? Those who say that we are children only of a certain faith multiply strife and contention, increase the breach and make a cleavage among brethren; for then there would be perpetual war between one party and another, and each one would say, I alone have chosen the correct ways. This would not be so if their eyes would be opened to see that they are children of one people; then the laws would not be like stumbling-blocks, and each one could choose his own way as long as he does not transgress against his people. We are the children of one people, and only those laws of the faith which are bulwarks to the unity of the people shall be the cornerstones for our faith and for the unity of the nationality. These laws of the faith are only the belief in one God, and none but He alone; the learning of Torah in the language in which it was written, for it is now for us as land and language; the hope for future redemption, which is for us as government; if a man will hold fast to these three, then he is of Israel, and concerning the rest let God enter into judgment with him, and not us." (106)

NOTES

References to three works by Smolenskin -- Am Olom (Ha-Shahar, Vol. III), Et Laasot (Ha-Shahar, Vol. IV), and Et Lataat (Ha-Shahar, Vols. VI, VIII, IX) -- utilize the pagination of an edition of the collected works of Smolenskin, Maamarim, 4 vol. All other references are to the pages of Ha-Shahar itself.

Chapter I

1. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, p. 119.
2. Hayes, Essays in Nationalism, p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. Ibid., p. 6.
5. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Kohn, op. cit., p. 16.
7. Ibid., p. 16.
8. Ibid., p. 16.
9. Hayes, op. cit., p. 21.
10. Kohn, op. cit., p. 14.

Chapter II

11. Ibid., p. 329.
12. Ibid., p. 330.
13. Hayes, op. cit., p. 44.
14. Ibid., p. 57.
15. Halkin, Modern Hebrew Literature, pp. 15f.
16. Hayes, op. cit., p. 44.
17. Ibid., p. 50.
18. Ibid., p. 53.
19. Cf. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. II, pp. 206-216.
20. Cited in Dubnow, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 329.

Chapter III

21. Cited by Goldin, "A Pen Portrait of Peretz Smolenskin," (The Reconstructionist, Vol. IX, p. 9.)

22. Klausner, "Introduction" to Smolenskin, Maamarim, Vol. I, p. xxvii.
23. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, p. vi.
24. Klausner, Ha-Sifrut Ha-Ivrit Ha-Hadashah, Vol. V, p. 58.
25. Quoted in Halkin, op. cit., p. 65.
26. Hayes, op. cit., p. 69.
27. Kohn, op. cit., p. 4.
28. Maamarim, Vol. I, pp. 170f.
29. Kohn, op. cit., p. 15
30. Ibid., p. 19.

Chapter IV

31. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 33.
32. Kohn, op. cit., p. 14.
33. Hayes, op. cit., p. 8.
34. Kohn, op. cit., p. 218.
35. Ibid., p. 555.
36. Ibid., p. 559.
37. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, part 3, p. 4.
38. Ibid., Vol. I, part 6, p. 4.
39. Ibid., Vol. I, part 3, p. 12.
40. Klausner, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 81.
41. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 97.
42. Klausner, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 81.
43. Hayes, op. cit., pp. 14-16.
44. Kohn, op. cit., p. 339.
45. Ibid., p. 429.
46. Cited in Hayes, op. cit., p. 53.
47. Ibid., p. 54.

48. Cited in Kohn, op. cit., p. 532.
49. Ibid., p. 567.
50. Ibid., p. 496
51. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, p. iii.
52. Halkin, op. cit., p. 47
53. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, pp. v-vi.
54. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, part 7, p. 4.
55. Maamarim, Vol. I, pp. 170f.
56. Ha-Shahar, Vol. I, part 6, p. 3.
57. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 176.
58. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 195f.
59. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 162.
60. Kohn, op. cit., p. 15.
61. Ha-Shahar, Vol. II, p. 361.
62. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 423.
63. Ibid., Vol. I, p. v.
64. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 144.
65. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 171.
66. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 145f.
67. Ha-Shahar, Vol. X, pp. 241-245.
68. Ibid., Vol. X, pp. 245-249.
69. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 200.
70. Kohn, op. cit., p. 329.
71. Hayes, op. cit., p. 20.
72. Ha-Shahar, Vol. XI, p. 9.
73. Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 10.
74. Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 194.
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76. Hayes, op. cit., p. 18.
77. Ibid., pp. 18f.
78. Kohn, op. cit., p. 256.
79. Ibid., pp. 429f.
80. Ibid., p. 448.
81. Ibid., p. 451.
82. Ibid., p. 375.
83. Maamarim, Vol. I, p. 42.
84. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 138.
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86. Ibid., Vol I, p. 24.
87. Ibid., Vol I, p. 26.
88. Ibid., Vol I, p. 28.
89. Ibid., Vol I, p. 161.
90. Ibid., Vol I, p. 45.
91. Hayes, op. cit., p. 95.
92. Kohn, op. cit., p. 23.
93. Ibid., p. 15.
94. Ibid., pp. 37f.
95. Ibid., pp. 38f.
96. Ibid., p. 333.
97. Kaplan, A New Zionism, p. 77.
98. Maamarim, Vol. II, p. 174.
99. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 128.
100. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 27.
101. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 191.
102. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 97.

103. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 95.
104. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 96f.
105. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 173f.
106. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 192f.

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