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AN INVESTIGATION INTO POLISH JEWISH LIFE

16th

OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY WITH SPECIAL

REFERENCE TO ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF HIZUK EMUNAH.

[1920.]

## C O N T E N T S

### BIBLIOGRAPHY.

#### CHAPTER I.

Protestantism	Page 1	to	Page 5
Anti-trinitarianism in Europe	" 6	"	" 8
Anti-trinitarianism before Socinus in Poland and Lithuania.	" 9	"	" 16

#### CHAPTER II.

Hebraic and Jewish Influence on Polish Anti-trinitarianism	" 17	"	" 25
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#### CHAPTER III.

Socinianism	" 26	"	" 34
Socinianism in its Relation to Judaism	" 35	"	" 39
Theological Socinianism and Judaism	" 40	"	" 52



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## PROTESTANTISM

The humanistic movement in Italy and Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries found a most fertile soil in the Polish kingdom. Humanistic works were widely read there, and many Polish students matriculated at West European universities. (Schiemann X, pt. 1; p.641). The Polish literary revival of the sixteenth century which employed both Polish and Latin as a medium of literary expressions, found its greatest following among the nobles who soon distinguished themselves by their superior education in contrast to their uncouth German peers. (Ibid. X, pt. 2; p.269). The critical spirit of investigation and free thought engendered by the humanistic influence in Poland prepared the ground for a kind reception to the western moving religious Revolution that had been brought to a head by Martin Luther. The nobility and the city patricians - many of whom were German settlers with German sympathies - accepted the new religious innovations with an almost suspicious alacrity. The great mass of peasants were for the most part not affected. They were crushed into an absolute state of poverty and ignorance and subjection, that made their helotage a by-word even in a century where nearly all European peasants were in a state of serfdom. (Ibid. X, pt. 1; p.638.) The spiritual tendency of Humanism and the Reformation passed them by. In 1511 the children of Polish peasants had been excluded from the public schools, (Ibid. X, pt. 1; p.637.) and thru'out the sixteenth century, - one of great brilliance and achievement in Polish literature - the peasants sank lower and lower. The restriction of the new anti-Romanist religious innovations to the cultured and moneyed classes, to the almost complete exclusion of the peasantry, - was both the great strength and weakness of the whole movement. Its strength in that these cultured classes realized at once the justice in the main of the anti-Romanist criticisms and its weakness in that their faith was intellectual and not moral. It is evidenced that the causes which permitted Protestantism, - confined as it was to the higher classes, - to take a quick hold in Poland where not religious but economic and political. The nobles were jealous of the clergy who were exempted from many taxes, and the obligation of military



service both for themselves and their retainers; because the clergy possessed immense estates and derived an immense income thru' tithes. The Protestant Revolution was a weapon in the hands of the nobility to fight the growing power of the clergy; to bait Rome. The religious problem, altho' an issue also, was secondary and not indigenous. (Ibid. X; pt. 2; p.270.)

The tendency in most European countries for centuries was centralization, - in Poland, - decentralization. The sixteenth century saw the triumph of the great landed magnates over the peasants and the burghers, and the attempt to control the church and the clergy. The Catholic nobles sympathized with the Protestants in their attempt to control the church and after the death of the great leader of the Reformed (Calvinistic-Helvetian) Church in Poland the church organization was modified ~~was~~ to give the laity (nobles) greater power. In this particular attempt on the part of the great lay leaders to control the new church and its followers the aims of the Polish magnates and the German princelings are one. (Ibid. X; pt. 2; p.34). The high intellectual character of the Polish followers of Humanism produced in them an aversion to the ~~literality~~ <sup>literal</sup> of the Mass, and the worship of saints and images. There was a strong desire to return to the simplicity of the primitive church, as it was ideally conceived. (Krasinski, 1, p.142-3) There was a strong feeling of indifference if not of contempt for the most sacred regulations of the church on the part of some of the most prominent prelates. (Schiemann X; pt.2; p.273).

The lack of a strong centralized government; the indifference of the clergy; and the heterogeneity of the people among whom there were Poles, Germans, Jews, Russians, Livonians, Ruthenians, Cossacks, Tartars, Moldavians and others made for religious toleration. Thru' the German settled province of Greater Poland (Posen) Lutheranism entered the country. (Ibid. X; pt. 1; p.642). The German colonies, settlers and merchants transplanted the Lutheran doctrines all thru' the ~~paria~~ <sup>prairie</sup> kingdom. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.316.) The Polish nobles whose cultural relations and sympathies were Italian adopted the Calvinistic creed brought to them by Italians who had adopted that form of

belief thru' their settlement in Switzerland.

Altho' Sig. I (1506-1548) in the third decade of his reign repeatedly forbade the spread of Luther's works thru' penalty of confiscation and exile he was on the whole tolerant of religious innovation and was not a real bar to the spread of the Reformation. (Schiemann X; pt.1; p.645; Sternberg, p.111) Laws were enacted with heavy penalties all thru' the reign of Sigismund and decrees were promulgated by church synods forbidding Polish students attending Protestant German universities; the possession of the works of Lutheran theologians, but all to no avail. The Protestant movement spread rapidly, (Schiemann X; pt.1 p.646-7) Protestantism came into Lithuania from the Baltic Provinces to the North; from Poland and thru' its German settlers. A school was opened in Vilna for children of burghers and it distinguished itself thru' its attacks on church customs, holy days, the Eucharist and the saints. (Ibid. X; pt. 1; p.650) The greatest Lutheran magnate, Nicholas Radziwill is said to have studied the Lutheran, the Jewish, and Mohammedan creeds and finally decided to look for a new one altogether. (Mickiewicz, Literatura Slaw. in Sternberg, p.115. Cf. Story of Chazar King, Ivan etc.) In spite of this suspicious story he was well known as an anti-Romanist. His daughter was said to be inclined toward the Jewish faith. (Ibid.) Sigismund (later Sig. II) the grand duke of Lithuania was known to be tolerant of the new creeds and possessed the works of Luther and Melancthon in his library. (Schiemann, X; pt.1; p.651)

In 1548 at the ascension of Sig. II (Augustus) to the throne of Poland a considerable part of the nobility and many of the German burghers had taken up the new ideas and it was said that the king also was favorable inclined toward them,--however the movement did not touch the great masses nor had the Dissidents (the anti-Romanists) as yet any definite organization. (Ibid. X; pt.1;p.653) Significant is the following from Calvin to Sig. II:

"Your majesty has far less difficulty to struggle with than Hezekiah and Yosiah, who had an arduous and severe contest with the contumacy of their people; whereas in our days, a greater part of the Polish nobility shows a prompt and cheerful disposition to embrace the faith of Christ." (Edwards, p.26)



One of the very prominent, if not the leaders of Protestantism in Little Poland (Cracow) was F. Stancari, an Italian who in 1549 was a teacher of Hebrew in the University of Cracow. The early leadership of Italians, many of whom were Hebraists gave to the subsequent Polish reformation a distinctive turn, which as we shall see was fraught with important consequences for the future of the faith.

The Protestant movements spread with so much rapidity that at the Diet of 1552 radical reforms in favor of Dissidents, ~~as~~ as they were called, were made. Altho' they were not able to obtain equal rights with the Catholic clergy in teaching religious doctrines, they did receive equal rights in filling crown offices. (Corwin, p.141) The tolerant spirit which for the most part characterized the reign of Sig. II encouraged the growth of the Dissidents and in 1560 among the twenty-five thousand families of the nobility there were about one thousand Protestant families. (Schiemann, X; pt. 2; p.323.) This number were actual Protestants, but in all probability a far higher percentage were anti-Romanists. Krasinski, the Protestant historian of the Polish Reformation insists that at the death of Sigismund Augustus (1572) most of Little Poland (Cracow) was anti-Romanist. (Krasinski, II; p.9)

The anti-Romanist feeling and the Protestant growth alarmed the Roman church, which used every weapon in its power to crush this unsympathetic attitude and religious revolution, but when they saw all their efforts dissipated in order to save themselves from what seemed to be a complete rout they finally gave the Dissidents the same status as Catholics, in January, 1573. Yet it is interesting to note that the very Diet that gave freedom to the Protestants firmly established serfdom in the land, subjecting even the religious beliefs of the peasant to the will of the Lord:- perforce the serf followed the creed of his master, but there was no intelligent following which would insure the future of the movement. (Ibid. II; p.11-12) The Protestants immediately after their recognition by the authorities formed themselves into an organization governed by Synods, which met at stated intervals and legislated on matters of creed, dress and conduct. It is the opinion of Graetz that these synods had an influence upon the organiza-



tion and the work of the Council of Lands. (Appendix I) The Protestants discussed dogmas and the Jews practical affairs. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.466).

The power and influence of all the Dissident groups in Poland; the Helvetians in Little Poland and Lithuania; the Bohemian Brethren and the Lutherans in Greater Poland had so increased that it is quite certain that the election of a Protestant king after the death of Sig. II, would have thrown the country into the hands of the Protestants. (Graetz; Ger. IX; p.398) However, the Catholic Henry of Valois, who was implicated in the St. Bartholomew massacre was elected and it is interesting to note that the influence of the Porte was thrown to him at the instance of the Jewish diplomat Solomon Ashkenazi. The year that witnessed the recognition of the Dissident groups was marked by a determined attempt on their part to draw a line between themselves<sup>and</sup> the growing anti-Trinitarian movement. (Krasinski, II; p.65ff.)

## ANTI-TRINITARIANISM IN EUROPE.

Synchronous with the development of the Protestant Revolution in Western Europe was the rise of the Anti-trinitarian movement in Christianity. This movement thru' persecution spread eastward until it finally found a temporary lodging place in the tolerant borders of the Polish Kingdom. Polish Protestantism; and especially Anti-trinitarianism, and Socinianism owes its origin to the Anti-trinitarian leaders, Italians for the most part, who fleeing from Italy, after a short inhospitable stay in the Switzerland of Calvin, finally found refuge in Poland. Inasmuch as all Anti-trinitarian movements thru'out the history of Christianity,--by virtue of its stress on the principle of the unity of God, which has always characterized Judaism, are ipso facto in some relation to Judaism it is necessary to recount very briefly the spirit of West-European Anti-trinitarians and more in detail the development and groups of East-European Anti-trinitarianism with the possible purpose of showing relation to current Judaism if such relations can be localized.

"It was not an accident that this movement (Anti-trinitarian) had its origin in Italy. Like the humanistic reformation which Le Fevre d'Etaples, Colet and Erasmus conceived and laboured for, it had its roots in the Italian Renaissance and its precursors in Italian thinkers. The Renaissance of Christianity by a return to the sources was a natural counterpart of the renaissance of classical antiquity by the same means. The New Testament itself was a piece of the ancient world, and better understood by those who had steeped themselves in the thought of antiquity and interpreted it as other ancient authors are interpreted than by those who read it through the eyes of mediaeval schoolmen or of the Fathers. They interpreted Paul not by Augustine, but in the light of Neo-Platonic and Stoic ideas which seemed to them not only to be the acme of ancient philosophy, but to embody eternal ideas and they discovered the same sublime philosophy in Paul's Epistles and the Gospel of John. (Moore, 11, p.340.)"

The development of the critical spirit in history and literature which Moore has so well described is characteristic of the Italian mind of this Humanistic period and is characteristic of all great Italian religious reformers who devoted themselves to theological studies. It is however, admitted by Christian students of this period that one of the general causes of the Anti-Trinitarian movement in Italy was the influence which the monotheistic Jewish rabbis and teachers exerted on the Hebraists



who studied under them. (Bonet-Maury, p.80-1.) It is a fact that is incontrovertible that the great leaders in radical thought in Europe, Anti-trinitarians for the most part, were Hebraists who acquired the monotheistic idea directly thru' their studies of the Bible and Jewish literature. Valdes the Italian Reformer was a Hebraist. (Allen, p.9.) Among the original West-European Anti-trinitarians were Martin Cellarius and Servetus, (Appendix II), both good Hebraists; the latter had studied under Reuchlin and was an influence on the Poles in his Anti-trinitarian ideas. (Wallace, 1-p.395;1; p.412ff.) Erasmus Johannis, who lived in Poland for a time, Hans Denck; F.W. Capito were all fine Hebraists. (Wallace, 1; pp.401,417; 11; p.374.) The Anti-trinitarians in Germany, largely covered under the loose term of Anabaptists had their following chiefly among the masses. It was a church of extremes evidencing elements of the most rigid ascetism and the loosest libertinism. It sought to return to the primitive simplicity of the early Christian Church as it pictured that Church together with a conception of the Jewish-Christian One God. They shunned,--as did their early Christian forbears,-- the responsibility of civil positions and strongly insisted on freedom of conscience and unhesitatingly condemned religious persecution. (McGiffert, pp.101-105.) But when this religious adventure linked itself with the social and economic revolt of the German peasant it was crushed in an orgy of hatred and blood. In Italy where the movement was essentially limited to the cultured, literary nobility and intelligentia the discovery of the heresy and the expulsion of the few recalcitrants was sufficient to crush the movement. The Italian intellectuals who suffered exile for their conscience sake fled to Switzerland and when that refuge was refused them thru' the inhospitality of Calvin and his associates, they came to Poland. In the early phase of Anti-trinitarianism in Western Europe there are two central and fundamental principles. First, a difference from the established church idea of the unity of God which by no means implies a monotheistic conception, and second, baptism of adults only; (Fock, p.154.) Homobaptism. The highest expression of the Unity of God among Anti-Trinitarians is well evidenced in the following verse by the German Hebraist and Anti-trinitarian Hetzer



(d.1529) who evidences a theological view of God's unity that was rare even among  
Anti-trinitarians:-

Ich bin allein der einig Gott,  
Den ohn Gehylff alle Dinge verschaffen hat;  
Fragstu, wie viel meiner sey?  
Ich bins allein, meiner sind nit Drey.  
Sauch auch darby ohn' allen wohn  
Das ich glutt nit weiss von keiner Person.

(Wallace, 1; p. 412ff.)

ANTI-TRINITARIANISM BEFORE SOCINUS IN POLAND  
AND LITHUANIA.

The assured success of the Protestant confessions in Western Europe; the unfortunate linking of the German religious liberals to the Anabaptist movement and the rise of Catholic Reaction were three of the determining factors that centered Anti-trinitarian thought in the great kingdom of Poland. The development of Anti-Trinitarianism in Poland is synchronous with the believers of the two groups. They were all classed as Dissidents. It was only toward the latter part of the sixteenth century that the Protestants grew sufficiently powerful to make a distinct cleavage between themselves and the Radicals. Even this cleavage was made difficult because of the refusal of the Anti-trinitarian leaders in many instances to commit themselves. This equivocal theological stand on the part of the religious liberals appears to be an Italian heritage;—many of the most prominent leaders juggled so with vital terms and gave their own interpretation to crucial phrases that their personal creed often bore the countenance of perfect Protestant orthodoxy. The union of the radicals and the conservatives,—all ostensibly orthodox Protestants,—can best be seen in the translation of the famous Protestant Bible:—"The Bible of Brest",—numbering among its translators nearly all the great Italian, Polish Anti-trinitarians of later days: Stancari, Ochinus; Lismanini; Blandrata; Gregorius Pauli, etc.—. It is necessary that we thoroughly understand the relation between the Italian and Polish reformers for since the Polish reformers were for the most part Italian leaders of the sixteenth century we can only understand the relation of the Poles to the Jews by a study of the attitude of the Italians in Poland toward the Jews. The Humanistic movement as I have already indicated was characterized alike in Poland and Italy by its influence limited to the nobility and the land owning class to the complete exclusion of the peasantry. Italians were attracted to Poland not only because of the greater freedom to be enjoyed there thru' the anarchy perpetuated by the sovereignty of the great landowners, but because of the towns more closely resembled the Italian towns than those



of any other country. The Polish cities had no real renaissance of their own but there was constant and direct intercourse between Poland and Italy and the beautiful buildings of the great Polish cities were built by Italian masters. Polish Humanists were practically completely dependant upon Italy. (Harnack, VII;p.135) This Italian Humanism is well characterized in one of the most prominent prelates of the Catholic Church; his indifference; his cynical raillery at the most sacred thots and rites of Catholicism would be more true of one of the highly cultured, disillusioned Italian Churchmen of the sixteenth century. It was suspicioned that he did not observe the great fasts; ate meats and even approved the Eucharist in both forms. He was said to be an atheist and to have refused to acknowledge any religion and faith. Moses, Mohammed and Christ were the greatest impostors who had seduced the world from the path and robbed them of their reason. (This is an old stock accusation). Called the Apostle Mathew:"Matty"; said he was only a peasant; attacked the glory and divinity of Christ and said he was only the "son of mortal folk." (Schiemann, X. pt.2; p.273.) These Italians who came to Poland were for the most part Calvinists. They had come East by way of Switzerland where they had assumed the Calvinistic cloak and in Poland they naturally joined the Reformed Church. (Moore, 11; p.338) Some came as confessors to royalty; some as teachers of Hebrew in the University of Cracow; other fled to Poland for freedom of conscience. (Schiemann, X;pt.2; p.272; Krasinski, 1; pp.279-80) And finally the influence of Anabaptist refugees added to the leaven already working among the native Poles who had read the Humanistic ~~works~~ works and studied in the great European universities. The emotional amenability of the Poles to Italian culture; freedom of press and freedom of worship, gives the necessary impulse and directs the trend of thot along critical, rational, humanistic, dogmatic lines. (Moeller, p.452.)

Anti-trinitarianism received its first impulse in Poland among certain Cracow leaders who had some sort of a secret society about 1546. The works of Servetus were extensively read in Poland. Five years later we have the visit of Ulric Socinus, the anti-trinitarian, and Stancari the Professor of Hebrew at the University of Cracow attracts



attention in expounding the psalms thru' his attacks on the saints. Pauli and Gonesius come out and proclaim an Anti-trinitarianism (1556) that is strongly tinged with Anabaptism. (Krasinski, 1; pp.347-8) In the next year the Anti-trinitarian ideas still under the shelter of the orthodox Reformed church-spread rapidly.

At a synod in Pinzow (near Cracow) among whom were the Anti-trinitarians:-Blandatra; Gonesius; Stancari and Wismannini a great deal was accomplished toward the demolition of the accepted idea of the Trinity. (Wallace, 11; pp.152-3) It should be noticed that the leaders of this anti-trinitarian movement in the Reformed Church are nearly all Italians. In the period between 1559 and 1560 Anti-trinitarianism developed in a number of Reformed synods. From 1560 on the movement advances by leaps and bounds. As early as 1562 a synod of Pinzow as a whole has a slightly anti-trinitarian bias. (Krasinski, 1; pp.356-7) In this year the conflict between the two elements in the Reformed Church came to a head and the Reformed Church was divided into an orthodox and liberal church: called the Greater and the Lesser. At the Conference of Petricow in the same year the leaders of the anti-trinitarians solemnly declared their rejection of the mystery of the Trinity as unscriptural. (Krasinski, 1; pp.358-9; Wallace, 1;p.180ff.) In the following year the two groups held separate synods and the Anti-trinitarians come forth as well developed party strongly supported by many of the great landowners. Because of the schools of the group founded at Pinzow the anti-trinitarians are known as Pinzowians. The impugment of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity:the divinity of Jesus,inflamed not only the Catholics, but also the Protestants of all three confessions. The Catholics and the Protestants ~~united~~ joined forces at the Diet in 1564 for the nonce and attempted to crush this radical movement by the expulsion of all foreign ministers. The Catholic leader Hosius who is responsible for the advent of the Jesuits into Poland felt that the expulsion should include all radicals. He believed that; "War amongst heretics gives peace to the Church." (Krasinski, 1; pp.323-4) A final attempt was made by the king in 1566 to settle the differences of the two groups but the attempt was a complete failure. The schism was now complete. (Ibid. 1; pp.364-5.)

Before the Anti-trinitarians separated from the Reform Church,--when both churches were apparently one they united in the publication of a translation of the Old and New Testament complete. It was published in 1563 in Brest in Lithuania and was claimed by both parties inasmuch as both groups had their leaders busy with the translation. The translation was quite good under the influence of the humanistically trained Italians on the Board; Stancari; Cchinus, Lismannini, Blandatra and others, and it said that it was praised by the Jews. (Wallace, 11; pp.234ff.) Printing presses of the Anti-trinitarians after their separation were set up at Racow and Zaslav and were the means of spreading their doctrines and beliefs broadcast. The later organized Anti-trinitarians (Socinians) never had a complete C.T. translated that they all accepted. They did, however, have a translation of the N.T. by Sokolowski (Falconius) published in Brest (Lithuania) in 1566 and a revised version of the H.T.'s of Budny and Czechowicz published in Racow in 1606-20.

Anti-trinitarian doctrine and theology in Poland has three phases according to my extent division. It must be understood that these divisions are to a certain/arbitrary inasmuch as the specific ideas expressed by one group are found in other groups and certain individuals extended their influence thru' two if not three groups. First, 1540-65 the individual expression of anti-trinitarian ideas by prominent individuals, Italians or of Italian descent, second, 1565-1580, the views of the organized Pinzovians, (pre-Socinian anti-trinitarians) and finally, 1580-1660 the views of Socinus and the Socinians. One of the very first to announce his anti-trinitarian views publicly was Gonesius (Goniondzki; Goniadski-Conyza) in 1556 who declared his belief in Three Gods, each of varying rank and in homobaptism. (These two ideas characterize practically every early Polish anti-trinitarian.) He was a sort of an Arian; did not believe in the pre-existence of Jesus and was of the opinion that a Christian should neither bear arms nor accept a civil office. (Wallace; 11; p.171ff; Krasinski, 1; pp.347-8) Like some of the Moravian brethren he wore a wooden sword to indicate his opposition to war and declared his belief in the Scriptures alone as the certain rule of faith. Pastoris the Dutch Anabaptist who helped introduce Anti-trinitarianism into Poland denied the co<sup>e</sup>ernity and consubstantiality of



Jesus with God and declared that the Holy Spirit had no personality and was but the power and the energy of God. (Wallace, 11; p.163ff.) Alciati the physician and soldier held a humanitarian conception of Jesus and was accordingly bitterly hated and derided by his co-opponents whom he shocked by the statement that he believed that the Mahometan's idea of God was more reasonable.

Gentilis the Italian martyr of Bern, who strongly influenced Polish thought declared the Trinity a human invention unknown to Catholic creeds and opposed to evangelical truth; the Father is the One God of the scriptures; the Son is not of himself, but of the Father three external spirits each a separate God, (a sort of Tritheism) each distinct in order, degree and essential properties. (Wallace, 11; p.103ff.) Gregorius Pauli of Brzeziny, a Pole of Italian extraction condemned paedobaptism; the pre-existence of Jesus; rejected the Nicaen creed and the first five General councils; advocated community of goods; advised against the acceptance of civil offices by Christians or the bearing of arms and expected the speedy arrival of the Millennium which would be preceded by the conversion of the Jews and Mahometans. (Krasinski, 11; p.362;1;pp.357-8. Wallace 11; 180ff) George Schomann the Silesian immigrant ~~from Poland~~ declared that the doctrine of the perfect coequality in the three persons of the Godhead is not taught in the N.T. which teaches there is One God; One Son of God and One Holy Spirit. (Wallace, 11; p.196ff) Niemojewski the Pole declared the current views of the person of Jesus are not scriptural but borrowed from the Church Fathers. The only Father is the God of the Old Testament, Christ is man and not God and he even doubts ascription of honor to Jesus. He did not believe in the Holy Ghost. (Wallace 11, p.215ff) Blandatras saw in Christ a man chosen by God and exalted to God. (Harnack, VII; p.135)

Martin Czechowicz (Czechowicius) a Pole or Lithuanian was born in 1530. At first as a Catholic priest he was drawn towards the Hussites; then to Luther, then to Calvin and finally became an Anti-trinitarian. He was a preacher in Vilna, Kujavia and Lublin where he died after the sixteenth century. In 1561 he was Chaplain to Prince Radziwill in Vilna and that same year Czechowicz laid a letter before a Synod warning against the heretic Blandatras. In 1565 he became an Anti-trinitarian. Two years later he developed



and maintained his doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus and continued to maintain it in spite of much opposition. He was attacked as a "Jew" and as a "Denier of God" for his views and finally in 1570 he gave up the obnoxious idea of the pre-existence of Jesus.

In 1575 he wrote his Christian Conversations, Dialogues, a sort of Catechism and written partly as a result of disputations he had with Jews in Lublin and other cities. He wrote in 1565: "A Conference of Three Days on certain articles of Faith, but especially on Infant Baptism," Nieswiez. This, however, was not published until 1578. In 1581 Jacob (Nahman) of Belzyce court physician to Sig. III (1587-1632) refuted the Dialogues of Czechowitz in an "Answer of Jacob the Jew of Belzyce to the Dialogues of Czechowitz." That same year Czechowitz answered Jacob in "A Vindication of his Dialogues against James, the Jew of Belzyce". Jacob of Belzyce defends the simple dogmas of Judaism and accuses his antagonist of desiring to arouse hostility to the Jewish people. Czechowitz in his polemics against the Jews criticized the errors in the Talmud; made sport of the phylacteries, the mezuzah and the tzitzit. He attempted to refute the view that the Jews maintained against the Messianism of Jesus and fought against the Jewish idea ~~of the Messiah~~ that Judaism is still obligatory on the Jews. Isaac ben Abraham, the author of *Hizuk Emunah* knew of the "Dialogues" (1575) and the "Three Days" (1578).

Czechowitz declared that God was not made man but man (Jesus) was made God. "It was not God who was made man, but that man was made God, and that Jesus Christ did not exist before he was born of the Virgin; that he was man similar to the rest of mankind, except that he was without sin; that he was conceived like other men, but was called the 'Son of God' because he was prepared by God in the womb of his mother; and that he was made Lord of all things, that he might save and give eternal life to such as pleased." He admitted miracles and the evidence of the prophets who predicted the advent of the Savior. He believed in Justification by Faith alone. Works had only a subordinate merit. He believed in adult baptism and in the Lord's Supper. He maintained that a Christian should not take office or bear arms. Those who refused to adore Christ he designated as "Semi-Judaizantes", a term that he probably originated. He did not believe in original



(Wallace, 11; p.220ff; Krasinski, 11; p.361ff; Graetz, IX-Ger.p.469, Note 3; Spinner p.35; Dubnow, 1; p.136-7)

Isaac ben Abraham quotes Czechowitz quite frequently and with evident respect. Isaac probably respected Czechowitz because of his liberal views on the Trinitarian idea, "And likewise the sage Martin Czechowitz in his work "Dialog<sup>s</sup>" which he wrote in Polish in Chapter Two, confutes the believers of the Trinity with powerful proofs from Scriptures and reason and likewise in his work which he named "Three Days" from page twenty-eight to page sixty-nine, confutes all the proofs of the believers in the Trinity which they bring from the Gospels and similarly many of the sages of these sects,--each one in his work has refuted all the proofs of the Trinitarians from their very bases. (H.E.1-10) Original sin as Isaac explains it is also supported by Czechowitz in "Three Days" p. 3 (H.E. 1-11). Czechowitz is in agreement with Isaac in his interpretation of "Clom" as a definite, limited time, and that "Torah" in Proverbs refers to "teachings" not to a new covenant. (H.E.1-26) In dating the destruction of Damascus, predicted in Is.VII -8, Czechowitz in his "Dialog<sup>s</sup>" p.141, is in agreement with Isaac. (H.E.1-21) The frequent injunctions and attacks that Isaac makes on the Christians for eating blood does not apply to Martin Czechowitz who very strongly opposed this violation of the Noachian precept. (H.E. 1-49-50;11-100; Rees, p.219. Note.) In answer to the Christian statement that the famous weeks of years passage in Daniel refers to the death of Jesus Isaac answers that all Christians have different methods of beginning and ending this period and he states that Martin Czechowitz agrees with him in this contention in his Dialog<sup>s</sup> p.170. (H.E. 1-42) Very interesting is Isaac ben Abraham's comment on John X-30: "I and the Father are One".,Isaac quotes Czechowitz who says in his "Three Days" p.60, that when Jesus said this he did not mean that he and the Father were one no more than it would follow that Paul and Appolos were one because of the statement "he that planteth and he that watereth are one." (1 Cor.111-8).

It will be noticed that this first group of thinkers are characterized by their attacks on the accepted conception of the Trinity, their dislike of paedobaptism; their

sympathy with the primitive church attitude of aversion to the bearing of arms and the assumption of civil office. Among these early leaders were thinkers of pronounced "Judaistic" tendencies whose work I have reserved for a later discussion.

With the definite organization of the Anti-trinitarians (the Pinzowians) we have an attempt at doctrinal unity of all the different anti-trinitarians in Poland. But they disagreed on all points except one and here only was there unity. They were all agreed that the Father is superior to the Son. It was only in 1598 when the influence of Socinus became predominant that unity was secured. The following outline will very briefly but comprehensively give the theological view point of the organized Pinzovians.

God the Father

I. All agreed as to the Supremacy of the Father.

II. Jesus Christ the Son:-Three views.

(a) One party declared he was a God of an inferior nature.

(b) A second party declared that he was the first created spirit, who became incarnate with a view of effecting the Salvation of mankind. (Arians. Earnovians.)

(c) A third party declared he was a human being:-two views.

(1) One party believed in the miraculous conception of Jesus.

(2) Another party that he was only a Son of Joseph and Mary.  
(Budneans.)

III. Worship of Jesus Christ:-two views.

(a) Some believers of the simple humanity of Jesus believed that he like God, should be worshipped because he was King and Lord of the Church after the Resurrection. (Adorantes)

(b) The Radicals declared that divine worship was for God only.  
(Non-Adorantes.)

IV. Holy Spirit.

All agreed that it was not a divine person.

V. Baptism.

All agreed it had no real sanctity. (Rees; p.111ff; Krasinski, 1;p.349-50)

The "right" of these Pinzowians (later called Racovians from their new center Racow) were called Earnovians inasmuch as like the Arians they believed in the <sup>non-</sup>pre-existence of Jesus, the "left" were the Budneans who maintained the simple humanity of Jesus and refused to adore him. The "center" embraced the great mass of the Pinzowians who were less



conservative than the following of Farnovius, but looked with horror upon the radicalism of Budny. The "center" was whipped into shape and the right amalgamated and the left crushed, by Socinus who is triumphantly chief in 1588. I have reserved a more detailed exposition of the views of Budny and Socinus for a later chapter.

This Pinzowian School of 1565-1588 produced a catechism in 1574. In which it is developed that "God made the Christ,--most perfect prophet, most sacred priest, invincible King." The new world is the new birth which Christ has preached. Christ granted to his elected eternal life that they might after God the most high believe in Him. This "Confession" forbade oaths before tribunals and forbade its followers to sue before tribunals. Sinners were to be admonished only. Baptism which was accorded to adults only changed the Old Adam into a heavenly one. The Eucharist was only symbolical. (Krasinski, 1;pp.362-3.)

It should be born in mind that with the exception of Budny there is no Unitarian conception of God among the Pinzowian anti-trinitarians. They are still Anti-trinitarians. The liberals were still far from the late Biblical and contemporaneous Jewish conception of monotheism.

## HEBRAIC AND JEWISH INFLUENCE ON POLISH ANTI-TRINITARIANISM.

Poland in the sixteenth century was the most tolerant country in Europe. The people were characterized by a fervent spirit of liberty that at times degenerated almost into political anarchy. The nobles were all jealous of their privileges and the constant trend in the land was away from centralized, concentrated authority toward decentralized, individual liberty. The two Sigismunds who ruled for the better part of the sixteenth century from 1506 to 1572 were quite sympathetic toward liberalism and evidenced this spirit of liberalism or at least of indifference thru' their periods of rule.

The great spread of Humanism found a warm reception in Poland, a land that had sent many of its most prominent sons to the schools and universities of Italy and Germany. The specific culture that had found a second home in Poland was that of the Italian and the many Italian religious reformers who found the land of their nativity inhospitable to their liberal and radical views; fled to Switzerland and from Switzerland to Poland where, for the most part, they were allowed to live in peace and to develop their individual views.

The great leaders of radical thought all thru' Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century were practically all Hebraists; men who drank at the fountain of Hebraic culture as exemplified in the Biblical and later Jewish literature. (Anti-trinitarianism in Europe) The radical theological spirit that spread all over Europe in the sixteenth century in the wake of Humanism and the Protestant revolution was marked by a distinct Hebraistic trend evidencing itself in a thoro study of the Old Testament and a revaluation in appreciation of the Hebraic rites, customs and morals. (Converts and Conversion) The Anti-trinitarian movement in Italy numbered among its numerous inspirations the rabbis and Jewish teachers who taught the Humanists the Hebraic literature where they were able to grasp the monotheistic idea of the Jew in its undefiled purity. When in the second

(The bracketed notes all refer to Appendices which develop in detail the statements made in this chapter.)



quarter of the sixteenth century these Anti-trinitarians fled for refuge, for freedom of thought and worship to Poland, they brought with them a Hebraic sympathy acquired through their instructors. (Anti-trinitarianism in Europe)

The great influence that these Anti-trinitarian Italians with their strong Hebraic sympathies exerted on Polish Anti-trinitarianism through their works and more especially through their Hebrew teaching in the universities and through their personal contact can not be underestimated. The movement of "back to the classics" was prevalent among the cultured classes all through Poland and Lithuania and this movement included a study if not a respect for the Hebrew classics. But there was a more direct influence on the Polish people and the Polish liberals and this was the direct influence of the Jews in their association with the non-Jews.

A very large part of the trade of Poland was in the hands of the Jews who were thus brought daily into contact with the Polish people of social status and of all ranks, from the peasant in his hovel to the great magnates in their castles. (Polish Life) The economic relation to the Christian was especially keen and close in the first half of the sixteenth century before the anti-Jewish reaction had set in occasioned by the rise of Polish liberalism and the Jesuit counter reformation. (Ibid.) At the fairs; in the trades; the arts; manufacturing, petty vending, the Jew was daily in touch with the non-Jew; through all parts of the land. The Jew was an absolutely necessary economic factor in the land and because the authorities; the kings and the nobles realized this they displayed to them a spirit of tolerance which is reflected in a similar spirit on the part of the greater mass of the people before a later anti-Jewish reaction had set in. Cultured Sefardim from the Balkans came north and were in constant touch with the Poles in Red Russia; Polish Jews of intelligence if not culture acquired great wealth and were in constant touch with the Polish thinking classes at a time when a whole nation was keenly interested in theological problems of great import. (Ibid.) The great mass of the Jewish people in the land at this time were the descendants of Jews who had been in the country for decades if not centuries; people who understood and were understood by the Poles. The great influx of



foreign Jews who came in the second and third quarters of the century and later had not yet taken place; and had not yet entered into commercial rivalry not only with their fellow Jews, but also their Christian competitors. The publication of the Latin pro-Jewish work: "Ad quærelam" evidences the intimate relation the Jew bore to the non-Jew in the economic life of the country; thus giving him an opportunity to come into close and intimate touch with the people at a time that they were susceptible to new religious influences. (Ibid.)

The relation of the Jew to the Non-Jew was not only economic, but also social. It is true that in the cities the Jew lived for the most part in quarters of his own in a particular part of the city, but even so,--in the first half of the century under consideration,--the spirit of tolerance if not good will that characterized much of the relation between the two groups permitted the Jew and the Gentile to associate quite intimately; to an extent that was altogether unknown in the following century. In Lithuania especially where the people were not fully Christianized; where there were many other subject nationalities; different races; different religions and creeds, there was a strong spirit of tolerance and indifference that permitted of loose association of all the groups in the land. (Ibid.) The great mass of the Jews in the country knew and spoke the vernacular; a knowledge of which was absolutely necessary in their commercial enterprise. (Ibid.) In the villages there was a large degree of intimacy extending even to the lending of garments and ornaments on the part of the Jews to their peasant friends that they might come to the church in gala attire. (Ibid.) At the time that the theological questions became mooted problems the Jews took advantage of the opportunity presented to argue with the Christians on all theological questions of import. (Simon Budny) The extant works of Polish and foreign writers contemporaneous with the Jews of this period evidence very forcibly the cultural aspirations of the Jews; their special relation with the Christians and show forth an intimacy that indicates a strong mutual influence of one culture on the other. (Polish Life) There were many wealthy Jews all thru' the land who were not subject to the ordinary Jewish restrictions and some of these financial leaders entertained Christians in their homes and commanded great respect and influence. (Ibid.) There



was no mass persecution in Poland in the sixteenth century to stimulate conversion and apostasy yet there are considerable evidences of conversion and apostasy explainable for the most part only thru' an understanding of the fact that the relations between the two groups were much closer than the extant rabbinic literature would indicate; a literature that had no interest in Christian and Jewish relations and frowned upon any intimacy between the two groups. (Converts and Conversion.)

Jews read the works of the Polish Liberals; knew their point of view; studied it and discussed it. Individual Jewish thinkers had a profound respect for some of the Christian writers whose works they quote to substantiate their own ideas. (Simon Budny.) The liberalism of the Jew in his relation to the non-Jew and conversely the intimacy of the non-Jew and the Jew can best be seen and appreciated when explained and compared to the attitude that prevailed in the seventeenth century. The Jews of the early part of the sixteenth century had developed no rabbinic literature; were strongly Jewish in sympathies, but not in learning; were in constant and intimate touch with their neighbors. The Jews of the seventeenth century was a Talmudist; a keen and profound student of Talmudic literature living his own life except where the necessities of making a livelihood required his contact with the non-Jew. (Polish Life.) The Polish clergy expresses no organized animus against the Jew until the rise of the Polish liberalism which frightened the clergy and turned them against the Jews whom they look upon as the source of all this trouble. This feeling on the part of the native Polish clergy is only too fully encouraged toward the end of the century by the advent and machinations of the efficient Jesuit order. (Ibid.)

Thru'out the century the nobles and the kings for the most part favored the Jews. Restrictive laws were of course passed quite often, but they were never fully observed and never fully effective. The constant repetition of some of the statutes proves this. (Ibid.) The petty persecution that did ~~manifest~~ evidence itself was never unbearable. There was no mass persecution in Poland and Lithuania all thru' that century. Not until the second quarter of the seventeenth century were the Jews massacred in large numbers.



(Ibid.) The anti-Jewish legislation that did come into being in Poland was not stressed until the rise of the Protestant movement with which the church believed the Jew to be related if it was only because the two had that much in common that there were at variance with the church. The Jews themselves thru'out the land were well satisfied with the peaceful conditions and life that they experienced in Poland and which they realized was far superior to the intolerance and massacres that characterized other countries. (Ibid.) The relatively peaceful life in Poland made for association with the non-Jews and the impression of Jewish views on non-Jews.

Conversion was not at all uncommon in the early part of the sixteenth century, in Poland. The spirit of tolerance that made for social intercourse may account for these converts. (Converts and conversion.) The sixteenth century was ripe for Jewish converts. There were many who were ruthlessly logical in working out their god-conception and who realized that there could be no-half way station between Catholicism and Judaism. Belief in the One God for them lead directly to Judaism. Later toward the end of the century Socinianism provided a resting place for those who had left the Church and the Protestant confession yet did not wish to go as far as formal Judaism. (Ibid.) The spirit of radicalism that characterized the whole century and the relatively close relation between the non-Jew and the Jew inspired the latter toward active efforts to proselytization. The Jews were perfectly conscious of the great importance of the Protestant Reformation, especially in Germany,--and they were determined to take advantage of the times. (Ibid.) Jews took the opportunity to enter into polemical discussions with the non-Jews and it was to enable the Jews who could not hold their own with the Christian opponents that Isaac ben Abraham wrote his *Hizuk Emunah*. In Lithuania which seems to have been a more fertile soil for Jewish conversionist efforts they seem, judging by Christian accusations, to have made considerable headway. Direct patent efforts of Jews at conversion is seen clearly in Russia toward the end of the fifteenth century where they converted many and gave a strong impetus to a Judaistic sect. (Ibid.)

The Russian Judaizers like the Transylvanian Sabbatarians were influenced by West-



European Humanism; millenarian mysticism, Old Testament rites and by direct Jewish missionizing activity. The Theology of the two groups which owe their origin to practically the same causes are for all practical purposes very closely allied. (Ibid.) The Jew during this century was not content to remain passive and watch developments but in many instances took an active part in trying to take advantage of the spirit of the age which showed a strong trend toward Hebraism.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the Russian Judaizing movement broke out afresh under the spur of the religious liberalism of that time. (Ibid.) There was a palpable relation between Judaizing movements and religious liberalism, expressed most often in an elevation of the Old Testament over the New Testament and a revaluation of Hebrew customs, ceremonies and rites.

That the authorities in the Greek Catholic Church identified or attempted to identify or to damn the Judaizing movement in their land by associating it with Judaism is seen in the action of translating well known Anti-Jewish works of West-European origin and distributing them among the people. (Ibid.) The theology of these Russian Judaizers developed the humanitarian character of Jesus and the supremacy of the Old Testament. To the authorities this spelt Judaism. The accusation against the Judaizers was that they wished to "glorify the Jewish faith and abuse the Greek orthodox religion." (Ibid.)

In Transylvania, on the borders of Poland, a number of people among them the great liberal Francis David, ran the gamut of religions from Catholicism to Lutheranism, to Calvinism, to Unitarianism. The Transylvanian heresy is a direct swing toward Hebraism but not quite perfect. Its God conception is not purely monotheistic. In all probability the leaders of this movement were subjected to Jewish influence. (Francis David) The radicals of Poland and Lithuania were <sup>in</sup> all probability brought into relation with the radicals of Transylvania thru' Blandatza and later Paleologus, the Greek liberal; and there is the possibility that David thru' personal relations with the liberals of Poland and Lithuania introduced their creed into his land. (Ibid.) The religious theology of David and Budny are very closely allied. Jesus is man; and the Mosaic law is supreme. (Ibid.) The conservative anti-trinitarians in Poland bracketed the two heresies to-



gether; both Budny and David; in their attacks on the non-adorantes. (Ibid.) The rise of radicalism in Lithuania was ascribed to David and his "poisonous doctrines." It is of great significance that when the Davidists were subjected to persecution they became out and out Sabbatarians and allied themselves more closely to Judaism and that finally in the course of time they gradually merged into Orthodox Judaism.

The translations of the Old and New Testament by Budny the eminent Polish radical show a strong Jewish influence. The Jews were thoroly cognizant of the work that he did and he commanded their utmost respect. (Simon Budny) In his biblical exegesis he closely follows the best Jewish methods; careful study of the context and due regard to historical antecedents. (Ibid.) Budny was a good Hebraist as evidenced in his translations which were always from the original. In all probability his teachers were Jews. In his attitude toward the Bible he very closely approximates the Jewish point of view. (Ibid.) His Christian contemporaries looked upon him as a confirmed radical and considered his work altogether subversive of revelation. (Ibid.) His theology was the same as that of the rest of the sixteenth century radicals:-the humanitarian character, of Jesus and the supremacy of the Mosaic code. (Ibid.) He was probably an anti-trinitarian for many years but did not publicly evidence his leanings until 1572 with the publication of his famous Biblical translation. (Ibid.) Budny and his group which was quite extensive all thru' Poland and Lithuania were bitterly attacked as Judaizers. (Ibid.)

The observance of the Mosaic law and the development of anti-trinitarian ideas brot down the accusation of Judaization. (Francis David) The rise of this term and its constant application all thru' the century is very significant in that it implies a denial of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity and a partiality toward the Hebrew religion and customs. (Judaizers) The very existence of the Jews who were ipso facto monotheists was an aid to the radicals in their development of their characteristic doctrines. In the minds of all non-Jews and possibly ~~and~~ in the minds of the Jew themselves, monotheism and Judaism were inseparable ideas. (Ibid.) The swing toward Hebraism in Poland at this time is evidenced in the number of Old Testament translations and the strong tendency to-



ward its study. (Ibid.) All of this in the mind of the church was Judaization, a crime that they made punishable by death, wherever the opportunity offered itself. (Ibid.) That the Jews were somewhat responsible for the anti-Catholic movement or that they were somewhat identified with it is evidenced by the very term Judaizers applied to liberals and by virtue of the fact that with the growth of liberalism comes a recrudescence of attacks on Jews who were supposed to have encouraged the movement. (Polish Life) Altho the Church did not hesitate to decry as Judaization anything that displeased it, the fact remains that they did believe that they saw Jewish propaganda in the anti-trinitarian liberalism. (Judaizers.) Even the liberals were a little afraid of the inextinguishable leaven of Hebraic ideas and they attempted to head off their own radicals by attacking them as Judaizers. (Ibid.) In the minds of the people the humanitarian conception of Jesus was inseparably bound up with Judaism as they understood it. (Ibid.) The proof of Hebraic influence in Polish life is seen in the very opposition that Judaism invokes. This is seen in the virulent anti-Jewish literature of Poland that is synchronous with the rise of Polish liberalism. (Polish Life) The semi-Judaizers were an important element among the Polish liberals and altho they were practically crushed by the Socinian organization they were of sufficient strength even in later years to warrant the appearance of the essay by Socinus on the "semi-Judaizers." (Simon Budny) Anti-trinitarian liberalism of the Budny school was for all practical purposes crushed by the rise of power of Socinus between 1584-8). (Ibid.)

Until the time of Solomon Luria the Polish rabbinical leader there was not one Hebrew author in Poland. (Polish Life.) The whole period from 1500 to 1550 was relatively inactive from a rabbinic point of view. Not until the time of Luria and Isserles do we have a strong active rabbinic movement in Poland when rabbinism was spurred on by the emigrants from the Teutonic countries. (Ibid.) The rabbinic activities of the latter half of the sixteenth century drowned the cultural attempts of the Jews of the first half of the century. (Ibid.) Hebrew printing in Poland did not come until late. Not until the outburst of Hebrew and Talmudic studies in the latter half of the century was there an increased activity in printing. Only nineteen books were published in Poland and



Lithuania between the years 1530 and 1569. (Ibid.) In the period that characterized the first half of the century Jewish children even attended the same secular schools with the non-Jewish children. (Ibid.) Poland boasted of many prominent educated Jewish physicians in this century many of whom had studied at the university of Padua. (Ibid.) There were some Jews who were Latinists and this of course gave them the opportunity if they were so inclined to keep in touch with the best literature of the humanistic movement. (Ibid.) There was in Poland during the first half of the sixteenth century a type of Jew who was intensely Jewish in his sympathies yet a person who could and did associate with non-Jews; speaking their tongue; knowing their literature and history, associating with and being received by them as an intellectual equal. Such a man I term a "Secularist", and it is largely due to the activity of this type of man that the Hebraic and Jewish influences directly applied themselves to the Polish liberals with whom they came in personal contact. (Ibid.) A fine type of a "Secularist" is Isaac ben Abraham a rabbinite Jew of Poland whose activity extended from the period of 1536 to 1578. (Isaac ben Abraham) Isaac associated with prelates of the church, great nobles and laymen of all the conservative and radical creeds with whom he discussed mooted questions of theology. He knew the theological principles and dogmas of the church; was a fine Polish student; knew the Polish translations of the Old and New Testament and quotes from a Polish Historical Chronicle. He had a knowledge of general philosophy; knew the classics albeit second hand and may have had some knowledge of Latin. As a polemist his work shows the keen, incisive spirit of cold reason that apparently evidences a man of humanistic training and if he did not possess the academic training he certainly evidences the spirit of that age. He wrote his book; *Hizuk Emunah*,<sup>†</sup> a time when Polish was understood and read by many. The statement of Commendoni and other Polish contemporary writers evidences the high cultural activity, of the Jews until practically the close of the sixteenth century. (Polish Life) Dubnow the Jewish historian is strongly of the opinion that the sixteenth century was one of peace, making for culture, progress and intimate association. (Ibid.)



## SOCINIANISM.

Faustus Socinus, a nephew of Laelius Socinus an Italian anti-trinitarian was born in Sienna, Italy, December 5th, 1539, of a patrician family. From 1557-1562 he lived at Lyons. During this period he studied the works of Ochimus the anti-trinitarian. He visited his Uncle Laelius at Zurich whose property and manuscripts he ultimately inherited altho' in all probability Faustus was already a Socinian before he secured the manuscripts of his cautious uncle. He returned to Italy in 1562 and settled in Florence, where he was employed at the court of Francesco Medici, a personal friend. He spent twelve years at Court without specially interesting himself in theology. He finally left court and spent the years from 1574 to 1577 at Basle where he continued his theological studies. About the year 1578 he was called to Transylvania by Blandatra to assist him in demonstrating to the recalcitrant Francis David that Jesus is worthy of adoration. He was of course unsuccessful and in 1579 he went to Poland. He was accused by some people of assisting Blandatra in his persecution of David. He spent the next four years in Cracow in theological study and argument and in 1583 he moved to a town near Cracow where he lived with a prominent Polish noble whose daughter he married. This marriage into the nobility gave him prestige with the higher classes and a certain amount of influence among the anti-trinitarians leaders. He became a factor in the anti-trinitarian church synods and was especially prominent at the Synod of Wierow and Chmielnik, where he successfully maintained the doctrine that Jesus Christ was worthy of adoration, and where he attacked the millenarian ideas of many of the anti-trinitarians. In 1588 at the synod of Brest (Lith) his influence was pre-dominant and he welded the anti-trinitarians of Poland into a religious system. At this synod they took up the important questions of the Death and the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ; justification; corruption of human nature; and strong opposition was developed against the adherents of David and Budnaeus on the subject of the invocation of Jesus. In 1598 he was assaulted in Cracow by a mob of students who destroyed his library. He then moved to a town near Cracow where he lived with Abraham Blonski until his death,



March 3rd, 1604. (Krasinski, 11;p.364ff.)(Wallace, 11;p.306) Socinus was able thru' his ability and personality to unite all the Pinzowians, Farnovians, Racovians, Budnaeans and unaffiliated liberals into one harmonious system. Socinus developed his own views chiefly in works addressed to the Protestant churches of Poland inviting them to join his own. He himself never composed a catechism. He began on the Racovian catechism but it was finished by Smalcus and Moscorovius. (Ibid. p.270) Socinus was an Italian, steeped in Italian culture and naturally drew all his teachings from Western Europe as did many of the Polish Leaders. Anti-trinitarianism in Poland was not an indigenous product. The Polish nobility thru' their cultural relations to Humanism and especially to the Italian Humanists were amenable to anti-trinitarianism as presented by an Italian of ability and personality. The great mass of recruits among the Socinians were recruited from the Shlakhta, the cultured class in Poland. It was not a movement of the masses. Attempts were made in the years 1598 to 1613 to unite with the Reformed Church and the Mennonites in view of the solid front that the Catholic church was presenting to all heretics but the attempt toward unity was a failure. The Protestants would have nothing to do with heretical Socinians. (Krasinski, 11;p.379-80). In all probabilities the constant attacks to which the Socinians were subjected because of the liberalism of their dogma and creed tended to make their public expression of opinion far more conservative than it really was. Occasional slips now and then evidence that the leaders and many of the followers were far more liberal than literary productions would indicate. The golden period of Socinianism extends from 1585 to 1638 and was to a large extent due to the school at Racow near Sandomir. An anti-trinitarian church was established there in 1600 and it soon became the chief seat of European Socinianism the "Sammatian Athens". In 1602 a fine school, was established with a scholarly faculty and at one time it had a thousand pupils which included not only Socinians, but also Roman-Catholics and Protestants. Churches and schools were established in different cities in Poland, Volynia and Lithuania. (Ibid. 11;pp.384-5) Printing presses were set up at Racow and Zaslav. The Zaslav press was later transferred to Losk, then to Vilna and finally to Lubeck. (Wallace, 1;347-8)



The Socinians never had a translation of the Old Testament acknowledged by all but they did have a New Testament remade from a version of Budny and Czechowitz which was published in Racow in 1606. The Socinians were great missionaries and they sent men abroad, liberally supplied with funds, for propaganda purposes. Mosheim says that the Socinians tried unsuccessfully to introduce their doctrines ~~unsuccessfully~~ into Hungary and Austria. (Mosheim, pp.447-8) But with the rise of the Jesuits to power the Socinian movement began to retrograde. In the first place the Jesuits won many weak souls back from the heretical creeds by pointing out the consequence of liberalism as evidenced in the Socinians who denied the Trinity (Schiemann, X, pt.2; p.334) Then during the reign of the Jesuit inclined Sig. III (1587-1632) a reaction set in that evidenced itself in frequent inspired outbreaks of the mob. (Dubnow, I; p.91) In 1638 after a couple of school children had stoned a wooden cross the School at Racow was closed. In this matter the Protestants sided with the Roman Church. Six years later the schools and churches in Volynia were closed and abolished; in 1656 there was a program against the Socinians in Sandecz and finally in 1658 all Socinians were expelled. There is an interesting statement to the effect that John Casimir the King of Poland at that time had taken a vow to reduce the enemies of the church and at the Diet in 1658 there was for a time a doubt in his mind whether the vow should be fulfilled by the expulsion of the Jews or the Socinians. He finally decided on the Socinians. The story is most probably an outgrowth of a bitter sentiment among the conservatives that the Socinians were less worthy of tolerance even than the Jews. Przypkowski, the biographer of Socinus declares that vow related only to the Socinians. (Krasinski, II; p.387)

#### THE SOCINIAN THEOLOGY.

In Italy, the source of Polish Anti-trinitarianism, the union of the humanistic motif with the Nominalistic-Pelagian tradition in theology, gives a place to anti-trinitarianism as an actual factor in the historic movement. (C.E.XIV; p.113b; Harnack, VII; p.132). Socinian anti-trinitarianism, when viewed from the point of view of Church history



and history of dogma is directly related to the ancient and mediaeval anti-ecclesiastical schools. Out of these movements it developed itself; it clarified these movements and combined them into <sup>an</sup> acceptable whole. (Ibid. p.120) The influence of Humanism in Socinianism is predominant. Socinus the leader had no sympathy at all with the prevailing spirit of the Anabaptists. (McGiffert, p.108) The doctrines were originally developed for the most part by Italian thinkers who directly influenced the upper classes who had acquired or inherited the Italian culture. The Socinian leaders were fine students and clear thinkers. Men who approached their faith calmly and argued without scurrility or resort to abuse, a rather unusual attitude in an age when abuse often went for argument. The Socinians leaders as a whole were men of high moral character and living. (Krasinski 11;p.404ff.) The most characteristic element in Socinianism lies in the direct attempt that it made as a Protestant faith to justify itself, "before the Humanistic Erasmic, historico-critical, formal and moral reason for the great century eager for progress." (Dilthey, Archiv.f.Gesch.d.Philos.,Vol.VI.,p.88ff., in Harnack, VII;p.166.)

The Political doctrines of Socinus required passive obedience and unconditional surrender to the authorities. Socinians were allowed to bear arms in self-defense altho' there was a pacificistic group among the Socinians that declared (1605) that Poles should not even take up arms in self-defense against the Tartars. (Krasinski,11;p.376) Budny and Paleologus the radicals were in consonance with Socinus in the belief that Christians should serve in the magistracy and might bear arms. (Rees, p.179)

They rejected divine predestination, unconditional election, the traditional doctrine of original sin. They asserted man's freedom in the strongest terms. They were strong believers in what they called original justice. (McGiffert,pp.109-118; C.E.XIV p.113b; Allen, p.71)

Among the Sacraments they retained only baptism and the Lord's Supper, evidently because these rites were supposed to be found in the New Testament altho they felt that these ceremonies were of minor importance and had no intrinsic efficacy. (Krasinski,11;p.372.;McGiffert;Allen;C.E.v.supra)



The conception of redemption and justification is intimately bound up with the Socinian Christological theory. Inasmuch as they believed Christ to be man, his death could not "satisfy" for sins and the lack of divinity on his part made the sacraments unnecessary and inapplicable. Christ's death was not an atonement for the sins of mankind. Christ thru' his death only showed the manner in which divine mercy was to be obtained and he set an example which man thru' Jesus' help should imitate, in order to be saved. Christ's death served as a "moral influence". The Socinians had no belief in Hell. The unfaithful do not suffer the torments of a hell in the hereafter, they simply disappear, are annihilated, and "so perish everlastingly". (C.E.XIV;p.113b; Moore,11;pp.341-2; Allen,p.71; Krasinski,11;p.372.)

There was nothing especially "mystical" or "religious" in a spiritual sense about official Socinianism. The leaven of skeptical Italian Humanism was always evident.

Its "doctrines of faith" means nothing else than the dogmatism of sound human understanding. They had no idea of Christianity that would make it a religion of faith of dependance on Jesus the Lord of all; of mystical, spiritual revelation to the Son of God. (Harnack,VII;p.127;165;167)

The Christology of the Socinians involves some apparent contradictions but these can be understood when it is remembered that they were a critical-humanistic school which was compelled to adapt its theories to the language of a people that still hankered after the orthodox views of the Catholic church.

God is simple and of one personality. Many persons in the godhead would destroy the simplicity of God. For this reason there can be no Trinity. No divine person could be united to a human person since there is no unity possible between two individuals. The Socinians it must be remembered did not become Arians, Tritheists or Unitarians. Christ is the word, but had not pre-existence nor did <sup>he</sup> assist in the creation of the world. Created in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost, altho it is stated at places that the Holy Ghost had no personality. There were also Socinians who stated that he was born of Mary thru' Joseph. At all events he was born a perfect man, with a complete Human



Nature. Before his public ministry he ascended to Heaven where he was instructed to teach a new rule of life and to confirm it with his death. Those who follow him shall inherit eternal life with God; ~~a messenger of God witnessed to by reports of ancient his-~~ ~~tory~~, others shall be destroyed. He is the founder of a new religion; a reformer who redeemed mankind and gave them a new birth and in this sense he is the creator of a new world. Jesus' true humanity and genuine moral development gave his life a real ethical value for all his followers. He is God's interpreter and appointed mediator. He is not God, but a deified man and therefore is to be worshipped and adored. His death and passion were not undergone to bring about redemption. After the resurrection he was exalted to the right hand of God, with whom naturally he is not consubstantial and he became the King and the Priest, and the Judge of all man insisted that divine worship be paid to him. Altho' the Socinians denied the personality of the Holy Spirit they were wont to speak of the strength and the inspiration for virtuous living which the spirit imparts to Christian believers. (McGiffert, pp.111-17; C.E.XIV;p.115-114; Allen, p.71; Krasinski,11;p.372; Mosheim, p.452; Harnack,VII;p.147.)

There are two fundamental elements in Socinianism that are not always complementary. Tho' not definitely formulated as an article of faith in practice reason was accepted as the highest tribunal of human appeal. (Allen, p.54) The Old Testament and the New Testament were to be translated as to agree with the dictates of reason. On the other hand the statement was again and again reiterated that the Bible was the revealed word of God.

"And as for myself, you may assure yourself, I have no greater care than not to deviate either to the right hand or the left, from the way which the sacred books prescribe to us because I well remember, that nothing must be added to, or taken from the word of God and his precepts." (Socini Opera 1;p.432b ff.)

Yet they believed that the Bible should be subjected to the criticism of the intellect. (Allen, p.59) This would necessarily at times involve an inconsistency when the humanistic temperament came in conflict with the absolute belief in the authority of the Bible. (McGiffert, p.117) Their respect for the Biblical works and their rejection of a large part of the patristic development because of its unbiblical character, tended to enhance



the credit of the scriptures. (Ibid. p.118) Like all the liberals brought to life by the Protestant Revolution the Socinians also fell in line, officially at least, in taking their stand firmly on the ground of scriptures. (Harnack, VII;p.129) Revelation, which is necessary for salvation, is contained in the Scriptures alone, especially the New Testament. The Socinians had far greater respect for the New Testament than for the Old Testament possibly because of the nomistic character of the Old Testament. (McGiffert p.115; Harnack, VII;p.140) The rationalism of the Socinians did not interfere with their recognition of the authority of the Scriptures, but it did affect their interpretation of them. The attributes of God were demonstrable thru' reason:-unity;eternity;justice. Private judgment is the basis of all doctrine which however must be consistent with revealed doctrine as evidenced in the Bible. (C.E. XIV;p.114) Socinianism was essentially an intellectual movement and never really had the sympathy of the masses who much preferred to believe than to reason. (Lindsay, p.474) The principle of Socinianism of judging revelation by the test of human reason was never carried to its logical conclusion because of the accepted view that revelation was naturally authoritative for all times but this principle of making reason supreme was taken up by later West Europeans and reached its highest expression in the period of the French enlightenment. (Krasinski,11;p.368) A saving Socinian doctrine, that almost seems to be tacked on, is that human reason is not quite sufficient to guide man in the way of salvation and that every one must be enlightened from above if he is not to perish eternally. (McGiffert, p.113.)

The Socinians following in the footsteps of their great Leader Socinus were always moderate and restrained in their arguments. The following extract of a letter of Socinus to John Niemojevius, March 26th, 1587, well indicates the character of the man and his school in argumentation:

"the questions, chiefly connected with religious truth may be proposed and examined with calmness and love; not for the sake of condemning any particular doctrine, as has been preposterously done in the Church hitherto, but for the sake of discovering the truth and of retaining it when found. Norebe so much shocked, I pray you, when you hear anything affirmed contrary to your opinion and that of the majority



before it is first understood, and the force of the reasons and proofs duly weighed; especially as you have already learnt by experience; that you have at first started back with horror from those ~~oppositions~~<sup>emphatic</sup> oppositions, which you afterwards cordially embraced." (Socini Opera, I; p. 402a; Wallace, II; pp. 215-6)

But Socinus and his followers never pushed their rationalism to its utmost consequences. At least not formally and publicly. They did attack the principle of the Trinity, but the rationalism that shattered the Trinity was never fully applied to all the other doctrines of Christianity and the Trinitarian Christology was practically preserved by a retention of the known ~~theology~~<sup>semi</sup> theology of the Catholic church. The sincerity of the published Socinian theology has been impugned by a number of careful historians. It is significant that the papal condemnation that appeared from 1555 to 1603 condemning anti-trinitarian and Socinian views assert that they did not believe that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit; that he was begotten by Joseph; that the Blessed Virgin, was not the Mother of God and that she did not retain her virginity. (C.E. XIV; p. 115) It is very probably that this more radical view more accurately typified the great mass of skeptically inclined Socinians rather than the ambiguous Christology of the Racovian catechism. Mosheim declares that the real view of the Socinians was that human reason was supreme even above scripture. All doctrines were to be subjected primarily to reason and the individual man is the ultimate authority in dogma. (Mosheim, pp. 450-1) An unscrupulous but keen contemporary philologist characterizes the Socinians as "hypocritae docti". Altho' this is rather a severe indictment it <sup>is</sup> very probable that they did express a theology that was far more conservative than their actual beliefs. Their high exegetical skill was certainly not in consonance with their belief in the absolute character of Scriptural authority. Harnack is very strongly of the belief that the "illuminist" element was far more strongly developed among them than their public writings would indicate. (Harnack, VII; p. 152, Note 1.)



Socinianism was above all a criticism and an attempted reconstruction of doctrines. (Lindsay, p.474). It threw off the burden of the past; simplified the Christian religion thru' reason; reduced the system of dogma to fragments and restored to the individual the right to examine in the controversy about the Christian religion, the classic records and himself. It relaxed the close relationship between religion and world knowledge, which had been characteristic of the old church and had been sanctioned by dogma and it sought to substitute ethics for metaphysics as a foil for religion. It helped prepare the way for understanding that religion must produce a series of well defined dogmas which are evident and understandable thru' their clearness. It made a beginning in delivering the Bible from the ban of dogma and began the development of a sound historical exegesis. (Harnack, VII;p.166)



## SOCINIANISM IN ITS RELATION TO

### JUDAISM.

Socinus after his arrival in Poland was determined to organize a Polish liberal church of an anti-trinitarian character, tho' not necessarily of a Unitarian nature. To accomplish this it was first of all necessary to either drive out of the organization or to crush the radicals who were bringing down an accusation of shameless heresy on the heads of the anti-trinitarians. This radical school was represented by Budny who was practically a complete Unitarian in his God conception. Socinus felt that those people who refused to adore Christ would also naturally reject the belief in the supreme power of Jesus and for that reason he felt that they were not worthy of being called Christians. (Toulmin, p.467.) For the same reason Socinus, from the very first had bitterly attacked David in Transylvania. Socinus is said to have accused David and his followers of the "calumny" of "falling into Judaism and having discarded Christ to introduce Moses into the Church and insinuated other things concerning him (David) of this kind." (Toulmin, pp.86-7) Socinus really felt "that this opinion, Jesus Christ, being thus made little account of, would lead men to Moses and Judaism". (Socini opera, 11; pp.710-12) (Toulmin, pp.87-8) Socinus was rigidly opposed to anything that savored of Judaism; he had no sympathy at all with that faith any more than any other conservative Italian of the sixteenth century. Jesus Christ meant everything to him and was the center of his theological system despite the fact that his humanistic training had compelled him to assert that Jesus was not consubstantial with God. Socinus realized if the anti-trinitarian movement in Poland were to be identified with Judaism thru' its monotheistic and outspoken anti-trinitarian character then the movement was doomed. For this reason, under his leadership, the non-consubstantiality of Jesus tho' believed by all Socinians was not overemphasized in writings and was carefully swathed in christological <sup>terminology</sup> ~~terminology~~ that tended to baffle orthodox Christians and to satisfy scrupulous Socinians. Socinus made every effort to cut the connection with Anabaptism that evidenced itself in a desire to return to the primitive church and a higher valuation of the O.T. He was successful in this to a large extent and then he



turned his attention toward the problem of unifying all the anti-trinitarians by overcoming the Arians (Farnovians) and the Non-Adorantes (the Budneans). (Moeller, p.454.) In the synod of Wengrow he successfully maintained the doctrine that Jesus must be worshipped and he showed how the rejection of Jesus worship would lead to Judaism and even to Atheism. (Krasinski, 11;p.366.) He and his followers could see no possibility of any stopping place between Unitarianism and Judaism for Judaism was primarily associated in their minds with monotheism and the O.T., and the Unitarians were always inclined to grant more respect and validity to the O.T. than to the N.T. for the O.T. seemed to have a purer God conception and possibly the radical sought refuge in the O.T. because of the fact that the conservatives held out the N.T. and because of certain mystical ideas that found their best expression in an observation of Old Testament rites and ceremonies. There is also the strong possibility that Socinus and his followers were trying to calumniate the radicals by identifying them with Judaism, the very accusation that the Catholics made against the Socinians as a whole. The enemies of the Socinians did not hesitate, in turn, to say that "any liturgy which will please one that is a thoro' Socinian, will please Turkes, and Jews, also, if it be but warely composed, and they will keep themselves in such general expressions as some do too much affect." (Wallace, 11;p.116.)

In 1584 Budneans was excommunicated and this act may be laid to the influence of Socinus and his school. (Fock, p.157) Mosheim is of the opinion that the interesting essay on the Semi-Judaizers was directed against the Davidians, but it is far more probable that it was directed against the Budneans right at home. It is evident that Socinus wanted unity in his organization and he wrote this against the followers of Budny and his associates who existed for many years in the Socinian church. Socinus realized that Budny's idea of the absolute authority of the individual in dogma would ultimately lead to the break down of all the elements of the Christological system and he was thus bitterly opposed to the man whom he felt, was most dangerous altho as a matter of fact Socinus was himself logically very close to the stand point of Budny. That Socinus was more concerned with the political effect of the worship of Jesus is evidenced by the fact that in



some of his writings he stated that there are cases in which prayer to Christ was not necessary to salvation. (Socini opera Epist. contra Vujekium. B.F.P. 11; pp.538)

In 1596 in a letter to the Superintendent of the Unitarians in Transylvania, Socinus admits that the practice of invoking Christ in itself indifferent, and therefore unnecessary inasmuch as it is neither commended nor forbidden in Scripture. (Wallace 11; pp.417-8) Within six years of his death a number of Socinian leaders, among them some of his own trusted disciples stated it was not altogether necessary for salvation to believe all taught by Jesus and the Apostles and that certain passages of the N.T. could be rejected, - a statement which evidences a beginning of the rejection of revelation and is in full consonance with the principle developed by Socinus that reason is supreme. (Krasinski 11; pp.376-77)

The radical element in the Socinian church has a fine analogue in the early Christian church. First there were two churches: the Hellenic Christian and the Jewish Christian. In time the Hellenic Christian church absorbed the Jewish Christian and for all practical purposes destroyed it yet it continued with a certain amount of vitality as late as the Nicean council. This same development is characteristic of the Socinian church. The Budneans and their followers were all practically crushed about 1584 by Socinus, but for many years after that we find the same heresy of refusal to worship Jesus always cropping out and possibly the reason we do not hear of it after the days of Socinians was because the Socinian group <sup>was</sup> more liberal and tacitly tolerated what it could not completely eradicate.

About 1600 Socinus wrote to Smalcius that many Lithuanians do not believe in the invocation of Christ. The leader of this Budnean group was a Joseph Domanovius (Domanowski) (Wallace 11; pp.419-459)

Socinus is usually very considerate in his arguments and his polemics but he seems to have been especially prejudiced against the Greek radical Paleologus whose two works on the "Civil Magistrate" he attempted to refute. Socinus was accused of treating "Paleologus with acrimony and mingled calumny.....For you.....have asserted he is like the Jews."



(Toulmin, pp. 78-9) To call a man even an enemy a Jew, was felt to be even too much-  
uncalled for.

Exegetically inasmuch as the Humanists followed by the Socinians had gone back to the simple historical meaning of the text they were in close touch with the Jewish interpretation. Socinus is fully aware of the ludicrousness of certain methods of false exegesis and he states: "All which things, as they are not only repugnant to the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, but are self-contradictory and appear in a great measure ridiculous, have made (truly lamentable it is) the sacred and most divine religion of Jesus Christ the great sport of Jews and Turks and of all strangers to it." (Toulmin, p. 362.)

Socinianism in a number of respects is related to Judaism in a negative way. It is a direct outcome of the mediaeval anti-ecclesiastical movements and in that they were drawing away from established Catholicism they automatically drew somewhat nearer to Judaism tho' temperamentally the Socinians were just as anti-Jewish as the most rabid Catholics. Socinus after his advent to power enacted a reaction against the Judaizing influence which had been developing in a virile manner prior to his rise to power. Despite his academic liberalism he was psychologically not able to give up Jesus as a personal power in his life or as a God. But Socinus goes farther than Judaism. The Socinians aside from their more conservative expressions of theology make the individual man the ultimate authority. Judaism has never gone as far as this, but has always taken its stand firmly on the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

The Socinian catechism evidences an element of liberalism, however, in its attitude toward Judaism that is far more liberal than the Catholic Church. The Church accounts for the Jews continued existence as the Cain among the nations; the pariah who serves as a warning to all, of the horrible punishment of those who rejected Jesus. The Socinians explained the continued existence of the Jewish religion because it had "divine authority". It is to last until the advent of Christ. (Rees, p. 21)



An insight into the Socinian psychology and possibly its relation to Judaism can be seen in its definition of the Christian religion as "the way of attaining to eternal life that is pointed out by God thru' Jesus Christ." It should be noticed that nothing is said of the Old Testament. In many respects Socinianism is far from even an approach in the direction of Judaism. Its approach seems to lie in its humanism which meant, among other things, - proper exegesis. The Socinians really believed that the New Testament alone was the sole authority and norm of religion. The Christian religion is the theology of the New Testament. (Harnack, VII; p.138) Like Paul, Socinus and his followers felt that the New Testament had replaced the Old. There is of course, a very strong approximation toward Judaism by the Socinians in their God conception. In developing their God idea and other elements of their theology they knew and did not hesitate to use Jewish arguments and Jewish methods. . . .

Justification came thru' God's mercy in and by Jesus Christ. Discipline was to be maintained in the Church thru' excommunication and excommunication. Baptism was for adults and thru' immersion and produced the quality of spiritual regeneration. In this last instance they were more conservative than the later Socinians. The Lord's supper was only a symbol, something like the Eucharistic attitude. (Moshelm, p.330, note 2.)

The Racovian catechism was begun by Socinus and Peter Skrzetuski Jr. and finished by Basilides and Moscovicius the year after the death of Socinus. It was first published at Racov in Polish in 1605 and hence is known as the Racovian catechism. (Harnack, p.138, note 2) Harnack, Dec. Post Socinus and other scholars are of the opinion that the edition of 1605 and 1608 represent the work of Socinus, and the doctrine of the main body of Socinians. Harnack completely agrees the Racovian catechism, even the much later editions, as a comprehensive and faithful account of the ideas of the Socinians. (Harnack, VII; p.138, note 2) (Harnack, II; p.330.)

Moshelm on the other hand is strongly of the opinion that the book itself did not express the actual beliefs of the writers, and that the doctrine never obtained among the followers of Socinus with authority. (Harnack, Dec. 17-18-19 in Harnack, pp.330-331) He believes



## THEOLOGICAL SOCINIANISM AND JUDAISM.

The first catechism of the Anti-trinitarian group in Poland was published in Cracow in 1574 under the title of "Confession of Unitarians". It presents a very simple undeveloped theology. Mosheim, the Church Historian, declares that the Socinians later tried to suppress it because they deviated from its Theology, but a study of the Racovian Catechism, ~~the~~ (the Socinian confession of faith) hardly bears this out. The author of this first catechism was George Schoman, born in Ratibor, Silesia, 1530; came to Cracow in 1552 and later lived in Pinzow. (Wallace, 11; pp.196ff.) According to this "Confession":—God is a Supreme Being, all wise, all-powerful. Jesus Christ is a man, promised by prophets, of the seed of David; made Lord and Christ by God thru' whom the Father created the "new world" i.e. a new spiritual creation in the heart of mankind. Christ is to be adored. The Holy Ghost has divine quality. Justification comes thru' God's mercy in and by Jesus Christ. Discipline was to be maintained in the Church thru' admonition and excision. Baptism was for adults alone; thru' immersion and produced the quality of spiritual regeneration. (In this last instance they were more conservative than the later Socinians..The Lord's supper was only a symbol, something like the Zwinglian attitude. (Mosheim, p.438.Note z.)

The Racovian catechism was begun by Socinus and Peter Statorius Jr. and finished by Smalcus and Moscorovius the year after the death of Socinus. It was first published at Racow in Polish in 1605 and hence is known as the Racovian catechism. (Rees, p.LXXVIIff) Harnack, Geo. Foot Moore and other scholars are of the opinion that the editions of 1605 and 1609 represent the work of Socinus, and the doctrine of the main body of Socinians. Harnack completely accepts the Racovian catechism, even the much later editions, as a comprehensive and detailed account of the ideas of the Socinians. (Harnack,VII;p.137) (Moore, 11; p.339.) Mosheim on the other hand is strongly of the opinion that the book itself did not express the secret beliefs of the writers and also that the catechism never obtained among the followers a very wide authority. (Ecc.Hist.IV-196 in Toulmin, pp.269-70) He believes



that the catechism was only a popular exposition for the uninitiated and for the non-Socinian public but in truth the inner doctrines of the sect were far more advanced. (Rees, pp. LXXXVIII-IX quoting Mosheim.) The work was written for the purpose of blinding the rabid elements among their opponents. (Mosheim, p.454.)

In all events it is perfectly safe to accept this work as the expression of the conservative elements among the Socinians making the mental note that the group itself possessed more radical elements.

The editions of the Catechism are as follows:-

1605	Polish.....Racow.
1608	German
1609	Latin.....Racow.
1609	Latin....Amsterdam (but probably printed much later than title page.)
1619	Polish.....Racow.
1612	German
1651	Latin.....London.
1652	English.....Amsterdam.
1659	Latin.....Amsterdam. (1665?)
1666	Dutch.....Amsterdam.
1680	Latin (Best edition)
1684	Latin
1818	English.....London. (following edition of 1680) This is the edition that I use. Translated by Thomas Rees. Quoted as "Rees".

(Rees; p.LXXVIIff; Kransinski;11; pp.370-71; McGiffert, p.108; Harnack,p.118)

#### EATING BLOOD

One of the most mooted questions of dogma in Poland in the sixteenth century was the question of the permissibility of eating blood. Budny and Czechowitz who know it to be a Noachian precept objected to it very strenuously but Socinus declares that the prohibition is repugant to Christian liberty. (Toulmin, pp.245-6-7). Later Socinians after Socinus also prohibited the eating of blood as one of the Noachian precepts. Isaac ben Abraham takes occasion several times to attack the Christians for this flagrant violation of an important law. (H.E.1-49;1-50;11-100) Isaac shows where even the primitive Christians enjoined it in Acts XV-20;29;XXI-28. The occasion that Isaac takes here to discuss this question which he considers to be of weight shows that he is cognizant of



its importance at that time among the Christians. The importance of the whole question for the Christian lies in the fact that Paul permits the eating of everything yet there are contradictory injunctions not only in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament also. The problem for the Socinians and the opportunity for Isaac lies in the attempt to harmonize these difficulties.

Discussing the oft-quoted passages of turning the other cheek, the Socinians declare this is not to be understood literally and they quote in support of this John XVIII-23 and Acts XXIII-3. (Rees, p.225) Isaac ben Abraham quotes the very same two verses to show equally that the primitive Christians did not follow this statement literally (H.E. 11:37). Yet the Socinians believe in loving their enemies in accordance with the New Testament injunction, (Rees, p.227) altho Isaac declares that no Christian ever practices this trait. (H.E. 1-50).

The Socinians believed that baptism was merely an initiatory rite, not a sacrament. (Rees, p.250ff) Isaac speaking of this rite declares that the Christians believe it to be a substitute for circumcision. (H.E. 1-19) Isaac evidently had no argument against the Socinians, but must have been addressing the conservative Christians.

The Socinians believed in the Devil as the author and the active promoter of temptations. (Rees, p.188). Isaac commenting on Gen. III-15 is fully aware that the Christians still believe in the devil saying that they are wrong in believing that Jesus crushed Satan for they still believe that the Devil causes evil as seen in Romans XVI-20; 1 Thess. 11-18. (H.E. 1-12).

A mooted problem among all Christians was the interpretation of the term "olom". The Socinians attempted to show that it may mean a definite limited time, not eternity. (Rees, p.74) Isaac also arguing with the Christians who say that "olom" in Jer.XVII-4 means forever shows that the word may mean both definite and indefinite time. (H.E.1-26)

The average conservative Christian refers the passage Is. XXXV-5 quoted also in Math XI-5 to Jesus, but the Socinians with the Jews of course declare the passage to refer to the one God of the Hebrews. (Rees, p.157ff.) (Allix, p.336ff.)



Socinus believed that both faith and good works are necessary for justification but especially stresses justification thru' God's grace. (Toulmin, p.233.) Isaac declares specially that we are saved not by our fulfillment of commandments but thru' God's grace. (H.E.1-23) Isaac here seems to be influenced by Christological views.

The Socinians found difficulty in explaining away the lack of observance of the Jewish Sabbath required by the Decalog. They declared it to be a peculiar sign of the covenant between God and the Israelites by which he gave them rest from Egyptian trials and furthermore it was destined as a memorial to show that the most excellent part of the Mosaic Law was not perfect, and that a Law more perfect than that of Moses should succeed namely the law of Christ. (Rees, p.216ff.) Isaac attacks the Christians for their change of the Sabbath which he declares to be expressly against the Mosaic Law. (H.E.1-19;11-100)

The Racovian catechism has a chapter "Of the Precepts of Christ" which he added to the Law. (Rees, p.173ff.) One of the principal charges that Isaac brings against the Christians is that they have added to the Law and therefore have brot down on their heads the curses prescribed for so doing. (H.E.11-100) Isaac scoffs at those Christians who believe in retaining some ritual and moral laws and rejecting others especially since the Christians say that Jesus has annulled the law of Moses. (H.E. 11-10)

The Socinians declared that Christianity is a great faith and that the proof lies in the resurrection of Jesus. (Rees, p.10-11-12) Isaac declares that the Greatness of Christianity is by no means an evidence of its truth and he applies the general rule that success does not mean truth and he quotes the case of Alexander the Great and the contemporary Moslem empire both of whom were considered to be false faiths by the Jews and the Christians. (H.E. 1-5)

The Socinians declared that the Jewish religious system was to flourish only until the advent of Christ. (Rees, p.12) Isaac is well aware of this statement and he answers it at length (H.E. 1-19).

One of the most popular Socinian arguments was that "under the Old covenant severity and rigor obtained; but under the New, favor and mercy". (Rees, p.176) Isaac answers



this at length. (H.E. 1-19). He insists that Jesus did not free the people at all from the Law, but expected them to obey all the precepts since he explicitly told them to obey the Law and especially the Mosaic code. The Socinians maintained in spite of New Testament evidence to the contrary that "Christ has abrogated either expressly or tacitly, those of the ritual kind." (Rees, p.174) The Socinians maintained that "Paul openly abrogated and annulled a great part of the precepts relating to external rites or ceremonies" etc. Isaac quotes Paul on 1 Cor. V-1 on the laws of incest where he still continues to follow the Mosaic precepts, Isaac also shows that in spite of the alleged severity of the Mosaic criminal legislation the penal laws of his/own day, <sup>(Isaac's)</sup> -Christians of course - were in some instances more severe than the Old Testament code, specifically as regards money thefts. (H.E.1-19) The Socinians believed the standard Christian view that Jesus abrogated the ceremonial and judicial part of the Law and accepted only the moral law to which they added whatever necessary. (Rees, p.173ff.) Isaac of course believes only in the absolute inviolability of the Old Testament (H.E.1-19;29;30.) The Socinians declared that the Christians religion was divine from its nature because of the sublimity of its precepts and its promises. (Rees, p.11) Isaac in answer to a similar argument answers that the Mosaic code is of divine origin and is never to be abrogated "for there is no indication in these (biblical) passages that God will ever grant another law." (H.E. 1-20) Socinus declares in the whole Pentateuch there is no mention of future life and that the Jews now have no real conception of a future life. (Socini Opera 11; p.804) He is followed by the catechism that "there is in the Law of Moses no promise of this kind of eternal life." (Rees, p.282) Isaac goes at length into the whole question and quotes many passages to show definitely that the Jews of that time did believe in immortality. (H.E.1-18) The catechism however qualified its remarks by saying that those good Jews who believed in immortality will secure it even tho' it was not promised them. (Rees, p.283.)

Speaking of the mooted question of the New Testament narrative the Socinians declared that it was "impossible the mind can admit any suspicion that these authors had



not a perfect knowledge of the subjects upon which they wrote because some of them were eye and ear witnesses of what they describe and relate; whilst the rest received from these persons the fullest information respecting the same matters, and by this means became thoroly acquainted with them." (Rees, p.3) Isaac speaking of Mark and Luke declared that their testimony was impeachable; that even eye witnesses have not a perfect knowledge and that one contradicts another and they never agree and hence cannot be accepted as the truth. (H.E. Intro. to pt.11.) The Socinians declared the New Testament narrative to be authentic for the first Christians would not lie but Isaac who has his own opinions on the subject declares that the gospels are written by men who were not intelligent and were highly untrustworthy who didn't know the Old Testament text and couldn't understand the meaning of the scriptures. (Rees, p.3. H.E. Intro. to pt.11). The Socinians and Isaac are one in their belief that the scriptures are divine revelation. (H.E. 1-6; 1-16) Isaac and the Socinians are also one in their rejection of the authenticity of the Apocrypha because of its unreliability and "uninspired" character. (Rees, p.22; H.E. 1-43.)

Conservative Christians refer Psalm 110 to Christ but Isaac and some of the Socinians consider this absurd. (H.E. 1-40; Allix, p.335) In passage John VI-38 Jesus is described as coming down from heaven. The Polish Socinians were of the peculiar belief that he went to Heaven for instructions after he was born and then descended. Isaac does not seem to be aware of this interpretation but confutes the simple and literal meaning by showing in Luke 11-7 that he was born of a virgin. (H.E. 11-44) The Socinians asserted their belief that God was One and that His essence was One and are thus in full agreement with Isaac altho there is not the slightest similarity in their method of proving this. The Socinians come to their conclusion thru' logical thot but Isaac reaches his conclusion thru' an etymological study of "Elohim". The Socinians prove that there is One divine person by reference to John XVII-3 and Isaac uses the same verse to show that Jesus admitted he was not God and knew that there was one true God. (Rees, p.33ff. H.E. 11-55).



The Socinians were firm in their belief,--officially at least,-- that Christ must be worshipped. Christ declared Socinus was to be granted divine worship, is called God tho' slightly subordinate. (Rees, 189-197; Socini Opera 11; p.801.) The first edition of the catechism was more rigid in its adoristic view:

"What do you think of these men who do not invoke Christ, nor think that he must be adored? That they are no Christians, since indeed they have no Christ; for tho' in words they dare not deny him, yet in reality they do." (Rees, p.199.)

This passage evidently refers to the Budneans and similar schools of thot. The Racovian catechism seems to show some degrees of evasion in speaking of the personal unity of the deity. They believe in the personal unity of God yet they constantly employ the orthodox terminology of the Son, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. (Rees, p.252.) Isaac employs strong Old Testament arguments to prove the unity of God and to disprove the Trinity. Isaac also employs the argument from logic that it is impossible for God to create a being equal unto himself. If God is corporal and spiritual then he is a composite creation and a composite creation evidently has a creator. Since he is composite he is like all created things and subject to change and division and thus has not the attributes of divinity. Even the philosophers who recognize no religion acknowledge the unity of God and say He is not plural nor corporeal. The New Testament itself evidences the unity of God. (H.E. 1-10) Isaac shows from Mark 111-28; Luke XII-19 and Mark XLII-32 that the New Testament does not teach the Trinity. (H.E. 1-10) Gentilis a famous anti-trinitarian who came to Poland in 1561 also declares that the Trinity is a human invention, unknown to primitive Catholic creeds and opposed to evangelical truth. (Wallace, 11; p.103ff)

The Socinians attempted to show that many passages in the scripture usually applied to Christ really belong to the One God. The Socinians and Isaac both using the same verse John XVII-3 agree that it shows that Christ is quite distinguished there from the one true God. (Rees, p.79. H.E. 11-55)

The Socinians at all times fought the interpretation of their orthodox adversaries whereby they would indentify God and Christ. They declared that Jude 1-5 does not mean Jesus Christ, but the God of the Old Testament. The Socinians also explain 1Cor. X-3-4



figuratively; Christ in reality was not in the desert. (Rees, pp.111-112.)

The Socinians agree with Isaac that the primary meaning of the famous passage of Ps. 11-7 refers to David. (H.E.11;68;11-95; Rees, p.71) The Socinians reject the orthodox interpretation of Is. IX-6 because as the orthodox translate it would imply two fathers, both eternal. (Rees, p.138) Isaac rejects the Christian interpretation which would apply it to Jesus for an altogether different reason. (H.E.1-21) The Catechism commenting on John X-29,30 that "I and my Father are One" declares that God and Christ are one in agreement of mind, not essence. (Rees, p.132.) Isaac commenting on the same verse quotes Czechowitz who deduces an argument where Paul and Appolos are said to be one which can only mean in agreement for they are two men. (H.E. 11-50) The Socinians agree with Isaac in declaring that there is One Supreme God, but where Isaac naturally infers from a verse that he is therefore man if not God, the Socinians infer from the very same verse that tho' he is not Supreme God he is associated with God in the administration of the world.

The Socinians proved the divinity of Jesus thru' his miracles and his resurrection. (Rees, p.7ff.) Isaac speaking of the miracles recorded in Mark XI-II-13 states specifically that this shows he is not a god. (H.E.11-30) The verse which the Christians take to prove the resurrection:- John XX-17 is also used by Isaac to prove that Jesus is not divine or God. (H.E. 11-58) The Catechism quotes Mathew XXVII-46; Mark XV-34; John XX-17; 1 Cor. XV-28, to show that Christ is not God and Isaac uses every one of these verses to show also that Christ is not God. (H.E. 11-26;11-58;11-32; Rees, p.60) The Catechism quotes John X-38;XIV-10-11; and XVII-21 and declares that these verses do not prove that Jesus has the same divine nature of the Father and also "shall we on this account say that the disciples ought also to have a divine nature." (Rees; 141-2) Isaac says exactly the same thing using the very same verses in telling those Christians who assert that these verses prove the Trinity that in the same manner of reasoning they would prove that the twelve disciples are one with God and Jesus. (H.E.11-52) Isaac declares that "we do not find any place where Jesus calls himself God, but on the contrary ascribes divinity



and power and infinity to the Lord, who is worthy of praise." (H.E. 1-50) Socinus in the very same vein declares "Christ never taught he was the one God, the author of all things, but rather, in all his words and actions, always ascribed all the praise and honor to God, his Father, as the source of his office, power and glory." (Toulmin, p.375.) The Catechism proves that Jesus was not God but man while on earth and uses the verses Tim. 11-5; 1 Cor. XV-21-22; Romans V-15; John VIII-40 and Hebrews V-1. (Rees, 51-2.) Isaac employing the very same argument uses two of the same quotations: Romans V-15 and John VIII-40. (H.E. 1-10; 11-48)

Both Isaac and the Socinians were fully in accord with each others views in attacking the worship of images. Isaac declared that altho they believe in God as the primal cause of all things yet in their personal faith they believe in idols made by men:--ikons. (H.E. 1-38) Socinus calls the Catholics idolaters:--"papists, whom I regard as idolaters." (Socini Opera 1; p.502, in Toulmin, p.78) The Catechism sets forth: "But our adversaries say that these services are not paid to the images themselves; and that not the images but those whom they represent, are worshipped?" The answer of the Catechism is that images of God are forbidden altogether and those who worship God thru' images are no better than the heathen for even the heathen worshipped God thru' images. (Rees, p.208-9)

The Catechism proves that there is but one God according to the Scriptures who is the Father of Christ but is not Christ. The proof is found in 1 Cor. VIII-6 and John XVII-3. Isaac uses one of these same verses to prove the same contention: John XVII-3. (H.E. 11-55; Rees, p.57) The catechism uses 1 Cor. XV-27 to show that the father and the son are not one, and Isaac uses the same verses to prove the same fact tho' in a slightly different way. (H.E. 11-32; Rees, p.58) Both Isaac and the Catechism use Mathew XXVIII-18 to show that there is a higher authority than Jesus, both stressing the significance of the statement:--"power is given to me". (H.E. 11-27; Rees, p.58.) Both Isaac and the Catechism use John VI-38 to show the distinction between God and Jesus. (H.E. 11-44; Rees, p.59) Both Isaac and the Catechism use Mark XIII-32 to show that Jesus is ignorant of the future; a knowledge that is confined to God alone. (H.E. 11-31; Rees, p.59).



The Socinians were in full accord with the Jews in their interpretation of the much mooted word: Elohim which the orthodox took to prove the plurality of Gods person. Socinus followed by the Catechism declares that Elohim is a proper noun referring to the supreme author of all things and that also it refers to created beings-angels, princes, judges, etc. (Rees, p.34-5) Isaac declares that "it is known to all students of Hebrew that the name Hebrew is ascribed to God; to angels, judges and leaders." (H.E. 1-19) A student of the Socinian movement is of the opinion that the Christians have many of the Jews' answers to the Christians (in the matter of attacking the Trinity) and often carried them much further than the end the Jews themselves did intend by them (Allix, p.332.) Socinus commenting on Gen. III-22 follows the Jewish interpretation that God speaks of himself and the angels. Likewise Socinus follows the Jewish interpretation on Gen. XI-7. (Allix, p.333.)

Isaac ascribes the phrase the "Lord our righteousness" in Jer XXIII-5-6 as title of the Messiah as does the Christians who ascribe it to their Messiah: Jesus. (H.E. 1-42) The Socinians on the other hand refer this title to the people of Israel. (Rees, pp.76-7 Allix, p.336.) Crellius one of the most famous of the Socinians does not accept the Orthodox Christian translation of the famous passage:-Isaiah VII-14. (Allix, p.335) Crellius does not take the famous Christological passages in Micah V-2 and Mathew 11-5 literally. Isaac takes the same verses and disproves the Messiahship of Jesus, but on altogether different grounds. (H.E. 1-33; Allix, p.336.)

The writers and later editors of the Racovian Catechism had a first hand knowledge of Biblical literature and grammar that they used to an advantage in their exegesis. (Rees, pp.71-3-7.) They realized that an attempt to convert the Jews thru' Old Testament proofs was an impossibility. Smalcius says that the books of the Old Testament are of little use to convert the Jews. If texts of the Old Testament are to be interpreted in relation to Jesus they must be interpreted mystically; i.e. according to another sense than the words naturally import. (Allix p.334.) These later Socinians who for the most part after the expulsion in the seventeenth century lived in Holland were fond



of studying and quoting Talmudical and later Rabbinic authors with whom they were conversant largely thru' translations. (Rees, pp.105-6;145-6)

One of the chief sources of anger on the part of Isaac in all his polemics with Christians is the custom of tearing verses out of their contexts; failure or refusal to study or recognize the significance of the context and the simple correct meaning of the verse. The Questioner in the Catechism asks:

"But does it not seem harsh that when some words in passages of this kind do, on some account, pertain to Christ, the whole should not be referred to him?"

"It ought not to seem harsh that words of this description, spoken of another person, should be applied to Christ so far only as they correspond to his person."

(Rees, p.103.)

Just what Isaac considers to be exegetically improper. The Socinians continue and state that a proof that a phrase of a verse may be used is seen in 11 Sam.VII-14 quoted in Heb. 1-5 where the New Testament only quotes the first half of the verse: "I will be his Father and he shall be my son", the latter half, "if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," is omitted in the New Testament as unsuitable to Jesus who has not committed any iniquity. Isaac in treating of Heb. 1-5 discusses this very point and verse. The Socinians admitted that this verse apparently applied to Solomon, and Isaac states specifically it applies to Solomon; that the first part, as the Christians say, cannot apply to Jesus, because of the latter part which cannot refer to Jesus who is said never to have committed any iniquity. Isaac aware of the fact that the Christians have difficulty in applying even the first part of the verses to Jesus for he says that even the Christians know that the latter part practically refutes their argument. (H.E. 11-95) The Catechism applies Ps. XCVII-7 quoted in Heb. 1-6 to Christ but Isaac applies it directly to God, as the context evidences. (H.E. 11-95)

The Socinians of the latter part of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century were fully aware of the pure monotheistic conception of the Jew. It has always been my contention that the very existence of the Jews who were always con-



sidered as pure monotheists was a spur to all radical groups seeking an ethical monotheistic faith. Wissowatius (seventeenth century) in a note on the Catechism declares: "The Hebrews also, even the present time firmly believe that the creation of heaven and earth was effected by the one person of the supreme God, without any assistance or instrument." (Rees, pp.108-9)

#### SUMMARY.

My purpose in comparing the Racovian catechism and some of the arguments of Isaac be Abraham is not at all to prove the truth of one or the error of the other, but to consider their mutual relation,--if such relation exist and ascribe a reason for it, if possible. Chronologically the Mizuk Emunah was long finished probably before Socinus and his immediate school came into prominence altho' as a matter of fact that Socinian school embraced all those anti-trinitarian elements,--whether conservative or radical,--that had been contemporaries of Isaac in the second and third quarter of the sixteenth century. Isaac is not polemizing against any particular sect or creed in Christendom unless it might be the Catholic, and this in turn would include all the conservative elements among all the other groups and by refuting the Catholics he would necessarily be refuting all Conservatives. Inasmuch as practically every Christian sect gives a different interpretation to the various Christological passages in the Old and New Testament, Isaac sweeps them all into his category of opponents and polemizes successfully against them by confuting, not the specific Christological view of the verse, but the simple exegetical, historical view. The historical objections that Isaac raises to the various Christological passages is sufficient to refute all varying interpretations. Wherever the anti-trinitarians fall under the category of the conservatives in their views on resurrection, the Messiah, the abrogation of the Mosaic code, they are included in the general historical explanation which is a refutation of the specific Christological interpretations.

Certain facts stand out however. The Anti-trinitarians (who later are the Socinians) and the Jews had much in common. They had a mutual belief in one God; respect



for the Old Testament; absolute belief that the Trinity is not taught in the New Testament; and a common dislike for conservative creeds especially; Catholicism, and some of its sacraments. In certain polemics directed against the orthodox Christians where they differed alike from the Socinians and the Jews, Isaac and the catechism often use the very same verses in the Old and the New Testament, in confuting the common enemy. At times in commenting on the same verse where their ultimate goal of proof is the same they often employ the very same method and even metaphor in argument. This is not merely accident or fortuitous. There is a common source of one character or another. Both Isaac and the liberals of his day discussed the same mooted questions of theology and dogma. It would therefor be quite fair to assume that all the polemical and theological discussions of the century had narrowed down all the vital questions to the interpretation of a certain series of key verses and both Isaac and the liberals tho' living in different decades devoted themselves to the explanation and interpretation of these verses in much the same way, wherever they agreed. There is no question that most of the arguments had become stock arguments thru' the process of time. The Jews on their side had a series of polemical writers from the Talmudical period on; the Christians too had a liberal tradition that expressed itself in writings and heresises all thru' the ages from the time of the Patres and on. The intimate association in the sixteenth century which is a patent fact stimulated social and intellectual intercourse and an exchange of similar views was brought about. This will account for the fact that the Racovian catechism first published in 1605 has much in common with the theology and polemics of *Hizuk Emunah* first finished about 1578. The influence of the Jews upon the liberals is seen that wherever the Socinians are not bound by their own Christology their exegesis is of that sound, exegetical humanistic character that brings it into agreement with the sounder elements of Jewish rabbinic exegesis.



## APPENDICES

### CHAPTER I.

The Synods and the Council of Four Lands

Appendix I.

Page 1 to Page 17

Michael Servetus and the Jews.

Appendix II.

" 1 " " 3

### CHAPTER II.

Jewish Converts and Conversion in Poland in  
XVth, XVIth, XVIIth Centuries. Appendix III.

A. The Russian Judaizers

" 1 " " 3

B. Conversion and Apostasy in Russia,  
Poland and Lithuania in XVIth, XVIIth  
and XVIIIth Centuries.

" 4 " " 10

The Government and the Jews in Poland in the  
Sixteenth Century. Appendix IV.

A. The Government and the Jews in Poland  
in the Sixteenth Century

" 1 " " 11

B. The Church and the Jews in Poland in  
the Sixteenth Century.

" 11 " " 15

C. Inner Life of Polish Jewry in the Six-  
teenth Century.

" 15 " " 18

D. Jews of Prominence in Financial Life

" 19 " " 20

E. Poland as a Refuge

" 20 " " 21

F. Polish Persecution

" 21 " " 23

G. Jewish Captives

" 23 " " 23

H. Jewish Malefactors

" 23 " " 25

I. Communal Leaders

" 25 " " 28

J. Printing

" 28 " " 29

K. Relations between Jews and non-Jews

" 30 " " 33

L. Jews as "Secularists"

" 34 " " 40

Simon Budny and the Jews. Appendix V.

" 1 " " 7

Francis David and the Sabbatarians in their rela-  
tion to Polish Anti-trinitarianism.

Appendix VI.

" 1 " " 7

Judaizers in Poland in the Sixteenth Century

Appendix VII.

" 1 " " 6



## THE SYNODS AND THE COUNCIL OF FOUR LANDS.

### APPENDIX I.

Graetz, the Historian, makes the statement that the Jews in their development of the Council of Four Lands were evidently influenced by the Protestant Synods of the 16th century. In this brief study of the relation of these two organizations I shall first set forth the origin, work and organization of the one, then the other and finally make a comparison wherever possible and evident.

It should be born in mind that Graetz in his presentation of the Vaad (The Assembly of the Lands) is somewhat prejudiced against all Polish institutions but on the other hand Rabbinowitz and Harkavy, the East European students of this Council, are prejudiced in favor of Polish institutions.

Graetz maintains that the work of this national Jewish administrative, executive and judicial council began about 1580; Harkavy says from about 1515 to 1540. The materials developed by the Russian school are far more convincing than the school of Graetz. As for the names; Council of Four Lands, Graetz declares that the original Kahal (assembly) was formed of Greater Poland (**Posen**); Lesser Poland (Cracow); and Russia (Lublin and Lemberg) and was then known as the Council of Three Lands, but as soon as Lithuania was added it was known as the Council of Four Lands. Harkavy however shows that originally the Three Lands were Greater and Lessor Poland and Red Russia, as Graetz-but after the Union of Lublin, 1569 by which Volynia becomes part of the "crown", separate from the Duchy of Lithuania,- it formed the fourth of the Four Lands. (It is only natural that Volynia should join itself to Red Russia than to distant Lithuania.) Lithuania, says, Harkavy never became part of the Council of Four Lands; Lithuania and its aggregate communities formed a vaad of its own about 1620. Thus there were two important communal groups in Poland:- the Council of Four Lands in the Crown and the Council of the Districts of Lithuania in the Grand Duchy. Only in time of danger did they come together. Organization of the Councils were stimulated if not directly prompted by the great national fairs, where thru' necessity of business and custom, many of the communal leaders and rabbis



came to settle legal questions between individuals and communities and thereby saw it would be advisable to have periodic meetings. The Government too saw that this was most advisable since it centralized responsibility and they therefor after a time gave the organization its official support. The German School of Jewish Historians say that the Vaad had authority over Jews in countries beyond Poland. Harkavy declares that it was never the intention of the Council to assume authority over Jews in other lands, but that merely their influence spread thru' its individual rabbinical leaders and induced others to send Sheeloth to them. The name itself; Council of Four Lands or Council of Districts of Lithuania, shows, that their work was limited to their own lands and that they had no desire to rule others. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p. 350, Note 1.

As early as 1514 Sig. 1 issued an order appointing Abraham of Bohemia as chief and treasurer of the Jews of Greater and Lesser Poland to collect taxes from them and bring them to the King's treasury. All rebellion against Abraham was to be punished by fines by the King and excommunication by the Rabbis (Graetz. Harkavy, VII-p.6.) Abraham was to be chief and leader of the Jews; he and the rabbis associated with him were to judge cases between individual Jews and Jewish communities. But the Jews resented his power, opposed him and obstructed his work so much that the King was compelled to issue a decree that the Jews should obey him. (Ibid. p.314-5, Note 1.) Abraham was bitterly attacked by the Jews, accused to the King, but in a proclamation of 1518 Sig. 1 declared that he was innocent of all charges against him; that he came well recommended from Hungary and Bohemia and gave him the special privilege of exemption in criminal charges from both Jewish and Christian courts. He was to be judged only in the King's court. The Rabbis were warned not to oppose him or to excommunicate him. (Ibid. p.315) It is thus evident that Sig.1 was following a policy of turning his somewhat autonomous Jewish community over into the hands of a great tax farmer in order to facilitate the payment of taxes. The same policy of centralizing responsibility for taxes in an appointed tax farmer was followed in the Duchy of Lithuania. In the same year the King appointed Michael b.



Joseph of Brest to the same duties and privileges as Abraham in Poland. Michael if necessary was to coopt a rabbi to control recalcitrants. (Ibid. Harkavy, p.7)

The proclamation of the King in brief states that Michael was appointed as Senior of the Jews to act as intermediary between Jews and King; to judge between Jew and Jew; to punish them where necessary and to force their obedience to his decisions. All taxes were to be turned over to the King's Treasury and he was to have the power to appoint a Rabbi to assist him in his decisions. It was the opinion of Sig.1, that the Jewish taxes could best be collected by lay leaders but he soon saw that without the thoro co-operation of the Rabbis he would have trouble. Primarily his one motive was to secure the Jewish taxes thru' one head, systematic and promptly, and when he saw that the secular leaders were powerless he then turned to the Rabbis who could if necessary use the power of excommunication, a weapon which appealed to one of Catholic church training. The hatred toward the lay leaders,--who were for the most part professional publicans,--stimulated the development of the Kahal which is a compromise organization, a combination of lay and clerical leaders. (Ibid. p.315).

The hatred of the people toward the imposed lay leaders is seen in a specific injunction of the King to the Cracow community to pay certain monies to Abraham of Bohemia and warns the Rabbis that they secure payment if necessary thru' excommunication. The Rabbis it seems did not want to make themselves instruments in the hands of the tax farmers and looked with favor toward the organization of an Assembly at the annual fairs at Lublin where the great rabbis and the lay leaders of the various communities met. (Ibid., Harkavy, p.8.) The King soon realized that the people did not like the leaders that he had imposed and that rabbinical leadership was more acceptable, so he began to encourage the leadership of the rabbis who were more acceptable to the people inasmuch as their learning gave them their prestige and they were thru' their appointment instruments of the people. (Ibid. p.334.) About 1520-30 the people in Poland,--later in Lithuania secured permission from the King to have the taxes apportioned and collected by men, chosen by the people, who usually



assembled together from the districts and countries of Poland at the annual fair at Lublin and Yaroslav. These leaders were laymen and rabbis- the later lending dignity, prestige and authority to the proceedings. At times the two groups would meet without one another. The rabbis judged cases involving money; between individuals and communities and both; especially at the fairs where a great amount of business was transacted. (Ibid. Harkavy, p.4.) Originally in the period of 1515-30 rabbis and communal leaders of different cities of Greater and Lesser Poland assembled at the fairs for business and religious purposes. After a time the Government gave these meetings an official sanction inasmuch as they found them useful for its own purposes. (Ibid. pp.351-2.) After the King saw that the gathering of the taxes by the tax farmers was inadvisable after he had turned over to the Jews the apportionment of the taxes of the various communities the actual apportionment was done at the fairs where the leaders were wont to assemble. This assembly in time met at stated intervals and recorded their decisions and discussions. Unfortunately there is very little material in the Responsa literature on the Council of Lands, (Katz, p.35, Note 2.) and the order of the Vaad and its decrees are not known or extent. The Pinkas Hagodol which has been mentioned by Lipman Heller has never been found. (Graetz, Heb. VIII, p.107.) We can be sure that if the Vaad was not founded at the specific order of the King and the authorities it was maintained at least with their permission and approval. In all probability the development of the Vaad and its securing of practical autonomy was not the work of a few years, but possibly a generation or two. (Graetz, Heb. VII, p.437.) The influence of the periodic fairs in Poland on the development of the Council cannot be over emphasized, for they were the great centers of commercial activity for the Jews of Poland and Lithuania. The Rabbis also assembled there for religious decisions and the like and in time, thru' a natural process of cumulative power and prestige, they turned their attention to the internal needs of the communities and the lands as a whole. The first organization, however, was primarily to assist



the government, but when the organization was perfected they turned their attention to religious government; appointment of rabbis; approval of books printed and works of charity. (Ibid. Harkavy VII; p.4-5.) Each Jewish community since its inception had a charter from the kings dealing with the matter of taxes: (Sheerit Yosef, Sim. 38, Katz, p.15.) Jews had always been accustomed to local autonomy. Each city had its own taxes and leader and was only governed indirectly thru' the king's agents. (Responsa Rema. Katz, p. 3) The growing influence of the Rabbis in Lithuania and Poland, both those who had assembled and discussed decisions at the great fairs and those in their cities is evidenced by a number of decrees of the King. All these decrees show very definitely that the King has come to believe that a very advisable method of handling the Jews is thru' the religious leaders of the community who are to be supported whenever their authority is questioned. In 1531 a decree was issued to the Jews of Brest Litovsk to listen to Rabbi Mendel Frank and gives him the authority to call in the secular authorities whenever necessary. (Graetz, Heb.VII p.333, Note 3.) Two years later an order was sent to the Lithuanian authorities to support a certain litigant stating: that at a meeting of the rabbis in Lublin they decided in favor of B. and therefore the kind demands the decisions of the rabbis of Lublin be carried out without fail. (Ibid. Harkavy VII, p.898-9.) This last letter is Harkavy's chief source for maintaining that the Vaad first met in Lublin in the decade 1520-30. (Ibid. p.9.) The Teshubot of Rema show that in his life time (1520-70) Lublin was well known as the gathering place of the Rabbis for the settlement of important cases. Rabbis who met at Lublin were not chosen in advance but were selected after having arrived at the fair. (Ibid.9.) The secular leaders of the districts were also present at the fairs in Lublin, according to Rema, and in cases of general necessity such as the imposition of new taxes or to oppose some false accusation they were gathered into an assembly of the Three Districts. (Ibid. 10) Sig. II, continued the policy of his predecessor in favoring the authority of the Rabbis and in 1568 confirmed a decision of Solomon Luria who



with two other Rabbis had decided a case and placed under a heavy fine any one of the litigants who would not accept the decision of the rabbis. (Ibid. p.333, Note 3.) The attempts of Sig. II to centralize authority and responsibility among the Jews is seen in a decree of 1551 that all Jewish communities chose a rabbi or judge and accept his decisions; that all recalcitrants be subject to corporal punishment and ~~by~~ confiscation of goods. Rabbis were also warned under penalty of heavy fines to judge cases in their own sphere of activity and not to encroach on territory of other rabbis. Cases between Jew and non-Jew were to be tried in the general courts from which each litigant has an appeal to a higher court. (Ibid. p.323.) During the last two decades of the 16th century the Vaad seems to be well organized. Its leaders were communal leaders and rabbis. (Ibid. p.340). In 1583 we have a record of certain ordinances of the Council of Five Lands at Tuszowce. These ordinances indicate that 45 years or less after the founding of the Council of Lands the members were not only dealing with material matters, but were also legislating with the spiritual welfare of the people in mind. (Ibid. Harkavy VII; p. 14-13.) In 1591 we have the publication of a series of ordinances of wide reaching import legislating a complete curriculum for schools. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.121, Note 4.) In 1595 the Council of Lands was well organized and was allotting the required King's taxes on the Jews. (Graetz, Heb.VII; p.431.)

A great deal has been written regarding the "lands" that actually formed the Council of Four Lands. It seems that at first the organization was very loose and included three, four and sometimes five "Lands", - Greater and Lesser Poland, Russia Volynia and <sup>possibly</sup> Lithuania. (Ibid. Harkavy, VII; p.5) Even after 1569, - the Union of Lublin, whereby Volynia was joined to the "crown" there were for the most part in Lublin, only the judges of the "Three Lands" unless Volynia was incorporated and the old names retained. (Ibid. p.11.) It seems that Volynia was originally a separate organization but under certain conditions it sent its representative to the Polish assemblies and even then it was not considered the "Fourth Land" and it was only about



1640 that it definitely becomes one of the "Four Lands". (Ibid. p.511, Graetz, Heb. VII, p. 440.)

The development of the Council in Lithuania was quite similar to that in Poland proper. The cause of its rise was the arrangement of the poll-tax. (Ibid. p.438.) About 1620 its rabbis and leaders of the cities of Pinsk, Brest and Grodno, later Vilna and Slutsk formed a Council of the Districts of Lithuania. A late Lithuanian testimony (1681) states that they were never under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Four Lands and they never had any official unity with them. It seems that the only relation between the two groups were accidental and concerned themselves with the needs of all Polish Jewry. (Ibid. Harkavy, pp.5-6.)

The organization of the Polish Jewish communities as integers in the Council organization is very interesting. At the head of the Council of the Three Lands (later Four Lands) was the Parnas chosen by the delegates to the Council. The exact power of this Parnas (or there may have been several chiefs) is not known. One account states that the Parnasim of the Four Lands were just like the Sanhedrin in the Hewn Chamber and that they had the power to judge every Jew in the Kingdom of Poland. The Parnasim, this account continues, would choose judges from the provinces to relieve them of some of their work and these judges would judge all civil cases, but cases involving fines and dine hazokot, and other important cases came directly before the leaders of the Four Lands. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p. 107, Note 2. In Hanover: Yven Mezulah. His view of Polish life however is somewhat rosy-hued and his glowing accounts should be accepted with caution.) It is definite that there was a tribunal associated with the executive leaders who judged civil and criminal cases, the latter consisting of charges very often against delatores. Jews were absolutely forbidden to have resort to secular judges. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.107.) Members of the communities who refused to accept the decisions of the Vaad were punished. (Graetz, Heb. Harkavy, VII; pp.22-3.) The leaders, the Parnasim, at the fairs were chosen by lot and it was also settled at each Council who each community should send from the chiefs



of the communities to serve as judges for the next fair. (Ibid.) Inasmuch as Lithuanians had frequent recourse to the Polish fairs where the Council met semi-annually and inasmuch as litigation was settled at these great marts of commerce the Lithuanians were accustomed to choose judges at its gatherings in Brest and send them to coopt with the judges at the Polish fairs. (Ibid. p.24.) Jewish charters and grants of individual kings gave to the Jews the right of judging both civil and criminal cases, but there seems to have been certain special non-Jewish Judges who sat on Jewish cases (Responsa Rema. Sim. 109. Katz, p.29) to whom an appeal could be made or at least to the King's court or to the court of his provincial representative. (Graetz; Heb. VII, p.103.) The Jews attempted at all times to prevent other Jews from having recourse to these courts which appear to have been completely venal. The Parnasim it seems were elected for the one fair only. (Graetz, Heb. Harkavy VII, p.6.) The Assembly itself considered carefully the demands and complaints of each community in relation to other communities and laid heavy fines on recalcitrant groups. The decisions and proceedings were filed in Lublin, but are not extant. (Ibid.) The delegates to the Council probably came from the provincial assemblies which seem to be well organized. There were three provincial assemblies: Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Russia. These individual units were well knit and autonomous. Like the national Council and organization this provincial assembly also had its court which considered appeals from the individual local courts, and served as medium for cases that were finally appealed to the national tribunal. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.107.) The basic unit of the National Council was the individual congregation. At the period of elections of officials for the community all the member of the congregation gathered together and thru' a popular vote chose certain electors and these electors in turn chose the community officials. (Masat Benjamin, Sim. 7, Katz. pp.20-1.) The communal leaders who were elected by the people had all powers and rights. (Masat Binyamin, Sim. 33, Katz, p.25.) In each community there was also a court composed of the Rabbi and two other judges. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.107.) The fundamental purpose of course for the organization was the collection



of the taxes and in the individual communities a table of amounts to be collected was made and the beadle went around thru' the community collecting. (Responsa Maharam Lublin, Sim. 41. Katz, p.21.)

After a time thru' a perfectly natural process the Council, which had been originally organized to protect itself against exploitation by great Jewish tax-farmers, turned its attention to communal and national government which included all phases of Jewish life for the Jewish group in Poland was always autonomous, and communal government meant religious control also. It concerned itself with the appointment and qualification of rabbis; the approval of books, and works of charity. (Graetz, Harkavy, VII pp.4-5.) Careful attention was paid to the examination and censorship of religious books. The Council of the Three Lands placed its approval on the Talmud published in Lublin 1580, (Ibid. p.10); books published in Cracow in 1598, (Ibid. p.30) and it seems even to have controlled the publication of books or at least countenanced or discountenanced books thru' granting and withholding permission to publish. (Ibid. p.32.) They also exercised the function of a sort of a protective copyright by prohibiting reprints for a period of years. (Ibid. p.34); competent men were appointed to examine certain prayer books for errors and heresy, especially those prayer books published in Basilia. (Basel?) (Ibid. pp.35-6.) Very interesting are the tekanot published in 1591 and later on reissued. These regulations for internal guidance are so broad and comprehensive that one is moved to question if they were ever more than mere enactments:- The Teacher and the old students shall teach the younger students who come to the school the alphabet with the vowels; prayer book, Pentateuch with Rashi; the whole order of the prayers for the particular occasions; and ethics. The children should also learn the alphabet of the foreign languages (Polish) in order to be able to read the books (for what purposes) and also ~~the~~ to write in the language of the country. The more apt among the students were to be taught Hebrew grammar and arithmetic. If a boy reaches the age of 14 and is not distinguished by his knowledge of the Gemara he is to be taught a trade. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p. 121, Note 4.) About



the year 1600 the Council contributed one fifth of two thousand gold pieces which was the required amount to save the Jewish community of Cuelz in one of the German countries, from expulsion, thus extending its benefactions outside of Poland. (Graetz, Heb. Harkavy p.31.) Among the manifold duties of the Council of the Three Lands was to send accredited agents thru' out the country searching for husbands who had deserted their wives. (Pene Yehoshua, pt. 2; Sim. 63. Katz, p. 27).

#### SUMMARY.

The Council of Lands was founded 1520-40, tho' it could not boast of much organization at that time; it was primarily an assembly of Parnasim (lay leaders) who associated with themselves certain rabbis. First Three Lands; about 30 years after the Union of Lublin, Volynia was added to the Council, but it was not until the period between 1624-40 that it became a definite unit forming the "Fourth Land". Lithuania never entered the Council of the Four Lands even in the fifty years between the Union of Lublin and the Foundation of its own Council. The Lithuanian Council was founded in 1623 for the same purpose as the Council of Four Lands:- the apportionment of taxes among the several communities. At first only Grodno, Pinsk and Brest were included, later Vilna and Slutsk added. (Graetz, Heb. VII; pp.433-441.) The letters and decrees of Sig.I show that the real purpose of the founding of the Vaad was the matter of taxes and for this reason the king approved of it. Incidentally disputes between individuals that occurred at the fair were brought up, or affairs that had been hanging over since the last fair, or matters which had not been accepted in decisions of rabbis of lesser communities. (Ibid. Harkavy VII; p.8.)

After a time when the Kahal became well organized it found that its work required them to establish and to limit the jurisdiction of the authority of each community; to sit on cases between community and individual; to divide and apportion taxes on communities to settle religious problems; education, questions of communal income; to advise on matters of intercession before the authorities at critical times; decisions on



matters of ritual and practical religion. (Ibid. p.352.) The Kahal really began to develop after the death of the last Jagellons when the country became an elective monarchy and the power of the central government became weakened. The leaders of the Jewish communities saw that it was necessary for their own protection to develop and to strengthen the bonds between the Jewish communities and incidentally to strengthen their inner house:- Talmudic studies which embraced the determining statutes for this autonomous community. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.96.) Because they had much in common - especially danger,- the two great Councils of Poland and Lithuania worked in harmony when conditions required their co-operation; the Lithuanian Council sending delegates to the Council of the Four Lands. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.441.) The Kahal gave the Jews inward strength and outward respect. It was for the most part the governing body of the Jewish group. Its organization was really a great boon to the Jews inasmuch as the authorities had no real interest in them and they had to work out their own salvation. By serving as guide and mentor in all intercommunal disputes it strengthened and lengthened the life of the community. (Graetz, Heb. VII; pp.352-3.)

It is very questionable however if the Council ever possessed the unlimited authority that some historians would wish to ascribe to it. It is questionable if it had the complete support of the temporal authorities or even of the Jews themselves. I do not think that it would be inaccurate to state that the Polish authorities merely tolerated it because it assured them their taxes and that the Jewish people supported it as circumstances dictated. The Jews were an autonomous group in all cities where they were located but the authority of the Jewish leaders ceased at the minute that an individual Jew wished to have recourse to the non-Jewish courts. Despite the decrees and charters issued authorizing Jews to try their own cases I am not aware that Jews were forbidden to have recourse to non-Jewish courts. It was this possibility of recourse to external authority that threatened the foundations of Jewish autonomy and was the key note to legislation and action on the part of Jewish leaders. The fear of intervention in the communal life on the part of the secular authorities was so great



that excommunication was imposed on any Jew who interfered with the customary mode of elections and attempted thru' intrigue with the secular authorities to interfere with established acquired privileges. (Ibid. Harkavy, pp.27-8.) The privilege of self government was not without its dangers too. The kings officials did not hesitate to hold the communal leaders responsible for crimes by Jewish individuals and this to a certain extent exposed the leaders to the vagaries of blackmailing Jewish scoundrels. (Bet Hodosh Yeshenot, Sim. 43. Katz, pp.12-3.) There was also a conflict of authority between the Leaders of the Council and the great rabbinical leaders. Maharam Lublin permits Jews to accept yayin neseK from Christians in payment of debts although this Heb. had been expressly forbidden by the Council. (Graetz, Harkavy, p. 29.)

An attempt to compare the work and organization of the Council to the Synods of the Dissidents (Protestants and Anti-trinitarians) is of necessity rather a hazardous proceeding. We have no direct information that either was affected by the other. At best we can only show similarities and draw our own conclusions from the data presented. There is hardly the possibility here of arguing from priority. There have been councils and synods in Catholic Christendom ever since the New Testament period and the Jews thru'out the diaspora had ample opportunity to benefit from the assemblies of their Christian brethren. Under circumstances which were favorable either during the Talmudic times or later the Jews did have some sort of assemblies which legislated for the people. The Council developed in Poland not altogether because of the need for it, - the same need existed in all countries of the Diaspora, - but because the loose political organization of the land; the constant dissension and internecine war; the composite character of the body politic, permitted the organization of an Assembly of the type that we have described. The Protestant synods and assemblies come into being from the middle of the 16th century and on. The Jewish Council altho' in existence for a decade or two prior to this had no real organization and it is not until the last quarter of the 16th century that the Vaad takes on a definite organization.

The long drawn out Council of Trent called among other things to fight the Pro-



testant Revolution occasioned a great deal of discussion in Poland. The one great and outstanding difference between the two groups in their Assemblies, as Graetz had briefly pointed out, is that the Christians were interested almost completely in dogma; the Jews in affairs of practical purpose. This is true for the most part for the following reason:- The Christians as integral parts of the body politic were subject to the organic law of the country and could not of necessity concern itself with civil law and enactments. The Jews on the other hand were somewhat of an imperium in imperio, a distinct group living under its own laws, what the modern day Turks call a "millet." It was necessary therefore for the Jews to make laws of practical import. The dogmatic issue hardly, if ever, affected the Jew inasmuch as Judaism, in spite of its legalistic character allowed infinite expansion and furthermore the weapons of religious compulsion had never been fully developed by Jewish leaders who had not the authority to carry the weapon of excision into full force. However, in the Bohemian Brethren, one of the three Dissident groups in Poland, who we shall later consider, we find elements analagous to that of the Jews for they were a foreign group, speaking a language of their own, with a separate culture of their own. Modrzewski, a Polish nobleman, influenced by this Council, proposed another Council that would undertake to reform the abuses of the Church. He suggested that all the members of the Diocese should be convoked by the Bishop to a diocese synod; which in turn should send delegates to a general synod composed of both clergy and laymen. This proposal is very interesting. The <sup>suggested</sup> invocation of the laymen in dogmatic disputes and church government is an innovation in Catholic life. The Jewish council it will be remembered always coopted laymen in its work. The popular election of delegates to a diocesan synod and the further election at the diocesan synod of delegates, both clergy and laymen to a general synod is true in general of the Vaad organization. However, it is most probably that both the Jews and Modrzewski based their ideas on the national political organization which was similar. The Polish government had both Provinial Diets (Dietines) and the National Diet, and the greatest part of the



public offices in Poland were elective as were the offices of the Council. (Krasinski, 1; p.233.) In practically all the Protestant and Anti-Trinitarian synods in Poland from 1560 on the laity were represented with the clergy. This is especially characteristic of the Anti-Trinitarians, a group that was profoundly influenced by Anti-Romanist Humanists of Germany and Italy. This group attempted to establish the superiority of the laity over the clergy; in the government of the church; to deprive the minister of influence and to limit him to the office of teaching. This process of the growing power of the laity in church government and in communal life which to a certain extent is the underlying motif of the whole struggle prior to the Lutheran Revolt is evidenced in the Council and the individual congregations where the layman is supreme. (Krasinski, 1; pp.352-3).

In 1569 at the great Polish center of commerce and activity, Lublin, there was consummated the final union of Poland and Lithuania. A year later at Sandomir, the three confessions of the Dissidents in Poland; the Helvetian (Calvinists); the Bohemian Brethren and the Augustan (Lutherans) were joined together and it is about this time that the Council of the Three Lands is actively organized. The real motive behind the union of the Dissidents of Poland into a national organization was not dogmatic but an attempt to consolidate against the attacks of the Roman Church, and as long as the united confessions adhered to this purpose they persevered, but they were rent by dogmatic disputes, which the Council was always spared, - and the Consensus of Sandomir was finally dissolved and brought with it ultimate destruction of the Protestant movement in Poland. It is interesting to note in three of the greatest national synods convoked by the Dissidents in Poland, a number of ideas, and enactments quite similar to that of the Council. In all three synods there were both laymen and clergyman; the officers of the synod were elected at the synod; no books were to be printed without having been previously submitted to the approbation of the leaders of the three confessions. (Krasinski, LL; pp.79-80.) Vicious people were to be expelled from the church; morals were regulated; abusive language, dancing, gambling, low dress forbidden.



Inns were to be kept clear of immoral women; landlords were not to oppress their peasants; markets and fairs to be kept closed on Sunday. (Krasinski, II, pp.65ff.) One of the synods was called for the express purpose of considering ways and means of combating the hostile activity of the Jesuits. The clerical leaders of the three confessions were expected to meet each year at an appointed time and place with the clerical chief of the Calvinists of Lithuania to discuss matters of church. These clerical leaders were also to attend the Diets and to confer with Protestant lay leaders as to the convocation of general synods. A general school was to be established centrally and upper and primary schools in the church districts supported by the landlords. Fasts were to be declared to fend off the divine wrath and to ward off threatened evils, presumably religious enemies. (Krasinski, II, pp.79-80, 106ff.) Although most of these enactments can be found in the decrees of various Catholic Councils throughout the ages most of them are also characteristic of the nature of the Council of Lands which was contemporaneous with these Synods which extended from the first half of the 16th century. It is interesting to note that in the first theological work of the Anti-trinitarians, published in Cracow in 1574, the members of this small, separatistic organization are forbidden to sue before any tribunal and refractory members are not to be persecuted but admonished and if refractory to be excluded. (Krasinski, I, pp.362-3.) The injunction to abstain from recourse to secular courts was a fundamental principle of autonomous, organized Jewry and the exclusion of refractory members of the community was characteristic of Jewish communal activities.

Because of the lack of unity and the desire to unite in order to fight their enemies the Protestants in Poland devoted the period from 1555 to 1570 to unification and organization. Of the three confessions: the Helvetian and the Augustan had separate organized hierarchies for the provinces of Greater and Lesser Poland and Lithuania. The organization here is patterned after the political, geographical divisions and are thus coterminous with the provinces that either were part of or associated with the Council. The three confessions were occasionally united by great national convocations



or Synods. The Council on the other hand met regularly twice a year. The chief of the province for the Protestants was the Superintendent who corresponded somewhat to the Roman Catholic Bishop; he resembles the Parnas in that he presided over the provincial synod; ordained "seniors" of his district; executed enactments; inspected printing presses; and was subject to the synod. This superintendent, or senior primarius was assisted by political and clerical seniors. The political senior was elected at the synods by the land owners and other nobles alone and concerned himself with the conduct of congregations and ministers; and acted as advocate before the temporal authorities in affairs involving the church. The Clerical senior appointed from each church district concerned himself with more religious issues. These seniors were assisted by conseniors. The clerical senior had direct control of the ministers, deacons and lecturers. The supreme government of the churches was vested in the synods which met in the local church districts four times a year in which all members of the church participated. This unit would correspond to all individual congregations in the Council organization. Each local church district sent a clerical senior; the two conseniors and the province sent four civil seniors to an annual provincial synod at which ministers if they so desired, altho' not delegates, might participate. This would correspond to the provincial Council in the Jewish organization. The general or national synods were called at emergencies only.

The Bohemian Brethren, living chiefly in Greater Poland,- tho they also had communities in Mazovia; Little Poland, Red Russia and Lithuania, were all united under one chief senior, who was assisted by a number of conseniors. They seem to have had some of the duties ascribed to the Parnas of the Council. The pastors of this church were obliged to educate in their houses some young men for the church somewhat like the rabbinical students in the homes of the rabbis. At their synods one Bishop acted as the President; another as the secretary; co-bishops assisted. Synods in this church were general and particular, in which clergy and laymen participated. The particular synods were local and considered local problems. Discipline was effected thru admonition,



public reprehension and if necessary exclusion from the church. This church concerned itself with the legislation of moral teachings for its followers, and the minutiae of life somewhat after the fashion of the Vaad. Its followers lived a close simple life, trying to emulate the primitive Jewish church and in this respect they approached somewhat to contemporaneous Jewish methods. (This discussion of the organization of the Protestant churches of Poland is taken from Krasinski, II; p.292 ff.)

In view of the many parallels in motive, legislation and organization between the Protestant groups and the Council of Lands I think it would be safe to say that there is evidently a mutual influence but in all probabilities both drew directly from the contemporaneous Polish political organization which seems to be at the base of both organizations.



## MICHAEL SERVETUS AND THE JEWS.

### Appendix II.

I have placed Servetus among the Hebraists tho' it is questionable if he knew much Hebrew. It seems that he secured some of his Rabbinic quotations second hand. His whole life work however is permeated with Jewish influences and his god conception as evidenced in his works was a direct and strong influence upon the Anti-trinitarians of Poland in the 16th century. The development of Servetus' relation to Judaism is for the most part taken from the monograph by Jacob Guttman: Michael Servet in seinen Beziehungen zum Judentum. (Monat. G.W.J. Vol. LI; pp.77-94. 1907). Anti-trinitarianism is the burden of all his works. He was opposed to the belief in the Trinity because of reason and the testimony of the Bible. (Guttman; p.82). It is this sound scientific approach to the Trinity that also characterizes most of the radical Christian thinkers of this century and also the author of *Hizuk Emunah* in his arguments against the Christian conception of the Trinity. Yet there is no evidence to believe that Servetus was a Unitarian; he fulminated against the scholastic conception of the Trinity but did not in turn offer a god conception that unequivocally maintained a pure unity. (Allen, p.44.) Servetus, had a splendid classical training which gave him the critical attitude toward a proper study of literature and influenced <sup>him</sup> to go to the Bible itself for an exact knowledge of the theology. He believed with the Jewish commentators that the prophets should be interpreted in the light of the events of their day and not in accordance with the vagaries of enthusiastic Christologists. (Ibid. pp.36-7.) In his mystical enthusiasm he declares that he finds all his philosophy and all his sciences in the Bible. (Ibid. p.32.) However, it was his knowledge of a number of the great Jewish commentators, writers and theologians to whom he had constant recourse for interpretation that laid him open to the attacks of his enemies who declared that he had visited Africa and had derived his religious notions from Jews and Turks residing in that country. (Wallace, I; p.421.) It is most probably that his knowledge of the Jewish writers comes thru' anti-Jewish works. He quotes Rashi once on Genesis 1-7;



(Christ. restit. De Trinit. 11; p.155) Ibn Ezra twice (Christ. restit. De Orbis perditioni 1, p.399) and Abraham Saba, a contemporary, twice, (Christ. restit. Dialog. De Trinit 1; p.22) in Guttman, p. 91.) It is evident however from his quotation of Saba that he managed some way or other to keep in touch with contemporary Jewish literature.

In two places he mentions David Kimchi's commentary to the Psalms in dealing with Psalm 11, verse 7, adopting the Jewish interpretation, which he declares to be irrefutable, and condemning the Christological interpretation which he declares to be foolish. (DeTrinit. errorib. 11, p.56b;59. in Guttman, p. 92.) As for the two elements used by God in creation;- the one for heaven and the other for earth he evidently had heard or knew of this Jewish idea found in the Pirke d'r. Eliezer, chapter III, and in the Moreh of Maimuni II-26. (Christ. restit. De Trinit. IV; p. 159. In Guttman pp.87-8.) He also quotes the Akedath Yizhak of Isaac Arama, a Spanish writer who died shortly before the birth of Servetus. He sees an analogy to the Trinity in the sentences in Proverbs V: 1-2. (Christ. restit. Apolog. as. Ph. Melanch, pp.699-700, in Guttman, pp.87-8.) Speaking of the views of Church Fathers and the Scholasts on the Trinity he says that such horrible blasphemies are not even found in the Talmud or the Koran. (Christ. restit. De Trinit. 1-46) He quotes the statement in Breshith Rabbah 1 to the effect that God only contemplated creating the name of the Messiah in His pre-creative moments of contemplation in order to controvert the idea of the Trinitarian sophists that the person and visible form of the Messiah was subsisting in God. (Christ. restit. De Trinit. IV pp.133-4, in Guttman pp. 96-98.) Servetus quotes Maimuni's principle that the sacrificial system was given to the Jews to lead them away from heathenish idolatry tho' he does not quote the name of Maimuni. (Christ. restit. Dialogi de trinitate, 1; p.224) but in developing this same idea of Maimuni' in Christ restit. Epist. ad calvin, p. 652 he makes a direct mention of Maimuni. (Moreh, III, p. 32-46. in Guttman, pp.89-90.) If Servetus did not use a Hebrew copy of the Maimuni he could have had access to this work thru' the Latins translations then extant. Servetus knew of the Nizahon thru' a manu-



script and in speaking of this book he is very harsh and bitter. This is the only known instance where he speaks harshly of a Jew. (Christ. restit. De Trinit. 11, p. 61, in Guttman p. 92.) Servetus is important because of his recourse to the Bible as the true source of theology; because of his historic-exegetical mode of interpretation; his Anti-trinitarian God conception; his employment of reason in theological thought; and the influence that he exerted on the Polish Anti-trinitarians.



## APPENDICES

### CHAPTER I.

The Synods and the Council of Four Lands

Appendix I.

Page 1 to Page 17

Michael Servetus and the Jews.

Appendix II.

" 1 " " 3

### CHAPTER II.

Jewish Converts and Conversion in Poland in  
XVth, XVIth, XVIIth Centuries. Appendix III.

A. The Russian Judaizers

" 1 " " 3

B. Conversion and Apostasy in Russia,  
Poland and Lithuania in XVIth, XVIIth  
and XVIIIth Centuries.

" 4 " " 10

The Government and the Jews in Poland in the  
Sixteenth Century. Appendix IV.

A. The Government and the Jews in Poland  
in the Sixteenth Century

" 1 " " 11

B. The Church and the Jews in Poland in  
the Sixteenth Century.

" 11 " " 15

C. Inner Life of Polish Jewry in the Six-  
teenth Century.

" 15 " " 18

D. Jews of Prominence in Financial Life

" 19 " " 20

E. Poland as a Refuge

" 20 " " 21

F. Polish Persecution

" 21 " " 23

G. Jewish Captives

" 23 " " 23

H. Jewish Malefactors

" 23 " " 25

I. Communal Leaders

" 25 " " 28

J. Printing

" 28 " " 29

K. Relations between Jews and non-Jews

" 30 " " 33

L. Jews as "Secularists"

" 34 " " 40

Simon Budny and the Jews. Appendix V.

" 1 " " 7

Francis David and the Sabbatarians in their rela-  
tion to Polish Anti-trinitarianism.

Appendix VI.

" 1 " " 7

Judaizers in Poland in the Sixteenth Century

Appendix VII.

" 1 " " 6



JEWISH CONVERTS AND CONVERSION IN POLAND

IN XVth-XVith-XVIth CENTURIES.

THE RUSSIAN JUDAIZERS.

APPENDIX III

In the latter half of the fifteenth century the rationalistic and critical spirit of West<sup>e</sup> European Humanism had filtered into Russia following the trade routes. Schisms also broke out in the Greek Catholic church during this period of religious stress and storm, and all this added to the zeal of prosleytizing Jews who thought they saw their opportunity in the humanistic and religious revolutions of the 15th and sixteenth centuries, which thus gave rise to a Judaizing movement. (J.E. VII; p.369ff.) One of the earliest of Russian historians, a bitter opponent of the whole Judaizing movement ascribes its origin to the Kiev Jew Skhariyah, but altho' this statement of the origin seems to be accepted by all Jewish historians it should be born in mind that the most prevalent method of damning a movement was to ascribe to it a Jewish origin. This Skhariyah (c.1470) it seems was a practical Kabbalist, a mystic who influenced people thru' his conception of love and thru' visions. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.60). Associated with Skhariyah were a number of Lithuanian Jews, all having Slavonicized names. The heresy which started most probably in the great commercial city of Novgorod, just north of the Lithuanian border spread to Pskov and Moscow in which latter city they soon acquired a large following. The actual heresiarchs and sponsors of the movement were the priests Alexius and Denis, whose work centered in and around Moscow. In 1487 a number of Moscow merchants were circumcized and fled to Lithuania. (J.E. VII; p.369) A year later the heresy had acquired such proportions that a council was called by some of the orthodox leaders to fight the heretics, ~~quoting the prophet~~ "who glorify the Jewish faith and abuse the Greek orthodox religion" (Ibid.) These Russian Judaizers were not Jewish converts in the full sense of the term. Urged by the prevailing<sup>critical</sup> spirit of the time, leaders who were for the most part of the cultured class, rejected the N.T. and reverted to the O.T. which they seem to recognize and believe in as a basic, moral and



ceremonial code; a spirit of ascetic mysticism also possessed them and found an outlet in the Hebrew ceremonialism and added to these two influences was the actual work of zealous Jews acting as missionaries. Judaization in Russia at the end of the fifteenth century was a tendency to glorify the Jewish faith; to abuse the mother religion, yet without fully leaving its fold. The same mystic ecstasy that found its outlet in celebrating the Mosaic festivals and following the Jewish calendar is characteristic of both the Russian Judaizers and the Transylvanian Sabbatarians. (Rudnjew, p.107, quoted in Sternberg, p.122. Nicol. Rudnjew: Treatise on the Heresies and Divisions in the Russian Church from Wladimir the Great to Ivan the Terrible. (Russian) Moscow. 1838. Based on "Proswjetitel" (The Enlightener) by Joseph Wolokolamski (Volotzki), a work on sects, a contemporary and opponent of the Russian Judaizers. d. 1516).

The dogmas of these Judaizers briefly are as follows:

1. God the Father had no son or holy ghost.
2. Jesus is not the true son of God. The Messiah is not yet born. Jesus Christ is ~~not yet born~~ only a mortal man, was crucified and buried.
3. Law of Moses only to be followed.
4. Redemption thru' Jesus is unnecessary and not reconcilable with God's nature.
5. Writings of the "Fathers" rejected and also the New Testament for it is now fifteen hundred years and Jesus has not yet come.
6. The worship of images is idolatry.
7. Monks' celibacy, is not a divine but a human institution, and is anti-Biblical inasmuch as it defies the precept to raise up seed.
8. Attacks Mariolatry and Hagiolatry. (Rudnjew, p.110, in Sternberg pp.117-18.)

The similarity of this creed to the Davidian theses is evident. Strong government action in 1504 for all practical purposes crushed the sect tho' not before some had gone over directly to Judaism. (J.E. VII; p.369ff) In order to prevent the sectaries from making any headway, anti-Jewish works in use in Western Europe were translated from the Latin and spread among the people. It was



hoped that the association of the hatred Jew with the new movement would completely ~~eliminate~~ eliminate it as a popular creed. (Ibid.)

The persecutions of 1504 did not entirely crush the movement. The influence of the religious liberalism of the sixteenth century again affected Russia and the sectaries took on a new lease of life. Some of the Judaizers threw off the mask of Christianity and definitely went over to Judaism. Mathaus Bakschyn made many converts about 1554. Theodosius Kosoj of Moscow went to Lithuania in 1552 where he married a Jewess. Kosoj does not seem to be a full going convert to Judaism either. He believes in the Mosaic books; rejected the Trinity on the basis of the Shema; denied the divinity of Jesus Christ and forbade image worship. He traveled thru' Lithuania spreading his doctrines (c.1555) and had followers in Moscow and in the monasteries of the northern part of the Volga. (Sternberg, pp.122-3) (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.61) Interesting as an evidence that these Judaizers were not Jews, as some of our Jewish historians would imply, is the following statement from Bet Hillel, Eben Ho'ezer. Sim. 2, c. 1600-1650, that thorough investigation should be made into the ancestry of every man who claims to be a Jew and desires to marry into a Jewish family. For there are some who conduct themselves according to the Jewish religion, speak the language, know all the customs of the faith, who even so require investigation. It was the custom, he said, in Lithuania not to marry any one unless there is proof that he is a Jew, and ~~was~~ "So I acted in the case of a man who came from M o s c o w and I decreed that investigation should be made until his Jewish descent was ascertained." (Quoted in Katz, p.56).

The first part of the sixteenth century in Poland, at a time when the Reformation was yet unborn; when no reactionary intolerant religious tendencies had arisen; themselves there were evidently Poles who became converts to the Jewish faith and lived in Poland undisturbed. Some of these proselytes, however, for greater safety were sent to the border provinces of Russia and to Turkey. (Graetz, loc. cit. p.62-3, note 1. quoting Pfefferkorn in Handelsblatt against Berlin, 1578). Conversations of this type were purely and directly a result of the direct intercourse that existed in Poland at this time between the Jews and non-Jews.



## CONVERSION AND APOSTASY IN RUSSIA, POLAND AND

### LITHUANIA IN XVIth, XVIIth AND XVIIIth

#### CENTURY.

The conception that one might garner from the average popular and even scientific history of the Jews that the chosen people lived secluded in ghettos, steadfastly maintaining their own faith, living a separate and distinct life, away from non-Jewish influences is a nonsensical. A study of slavonic Jewish life from the fifteenth thru the sixteenth century evidences a close association of the Jews with their non-Jewish neighbors especially in the smaller towns and villages. This change of views due to commercial and even social intercourse is most strongly evidenced in converts to Judaism and apostasy from the faith. It is quite difficult at times to determine however who are Jews and who are merely Judaizers. The distinction between the two groups is very evident at times and again verges into a creed that is but little different from the acknowledged Judaism of the age. (Cf. the early Christian converts the Clements, claimed as proselytes both by the Jews and the early Christians.) In view of the radical theological spirit that characterized all of Europe in the sixteenth century and was marked by a distinct Hebraistic trend that evidenced itself in Western Europe thru' the Anabaptist movement and in Eastern Europe thru' the Polish Anti-trinitarians; Transylvanian Sabbatarians and Russian Judaizers, it would be more advisable to accept the statement that the Judaizers were Jewish converts with a great deal of caution.

In the first part of the sixteenth century in Poland, at a time when the Reformation was yet unborn; when no reactionary intolerant religious tendencies had evidenced themselves there were evidently Poles who became converts to the Jewish faith and lived in Poland undisturbed. Some of these proselytes, however, for greater safety were sent to the border province of Russia and to Turkey. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.62-3, Note 1, quoting Pfefferkorn in Handspiegel against Buchlin, 1510). Conversions of this type were purely and directly a result of the direct intercourse that existed in Poland at this time between the Jews and non-Jews.



One of the cases of alleged conversion was that of Catherine Zaleshovska (Vogel Weygel, Zalaszwowska, Melcherowa) an elderly woman of eighty, a wife of a Cracow alderman. The statement that she was a full convert to Judaism is hardly justified by the evidence or an understanding of the times in which she lived. The statement that the disputes in Poland between the Jews and various sects of the Christians gave the Jews an opportunity to proselytize and thus to convert this woman is hardly justified in view of the fact that there was no real active attempt to effect a schism in the Polish Catholic church for twenty years after the occurrence of this alleged conversion. (Graetz Heb. VII; p.320) She was in all probabilities one of the precursors of the Anti-Trinitarian movement and she is regarded by a contemporary Polish anti-Trinitarian as the first Polish member of the movement. (Wallace, 11; p.139) The Bishop of Cracow made futile efforts to bring her back to the fold before condemning her to death. The accusation was that she denied the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, and that she adhered secretly to the Jewish faith. The following is the testimony of the trial as given by Lucas Gurnitzki a contemporaneous historian:-

"The priest Gamrat, Bishop of Cracow, assembled all canons and collegiates in order to examine her as to her principles of faith. When in accordance with our creed, she was asked whether she believed in Almighty God; the Creator of Heaven and earth, she replied: "I believe in God, who created all that we see and do not see, who cannot be comprehended by the human reason, who poureth forth his bounty over man and over all things in the universe." Do you believe in the only-begotten son, Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Ghost?, she was asked. She answered: "The Lord God has neither wife nor son, nor does He need them. For sons are needed by those who die, but God is eternal, and since He was not born, it is impossible that he should die. It is we whom he considers his sons, and His sons are those who walk in his paths." Here the collegiates shouted: "Thou utterest evil, thou miserable one! Bethink thyself. Surely there are prophecies that the Lord would send His son into the world to be crucified for our sins, in order that we, having been disobedient from the days of our ancestor Adam, may be reconciled to God, the Father. A great deal more was said by the learned men to the apostate woman, but the more they spoke, the more stubborn was she in her contention that God was not and could not be born as a human being. When it was found impossible to detach her from her Jewish beliefs, it was decided to convict her of blasphemy. She was taken to the city jail, and a few days later she was burned. She went to her death without the slightest fear." (Dubnow 1, pp.79-80.)



Her faith as presented by a contemporary historian would indicate that she was a characteristic early Anti-trinitarian with a God-conception that was almost purely unitarian, not complicated by the compromise that later characterized the Socinian group. The accusation of adhering to Jewish doctrines is the characteristic church accusation against those advocating a god-conception that is not in accordance with the orthodox trinitarian dogma. A Socinian historian of that period is of the opinion that she was suspected of Judaism only because she denied that the Son of God was begotten from eternity of the substance of the Father. (Wallace II; p. 139.)

The spread of the anti-Romanist and the Lutheran doctrines which were probably responsible for the attitude of Catherine Zaleshovska made heavy inroads into the ranks of orthodox believers and in all probabilities stimulated the Jewish people to some sort of proselytizing. It is well known that the Jews of Germany during the Lutheran Revolution watched the progress of the schism with great interest and felt that their faith would ultimately benefit by it and in all probabilities the Jew of Poland assumed the same point of view. The same year that witnessed the execution of the aged Zaleshovska saw the rise of a series of bitter accusations against the Jews of Poland and Lithuania; that they were engaged in an active campaign of proselytization. The rumors and accusations were that the Jews were converting many Christians, sending them to Lithuania from whence they were sent for greater safety to Turkey where they openly professed their faith. A number of these converts were made in Cracow, the hot-bed and Polish source of Anti-trinitarianism where after being circumcised they were sent to Lithuania. The testimony was from Christian and Jewish sources. The Christians declared that many Christians had been converted and the testimony of a Jewish informer was to the effect that in a city of Walachia he had seen hundreds of newly circumcised converts on the way to the Turkish border; that the Jews were in correspondence with the Sultan who contemplated a Polish invasion. Evidence was also furnished that carts of Jews filled with goods were being taken across the border to Turkey. The King, Sig. I, was very much worried, not so much about the converts as the loss of the Jews



and their goods. The king sent two commissions to Lithuania to investigate and both commissions took the opportunity to persecute the Jews bitterly; breaking open homes; extorting monies and establishing a veritable reign of terror. In their delegations to the King the Jews denied all attempts to convert the Christians and even promised to turn over to the authorities such men as were making converts. The King then issued decrees in their favor. Naturally with the evidence presented there is no means at hand to ascertain if the Jews were engaged, even sporadically in individual attempts, at proselytization.

This was the period of the encroachments made by the Western European liberals and the more zealous of the clergy that to forestal the liberal movement by turning the attention of the temporal authorities against the Jews and intimidating all prospective liberals who were usually associated with Judaistic tendencies. The Christians and Jewish informers were evidently inspired tools of either the clergy or the Italian inner court clique led by the Queen Bona. It was the opinion of the Jews that the Queen and her chancellor Kmita were behind the Kings investigations in order that they might blackmail the Jews. (Graetz. Heb. VII; p.320-1)(Dubnow, 1; p.81.) Altho one can hardly say that there is much truth to the inspired accusations of unscrupulous tools it would not be just to say, on the other hand, that the story was made out of a whole cloth. Bielski a contemporary Polish historian also records the statement that the Jews were making many proselytes and sending them to Turkey by way of Hungary to escape the wrath of their former co-religionists. (Kron. Pols. p.1082. quoted in Sternberg, p.114.) Converts, sympathizers and Judaizing Christians occasionally straggled into the Jewish faith as evidenced by the statement that there were some people acquainted with Jewish customs and life and religion whose Jewish ancestry was questionable and that in Lithuania especially these cases were evidently so frequent that before marriage with such a suspect could be sanctioned an investigation was made of his family. (Bet. Hillel, eben ho'ezer, Sim. 2. 1600-1650. Katz, p.56.) The Jews evidently were not particularly desirous of receiving many new recruits. The time was ripe for Jewish converts especially those in



the early part of the 16th century who felt that there was no half way station between Catholicism and Judaism which most Poles later found in Socinianism. A just estimate of the situation would probably be to state that altho wholesale conversions as stated were altogether wrong there was evidently activity on the part of individuals. Among the proselytes whom Bielski records in this period (Bielski was a contemporary of Sig. I, 1506-48) were Peter Zatorski ~~and~~ of Cracow and Jacob Melsztynczyk. Melsztynczyk, attempted to build up a new religious system on a Mosaic basis and hoped to establish his faith thru' Miracles. He was finally murdered by peasants in Silesia. (Sternberg, p.114).

Characteristic of the sixteenth century legislation as proposed by various church assemblies and adopted and approved by succeeding national Diets was the incorporation in the statutes of the mediaeval church prohibition ~~that~~ <sup>MAINT</sup> Jews ~~to~~ <sup>NO</sup> employ Christian servants, especially maid servants for fear that they might become converts. It is not known whether these laws as repeated all thru' the sixteenth century in Poland and Lithuania were set forth to actually combat conditions of conversion or merely repeated as some of these "Stock prohibitions" were in all charters and legislation. In all probabilities, inasmuch as none of these enactments were observed, they were not reissued to combat any tendency on the part of the Jew to infringe on the religious principles of their servants. (Sternberg, pp. 142-6; Dubnow, I; pp.81-3) The Jews at this period of Polish Jewish life were quite interested in discussing their faith and recommending it to those whom they thought might be interested.

The following is a brief extract from one of the "Dialogs" of Martin Czechowicz:

"Teacher: Why didn't you visit me?"

Student: I met some Jews casually yesterday; no sooner did I begin to speak to them than they began to speak of their religion, recommended it to me and found fault with all others especially with the Christians and the Turkish."

(Graetz, Ger. IX; p.469. Note 3.) The disputations recorded in the "Faith Strengthened" of Isaac b. Abraham and the Disputations with the Jews as recorded by Czechowicz in his "Christian Dialogs" and "Catechism" show that the Jews were in constant theological touch



with the non-Jews; that there was a give and take in that.

The material data on Jewish apostasy is more abundant, not as an indication that there was more apostasy than conversion but merely because the responsa literature deals with this phase of Jewish life more in extenso than it does with the conversion phase. The various kings of the Polish empire during the sixteenth century approved of and reissued laws in favor of the Jews that had been originally promulgated centuries before. Some of these laws were statutes constantly in use; others were without significance. There were certain stock prohibitions directed against the Christians such as the prohibition of seizing Jewish children, orphans for the purpose of raising them as Christians. Such may be the type of the prohibition embodied among a number of decrees issued by Stephen Batory in 1576 from Thorn that Jewish orphans are not to be seized and raised as Christians and that such children in the possession of Christians be surrendered. (Graetz Heb. VII;p.332.) A year later a serious riot was started in the city of Posen, always a hotbed of Polish Jew-haters, by the refusal of a Jewess to see her husband who had announced his intention of renouncing his faith. (Ibid. 331.) Interesting is the decision of the King in 1580 that an apostate Jew must divide his estate equally between his Jewish and his Gentile children, in the case where he had remarried after having divorced his Jewish wife. (Ibid. 332) A rather curious law was that on the Statute books of Lithuania the Jewish converts to Christianity would be admitted into the ranks of the nobility. I believe that its significance merely lies in the fact that the Jew would receive the franchise which was the privilege of the nobility alone; the peasants were already disenfranchised and the burghers, foreigners in large part lived under special charters. This opportunity given to the Jews by Sig. II (1548-72) and again by Sig. III was not eagerly seized by the Jews who had no political ambitions and were desirous only of liberty for their religion and commercial activity. (Sternberg, p.145; Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.100) Cases of intermarriage occurred; one of the parties involved of course giving up his or her faith. Interesting is the recorded case of a Christian who declared that a Jewish girl had promised to forsake her faith and marry him and the aunt of the



girl in trepidation lest it might occur packs the girl off to another province. (Bet  
Hillil. pt. on Yoreh De'ah Sim. 157. c. 1650. Katz, p.13.)

By far the largest number of Jewish apostates were Jewish criminals. It was their  
wont to terrorize their respective communities; threaten to apostasize, be forgiven and  
continue their wanton acts until the Jews could no longer tolerate their evil; turn them  
over to the secular authorities and use their influence to prevent his apostasy and secure  
his execution. Characteristic is the story of the Jewish criminal and scoundrel who when  
ordered by the Jewish beadle to report to the Jewish court for punishment answered: "And  
do you think that I'll go to the Beth Din. Well, I'll tell you what my intentions are;  
what they have been for a long time and now I'm going to do it. I'm going to the priest."  
The beadle carried the answer back to the people and from that time they refrained from  
disturbing him. It is very hard for us to understand the frame of mind of the Jewish  
people of that time in a case like this. The threat of apostasy unnerved them and the  
explanation can hardly be that they feared to lose a member of the body politic as that  
the apostate became an informer, a tool in the hands of sinister authorities to plague  
the people. (Eitan Ha Ezrahi. Sim. 43. circa 1648. Katz. p.24.) The same author records  
a bitter arraignment of the leaders of the Jewish communities who attempt to gain the  
freedom of every Jewish criminal for fear that they will make false accusations or aposta-  
size to Christianity. (Eitan He Ezrahi. of R. Abraham Rappoport. (Schrentsle) Sim.45.  
c.1647) Meir of Lublin is most bitter against Jewish criminals for he is of the  
opinion that they will ultimately become apostates and thus always be a thorn in the  
Jewish side. Decent apostates or apostates for conscience sake evidently were unheard  
of. To prove his contention Meir quotes the case of a Jewish murderer who was let off  
lightly merely having his eyes blinded and his tongue torn out, but after that marrying  
a Christian woman, rearing a family, and becoming a bitter enemy of the Jews. (Maharam  
Lublin. 1st. edit. Sim. 138. Katz, p.52-3. circa 1600.)

of all charters granted to individual cities where Jewish communities had organized. A  
characteristic grant is that of 1514 of Sigismund the First (King of Poland and Grand  
Duke of Lithuania) to a number of Lithuanian cities whereby he confirmed the privileges



## APPENDICES

### CHAPTER I.

The Synods and the Council of Four Lands

Appendix I.

Michael Servetus and the Jews.

Appendix II.

Page 1 to Page 17

" 1 " " 3

### CHAPTER II.

Jewish Converts and Conversion in Poland in  
XVth, XVIth, XVIIth Centuries. Appendix III.

A. The Russian Judaizers

" 1 " " 3

B. Conversion and Apostasy in Russia,  
Poland and Lithuania in XVIth, XVIIth  
and XVIIIth Centuries.

" 4 " " 10

The Government and the Jews in Poland in the  
Sixteenth Century. Appendix IV.

A. The Government and the Jews in Poland  
in the Sixteenth Century

" 1 " " 11

B. The Church and the Jews in Poland in  
the Sixteenth Century.

" 11 " " 15

C. Inner Life of Polish Jewry in the Six-  
teenth Century.

" 15 " " 18

D. Jews of Prominence in Financial Life

" 19 " " 20

E. Poland as a Refuge

" 20 " " 21

F. Polish Persecution

" 21 " " 25

G. Jewish Captives

" 23 " " 25

H. Jewish Malefactors

" 23 " " 25

I. Communal Leaders

" 25 " " 28

J. Printing

" 28 " " 29

K. Relations between Jews and non-Jews

" 30 " " 33

L. Jews as "Secularists"

" 34 " " 40

Simon Budny and the Jews. Appendix V.

" 1 " " 7

Francis David and the Sabbatarians in their rela-  
tion to Polish Anti-trinitarianism.

Appendix VI.

" 1 " " 7

Judaizers in Poland in the Sixteenth Century

Appendix VII.

" 1 " " 6



## THE GOVERNMENT AND THE JEWS IN POLAND IN THE

16th CENTURY.

APPENDIX IV.

Mediaeval and early modern governmental and church restrictions and legislation with reference to the Jew should always be accepted very cautiously. Only too often laws and enactments were made by the government with a view to permitting their violation for certain considerations. Even when the governmental authorities in many lands and more particularly in Poland where a very decentralized government, and even state of practical anarchy was the rule rather than the exception,--were sincere in their attempts to restrict the Jews, venality of officials., and certain economic conditions made it almost impossible to enforce the anti-Jewish legislation. The regulations of the church against the Jew except for a certain period of the Dark Ages, were nought more than pious wishes. There is no question however that certain laws of repression were carried out but it is quite proper to say that in general the anti-Jewish legislation of the governmental authorities is not so much a reflex of actual conditions as an evidence of more or less intensity of hatred or tolerance toward the Jew. The conception of the reception of the Jew as an integral part of the body politic from our point of view was altogether impossible because of the universal prejudice against the Jew even by liberal minded men and because of the more potent fact that the conception,--quite modern, that the people themselves are sovereign and that all component parts of the state have a voice in its direction and a right to its privileges was altogether foreign both to the dark ages and to the first century or two of the modern period.

The Jews were expelled from Lithuania in 1495, but the absence of a strong organized central government in that Grand Duchy made it possible for the Jews to return officially in 1501. (Graetz, Heb. VII, p.55-58. Note 2.) The Jewish rights in Lithuania were established for the most part either by new charters of privileges or the renewal of old charters granted to individual cities where Jewish communities had organized. A characteristic grant is that of 1514 of Sigismund the First (King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania) to a number of Lithuanian cities whereby he confirmed the privileges



of his brother Alexander:-they were not required to pay more taxes than the other people; were permitted to engage in all trades and commerce without hindrance and were relieved from certain military duties. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.312.) A law of 1529 decreed that they could not bear testimony against Christians; that they could not keep Christian serfs and that they were required to pay a military tax which probably exempted them from personal service. (Sternberg, P. 137). There is altogether an absence of consistency in the method of the various kings in their legislation toward the Jews during this period. Legislation was quite often the result of individual or group influence exerted on the King. Legislation enacted one year might well be revoked the following year if the proper representation was brought to bear on the proper authorities.

A peculiar, yet apparently unquestionable decree, is that enacted for the Jews of Lithuania at the beginning of the reign of Sig.II (1548-1572) that all converted Jews were to be accepted into the nobility. (Art. 7.Stat.11; Art.8.Stat.111)(Sternberg,p.145.) We have no evidence that this opportunity was accepted by many, inasmuch as it probably only involved the granting of certain political rights which meant nothing to the Jew whose sole desire was to maintain his economic and religious privileges unimpaired. The Jews in Lithuania found conditions very satisfactory. The Lithuanians themselves were not possessed by that eager religious zeal that characterised their Polish neighbors. As a matter of fact the Lithuanians had been one of the very last groups in Europe to accept the Christian faith and even now they were not completely Christianized. Lithuania, like Poland, was comprised of a group of subject nationalities of various religions and this heterogeneity of race and creed made the lot of the Jew quite satisfactory. Many individual Jews rose to position of great wealth and responsibility. In the sixties we have the rise of the ritual murder charges which may be ascribed to the influence of the Jesuits who had now come into the country and were carrying on a vigorous counter-reformation in which the degradation of Jews was sought. The influence of this Jesuit group is seen more clearly in the adoption of the anti-Jewish decrees of the Polish Seim of 1538 into the Second Lithuanian Statute, (1566). This statute included the establishment of certain sumptuary laws including the wearing of the yellow caps for men



and the yellow kerchiefs for women; certain commercial restrictions, repetition of the prohibition to use Christian servants (which proves that the previous regulations to this effect were never carried out), prohibition to use golden chains; precious metals or jewels on girdles; swords and the like. (Dubnow, p.87.; Friedlander, p.56; Sternberg, p.146).

In order to more closely unite Lithuania and Poland the King was compelled to grant certain rights and make certain concessions to the powerful nobility. Among these concessions was the restriction of the rights of the Jewish people, which evidenced themselves in the anti-Jewish enactments of 1566 taken from the Polish disabilities, (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.325.) ascribes this to the influence of the nobles and this is no doubt true to a certain extent. The jealousy of the poorer nobles especially, was aroused by the evident prosperity of many of the Jews, but the ultimate fact behind it all is the great conflict between centralized and decentralized government; the king and the nobles; and the latter half of the 16th century marks the beginning of the rise of the nobles to victory over the king. In this battle for supremacy the great magnates desired to take the Jews away from the direct jurisdiction of the king and to have personal control over them for the purpose of exploitation.

The Jews for the most part fared well in Lithuania by virtue of the fact that they were a necessary factor in the body politic; that the country was characterized by a spirit of relative tolerance and by virtue of the fact that inasmuch as both the nobles and the king fought for the privilege of exploiting the Jews, the Jews managed to make terms with the one or the other. The king would sometimes grant certain Jewish privileges which would be nought more than a seal of approval on a fait accompli. Such is the privilege to the Jews of Vilna, in 1593, to have the right of residence; to purchase estate; to engage in all forms of business; to build synagogues and to have the civil rights of the other members of the community. Many Jews lived in the houses of nobles in the city and thus came under the direct jurisdiction of the nobles. (Graetz, Heb.VIII, p.98.) The Jews at all occasions sought either the protection of the lords, or the royal authority, never the municipal authorities who were universally hostile



because of conflicting economic interests.

The reign of the respective emperors and the struggle for power among the various factions of the court and the army, which were often at odds with the emperor, led to a general decline in the power of the emperor and the central government. The emperor's power was often limited by the powerful eunuchs and the military, who often acted in their own interests rather than those of the state. This led to a general decline in the power of the emperor and the central government, and the rise of powerful regional lords who often acted in their own interests rather than those of the state. The reign of the respective emperors and the struggle for power among the various factions of the court and the army, which were often at odds with the emperor, led to a general decline in the power of the emperor and the central government. The emperor's power was often limited by the powerful eunuchs and the military, who often acted in their own interests rather than those of the state. This led to a general decline in the power of the emperor and the central government, and the rise of powerful regional lords who often acted in their own interests rather than those of the state.

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SIGNISMUND 1-1506-48.

The division of the history of the Jew in Poland into the reign of the respective kings is adopted to a certain extent as a purely arbitrary and convenient division, but also because, occasionally, succeeding kings inaugurate a new policy in contradiction to that of their predecessors. Sig. 1, on his succession to the throne removed restrictions in residence in the Grodno district imposed by his predecessor Alexander. The reign of Sig. 1 saw the influx of considerable bodies of Jews from Bohemia among them the Talmudist Shalom Schahna (Sternberg, p.111) who gave that strong impulse to intensive rabbinic studies that ultimately gave birth to the great rabbinic movement of the second half of the sixteenth century, which in turn was accentuated by the rise of anti-Jewish persecution. Thru' the influence of Muczkowski a law was promulgated in 1530 threatening the city authorities of Cracow with a heavy fine if it permitted any more outbreaks against the Jews such as had been customary, but this law was repealed six years later after the death of the chancellor. (Sternberg, p.129;134; Friedlander, p.47.) Mob riots characterized the life of the Jews in practically all of the Jewish cities even in the relatively peaceful sixteenth century. Cracow was especially characteristic in this respect, inasmuch as the city had a large personnel of students at the University, who could not be held in check even by their professors and it was in such a student riot that Socinus the great polish liberal was almost killed and many of his valuable manuscripts were destroyed.

At the Seim of Petricow in 1538 there were enacted a number of characteristic anti-Jewish laws, which were reaffirmed in 1557, 1562 and 1565 in Poland and incorporated in the Lithuanian Statute in 1566. (v.supra) The fact that they were reaffirmed in later Diets gives one the impression that they were never fully or even partially observed. The passage of these laws however convinced the Jews that the trend of power was from the king to the nobles, that the king was not fully capable of helping them, for some of the enactments of this Diet,--especially the restrictions to trade, had been forced thru' by the burghers the old enemies of the Jews. There was a tendency thru' Poland at this



time to place themselves under the protection of the powerful magnates. The nobles fought for the privilege of taking care of the Jews because of the opportunities for taxation and estate development. The king was fully cognizant of this attempt on the part of the Jews and at the Diet of Cracow, 1539, warned those Jews who sought the protection of the nobles, that if they sought to give up the privileges of king to come under the jurisdiction of the nobles he would permit it, but under no circumstances would he give them his protection for they would then be out of his jurisdiction. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.319.)

The condition of the Jews in the various towns was largely dependant upon the conditions that they could make with the local magistrates representing the people or with the magnate who may have controlled the town. In many cases they were unsuccessful. Posen, especially, was always a hotbed of Jew hatred. In 1532, the Jews were limited to their old quarters and the number of houses limited to forty-nine. In many smaller towns they were segregated to special quarters and some cities were able to receive the special privilege of not admitting any Jews at all. (Friedlander, p.48.)

#### SIG. II - 1548-1572.

On the ascent of Sig. II to the throne<sup>W</sup> confirmed, at the convention at Petrikow all the privileges of Jews as given by Casimir IV. This confirmation of previous privileges and charters was customary at the ascent of the new king. (Graetz, Heb.VII;pp. 322-23);(Sternberg, pp.137-8). The Diet at Warsaw in 1557 laid<sup>W</sup> certain commercial restrictions on the Jews and also reaffirmed<sup>some</sup> of the anti-Jewish restrictions of the Seim of 1538, many of which were manifestly never carried out, and because of their apparent mediaeval tenor are evidently incorporated as a sop to the clericals; especially to the growing party of the Jesuits. The King personally was inclined to some form of liberalism, as far as it was possible for a sixteenth century monarch to be liberal, but the Diet was altogether independant of him, and was influenced more and more by the Jesuits as time passed. The salvation of the Jews was the continual con-



conflict between national and individual rights; a struggle which permitted the Jew the alternative of going from the losing to the winning side. (Sternberg, pp.142-3).

A study of the enactments of the later part of the reign of Sig. II, evidences the fact that the reins of restriction were beginning to tighten on the Jew, in the cities at least. It is immaterial that these enactments were never carried into effect; the very fact that they were on the statute books made it necessary for the Jews to exert special efforts to nullify their active application which was both expensive and tiresome. The growing influence of the Jesuits, the organization of the counter-reformation, all evidences itself in the constant repetition of the anti-Jewish laws in successive Diets in the decade from 1560 to 1570. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.328.)

Altho' the burghers in the sixteenth century did not attain any rights in the national Diet they did after a while have practically complete control in the cities and they gradually, but surely drove many of the Jews by adverse legislation out of the cities, or at least, restricted their economic activity to elements of business, where he was not, or could not, be a competitor of the Christian. This economic pressure on the parts of the burghers forced many Jews into the rural districts, where competition was less keen and especially to the estates of the magnates where they were able to establish individual monopolies. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.106.) In many cities the inhabitants attempted and did stop further immigration; in other towns ghettos were established or the right of residence was accorded only to those who had established this right at some prior time; in some cities they were only permitted to come during the period of the great fairs and to leave when the fairs were over. (Graetz, Heb. VII; pp.324-5.)

In 1569 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the kingdom of Poland were for all practical purposes united and the king was made an elective monarch. This decision taken at the Diet of Lublin, hence the Union of Lublin, had a profound influence on the Jews in Poland and Lithuania. The Jews of Lithuania were approximately reduced to the same relatively unfavorable condition as the Jews of Poland (Dubnow, I, p.88). The Union of



Lublin intensified the struggle between the nobles and the Kings. As a matter of fact the Union may be looked upon as the event marking the complete ascendancy of the nobility over the royal power. The conflict however, between the king and the nobles continued and this struggle, which lasted for centuries was both a danger and an opportunity to the Jews. A danger in that it placed them at times in the position between the upper and nether millstones if the king and nobles should ever stop fighting and combine against the Jew, but an opportunity in that each group which needed money offered special inducements to bring over the Jews. It was the realization that the nobles were in the ascendancy; the fact that the burghers in the cities were restricting their economic developments; the apparent helplessness of the king against these two parties that induced many Jews to migrate to the estates of the magnates wherever possible and to come under their protection. These nobles also thru' their possessions in the cities were able to rehabilitate the Jews there and permit them to be accountable not to the local magistracy, but to the federal government. The nobles and their followers of course were exempt from the jurisdiction of the city magistrates. (Graetz, Heb. VII; pp.329-30).

Sig. II, who died in 1572 was the last king of the house of Jagellon. All kings after him came under the terms of the Union of Lublin and were elective. This elective element in the constitution aided the Jews for every newly elected monarch needed ready money which the Jews had. The Kings, therefore, were accustomed to confirm the privileges of the Jews. The new kings in order to secure their election; which was at the hands of the nobles, were compelled constantly to make concessions to the power of the nobles and as the nobles arose in influence both over the burghers and the kings, the Jews who had allied themselves wherever possible to the magnates shared in their prosperity. (Graetz, Ger. I; p.461).

Following an interregnum of a year, Henry of Valois was elected king of Poland, (1573-4). The influence of the Porte was thrown in his favor largely thru' the influence of the Jewish diplomat Solomon Ashkenazi, who was very influential with the Turkish Grand Vizier. (Graetz, Germ. IX, p.399.) It is interesting to note how little a Protestant King meant to Ashkenazi, who was certainly interested in the welfare of his fel-



low Jews in Poland, where he may have lived himself, (Ibid.) that he threw his influence in favor of a Catholic rather than a Protestant contestant for the throne.

Henry was followed by Stephen Batory, a Transylvanian (1574-1586). The Jews of Poland and Lithuania fared better under his administration than previously not because he was more tolerant, but because he was determined as far as it lay in his power to conduct an orderly government wherein "law and order" would be recognized. He was probably one of the most sane and business like kings that ever ruled Poland. Despite the fact that he is the monarch more than any one else who is responsible for the development of the Jesuits in Poland, yet he made every effort to develop the country along vigorous lines. In an edict issued in 1576 after he was firmly established he issued two edicts against ritual murder charges; ratified old charters; gave additional commercial privileges; annulled all restrictions of commerce against the Jews; permitted them to work and trade on Christian holidays and sabbaths; forbade Christians to take Jewish orphans for the purpose of rearing them as Christians and required that such children now in their possession be given up; that cases between Jews and Christians may be decided by Jewish elders and each litigant has the powers to carry it to a higher court, (Graetz, Heb. VII, p.332.)

Individual sporadic outbreaks during his reign were not infrequent. Posen was a frequent offender. This town, <sup>was</sup> largely under the influence of the German burghers <sup>who</sup> were strong competitors of the Jews and made every effort to restrict them. Despite the displeasure <sup>of the king</sup> and the fines imposed on them for a riot in February 1577, the people broke out against the Jews in May, killed a number of Jews, destroyed a number of houses, among them the synagog, the bathhouse and the mikveh. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.331.)

In 1580 in addition to confirming the Casimir privileges for the Jew he issued a special statute for the Jews of Posen, which thru' their component laws given one an idea of the restrictions under which the Jews lived. The Jews were to be equal with the non-Jews in the courts. The provincial ruler was ~~then~~ to settle small cases; the king those of more importance. Jews were to be permitted to build homes anywhere and to engage in



any form of work. Jews are to appoint a "notarian" with a yearly salary to act between the Jew and the provincial ruler. A converted Jew must divide his estate equally with his Jewish as well as his gentile children. No restrictions are to be placed upon the price that the Jews may set on their goods; Jews may take the oath according to their own customs. Jews are not required for any civil ~~and~~ duty on their Sabbath and holidays. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.332.) In view of the lack of absolute authority on the part of, the king and the known hostility of the burghers of Posen and their practical autonomy it is very questionable if all these statutes were ever completely observed.

After an interregnum of a year Batory was followed by Sigismund the Third (1587-1632), who had had a strong Jesuit training. Jews were not permitted to buy goods or food before the Christians in the markets, and only after the Christians had bought all they wanted could the Jews come and buy. Jews were not permitted to go out of the city and anticipate the Christians by buying from the peasants before they entered the city, but the king soon modified this decree, which was applicable to the whole republic, by placing the Jews on an equality with the Christians in buying in the cities, but refusing to allow them to go out outside the city and anticipate the Christians in purchases. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.96.)

At the Coronation Diet in 1588 restrictions were again imposed on the Jews, altho four years later the king confirmed the Casimir privileges with the exception that they were required to have the permission of the clergy before they could build new churches. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.94; Ger. IX; p.463.) He also reaffirmed the decree found in the Lithuanian statute that converted Jews would be admitted to the ranks of the nobility. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.100.)

The king was compelled to protect the Jews in the cities against the economic repression of the city fathers especially in Cracow and later in Warsaw (1600) to issue a decree that the local authorities should not forbid individual citizens to sell houses in their cities to the Jews for business purposes. There was an attempt in a number of the principal cities of Poland to restrict the Jew in every possible manner and to force him out as a competitor. (Ibid. p.97).



The reign of Sig. III, saw the Jesuits a powerful active group. With the rise of the Jesuits the enemies of the Jews in the cities also increased in power and virulence:- the business men; the guild workers and the German settlers and their descendants.

We have the appearance of numerous allegations and accusations against the Jews largely thru the influence of the Jesuits, which were practically foreign to the preceding kings.

The power of the nobles, generally favorable to the Jews, increased during his reign. The Jews in many places came more and more under the protection of the nobles whose power was in the ascendant and who gave the Jews many opportunities for a livelihood. (Ibid. p.100-101.)

#### THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS IN POLAND IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The fight against the Lutheran church on the part of the Catholics also reacted against the Jews. (Graetz, Ger. 1; p.314.) The great struggle against the new heretics drew attention to the fact that the country had been sheltering heretics for hundreds of years.

The church during the period of the Reformation in Poland developed an added animus of hostility against the Jew because of the undeniable similarity in doctrines between some of the liberal Christians and the Jews especially with reference to the Unity of God. The bitterness of the Church brought to a head by the growth of liberalism in Poland is witnessed in the church synod of 1542 at Petrikow. They issued the following constitution which may be accepted as an evidence of sentiment not as decrees to be realized:- Jews in and around Cracow were to be reduced in number; no new settlements, no purchases of houses from Christians. New synagoges to be destroyed; no more synagoges to be built. Jews not to be permitted to act as stewards of the estates of nobles. Jews not to be permitted to exhibit their goods in public. Not to employ Christian maids, not to work on church holidays. The spirit of the assembly is seen in the resolution: "Whereas the



church tolerates the Jews for the sole purpose of recalling to our minds the tortures of our Savior, their number shall in no circumstance increase." (Dubnow, 1; pp. 81, 82, 83; Friedlander, pp. 41-42.) The Lazencha affair is another splendid illustration how the Jew often serves as a text upon which a whole homily of history is built. (Cf. Mortara case. The Dreyfus affair.) The Catholics were determined to prove to the Dissidents or at least convince their own followers of the self-sufficiency of the communion of one kind. They accordingly accused three Jews with buying a holy wafer from Dorothy Lazencha and stabbing it until it bled, proving conclusively that the blood is also contained in the body (wafer). All four were tortured and then burnt at the stake in 1556. The purpose of the church was to accomplish all its aims with one fell stroke. The master mind was the papal nuncio Lippomani sent by Paul IV. The trial was to prove the truth of the Catholic principle over that of the Calvinists and Protestants, that the bread of the communion was the actual body of Christ. It was to convince the great mass of the people that the Catholic dogma was true and that the Protestant dogma was false. Finally it was to stir up an anti-Jewish feeling that would vent itself in anti-Jewish riots that would have the additional merit of attracting the attention of the people from the rapidly developing theological liberalism. (Dubnow, 1; pp. 86-7; Kraninski, 1; pp. 305-6-7.) The result of the whole debacle was to prejudice the people of Poland violently against the Papal Nuncio so much that he had to leave the country; to bring forth a strong protest from the king and to give Protestantism a decided spur. It should be borne in mind that there was no indignation on the part of the people against the death of the Jews, but on the death of the woman. (Schiemann, X-pt. 2, p. 278; Graetz, Heb. VII; p. 327, Note 2.) The King issued an order after this affair that in the future Jews suspected of murdering a Christian child or stealing a host should be brought to judgment to the national Diet and not to any of the courts. There to be tried and not to be condemned on suspicion, but thru' proper reliable witnesses. (Ibid. p. 327) This regulation was not observed.

It was altogether impossible for the native Catholic clergy to give birth to a



counter-reformation that would be both vigorous and aggressive for even the primate Juchanski, Archbishop of Gnesio was touched with elements of humanism and thoughts of a national Polish church. (Schiemann, X, pt. 2; p.325.) The vigorous and capable Cardinal Hosius in 1561 invited Lainez, himself, a descendent of Jews, to send some of his Jesuits to Poland. (Krasinski, I; p.407.) in order to give impetus to the counter-reformation. In 1564 they established a school at Heilsberg; a year later they opened the Braunsberg college and also a school at Flotzk. (Schiemann, X, pt.2; p.334.)

In the twenty years from the death of Sig. II (1572) to the reign of Sig. III, who himself had had Jesuit training, the Jesuits reared a new generation in Poland who were in sympathy with their aims. They made every possible effort to control all the departments of the government and especially the schools in order that they might crush all semblance of heresy and the growing Protestant and anti-trinitarian movement. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; pp.93-4.) The program of the Jesuits included the complete eradication of the Protestants and their heresy; the oppression if not the suppression of the Greek Catholics and the attempt to reduce the Jews to the level of outlaws. (Dubnow, I; p.91.)

The rise of the Jesuits to power in Poland also saw the appearance and the recurrence of the charge of ritual murder. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.99.) In 1564 and 1566 Sig. II issued decrees against the ritual murder charge; Stephen Batory issued two decrees in 1576, but apparently all to no avail. In 1598 at Lublin three Jews were put to death in a horrible manner at the instigation of Jesuits because of the alleged murder of a Jewish child. The child was taken to the Church and worshipped. (Ibid. p.99.) In the Jesuit college at Vilna Jew baiting was taught systematically. (Dubnow, I; 89-90-91.)

Synchronous with the rise and development of the liberal movement among the Poles was the rise of an anti-Jewish literature.

The clergy published in 1541 the work: "De stupendis erroribus Judaeorum." Two years later saw the appearance of "De sanctis interfectis a Judaeis." The year intervening between the publication of these two works was the year of the anti-Jewish church synod at Petrikow. Cardinal Hosius who invited the Jesuits to Poland attacked the Jews



in his "Confession Fidei Catholicae", published in Cracow, 1551. (Sternberg, p. 142.

note. 1.) Skarga, the great Jesuit preacher published a work: "Lives of the Saints"

in which he tells in detail of the death of the child Simon of Trent b. Schmariah,

and asks the people to take revenge on the Jews of Lithuania. (Graetz, Heb. VII;

p. 331.) Kleonowicz, the poet who occupied a very influential public position in

Cracow did much to establish hatred for Jews in the hearts of the Polish people thru'

his anti-Jewish songs and poems. He describes them as seekers after money and "drink-

ers of strong drink." The last accusation is quite astonishing and is probably induc-

ed by the fact that so many Jews were engaged in the making and selling of intoxicants.

(Ibid. p. 333.) Father Mojecki in 1598 published in Cracow a decidedly bitter anti-

Jewish work: "Jewish Beastiality" enumerating and inventing ritual murder trials.

(Dubnow, 1; pp. 96-7; Hollanderski, p. 9.)

In 1618, Sebastian Michinski, a pupil of the Jesuits wrote: "Mirror of the Polish Crown", a very bitter work charging the Jews with all sorts of conceivable crimes, and asking the great nobles and magnates to set up the Spaniards as their examples of true Catholics and expel the Jews. The king confiscated the work, but not before it did much harm. The charges contained in the book were debated in the Diet of 1618. Two other anti-Jewish writings of the same year are: "Liberty of the Jews" and "Lamentations of the Infants murdered by the Jews". (Hollanderski, Ibid.)

"A clear Argument concerning Jewish Physicians," was the title of work by Shleskovski, a Polish physician. He asserted that the Jews poison Catholics, and that the pest then raging was a token of divine displeasure at the protection granted to the Jews.

Most of these writers it is noticed arose during the reign of Sig. III, who was devoted to the cause of the Jesuits. Other writers who attacked the Jews in their works are Gubicki and Grabowski. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p. 100.)

There was a general recrudescence of anti-Jewish hatred thru'out the sixteenth century on the part of the clergy; the leaders of the burghers; the guild workers and the



minor nobility. The clergy were but exhibiting their time honored hatred for the Jew stimulated by the successes of the Dissidents. The burghers and guild workers were engaged in a bitter economic struggle with Jewish merchants and artisans whose numbers were increased by the constant expulsion in the German empire in the latter half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. The minor nobility were jealous of the apparent success of the Jewish people. (Ibid. p.105.) (Friedlander, pp.52-3.)

The Jews in Poland were above all a tolerated group, an imperium in imperio whose welfare was solely dependant on the favor of the authorities at the helm either the kings or the magnates. The Jews in the sixteenth century endeavored thru' various means to attain the protection of the authorities and were generally protected from any wholesale massacres in this period. A few even attained positions of great prominence financially. (Graetz, Ger. IX; pp.443;459.) There were occasional riots, and bitterness and opposition on the part of the city dwellers and the church, yet this century is essentially one of peace for the Jew, a century making for culture and progress and intimate association. What we do have in this century is the beginning of a strong organized Jewish repression. (Dubnow, I; p.76.)

#### INNER LIFE OF THE POLISH JEWRY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The inner life of the Polish Jew in the sixteenth century is very interesting but one that cannot be discussed at length in this thesis, because of the breadth of the subject itself. I shall only give some aspects of the communal life of the Polish Jew of this century better to throw light on Isaac ben Abraham and his times. There is unquestionably a large amount of material in the Polish rabbinic works of this and the succeeding century that will cast light upon the economic life of the Jew, but very little of historical value in determining his relations to his non-Jewish fellowman, and his general political and cultural status. This is true because the Jew to a large extent lived a segregated life more so because all of our sources, with exceeding-



ly few exceptions are rabbinic and the interests of rabbis and their vision extended only to that which was either directly or indirectly related to the religious development of the people whom they served.

The great mass of the Polish Jews were engaged in labouring and manufacturing trades or in petty vending. One of the most common businesses, if not the most common, was that of butchering. This work was especially followed by the Jewish poor inasmuch as it involved very little capital and meat was a commodity that found a ready sale. One authority of the time claims that in Poland and Russia (Galicia), most of the people bought their meat from the Jews. (Nahalat siv'ah R. Samuel Levi Sim. 70. c.1600. Katz, p.22. Hanok bet Yehudah, Sim. 20. 1550-1600. Katz. Ibid. Sheerit Yosef, Sim. 70. c. 1550. Katz, p.20). A popular business among the Jews, vieing with the butcher trade was the selling of intoxicants. Wine seemed to be the favorite drink of the peasants. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 50. Katz, p.22). Another contemporary rabbi said that most of the people were engaged in the inn business selling liquor and strong drinks. (Masat Binyamin Sim. 43. c. 1600, Katz. p.22.) The privilege of managing the inn on an estate which practically meant a monopoly was much sought after by the Jews and occasioned a great deal of personal jealousy and petty business trick-take away  
ery to the privilege from one another. The Jews experienced so much trouble with in-economic  
dividuals trying unethically to secure the privileges held by another man at a particular place that the Jewish leaders in Lithuania decreed that once a man had established a tenure after a number of years it was his in perpetuity. (Beth Hodosh Yeshenot, Sim. 60, Katz, p.18.) The Anti-Jewish poet and songster Kelonowicz can not more aptly mock the Jews than to describe them as seekers after money (V'shoef mashkoth) and drinkers of strong drink. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.333.) He called them drunkards no doubt because of the fact that they engaged so universally in Poland in this trade.

Some were vendors of glass; others secured the privilege of mining and refining iron ore. (Pene Yehoshu'a pt. 2. Sim. 68. Katz, p.37)(Ponim Meerot, pt.1. Sim. 38. Katz, p.23.) In the various wars between the Poles and the Russians that extended from 1550 to 1700 many Jews followed the Polish armies as sutlers selling their wares,



for the most part liquor. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 128. Katz, p.45) Jewish traders going from Lublin to Moscow (interior Russia in distinction to Russia (i.e. Galicia) on trading expeditions were sometimes murdered by bandits. (Rema. Sim. 101. c.1550).

Ivan the Terrible had no use for the Jewish traders who came into his dominions. Sig. II in a treaty of peace that he arranged with Ivan tried to introduce the proviso that the Lithuanian Jews should be permitted to trade in his dominions, but Ivan refused on the ground that they sold poisons (medicinal herbs ?) and that they blasphemed Jesus. (Judaizers?) (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.446).

A great number of the Jews in Poland engaged in trade at the different fairs held at Lublin and Yaroslav and in Lithuania. Jews would go from one end of the republic to the fairs at the other end in order to show their goods. (Responsa. Shaagataryeh v'kol shahal. Rabbi Aryeh Yehudah Leb of Cracow.) (Sim. 4. Katz, p.23.) The fair at Lublin especially attracted the Jews in large numbers. The Jews would gather there three times a year and would rent houses near the city owned by the Gentiles. They might use them the whole year for their wares, but were not permitted to dwell in them except in the short period of the fair proper. There was not a Jew living in the city proper. The Jews would come to the city during the period of the fair and after it was over they would depart to their respective homes. (Rema. Sim. 120. c. 1550. Katz. pp.34-5.) Very many Jews owned their own homes in the cities and towns where they dwelt. (Bet Hodosh HeYeshenot. Sim. 153. 1600-1650. Katz, p. 21.) But the struggle to live amidst an environment which at best was but tolerant was very difficult inasmuch as competition was keen and the desire to attain riches was very keen. Luria makes the bitter remark that to some Jews money is more dear to them than their very souls and their honor. (Resonsa Sol. Luria. Sim. 28, c. 1550.)

Keen and successful competitors of the Jews were the Sephardim of Turkey who came up from the South and carried on extensive businesses in Poland where they were granted full protection by the Polish authorities. (Balaban, p.11ff.)

Jewish commerce started to decline as soon as the nobles were permitted to import and export goods without customs and duties. The Baltic Protestants and the Catholics



of Poland were one in their accord to attempt to restrict Jewish commerce. (Graetz, Heb. VII, p.324.) An attempt to restrict the economic activities of the Jews thru' legislation is seen in the edict of the Diet of 1588 which attempted, unsuccessfully to prohibit Jews from dealing with the peasants in the city markets until the Christians have dealt with them and to prevent the Jews from going out into the country and buying up produce from the peasant and farmers. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p. 96.) A strong effort was made by the non-Jewish leaders in some of the principal cities to crush the Jew economically by forbidding individuals to sell their homes to Jews for business purposes. The Jews attempted to prevent this economic strangulation by a decree of the King. (Ibid. p.97.) Another saving element was that the local authorities had no control over the individual homes and property owned by the nobles in the cities which they could and did rent to Jews for business purposes. A great burden on the economic life of the Jew was the strong influx of poverty stricken Jews from the German lands all thru' the period of the Thirty Years War 1618-1648. A pinkas (record) of the province of Lithuania of 1627 speaks of these poverty stricken people in very disparaging tones, and referring to them as a burden to the community. It was decreed,--in quite modern fashion,--that they should only be given transportation to the next town unless they had recommendations from responsible Jewish authorities. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.107. Note 4.)

Yet in spite of all the restrictions placed upon the Jews there lot was relatively good because of the support of the king, the magnates and some members of the lesser nobility. A very large part of the trade of the country was in the hands of the Jews. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.325.)

As the court of the king, Sigismund Augustus, shows that Sig. II looked upon him with great respect; addressed him as "Illustrious Prince" and promised certain favors possibly to the Jews of Poland for the sake of certain influence that Joseph retained in the Polish. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.325.)

Probably the most interesting of all these wealthy Jews who exercised a romantic but not necessarily important role in Polish Jewish life is Saul Jachim (Saul Jach) of Bydgoszcz in Lithuania, son of David Katzenellenbogen of Poland. Saul spoke Polish and



## JEWES OF PROMINENCE IN FINANCIAL LIFE.

Characteristic of the mediaeval and early modern monarchies where Jews were tolerated is the wealthy Jew who exercises considerable influence at court for the sake of his coreligionists thru' the favor that he personally has in the eyes of the authorities. Under Alexander, King of Poland, Yosko (Joseph) farmed the tolls and customs in nearly half of Poland. Michael Yosefovitch, in Brest (Lithuania) was the farmer of the royal revenue in all Lithuania and at times acted as the disbursing agent for the Grand Duchy, paying the salaries of the officials, as well as the creditors of the King. Abraham of Bohemia was recommended to Sig. I (1506-48) by the King of Bohemia and the Emperor of Germany and for a huge sum advanced in cash was given the privilege of farming the Jewish taxes of Poland. The objection to this individual farming was the impetus to communal autonomous levies which ultimately gave rise to the organization of the Council of Lands. (Friedlander, p. 44.)

Isaac Nachmanowicz, a wealthy tax farmer had a personal influence with the King. It was his custom to receive and entertain influential Christians in his home. In taking the oath he was excused from taking the "more judaico" and was permitted to take the oath required of the average litigant. (Balaban, p.5ff.)

A man who had the ear of Sig. II (1548-72) was, the well known Shtadlan of the city of Posen:- Simon Gunzburg. He was wealthy and respected and used his influence to intercede for his coreligionists when the occasion required. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.461)

Of influence to the Jews in Poland was Joseph, Duke of Naxos, the Jewish favorite at the court of the Turks. Extant correspondence shows that Sig. II looked upon him with great respect; addresses him as "Illustrious Prince" and promises certain favors possibly to the Jews of Poland for the sake of certain influence that Joseph extends to the Poles. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.396.)

Possibly the most interesting of all these wealthy Jews who exercised a romantic but not necessarily important role in Polish Jewish life is Saul Judich (Saul Wahl) of Brest in Lithuania, son of Rabbi Katzenellenbogen of Padua. Saul spoke Polish and



Russian fluently and his great riches gave him prestige with the authorities. In 1582 he acted as Shtadlan for the Jewish community of Brest. Personally he was exempt from the jurisdiction of the local provincial courts and was subject to the King alone. In 1593 he appealed to the King protesting against the unbearable taxes levied on them by the Starosta and declared that he interfered in the local autonomy of the Jewish People. At Saul's request the King reaffirmed the decree already existent that in disputes relative to Jews alone they were to have recourse to their own court and no appeal to a non-Jewish court in this particular type of case was allowed. In 1595 he represented both the Jews and Christians in protesting against the unjust taxes imposed. He is the subject of a great and fanciful legend to the effect that during an interregnum he ruled Poland for a day as King. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; pp.102-1; Dubnow, 1, p. 94.)

There are scattered references thru'out the responsa literature that evidence to us that there were many other prominent leaders of Jewish people in Poland in the sixteenth century of whom nothing is now known but the name. (Responsa Sol. Luria. Sim. 75. Katz, p. 28.)

The peculiar individuality of the Polish Jews which may have been influenced by the decentralizing, anarchistic element in Polish government and the lawlessness of the Polish nobles whose estates were managed by Jews, would not permit them to tolerate a paternal communal rule of Shtadlans. They had recourse to these Jews of prominence whenever they were compelled to do so because of adverse conditions, but the influence of their environment encouraged them to dispense with this influential class and to work out their salvation thru' autonomous, communal organizations.

#### POLAND AS A REFUGE.

The Jewish religious leaders and the Jewish people as a whole felt that Poland was a true refuge and they appreciated the peace; the rest and the tolerance that the country offered.

Isaac ben Abraham who flourished in the middle if not the first half of the six-



teenth century speaks of the peace for the Jew in Poland. That the kings and the nobles (in his time) do not war with each other. Jews are given charters for protection and are protected from evil. The Kings are kind to the Jews even "even as you see to-day." (H.E.1-46.)

In answer to a query of a German disciple about to accept a Rabbinate there, Isserles, said that it would be better to eat dry bread here (Poland) in freedom "where we are not hated."

Writing of the Bohemian persecutions of 1542 Isserles said that "their hatred (of the non-Jews) is not as strong here in Poland as it is in Germany. Would that this (pleasant) state of affairs would continue until the coming of the Messiah." (Responsa. Rama. Sim. 63; 95. Katz, p.7. Graetz, Ger. IX; p.62, Note. 1. Spenner, p.22.)

Shabai (Shack) son of Meir of Vilna, says of the King, Vladislav IV (1632). He is a "good king, proper to count him among the righteous for he has always done good to the Jew and has kept his covenant with them". (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.102.)

These quotations show that the Jewish people were relatively satisfied with their lot in Poland for they realized that tho' it was not perfect it was far superior to the massacres and continued repression in the Teutonic and Romantic countries. It also evidences that they for the most part were dependant on the favor of the governing authorities for their continued welfare; without the favor of the kings and the nobles the people would have suffered intensely.

#### POLISH PERSECUTION.

Altho' the position of the Jews is relatively good in Poland as evidenced by the testimony of the rabbis and others yet they had to suffer much petty repression both economic and civil. I ~~have already~~ <sup>shall</sup> dwell on the persecutions that the Jew experienced in Poland as presented by Isaac ben Abraham. Some of his pictures evidently give a good idea of the Jewish disgust with Christian persecution:- the attempt on the part of illiterate, uncultured, criminal men at times, to force their faith on the Jew; the



individual cases of torture for the sake of squeezing money out of the Jew; the widely scattered belief that all Jews are rich and should be made to disgorge their wealth.

Occasional riots that resulted in the loss of lives were not infrequent especially in the cities of Cracow, Posen and Vilna. Two repeated decrees of the efficient King Stephen Batory (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.97) could not keep the people of Posen from turning on the Jews and burning houses and communal buildings. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.331.)

Individual landed proprietors who exercised practically sovereign jurisdiction over their domains would sometimes exclude Jews altogether from their cities for various causes, or would sometimes discriminate between the admittance of Jewish merchants and Jewish artisans in favor of the latter. (Sternberg, p.144; Note. 1.)

A typical case of petty persecution by the city authorities is the injunction to refuse to allow the Jews to slaughter the cattle according to the ritual rites unless they paid an annual sum for the privilege. (Sheerit Yosef. Sim. 70. c. 1550.)

The uncertainty of the position of the Jews inasmuch as they really had no bill of rights which was universally respected in the country is illustrated in the awkward predicament of the Jewish leaders who were seized by the authorities until they would produce a fugitive Jewish girl who had promised to forsake her faith and marry a certain non-Jew. (Bet. Hillel. pt. on Yoreh De'ah. Sim. 157, c. 1650. Katz, p.13). These seizures were very rare and as a matter of fact that great mass of the people until the persecutions in Lithuania and Poland in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, lived in practically complete security.

The change in the security that the Jews once enjoyed is seen in the request of the Jewish authorities of Lithuania that the people fast twice a week for six weeks thru'out the country to avert the continuance of the massacre of 1636. (Geburot Anoshimp. 35b. Katz, pp.37-8.) The peasants were offered a dollar reward for every body of a slaughtered Jew that they would bring in from the snows during the winter of this massacre. (pene Yehoshu'a. pt. 2, Sim. 68, Katz. p. 37.)



Altho' the people themselves were not tolerant, the nobles and kings extended their favor to the Jews and protected them all thru' the sixteenth century from any general persecution. There was quite a detailed group of restrictive laws passed by the various diets thru' the century, especially toward the last few decades, but it is questionable if these laws were all put into effect and if they materially affected the status of the Jews. The church and the burghers and the peasants tho' hostile were not yet in a position to materially influence the Jewish status for the worse. Petty persecution was general but not unbearable.

#### JEWISH CAPTIVES.

The vast extent of the Polish republic and its adjacency to the Tartar and Turkish lands made traveling quite hazardous at times for the Jewish merchants. Jews traveling about thru' the country were often carried captive during the inroads of the nomadic tribes to the South and Southeast.

Jews living on the border cities of Volynia especially were often disturbed by the inroads of these tribesmen and every able bodied Jew in the city was expected to be ready with his weapon, at the command of the city authorities to help participate in the defense. (Maharam Lublin, Sim. 43. c.1600, Katz, p.44.)

So many Jews were carried off captive that some Jews would make regular trips to Turkey to redeem captives. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 89. c. 1600. Katz, p.44.) In 1644 a captive who had come from Constantinople said there had been many other Jewish captives with him in that city. (Pene Yehoshu'a. part on Eben ho'ezar. pt. 1. Sim. 13. Katz, p.44).

#### JEWISH MALEFACTORS.

The constant fear on the part of the Jewish communal leaders of coming under the jurisdiction of the local provincial authorities induced them at times much against their better judgment to tolerate and even to protect Jewish criminals in their own



midst. Jewish criminals, of course, who had committed crimes against Jews. Jews who had committed crimes involving non-Jews were for the most part tried in non-Jewish courts. In mild cases of slandering and the like the punishment of the Jewish authorities was unusually light in order the the defendant might not have recourse to other courts. (Resp.Sol. Luria. Sim. 59 c. 1550. Katz, p.26) The Jewish jurisdiction was practically voluntary as far as the individual was concerned. The law of the land,-- with exception<sup>b</sup>-- could not compel the Jew to seek justice at the hands of his own courts if he cared to have recourse to others. After Jewish autonomy had developed in the seventeenth century it is possible that the Jew was not permitted to go outside his own judicial organization. Even in the sixteenth century we have decrees of the kings compelling Jews to seek justice at the hands of their own (Jewish) courts, but it is very questionable if these laws prevailed. The great incentive for the Jew to remain in his own jurisdiction was the knowledge that his own courts were far more upright than the venal courts of the land. The fear of delatores among the Jews themselves always served to make it difficult to have the law universally accepted. (Responsa Sol.Luria Sim. 28. c. 1550. Katz, p.23.) Interesting is the case of two Jews who have a dispute over certain monies. The one who had lost according to the Jewish law went to the provincial judge who in order to share the spoils with him fines the original plaintiff. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 120. c.1600. Katz, p.11-12) The same author complains bitterly that there are many who transgress against the law, (Jewish ritual and civil law)(Sim. 15. Katz. p.24.) Maharam Dublin felt that the old policy of tolerating Jewish criminals for fear that they might become apostates and enemies was a sign of weakness and poor policy and believes especially in capital cases that no weakness be shown. Maharam worked on the principle that a dead Jewish criminal was the safest kind of a criminal. His potentialities for conversion and false accusation would then be completely destroyed while the Jewish murderer who had been merely maimed in punishment of a crime could always become a convert, rear a family and be a virulent enemy. He also felt that the Jews must show the Gentile that they do not always intercede for their own, but are



willing to punish them where the crime merits punishment. (Ibid. Sim. 138.1st. edito. Katz. p.52-3.)

Almost half a century later, another rabbinic light attacked the leaders for their wrong attitude toward Jewish criminals and their attempt to gain the freedom of every Jewish scoundrel.. He maintained that real criminals should be convicted and punished beyond even the chance or the opportunity of becoming converts. (Respona. R. Abr. Rappoport. Etan Hozrahi.) (Schrentsle Sim. 45. Katz, p.14.) The same author in 1648 speaks bitterly of the increase of crime among the Jews, especially of informers, thieves and murderers. Only thru' the prompt execution of criminals, who would serve as a warning example to others, could the situation be improved, he declared. (Ibid. Sim. 45. Katz, p.24; cf. also Sim. 43.)

Katz suggests that crime and vice increased in the period of the Cossack massacres since the Jews could not peacefully ply their trades and had no settled occupations due to the tumult and the hunger occasioned by that uprising. (Katz. p.24.) This may be true, but it should not be forgotten that our sources are all rabbinic and that these religious leaders were always captious and exacting and expected a great deal of the people, - perfection. They were never altogether satisfied with conditions and always took occasion to reprimand the people. Conditions are seldom as bad as the professional moralist paints them.

#### COMMUNAL LEADERS.

Unity did not always prevail among the Jewish leaders and the communities. There was always a great deal of dissension and petty jealousies that tended at time to disrupt the community. Isserles harangues the people for their internal strife and points to the sad illustration of the Bohemian troubles which he ascribes to lack of internal unity. (Rema. Sim. 63. Katz, p. 50.) Even the rabbis themselves could not do what they wanted, but ~~WERE~~ sometimes dictated in their decisions by factional leaders and clique interests. A contemporary of Luria's says: "I do not rule by myself and I am not



able to do anything without consulting my group." (Res. Sol. Luria. Sim. 20, Katz, pp. 24-25.)

Synagogs were often composed of cliques that were constantly fighting one another. A case in point is that of a synagog in Lithuania where two factions fought over a certain "reader" and finally the party opposed to him closed the synagog so that services could not be held for days. Finally the secular authorities were compelled to intervene declaring that "a house of God should not be closed. Let the rabbis of Lithuania determine if the reader is eligible or not." c.1550. (Res. Sol. Luria. Sim. 20. Katz, p.10)

One rabbinical light who had been Abbet<sup>n</sup> din in many communities in Poland and Lithuania complains that the generations have been perverted; that one cannot even get the opportunity to speak to a person who has some degree of authority over his fellow-men. (Yad Eliyahu of Elijah of Lublin. Sim. 48. Katz, p.26.) Statements like the last may however not be significant and may be only the hasty expression of an exasperated and irritable man.

The great mass of the Jews had no sympathy at all theologically with Islam, "a lying faith", nor with Christianity which they disliked intensely, because of its "idolatry" especially exemplified in the extreme hagiolatry of the Slavonic countries. (H.E. 1-4-5.)

The sixteenth century was a century of active study of the Talmud and its vast literature more particularly, of course, in the latter half of that century. So much so that a seventeenth century author speaking of the days that have gone before him, idealizes this period of Jewish life. "In every community there were Yeshibas; the principals were well paid; every Kehillah had their stipendaries; each disciple had two younger men whom he taught. Every community of fifty householders had no less than thirty students and their followers. There was hardly a house in all Poland where they did not study Torah. In every community there were many learned men and in a community of fifty householders there were twenty sages who were known as "Morenu" or "Haber" etc.", (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.347.) (from Yeven hamazulah). Isaac b. Abraham in the introduction to his



work does not find the picture so entrancing and feels it necessary to write a simple work in order to clarify the theology of his people and give them an opportunity to strengthen their own faith in their polemics with their Christian neighbors. The custom of training young students in the homes of learned men was quite characteristic of some of the Protestant sects of that day. Many Bohemian Brethren pastors were prepared for the ministry in the homes of other pastors with whom they were domiciled. (Krasinski, II; p.306.) Yet the influence of the rabbis were far flung and the Jews of Frankfort a/m did not hesitate to seek rabbinic support from the great lights in Poland. (Rema. Sim. 91. Katz, p.29.) A great many of the butchers were men who were well versed in the law inasmuch as it was the custom in Russia and Poland not to appoint shochetim unless they were good students of the law and men who feared God. (Responsa of Rosh quoting resp. of Rabbi.) (Sur'azinah, at the end. Katz, p.25.)

It was an established custom at every fair to set aside a place for a synagog and to pray there every day and especially on the Sabbath when it seems no business at all was transacted. The rabbis, the heads of the colleges, the chiefs of the provinces and most of the people gathered together on that day during the period of the Fairs and read the Torah and studied. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 84. c. 1600, Katz, p.35.)

Lipman Heller speaking of condition in Poland in 1633 said that fines imposed on individuals are divided among the poor. The rabbi and the community get no benefit from them. (Etan haezrahi. Sim. 7. Katz, p. 27.)

Wine made by Christians was very often taken by Jews in payment of debts despite the fact that the rabbis frowned on this practice inasmuch as the wine was not ritually permissible to the Jews, but the stress of economic circumstances overrode the objection of the rabbis. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 50. Katz, p.22.) The Jews of Vilna in order to avoid taking the oath in the Gentile courts with uncovered head payed an annual tribute to the authorities. Then it is said an authority arose in Vilna who permitted them to take the oath with head uncovered. (BetM Hillel pt. on Yoreh De'ah. Sim. 157 prior to 1650, Katz, p.13) Economic and other circumstances even in rigorous Poland and Lithu-



ania always profoundly influenced religious customs and thoughts.

Yet thru' all the pettiness of every day life, the thinkers among the Jewish leaders were thoroughly imbued with the spiritual ideal of the Jewish past. They were deliberately conscious of the high ethical principles that were part of their faith and of their obligation to spread these great thoughts among the peoples of the world. Just as the Priests and the Levites were accustomed to teach the Law and the commandments to the Israelites, so "must the people of Israel instruct and teach the peoples of the world among whom they are scattered, the words of the living God." (H.E.1-22)

#### PRINTING.

Hebrew printing received rather a late start in Poland, and this is probably the best and most conclusive argument that Rabbinic life in Poland and Lithuania was very passive until the latter part of the sixteenth century. Hebrew (rabbinic) printing in Poland began in 1530, but until 1570 was altogether unimportant. (Zunz, p.85.) From 1530 to 1569 only eight books were printed in Cracow; one book in Brest in 1546 and in Lublin only ten books from 1547 to 1568. (Ibid.) It was not until the seventeenth century that the Talmud was completely published for the first time:- in Cracow, 1602-5. (Graetz, Heb. VIII; p.109. Note. 2) In 1540 Paul Helicz, an apostate, published the Lutheran translation of the M.T. in Hebrew Letters, a translation that had been prepared by Johann Harzage, also an apostate. This translation may have been available to Isaac tho' there is no evidence to that effect. (Bandtkie, Hist. Druck. p.366. Sternberg, p.151.) There were no laws that would have prevented the publication of Isaac ben Abraham's *Hizuk Emunah*. The freedom of the press was established in 1539. There was a decree in 1556 against heretical books, but it is questionable if that could be applied to Jewish works and indidentally this decree was not carried out anyhow. (Krassinski, 1; p.294.) The censorship was finally inaugurated in 1618 thru' the influence of the Jesuits. (Sternberg, p.150. Note 4.) In all probability Jewish sentiment prevented the publication of the *Hizuk Emunah* inasmuch as the rabbis, who at the time the work was







## RELATIONS BETWEEN JEWS AND NON-JEWS.

It is very interesting at first glance to find that there is very little in the responsa literature that will show of relations between Jews and non-Jews in Poland in view of the fact that the Jews had lived in Poland for many centuries. The explanation, of course, is that practically all of our sources of Jewish life in Poland are Jewish and they are for the most part rabbinical, written by men whose interests were solely confined to the Jewish people in their relation to the law and only incidentally and indirectly in their relation to their milieu.

The leit motif of Polish Jewish life thru'out the sixteenth century in relation to the non-Jew is toleration and petty persecution. The Polish "pan" knew no law. A group meeting a Jew on a narrow bridge would be hesitate, if they felt so inclined, to push him off into the river. (Ret. Hodoshba, ~~hodoshot~~. Sim. 63. c. 1635. Katz, p.9.) The Jews had a wholesome fear for the priests and their students in the various Christian colleges inasmuch as the students, in Poland, often represented the reactionary elements in the body politic that expressed its patriotism and piety by attacks on heretics and Jews. (Pene Yehosu'ah. pt. 2. Hoshan Mishpat. Sim. 97. Katz, p. 8.) In Grodno the Jews built a fence around a vacant lot that once held a synagog, but no sooner would the Jews build the fence than the passing Christians would tear it down. (Ibid. pt. 1. Orah, Hayyim Sim. 7. Katz, p.8.) The special statute of Stephen Batory for the Jews of Posen in 1580 gives them equal rights with the non-Jews in the courts; permits them to build anywhere; to be represented at the court of the provincial ruler by a special representative; to take the oath according to their own customs and does not restrict them in the prices that they set upon their goods. They are not required for any civil duty of any sort on the Sabbath or other Jewish holidays. Apostate Jews are required to divide their estate equally between their Jewish and their non-Jewish children. (Graetz, Heb.VII; p.332). Lemberg at one time, during the reign of Sig.1, attempted to organize a coalition of Polish cities to restrict the economic activity of the Jews. (Sternberg, p.134)



Some Jews living on the estates of nobles were practically bound to the soil like the serfs inasmuch as they could not leave the estate without the Lord's permission.

(Maharam Lublin. Sim. 50. Katz, p.12.)

There was no great love lost between the two groups. Interesting light is shed on the attitude of the Christians toward the Jews by the statements "for it is the custom of Christians when they see a very ugly man to say: 'Well, this fellow is as ugly as Jew'". (H. E. 1-22). The Jews on the other hand had a tolerant contempt for the wine-bibbing qualities of the Lutherans; many of whom were of German extraction. Isaac ben Abraham says; "Water or vinous liquors taken in excess make one unclean as the Lutherans can well testify". (H.E. 1-15).

In the literary squabbles of the day the Protestants who themselves were making a bid for liberalism or at least for toleration did not think of according this same toleration to the Jew. The Catholics who had found after hundreds of years of experience that the Jew was quite ineradicable developed the comforting theory that like Cain they were to serve as a warning to the wicked inclined how God punishes those whom he hates and does not permit to die until their punishment is full; and that the Jew was to be tolerated as long as he obeyed the canonical laws of the Catholic countries where such laws were supported by the secular authorities. The Protestants on the other hand would be satisfied with nothing less than expulsion. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.326.) The Liberals in order to fend off the attack of radicalism and heresy attempted to prove the legitimacy of their Christianity by joining in the general attack on the Jews. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.315)

Nicalous Rey of Naglowisc, the famous Protestant Polish Poet bitterly attacks the Jews in his writings. In 1539, the same year that saw the burning of Catherine Zaleshovska there appeared in Cracow the Protestant anti-Jewish work of And. de Lubowla:— *Caecitas impia Judaeorum*." (Sternberg, p.144. Note 5.) Przyluski, also a Protestant, attacked the Jewish people. (Hollaenderski, p.7.) Fashisulski, another Protestant who was an authority on Polish laws and codes was also noted for his attacks on Jews. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.327.)



Yet the little material that we do have on relations between Jews and non-Jews evidences a fact, which is logically to be expected, that under many circumstances the Jews and non-Jews live together in amity if not in affection. In parts of Poland and Galicia peasants would borrow in clothes and the ornaments of the Jews during the Christians festivals; wear them in the churches and after the festival was over they would return the finery. (Masat Binyamin, Sim. 86, c. 1600. Katz, p.9.) A Jew had fallen into the river and was drowning and his wife could not help him for fear of being pulled in also. A priest who came along was furious that the Christians standing around refused to help the struggling man. In the meantime the Jew drowned. (Bet Hodosh Ha Yeshenot. Sim. 79. c. 1629. Katz, p.9.) One of the rabbis records the story of Beraha, a Jewish Cossack, whose fine horsemanship and general character excited the imagination of his non-Jewish comrades. He was killed in battle 1610-1. (Maharam Lublin. Sim. 137. Katz, p.46.) Altho' not at all inclined toward any phase of military life the Jews wherever required could and did do their work. On the border cities of Volynia which were exposed to the incursions of Tartar and Turkish bandits and troops the Jews were expected to help with their weapons in repulsing the enemy and defending the city. (Ibid. Sim. 43. Katz, p.44.)

Altho' no Christians lived in the Jewish quarter of Cracow they were constantly to be found there. The Christians used the Jewish quarter there for a thorefare and no doubt were constantly there for business purposes. (Rema. Sim. 132-6. c.1550) The great Radziwill is said to have studied the Lutheran, Jewish and Mohammedan creeds and finally decided to look for a new one altogether. His daughter Elisabeth was said to be inclined toward the Jewish faith. (Sternberg, p.115.)

In 1539 the year that saw the appearance of an anti-Jewish work, the burning of Catherine Zaleshovska for "Judaizing", there appeared the anonymous work:- Ad quaerelam mercatorum Cracoviae, responsum judaeorum declaratum. The book which is strongly pro-Jewish and was probably inspired if not written by the Jews themselves shows that the Jews should not be persecuted merely because they have different religion; that the Jews



bring money into a land and do not take it out; that it is better to tolerate the Jewish religion than to compel the Jews to become hypocrites; that tho' there are no Christian artisans in Poland there are almost a thousand skilled Jewish artisans; that there are only five hundred Gentile merchants and thirty-two ~~thousand~~<sup>hundred</sup> Jewish merchants; that if the Gentile merchants would not live such wasteful lives and if they would sell their goods cheaper than the Jews they would get all the trade. The Jews, it further declares, are not under the jurisdiction of the clergy, but under the king. (Sternberg. p.132. Spinner. p.14.)

The publication of a work of this type throws light on the relations between the Jews and their non-Jewish associates and evidences thru' the apologia the character of the accusations made. It is evident that the Jews are persecuted solely because they are Jewish in religion, but this accusation is accompanied by the customary evidence of commercial rivalry and jealousy which for the most part inspires the religious animosity. The Jews are accused of taking money out of the land and of underselling the Christians. The Jew in his answer shows the distinct contribution that he is making in providing an artisan class; and an extensive merchant class which can afford to sell cheaper because of a more regular life.

An interesting work of which I know only the title is "A Friendly Disputation against the Jews, containing an Examination of a certain Jewish writing, translated from Portugese into Latin, and an answer to certain Questions therein proposed to Christians" 1664. The authorship has been ascribed in part to Jonas Schlichtingius (1592-1661); to Martin Ruarus and to Daniel Brennius. These men are all Socinians, members of the Polish group that found refuge in Holland after the expulsion from Poland. (Wallace III; pp.82-3.)



<sup>s</sup>  
JEWS AS "SECULARISTS".

Most of the Jews of Poland and Lithuania were well acquainted with the vernacular. (Gevurot Anoshim. Sim. 1. c.1600. Katz, p.31-2. (Graetz, Ger. IX. p.66, Note. 1.)

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, Yiddish was by no means universal among the Jews. (Ibid.) It is perfectly proper that all Jews should be able to speak the vernacular inasmuch as practically all Jews were engaged in trade in one way or another with the non-Jews with whom they conversed in the prevailing slavonic dialect. Unquestionably the large influx of German immigrants from the teutonic countries gave an added impetus to the use of the Yiddish. Mordecai Jaffe discusses some Russian proper nouns and seems to have some understanding of vocabularies and grammar and makes the statement that people should have some knowledge of every tongue especially in the exact writing of names. There is, however, no expressed or implied desire, to secure secular knowledge for its own sake. (Iebush habuz v'argomon. Sim. 129 c. 1600. Katz, p.32.) It is interesting to note in certain testimony given exactly that a certain Jew, who is pushed into the river by some nobles, in his terror screamed in the vernacular of the land, not in Yiddish. (Bet Hodosh Ha Hodoshot. Sim. 63. Katz, p. 9. 1635.) It was not uncommon in marriages to use the Russian language in the marriage service. (Gevurot Anoshim. Sim. 1. Katz, p.32. c. 1635.)

On the authority of Gzacki, Levinson declares that in the Russian provinces of Poland (Ukraine) the Jews there prayed for hundreds of years in the vernacular. He points out that until the time of Luria there was not one Jewish author in Poland. All presses, until practically the third quarter of the sixteenth century were in Germany and Italy etc. (Sefer Teudah Byisroal. p.35. Vilna 1865.)

During the sixteenth century great migrations of non-Jews from Germany and Austria to Poland took place. These newcomers brought with them some of the ideals of the humanists and some were precursors of the Reformation. It is problematical as to what extent these new comers affected the Jewish people of Poland. The Jewish people in Poland



itself were in relations with the Jews in Italy, Germany, Moravia, Bohemia and Turkey and were fully aware of the great literary and theological revolution that was going on in their days. Under Sig. I, 1506, who was married to Bona Sforza there was also an influx of humanists and liberals.

Lelewel, a Polish historian said that the Jews in their indolence did not allow themselves to be affected by this great humanistic revival in Poland. (Sternberg pp.138-9) It is very questionable if Lelewel is correct inasmuch as there are some evidences that the Jews were affected by this revival of learning and furthermore if they were not affected to the degree that one would at first thought expect it was not because of indolence, but for reasons more logical and more weighty. The secular character of Jewish life in Poland in the first half of the sixteenth century is not so evident until it is compared with the more rabbinical character of the life in the second half of the sixteenth century and especially with the seventeenth century. There are considerable evidences that there were cultured Jews with a considerable degree of secular culture. The Jews were somewhat hindered in that printing received rather a late start in Poland, inasmuch as the printing presses are of practically no consequence until the latter part of the sixteenth century. The lack of this means of literary diffusion made the complete extension of humanism among the Jews an impossibility. The segregation of the Jews, voluntary for the most part, prevented them from getting into the spirit of the revival and the lack of a knowledge or sympathy for the classics which were essential for an understanding of the movement made the revival outside the scope of the Jew. The Jew with exceptions of course, was primarily interested in making a living and avoiding trouble from his non-Jewish neighbors. There were desiderata of his life and when they were attained he had little more to ask for. The Judaism of the Jews in Poland at this time, tho' not of an extreme rabid type, was of sufficient intensity to prevent much sympathy for any other culture.

If there were any other Jewish works of this period in Polish life they were of necessity manuscripts that have not survived. After the rabbinic reaction of the latter



half of the century such studies were looked askance at and no attempt was made to preserve these works or to encourage further studies along those lines. Because of the peculiar Polish conditions whereby autonomy was granted, the study of the Law - which was the organic statute for the Jew, - became a necessity and an opportunity for students and as time passed and the Jewish lot became more severe the study of the Law became intense to the seclusion of all other studies. The literature that is extant is practically all "rabbinical" or better "legalistic" and all evidences of the liberal arts as developed by the Jews are omitted or neglected because of lack of sympathy on the part of the authors.

The small work of Isaac ben Abraham, practically the only Jewish non-legalistic and "Secular" work of this period is a mine of information as we have seen and presents to us a phase of life whereby a cultured Polish Jew is on terms of apparent intimacy with some of the highest dignitaries of Poland, and if not characterized by a knowledge of the classics evidences at least a thoro knowledge of the language of the country, general and church history and above all evidences the critical spirit in his writing and thot. Altho' Spinner is rather sanguine in his statement that there was no cultural height which the Jews of Poland had not attained there is no question that a considerable number of individuals here and there did show strong evidences of the humanistic revival. (p.35) Spinner declares that Jews were affected by the spirit of humanism but that they were not admitted to the higher schools that they might perfect themselves. (p.22) Jewish children did attend the public schools with the Christian children in the first half of the sixteenth century to the dismay of the ecclesiastical authorities who in 1542 requested of the King that Jewish children should not attend the same school as the Christian children. (Sternberg, p.131. quoting Czaki)

A late as the end of the sixteenth century a contemporary Polish writer: Maciej of Miechow says that the Jews in Poland do not live as they do in other Christian lands for they work in trade and agriculture and not only do they study their Torah, but also the secular sciences such as astronomy and medicine. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.335, Note 2.)

There is a very interesting fragment of a summons by the rabbis of a rabbinical



synod under Sig. 1.: "A Jew should not confine himself alone to one science. Altho' the first science is the Torah the others should not be neglected. The ~~genesis~~ <sup>and</sup> of all sciences is seen in the Torah/may be recognized by all God fearing people. Jews were always found at the courts of Kings. Mordechai was learned; Esther was wise, Nehemiah was a Persian councillor. Study sciences, be useful to the Kings and Lords and they will help you. There are as many Jews in the world as stars in the heavens and as grains of sand in the sea; yet the Jews do not shine like the stars, albeit they are indeed crushed under foot like the sand by the whole world." (Sternberg, p. 147 quoting Czaki) Graetz doubts the authenticity of this appeal inasmuch as it is too strong an appeal for Science and the leaders were all rabbis and we know no rabbi who loved science so well. (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.447. Note 1.) The only really strong argument against the authenticity of this appeal is the fact that it is quoted for the first time in Czaki, an eighteenth century writer. Graetz objects to it largely because he cannot conceive of any Jewish group in Poland of secular sympathies. Graetz is somewhat biased for the only Poland he knows is the Poland of the seventh <sup>cent</sup> and eighteenth centuries with its rabid Talmudism and its ~~pup~~ <sup>pup</sup>l. Geiger, too, because he could not conceive of a Polish Jew of an advanced training in secular culture was firmly convinced that the Hizuk Emunah was the work of a Lithuanian Karaite. If internal evidence means anything, and I admit it is a very undepenable criterion, then this letter is in full accord with the spirit of the first half of the sixteenth century. There is said to be in the Vatican library a manuscript on astronomy by a Polish Jew, dated 1491. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.56 Note. 2.) Cardinal Commendoni, the papal nuncio at the court of Sig. II-1548-1572 writes: "There are yet found in these provinces (Lithuania, etc.) a great number of Jews who are not despised here, as they are in many other places. They do not live by base profits, by usury, by any menial occupation -not that they decline these kind of profits, but they possess landed property, are employed in commerce, and even apply themselves to the culture of belles-letters, particularly to medicine and astrology. They have had nearly all the commissions for levying the customs and the transport duties of mer-



chandize, both imported and exported. They boast of the possession of considerable fortunes; and, not only do they rank in the list of honest men, but sometimes command them. They have even no mark to distinguish them from the Christians. They are even allowed to wear a sword and to carry arms. In short, they enjoy all the rights of other citizens." (Hollanderski, p.9) Under circumstances such as these it is very easy to understand how the Jews did study the sciences by which were probably meant medicine and astrology, both of which also had a decided pecuniary advantage for the adept.

Science and secular studies in the period under discussion were held up among the Jews for the most part by distinguished physicians. Many Polish Jews studied in Padua at the Catholic university there where a knowledge of Latin was indispensable to continue the work. They were recorded on the university registers as Hebraei Poloni. (Dubnow, p. 132.) Ezekiel the Jew was physician at the time Alexander I, (1501-6.) Isaac Physico was physician at the time of Alexander and also during the period of his successor Sig. I (1506-1548). As early as 1501 the Polish envoy to Rome found Jewish medical students at Padua. In 1517 the Jews of Poland, according to contemporary accounts were well established in medicine and astronomy. (Spinner, pp.30-1)

In 1532 the King, Sig. I, appointed as "senior" or chief rabbi of Cracow the well known scholar Moses Fishel who had also taken the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Padua. Here we have the combination of a rabbi and a scientist. (Dubnow, 1p p.105.) The king freed him from all Jewish taxes. (Graetz, Heb. VII; p.316) Another famous physician under the same King was Simon Lowicz who flourished about 1537. (Sternberg, pp.148-9) Under Sig. II there were three prominent physicians all of them by the name of Solomon. Solomon Ashkenazi who had studied in Italy and who seems to have had considerable influence with the King, (Spinner, pp-21-33); Solomon Calarkoe of Cracow, also physician under Stephen Batory, of Lithuanian birth and probably of Spanish descent; (Spinner pp.33-4); and Solomon of Lemberg who in 1571 was confirmed as "senior" of Russia. David Meyer (Meyer David) was body-physician to Stephen Batory and served him also as occasional adviser. The chancellor of Siebenburgen thanked the king for the use of



his services. He was also a student of Paracelsus. (Spinner, p.33; Sternberg p.149) Jacob Belzye was court physician to Sig. III. He is the man who is famed for his disputations with Martin Czechowitz and Jacob must have evidently been a good Latinist too or he would not have been able to carry on the polemics that he did with Czechowitz, unless he knew Latin. The anti-Jewish work of the Christian physician Shleskovski shows how popular Jewish physicians were with the people. (Spinner p.35) Maharam Lublin speaks of the great scholar and student of science: Solomon the Physician. (c.1600.) (Sim. 62, Katz, p.28) ~~The~~ In <sup>the</sup> same work, Sim. 44, he tells of a rabbi in Brest who was ill and consulted a non-Jewish physician implying there was not at that time in that vicinity a Jewish physician. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the animus on the part of the Jews against any form of secular science had set in and there were very few Jewish physicians compared to the sixteenth century when they were quite numerous. Probably the most interesting of all the Jewish Physicians was Joseph Solomon del Medigo of Cania who was a physician, a philosopher and adventurer. He was the physician to Radziwill in Lithuania. He also had studied at Padua. He lived in Poland from 1620-4, but in his time for a number of reasons primarily the increasing persecution that marked the reign of Sig. III, the Polish Jewish leaders had so arrayed themselves against the sciences and all forms of secular culture that Joseph bitterly arraigns them for their opposition. (Dubnow, I; pp.133-4)

Knowledge of Latin was evidenced by the Jews who wrote "Ad Quaeralem" if indeed a Jew wrote it as in all probability he did. The works of the Jewish physicians and polemic Jacob of Belzye also evidence a good knowledge of Latin. Matatya Delacrut was an accomplished scientist and translated the "Theorae Novae planetarum" to which Moses Isserles wrote a commentary in Hebrew. (Spinner, p.28) Some Jewish students studied Aristotelian philosophy. Solomon Luria complained that: "I myself have seen the prayer of Aristotle copied in the prayer book of the Bahurs" (Dubnow, I; p.120. Graetz, Heb. VII; p.335)

Among the rabbinic scholars of the sixteenth century who were well acquainted in



sciences to a greater or less degree are Hendel Menoach; Moses Isserles; Hayyut; DelaCrut and David Gans the historian, geographer, astronomer, and mathematician, disciple of Isserles. Gans also knew Kepler and Tycho de Brahe, personally. (Zunz, III; p.87...Graetz, Heb. VII; p.345; Note.2) In the burst of rabbinic activity in the period from 1550-1580 there was a great interest in literature; mathematics, logic, and the works of Maimonides. (Zunz: ibid.)

In the period from 1500 to 1550 some of the Jews of Poland were influenced by the humanistic revival. Some Jewish children attended the secular schools and some Jews attended the medical school at Padua. There was an interest in medicine and astronomy and considerable association <sup>of</sup> cultured Jews with cultured non-Jews. The work of Isaac ben Abraham evidences this. The interest in scientific subjects tho' waning continues all thru' the sixteenth century, but is practically dead by the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The toleration of the Jew in the first half of the sixteenth century was sufficient to produce a character like Isaac ben Abraham and a work like the *Hizunk Emunah*. There were no places in Poland after the Counter-Reformation for secular studies for the Jews especially since even the Protestant schools were not open to them. There was no incentive for the Jew to acquire secular knowledge inasmuch as there was no Jewish leisure class and it offered nothing in the way of a living since all official positions were closed to the Jew. Those professions-medicine and astrology,- that did offer the Jew the possibility of a livelihood-were espoused as long as the opportunity offered itself. (Graetz, Heb. VII;p.336.)



## A P P E N D I C E S

### CHAPTER I.

The Synods and the Council of Four Lands

Appendix I.

Page 1 to Page 17

Michael Servetus and the Jews.

Appendix II.

" 1 " " 3

### CHAPTER II.

Jewish Converts and Conversion in Poland in  
XVth, XVIth, XVIIth Centuries. Appendix III.

A. The Russian Judaizers

" 1 " " 3

B. Conversion and Apostasy in Russia,  
Poland and Lithuania in XVIth, XVIIth  
and XVIIIth Centuries.

" 4 " " 10

The Government and the Jews in Poland in the  
Sixteenth Century. Appendix IV.

A. The Government and the Jews in Poland  
in the Sixteenth Century

" 1 " " 11

B. The Church and the Jews in Poland in  
the Sixteenth Century.

" 11 " " 15

C. Inner Life of Polish Jewry in the Six-  
teenth Century.

" 15 " " 18

D. Jews of Prominence in Financial Life

" 19 " " 20

E. Poland as a Refuge

" 20 " " 21

F. Polish Persecution

" 21 " " 23

G. Jewish Captives

" 23 " " 23

H. Jewish Malefactors

" 23 " " 25

I. Communal Leaders

" 25 " " 28

J. Printing

" 28 " " 29

K. Relations between Jews and non-Jews

" 30 " " 33

L. Jews as "Secularists"

" 34 " " 40

Simon Budny and the Jews. Appendix V.

" 1 " " 7

Francis David and the Sabbatarians in their rela-  
tion to Polish Anti-trinitarianism.

Appendix VI.

" 1 " " 7

Judaizers in Poland in the Sixteenth Century

Appendix VII.

" 1 " " 6



# SIMON BUDNY AND THE JEWS.

## APPENDIX V.

Simon Budny (Budnaeus) was born of noble birth either in Masovia or Lithuania.

He belonged originally to the Eastern (Greek Catholic) church but later became a Calvinist and was chaplain to Prince Nicholas Radziwill at Kleck. Later he was chaplain to Kiszka of Samogitia and finally preacher at Zaslav. (Lithuania) He was a master of the Russian, Polish and Latin tongues and was a good Hebraist. (Krasinski 11;pp.363-4) He studied at Cracow where he had met Blandatra and other anti-trinitarians and embraced radical ideas. (J.E.111;p.421) The date of his death is unknown.

His works as far as I have been able to collect notices of them are as follows:-

Luther's Catechism in the Lithuano-Russian Dialect. (translation). Nieswicz. 1562.  
Assisted in translation by M.Kawieczynski and Laurentius Kryszkowski.

"On the Justification of Sinful Men before God." Lithuano-Russian dialect. Nieswicz. 1562.

Bible. Trans. into Polish. Zaslav 1572. quarto. (O.T. and N.T.) Annotated.

Trans. from Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Said to have been assisted by Falconius. (Sokolowski) and Paleologus). Printed at expense and with the types of Mathias Kawieczynski, Starost of Nieswicz. Work done by Daniel Leszczynski. Notes on the Bible are said to be those of an unbeliever.

De Magistratu Politico. James Paleologus. Lusk 1573. Edited by Budny.

Refutatio Christiano non liceat Magistratum Politicum gerere, in Dialogis suis proposuit. Lusk 1574. (In answer to the Dialogs of Czechowitz.)

On the Principle Articles of Christian Faith, i.e. of the Father, of his Son, and the Holy Ghost. Lusk (Lithuania) 1576. (Obrona-the Apology) Written in 1573. This book is considered the most subversive of revelation of all his books.

New Testament. (trans.) With annotations. Lusk. Lith. 1584. octavo.

De Emendanda Republica. Modryewski. Trans. by Simon Budny.

(Krasinski 11;pp.363-4; Wallace, 11;pp.230ff.-240ff; Geiger, N.Schreften, p.191; Wallace 11,p.266ff; Geiger, Lieberman Kalendar 1854,pp.25-26.)

For purposes of future reference it is advisable to list the Polish translations of the Old and New Testament chiefly in vogue in the sixteenth century, and with special reference to this study.

Catholic.....Cracow.....1561.....Old and New Testament.

Catholic.....Cracow.....1574.....Old and New Testament.

Protestant.....Brest (Lith) 1563)...Old and New Testament.

Trans. before schism by Protestants and Anti-Trinitarians and claimed alike by each.

Budnean.....Nieswicz..1572.....Old and New Testament.



Budnean.....Losh (Lith)..1584.....New Testament.  
Catholic.....Cracow.....1577.....Complete.  
Catholic.....Cracow.....1599....approved by papal authority  
Complete.  
Catholic.....Cracow.....1617.....Complete.

The theology of Budny in brief was the belief in the complete humanitarian character of Jesus who is not to be worshipped under any circumstance; rejection of the idea of original sin, infant baptism; and supremacy of Mosaic code and ethics. Jesus, said Budny gave no new teachings; Christ is God only in the same sense that Moses was; prayer to Christ is not sanctioned by scripture. With Paleologus and Socinus he favored the same view that Christians could serve in the magistracy and bear arms. (Wallace, 11;p.244; Rees, p.179; Wallace 11; p.240ff; Geiger N. Schriften, pp.193-4ff.) He is the most advanced of Polish liberals, and is probably the only one who may with justice, as far as our knowledge extends, said to be Unitarian in his God conception. (Krasinski, 11;pp. 362-3) (Geiger, N. Schriften, pp.193-4) He is closely related dogmatically to Francis David of Transylvania; the connecting link between the two groups is probably the Greek Anti-trinitarian Paleologus. (Mosheim, p.458; Krasinski 11; p.375) It is not known at what age or at what time Budny became an anti-trinitarian. Such a problem is especially difficult in Poland where the preachers often remained formal Calvinists or Lutherans yet in secret professed the most liberal and advanced ideas.

I believe that it is quite safe to say that he was an Anti-trinitarian as early as 1572 which saw the publication of his Bible, the orthodoxy of which translation was never accepted by the Polish Dissidents. The ideas of Budny seem to have a strong appeal and he rapidly acquired a considerable following thru'out Russian Poland and Lithuania, known as the Budneans. (Mosheim, p.457) Altho' the liberal Hebraistic ideas of Budny gained him large following it also set up against him many enemies not only among the Catholics but especially among the Anti-Trinitarians who considered his teachings subversive. The Catholics called him and his followers Judaizers and in order to disprove this accusation they engaged in disputes with the Jews to show that they had nothing in common with them. (Dubnow, 1; p.136) The Socinians referred to them as Semi-Judaizers. In 1582



when the anti-trinitarian sentiment had started to crystallize into a definite theology his liberal ideas were frowned upon and he was condemned at Lublin and in 1584 the year that saw the active appearance of Socinus in the Anti-trinitarian assemblies, he was excommunicated, and deprived of the office of minister. (Krasinski, 11; pp. 362-3)

Mosheim is of the opinion that Socinus wrote his essay on the "Semi-Judaizers" to counteract the influence of David, but it is my opinion that he was directing his energies against Budny inasmuch as the great aim of Socinus was to organize and consolidate the various Polish Anti-trinitarian groups: Pinczowians; Racovians; Farnovians; Budnians and others and that the liberalism of Budny was a thorn in his side. (Mosheim p. 459, Note y; Wallace, 11; pp. 306ff) All the energies of Socinus were concentrated to the one object of either assimilating or crushing those who denied that Christ was not worthy of adoration, not because he himself was altogether convinced of this doctrine but because he realized in the conservative European milieu no Christian group could ultimately hope to achieve any success which did away with Jesus as a character worthy of worship. Altho Geiger is of the opinion that Budny died after 1584, Krasinski writes as if he were present at the synod of Novogrodek in 1600 in which the Socinian groups definitely decided to exclude all those who refused to worship Jesus. This resulted in the exclusion of Budny and Demoratski, a Lithuanian radical, and in the same year Socinus in a letter ~~at~~ to a friend said that there were many Lithuanians who did not believe in the invocation of Christ. (Wallace, 11; p. 459; Krasinski, 11; pp. 376-7) There is no question that the loss of the influence of Budny which may be said to date from the rise of Socinus, about 1584, is due to the influence of Socinus, the organizer. (Fock; p. 157)

We can get an intimate glimpse into the life and that of this man Budny by a study of the point of view that he evidences in the many quotations from his works which fortunately the author of the sixteenth century polemical work *Hizuk Emunah* has recorded for us.

Altho' Budny is ordinarily a very sane and sound critic and exegete he attempts



a harmonization of a difficult passage in Mathew: XXIII-35 which speaks of Zachariah son of Barachiah being slain between the sanctuary and the altar while the text in 11 Chronicles: XXIV-20 speaks of Zechariah son of Jehoiada being slain. Commenting on the passage in Chronicles Budny harmonizes it with the New Testament passage by stating that the son of Barachiah is but another name for the son of Jehoiada; the two are the same. (Hizuk Emunah, 1-22; 1-45)

The adherence of Budny to the literal interpretation of the Mosaic laws in many instance in contradistinction to contrary practices of contemporary Christians is seen in his condemnation of the Christians for eating the blood with the flesh which is expressly forbidden in the Mosaic code. (Obrona, pp.66;70. H.E.1-49) In the marginal note on Zechariah IX-7 Budny agrees with the Jews in their interpretation that the statement that the heathen nations will not eat unclean foods means that they will ultimately be united to the Jews. (H.E.1-44; H.E.1-15).

Budny has no axe to grind in his translation; no specific dogmas to uphold or support. He was primarily interested in giving the proper translation in accordance with the best text. A case in point is Romans V-14 where the whole question of original sin and the atoning power of Jesus hinges on the retention or the admission of the word "not". Budny, following Ambrose of Milan omits the word "not". (H.E.1-11)

I think that Budny was gifted with a certain sense of humor if not of sarcasm that evidenced itself in his notes on the New Testament. Budny quotes from the Latin of Luther a statement to the effect that the proofs of the Evangels for the Virgin Birth and the like are good to remember but not to argue with anyone and then Budny adds his own note in which he declares that Luther meant by this that those passages, and similar ones are good to be remembered by Christians only, but not to be argued with the Jews for the Jews can prove from their prophets that the prophets never intended at all that those passages should mean what the gospel writers imply they mean. (H.E.1-45) The independence of Budny in the use of his text is seen again Acts XV-20;29 where he omits the phrase "strangles" altho it is found in the Cracow translation (Catholic) of 1561



and the Brest (Protestant) translation of 1563. (H.E. 11-72) Budny does not hesitate to employ textual criticism. Commenting on the passage in Ezra 11-70 "and all Israel in their cities" he said that possibly at some other time the passage read more correctly; and all Judah in their cities for says Budny, Israel refers to the ten tribes who had been carried into captivity by the Assyrian King and had not yet returned. We are not concerned with the accuracy at this point of Budny's exegesis, but at the temerity he displayed in proposing or contemplating textual changes. The author of H.E. is not shocked at this, but cannot go as far and merely tries to show the falseness of Budny's exegesis. The significance of this passage lies in its inclusion in a Jewish work. The constant reference to Budny's works shows clearly and definitely that he was not unknown to the Jews who took the occasion to employ references from his works where they tend to support Jewish doctrines. There is never any tendency on the part of the Jews to adhere to Budny's point of view, but merely to quote him where he supports Jewish contentions. (H.E. 1-28) The author of H.E. speaks of him constantly as the "Christian Sage" and admires him very much probably because of the close approach to the Jewish point of view. Speaking of the eternity and the immutability of the Jewish Law Budny in the Obrona, p.39, and 41, says that the Torah given on Mt. Horeb is perfect and eternal; that there is no other Law besides it. There are not two laws that of Moses and Jesus. Jesus did not give a new law, but gave commandment to observe the Law of Moses. Budny supports his contention with many quotations. (H.E. 1-19) In many places where Budny noticed that the New Testament quoted incorrectly from the Old Testament he did not hesitate to make corrections right in the New Testament text. Acts VII-14 speaks of seventy-five souls going down into Egypt instead of the correct Biblical seventy (Genesis XLVI-27). The Cracow and Brest Bibles naturally follow the New Testament Greek and retain the "seventy-five" but Budny with whom exactness and respect for the version of the Old Testament was a passion arbitrarily changes the text in Acts to "seventy" to confirm with Genesis. (H.E. 1-45; 11-63) Budny was evidently acquainted with Patristic literature for he seems to be aware of the dispute that existed as to the authenticity of



the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Obrona p.47; H.E.11-94)

Budny was a sound exegete, following the literal sense of the text and for this reason Isaac ben Abraham, the author of *Hizuk Emunah*, delighted to quote him in substantiating his own views. Isaac trying to prove according to the prophecies of Daniel that the Jews are only temporarily in exile states that according to Daniel XII-7, the Jews, the "Holy people" will ultimately triumph and adds that the "opponent, the Christian translator, Simon Budny in his commentary also states that in this verse the "Holy people" refers to the Jews. (H.E. 1-6;1-41) Commenting on Amos 11-6 that the "righteous is sold for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes" Budny rightly says of the judges: "because of the bribe they would not judge uprightly". (H.E.1-31) In the well known phrase "For from Zion shall go forth the Law" Budny declares that Torah, Law, does not refer to anew covenant as the Christians say, but to "teaching" and accordingly Budny translates "torah" in Proverbs 1-8 as "teaching". (H.E.1-26)

Budny has no Christological axe to grind; nor has he the desire to sustain incorrect views in passages taken from the Old Testament and incorporated in the New Testament. Translating "shqhat" of Ps. XVI-10 as found in Acts XIII-35 where it is Christologically translated "corruption", Budny makes the correction in his translation and translates it the pit, the grave. (H.E.11-69) Sheol, says Budny, is not a theological Hell, but the grave, death. (H.E.1-11) Commenting on Jeremiah VII-15, Budny agrees with the Jews in the correct interpretation that Ephraim is a patronymic for the ten tribes of Israel, so called because Jeroboam b. Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim. (H.E.1-28) Budny quite properly states in commenting on a verse in Ezra 11 that there were many Jews who remained in Babylon and did not go up with the exiles when they returned to Palestine. (H.E.1-6).  
"Ziyim  
Commenting on Daniel XII-30, Budny very properly says that the /Kittim" are the Romans, as the Jewish commentators also state. (H.E. 1-6)

Isaac b. Abraham the Jewish author/has the most profound respect and admiration for Budny as an exegete and a translator and quotes him constantly. His pet phrase is to refer to Budny as the "latest Christian translator"; the "youngest among the Christian translators"; "the Christian sage", etc. Isaac advises constantly that people read the



translation of Budny and even bursts for into a shout of joy over it and cries out: "Read it and you will rejoice!" (H.E.1-31;1-41;1-6;1-15;1-11;1-43) Speaking of Budny's translation of Amos Abraham says: "If you read the translation of Simon Budny you will ascertain the truth." (H.E.11-64)

In his introduction to the second part of his book Isaac tells us that he has used the translation of Budny for the most of his quotations and that he has found it much better than all the translations employed before him. Bolafio in his "Ben Zikunim," (Livorno.p.32,1793) says in speaking of Christians interested in Jewish literature; "There is a wise man, Simon Budny, who praise it (The Talmud) very much and thinks more of it than all other books". (Graetz, Ger. IX; p.468, Note.1)

The radical theology of Budny; his close approximation of the Jewish conception of the Bible; his sound exegesis, unbiased by theological views, made him popular and respected among the Jews. Altho' it is not improbable nor impossible yet we have no direct knowledge that Budny associated directly with Jews tho' in all probabilities his exegesis which agrees in many cases with the Jewish view seems to imply that he gained his Hebraic knowledge from personal contact with the Jews. We are further inclined to believe this inasmuch as Hebrew learning was not at all developed among the Poles in the sixteenth century. The Hebraists of Poland were practically all of Italian extraction and they for the most part were coeval with Budny. The assumption is quite warranted by a study of the quotations of Budny from his various works that he depended upon the Jews in his exegesis but that the Jews in turn never drew from him. Isaac only quotes Budny in order to support his own views never to follow Budny. The Jewish influence may be said to directly exist therefore in the many followers of Budny all thru' the eastern part of the Polish kingdom where Catholicism was not as firmly established. The respect of Isaac for Budny is a splendid commentary of the times on the attitude of individual toward individual. This whole sympathy of Budny and his group toward the Jews brot down on them the hatred of the Christians and the characteristic accusation that he had become a convert to Judaism. There is no indication of this conversion in *Hizuk Emunah* and in one passage Isaac speaks of him as the "opponent". (H.E.1-6)



FRANCIS DAVID AND THE SABBATARIANS IN THEIR  
RELATION TO POLISH ANTI-TRINITARIANISM.  
APPENDIX VI.

Transylvania (Siebenbürgen) the home of David was an independent principality just south of Poland and bordering on it settled with four groups of peoples: Hungarians with a subdivision; Szekelys, Germans (Saxons) and Roumanians. The protestant Revolution swept eastward into Transylvania where many of the people went thru' all phases into Unitarianism. In 1540 with all the citizens of Klausenburg (Kolosvár) David became a Lutheran. Nineteen years later he joined the Reformed Church. (Calvinism) He became the court-chaplain to Prince John Sigismund and at the court he met the brilliant Italian anti-trinitarian Blandrata who converted David to the anti-trinitarian way of thinking, 1566. In this year he founded the Unitarian Church of Transylvania and expounded its view thru' writings and disputations. In 1568 the four religions were allowed all freedom:-Catholicism; Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarianism.

In 1570 Sigismund of Transylvania who had been favorably inclined toward David was succeeded by Stephen Batory who opposed David who by this time had extended his God conception in the Unitarian Church into a real monotheistic conception. (Bacher, 11; p. 465ff) (Wallace 11; p. 245ff.) Anti-trinitarianism had been simmering in Transylvania for sometime and was in touch with the Polish movement right on its borders. The first great Anti-trinitarian Synod, that of Wengrow, December 1565, was in touch with Transylvania. (Krasinski, 1; p. 361) It is very probable that David himself was in Poland for some time (Allen, p. 63) and Socinus states that it was David who infected Lithuania with his poisonous doctrines. (Socini Opera 1; pp. 364-5, in Toulmin pp. 81-2) Mathew Glirius a Transylvanian liberal published some of his works in Poland and it was said that he "judaized". (Wallace, 11 p. 271)

One of the intimate associates of David was the Greek radical Paleologus who lived in Germany, Poland and Transylvania. He was one of the joint rectors of the School of Klausenburg in 1573-4 during the time that David was developing his radical ideas. He was a Unitarian of an advanced type and in Poland he was intimately associated with



Budny. He is very important for he is the direct link between Budny and the Polish Monotheist and David the Transylvanian monotheist. (Wallace 11;p.266f.) Paleologus wrote two books on the civil magistracy, both published in Poland,-1573 and 1580, both edited by Budny. It is also said that he assisted Budny in his famous translation of the Old Testament. Paleologus, the close friend of Budny and David did not believe in prayer to Christ under any circumstance; did not believe that Christ had abrogated the office of Civil Magistrate and was of the opinion that war was allowable and that Christians were allowed to bear arms. (Ibid.) The conservative anti-trinitarians in Poland linked both Budny and David together in their attacks. (Ibid.11;p.244) Blandatra the Italian however, could not get along very well with David. Either because of jealousy of the influence of David or because he felt that the radical doctrines of David were subversive to the best interests of the growing Unitarian Church in Transylvania, Blandatra began to throw his influence against David. The quarrel involved the question as to the adoration of Christ. Blandatra declared that Christ was worthy of worship but David who believed now in the human origin of Jesus refused to accord Jesus adoration. In order to convince David of his error Faustus Socinus the young nephew of the great anti-trinitarian ~~Val~~ <sup>Julius</sup> Socinus was invited to come to Transylvania and dispute with David. Socinus was unsuccessful and in 1578 thru' the influence of Blandatra and with the knowledge of Socinus, David was thrown into prison where he died the following year. (Krasinski,11;pp.362-3)

During the disputation between Socinus and David which lasted for several months in David's house, David epitomized his beliefs in a group of theses which clearly show the point of view of this Liberal who was thru' Paleologus and thru' his own travels in contact with liberal thot in Poland. The Theses, very briefly, are as follows:

1. Jesus Christ is a man, the son of Mary and Joseph, and is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.
11. The Man, Jesus Christ, who is c a l l e d Christ spake only by the Holy Spirit ambassador of God, but his words are not Gods.
111. His words and those of the apostles must be tried by the test of M O S A I C L A W, and if in opposition must be harmonized to Moses and the prophets or rejected.



- IV. The Old and the New Testament are complementary; one does not exclude the other.
- V. The New Covenant existed only to the destruction of Jerusalem. Will not again have place till Jesus return and rule over the people of Jacob in Jerusalem restored.
- VI. In the meantime Jesus is the Christ of God's people, but by destination only, since according to the prophets his kingdom was to be earthly.
- VII. Jesus sent by God to be King of Jews, but they slew him and God took Jesus back to himself at his right hand.
- VIII. Jesus will remain with God until his enemies are destroyed.
- IX. Jesus is thus not functioning as a God.
- X. It is wrong to worship him. Even when on earth he should only be worshipped with civil and human homage.
- XI. Merely obey Jesus and keep his precepts.
- XII. We must receive what he promised us in the name of God.
- XIII. To invoke him is the same as invoking dead saints, as Mary for instance invocation to all of whom is unavailing.
- XIV. He is not a mediator.
- XV. His sacrifice (death) is not availing.
- XVI. For all above reasons it is wrong to invoke him. He will return and rule over us as the Christ, i.e. the Messiah of God. (Wallace, 11; p. 245ff)

Rees states that these theses are forgery by Blandatra in order to discredit David, but there is no evidence for this view and ample evidence to the contrary. (Rees, p. LIII)

Socinus himself in later life admits that he could not make David acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ and that "Jesus Christ was made little of". (Socini Opera 11; pp. 10-12, in Toulmin, p. 88.) The honor and precedence that the followers of David paid to the Old Testament and the Mosaic brot down upon their heads the accusation of the Polish Socinians that they were "semi-judaizers". (Wallace, 11; p. 245ff.) These theses of David show a decided swing toward the Hebraic attitude and conception of one God. When the "Unitarian" church was organized in 1568 it was not what its name implies, the term originally had a political not a theological connotation, and even in these Theses we do not find the absolute monotheism of the Jew. The whole attitude of David as



expressed in his Theses shows that his point of view is quite similar to that of the early Judaeco-Christians and one if really anxious to know if he was influenced by some of the liberal anti-trinitarian evanescent movements of Western Europe, such as the Anapablist heresies; by his own studies of the Scripture, by some of the primitive Church heretics, by the Polish Liberals or the Jews themselves of that day. It is impossible to localize the influence that produced him and his followers. In all probabilities they were complicated and include all. His relations with Paleologus and thru' him with Budny links him with the extreme "left" of the Polish Anti-trinitarians.

David, if he was either in Poland or Lithuania, could have come in direct contact with the Jews of those countries. There were evidently Jews in Transylvania in his time who could well have influenced him for we have the national assembly legislating their residence and rights of trade the year before he died. The trend of the Davidic movement in Transylvania after his death inclines us to believe that he too was affected by direct Jewish teaching. There is also the possibility that the liberalism of David may have influenced the trend of certain anti-trinitarians in Poland too. (J.E. XII;p.234)

After the conviction of David many Unitarians signed a declaration of faith at the instigation of Blandatra repudiating the teachings of David. (Bacher, p.465ff.) But many remained faithful and rejected the new creed which Blandatra had prepared and considered David as a martyr. Some of the Davidists, -who were even now accused of Judaizing, -went further than David and not only denied the Divinity of Jesus but made direct and distinct advances toward the Jewish faith, maintaining that the laws of the Mosaic code and the Old Testament are still binding. These Davidists are better known as Sabbatarians. The founder of the movement is Andreas Bossi, who initiated this phase of the movement in 1588. Bossi was a very wealthy Szekely noble, had many retainers and was a follower of the Unitarian faith. He was a great student of the Bible from which he derived all his knowledge of theology. He had no special theological training. He disseminated his teachings among his retainers who naturally followed his views. The



chief source of their doctrines is found in their Hymn book used in 1600. This song book contains paraphrases of the Psalms and metrical extracts from the Jewish prayer book. The songs of the New Moon, Passover, Feast of Weeks, Tabernacles, New Year and Day of Atonement, show that they celebrated the festivals of the Pentateuch only. Hanuka and Purim were not celebrated. They did not observe circumcision, but did keep some of the dietary laws and were very scrupulous about the Sabbath. They were of the opinion that they emulated the example of Jesus when they celebrated the Jewish festivals. Jesus, they said was greater than Moses, and was the human Messiah, whose mission was not the destruction but the maintenance of the Law. Jesus "was a Jew both in nationality and religion; he preached the Jewish law and drew men to Moses and the prophets". "His apostles too were all Jews, taught the Jewish faith and kept it themselves." (Ibid.) To be a true follower of Jesus and the Apostles the Mosaic Law must be obeyed. Jews were reproached for not recognizing Jesus as Messiah but they are still "God's chosen people even in their dispersion". The Sabbatarians considered themselves "of the camp of Israel." (Ibid.) They protested against all church ceremonies; objected to infant baptism that had been reintroduced by the Unitarians after the death of David; protested against the Church festivals and even the church bells. Their ethics were Jewish especially their protest against the New Testament phrase of loving one's enemies. Their adherents were enlisted for the most part among the Szekelys whom they converted from the Unitarian and the Reformed Churches. Their followers were for the most part; agriculturists; artisans and included members of the upper and lower nobility. In 1595 the Diet of Karlsburg (Fehervar) passed a law for their exclusion, but it was evidently without effect. Five years later the date of the appearance of their famous hymn book, many of their books and writings were confiscated and burnt and the Sabbatarians of Moras Vasarhely suffered so much that they in the time of the Sigismund Batthy they wrote to the Mohammedans that they "who likewise eat no swine's flesh and acknowledge God's unity have arrived at the conclusion that things cannot longer continue thus and that the One God will deliver the power into the hands of the mighty emperor of Turkey and his people." (Ibid.) Altho'



they had no organized congregations or clergy as late as 1606 they were very influential; for the court-preacher and the Secretary of State belonged to their group. That same year they held a secret Synod but it appears that in spite of their Jewish complexion their relations to Jews were not close for we are told that they did not even have a Jewish calendar. Four years later the Diet passed a law concerning the punishment of "numerous persons in the country who follow Jewish beliefs and Jewish rites and utter blasphemies against God." (Ibid.) In 1618 the sect was still growing and flourishing despite the fact they were now formally excommunicated from the Unitarian Church and a law was again passed "against the Sabbatarians or Judaizers". (Ibid.) There now came to the head of the movement the Transylvanian Statesman Pechi. (b.1570) who had travelled in European Turkey, Northern Africa, Rome, Naples, Portugal and France and had become an Orientalist of high calibre. For eight years he was chancellor of Transylvania under Bethlen. He was imprisoned in 1621 for some time. Up to this time he has been ostensibly a Unitarian but he must have been a secret Sabbatarian as evidenced by his adaptation of a well known Hebrew prayer for the New Moon. A possible influence on the Sabbatarian movement is the entrance about 1620 of the Sephardic Jews who were allowed unrestricted freedom of worship and the privilege of carrying on commerce thru'out the country. (Ibid; J.E.XII;p.235) Pechi secured Talmudic and rabbinic works from the Jews and used the material gained therefrom in his writings. After the death of Bethlen, who had imprisoned him, he came out of retirement and associated actively with Jews; arranged his household after Jewish fashion; kept the Sabbath, but the Sunday also. He organized a Synagog and read from the Torah. The Sabbatarians held services in the Unitarian churches that they claimed for themselves just as the Lutherans took over the churches of the Catholics.

Pechi wrote a compendium of prayers and ritual compositions derived from Jewish by means of which he brought in Jewish prayers and thus also made his followers aware of the less important rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. Among his writings were a translation of the Psalms; a commentary in which he used the Targum; Talmud, some Midrashim; Rashi; Ibn Bahya; Kimchi to all of whom he had access in the original; polemical works



against Christians; a translation of a Hebrew commentary; a paraphrase of Coucy's Semag. He had a good acquaintance with Hebrew literature and was unquestionably a fine Hebraist. (Ibid.) This compilation gave the Sabbatarians a specific Jewish religious foundation. The sect spread thru' all the country aided by the political circumstances and the great influence of Pechi which made all laws against them ineffective. The movement was at the height of its power circa 1635. (Ibid.)

There are a number of hymn books from the time of Pechi and later. Many of the hymns are a poetical translation of the Sephardic Machzor. There is a rendering of Yigdal and a paraphrase of the Psalms by a Sabbatarian who is evidently a good Hebraist for he uses the commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Kimchi. The purposes of this sect were translation of prayers from the Hebrew Prayer Book and polemical writings against Christian dogmas. The prayer book of Pechi is really an adaption of the Sephardic siddur and Machzor.

In 1638 a commission sentenced to loss of life and property the Sabbatarians who had been summoned and who were convicted as well as all who by a certain date should not declare their allegiance to one of the "four religions". Hundreds were confined and their property confiscated. Pechi was forced to recant and he died about five years later. The movement was for all practical purposes crushed. The Sabbatarians and those Unitarians who still refused to worship Christ were subject to such severities that the Socinians of Poland who still looked with some sympathy on these liberals sent Schlichtingius to Transylvania in 1638 to induce the people there to treat the followers of Francis David Semi-Judaizers, -as some of them were known, with less severity. The mission was unsuccessful. (Toulmin, p.428. Wallace, 111; p.41) It was absolutely decided in this year that the worship of Christ was necessary for a "Unitarian." (Wallace, 111; pp.139-40)



## JUDAIZERS IN POLAND IN THE SIXTEENTH

CENTURY.

### APPENDIX VII.

It is almost impossible to define the terms "Judaizer, Judaizing, Semi-Judaizers" with any degree of accuracy inasmuch as the term varied with the person employing it. It is a phase that is altogether relative in its connotation. The best definition that might be formulated on the basis of its most common connotation is that it implies a denial of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity:-the Trinity; the Mass, Resurrection etc., and a partiality toward the Hebrew (Jewish) religion, especially Monotheism and the Hebrew festivals. The term Jew, however, and Judaizer and Mahometan were "schimpfwoerter" commonly employed all thru' the sixteenth century, not only by the orthodox, but also by the liberals and even the radicals among the Protestants and Dissidents. It was the ambition of every group, even the most radical, to damn their opponents by casting upon them the odium of "Judaizing". The bitter animus of the Christian groups as a class against the Jew and Judaism as a class and as a religion was so strong that it was felt that the successful application of the Judaistic crimination would in itself be sufficient to destroy the prestige of the group accused.

The Church in Poland in the sixteenth century was very bitter against all forms of religious innovation and against all reformers, when the reformers assumed alarming proportions. The very existence of the Jewish group who always unequivocally maintained their monotheism, fairly flaunted it in the face of their Trinitarian fellow citizens always inclined the zealous Churchman to the belief that new ideas in the minds of the erstwhile orthodox might be laid at the door of the Jews. In addition their point of view was that if the Jews were not responsible for the odious innovations they were at least desirous of injuring the Church and of propogating heresy and thru' this trend of thought they came to the conclusion that all evils in the church doctrine could well be laid at the door of the Jew. It was an established policy, too, of the church, now pursued for many centuries to show forth the Jew as a horrible example to the "faithful" of a people that rejected the Christ when he had in truth come. (Friedlander, p.42.)



The clerical party in Poland, especially when under Jesuit influence, in the second half of the sixteenth century used the Jewish question as a foil in their attempt to crush the wide-spread liberal Christian movement. It was their constant aim to show the direct relation between the Jews and the Liberals and thus bring the latter into the damned category of the former. Especially did the clerics in their excitement see "Jewish propoganda" in the radical, rationalistic ideas of the Anti-Trinitarians who impaired the Trinitarian God conception. (Dubnow, 1; p.79)

The Church was especially embittered by the progress of liberal religious ideas inasmuch as they felt that the liberalizing tendencies, especially where they were anti-trinitarian in tendency, were a step toward Judaism and the thought that the group which they tried so hard to convert was in turn drawing sympathizers was a gall and wormwood to the orthodox churchman. The dread of being classified as a "Judaizers" or a "Semi-Judaizer", the two terms seems to be interchangeable, was so great even among the liberals that the Socinians were bitter in their opposition to all whom they called Judaizers and they did not hesitate to exclude from the communion of the church even prominent leaders on account of partiality to opinions of Judaizers. (Wallace 11-366ff) Even the most liberal group in all Poland, the Budnaeans lead by Simon Budny, did not hesitate to enter into disputes and discussions with the Jews in order to evidence to the Catholics, who attacked them as Judaizers, that they had nothing in common with that group. (Dubnow, 1; p.136.)

Any one who impaired the trinitarian god conception; who attacked the divinity of Jesus; who ascribed a human character to Jesus was a Jew, a Judaizer, a Semi-Judaizer, a Mohametan. Zwingli at Marburg in 1529, says D'Aubign'e, had first of all to deny humanitarian ("Jewish") views of the nature of Christ. Servetus complains that where one disagrees with the usual conception of the character of Jesus the people are scandalized and accuse one of Judaism and Mahometanism. (Dialog. de Trinitate. II;p.57; in Wallace 1; p.421) Ostored, the Polish anti-trinitarian and follower of Socinus was attacked by the University of Leyden theological faculty who said his works differed little



from Mahometanism and Alciati, an Italo-Polish anti-trinitarian, who held a very advanced conception of the monotheistic idea; and who was known to have declared that he believed that the Mahometan idea of God was more reasonable than the orthodox Christian idea, was also accused of being a Mahometan. Judaism and Mahometanism in the mind of the average Christian was distinguished by its Monotheism. (Wallace, 11; pp.112ff; 395.) It was said of Mathias Glirius, a Transylvanian anti-trinitarian who published one of his works in Poland, that he manifestly "Judaized". (Ibid. p.271.) The deniers of Jesus' divinity are New Jews and Arians proclaims the title of a German work that appeared 1526-7: "Das unser Herr Christu Jesus wahrer Gott sei, Zeignis der Heiligen Geschriftte, wider die Neuen Juden und Arainer, Unter Christlichen Namen, welche die Gottheit Christi verleugen," etc. (Fock, p.127)

The famous Catherine Zaleshovska the "apostate woman", burned to death 1539 in Cracow, who was accused of Judaizing, rejected completely the divinity of Jesus, and the sacrifice of the mass. (Dubnow, 1; pp.79-80; Wallace, 11; p.139)

The liberalism of the Davidists of Transylvania gave the Polish Anti-trinitarians a splendid opportunity to evidence their own relative conservatism to the Catholic and Dissidents of Poland who had in turn attacked the Anti-trinitarians as Judaizers. David developed the most liberal conception of Jesus, of his time;-that he was of human origin and was not to be worshipped. This was blasphemy to the great body of Polish Liberals; who knew the Davidists as Semi-Judaizers. Socinus himself had a bitter animus against David and his followers and it is the opinion of Mosheim, the church historian, that Socinus and his friends attacked David, and cried wolf in order to protect themselves from suspicion for they too acknowledged many of the opinions for which they condemned David, especially in reference to the invocation of Christ. (Wallace, 11; pp.245ff.) Socinus complains that he could not make Francis acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ: "Jesus (was) made little account of." (Socini Opera 11; pp.710-12; in Toulmin, p.88) Paleologus, the Greek anti-trinitarian, who was so closely associated with David and with Budny in Poland was bitterly hated by Socinus who calls him a "Jew", a "man quite



blinded with hatred of Christ's glory". (Wallace, 11; p.266ff) Characteristic Judaizers are the Davidists after the death of their leader who declared that to be a true follower of Jesus and the Apostles the Mosaic law must be obeyed, and considered themselves of "the camp of Israel". In 1610 a law of the Diet in Transylvania was directed against the:—"numerous persons in the country who follow Jewish beliefs and Jewish rites and utter blasphemies against God." (Bacher; p.465ff.)

A rather peculiar case is that of Jacob Melsztynzyk who seems to be a convert to Judaism, who attempted to build up a new religious system on a purely Mosaic basis. (Sternberg, p.114.)

Martin Czechowitz was one of the most prominent anti-trinitarians in the pre-Socinian period. He was considered too radical in his younger days by his fellow liberals who objected to his advocacy of the doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. In one of the synods in 1569 he maintained his point of view despite the accusations that were hurled at him of: "Jew"; "Denier of God." A year later he gave up the views that displeased his associates, became a conservative and evidenced his sound theological views by attacking all those who refuse to worship Jesus as; "Semi-judaizantes", a word which he seems to have used for the first time and which later became quite popular. (Krasinski 11; p.361.) Geiger offers the very plausible opinion that he attacked the Jews in order to cover his own heresy which he probably still cherished. (Geiger, Liebermann, Kalender 1854, p.23.)

A characteristic anti-trinitarian Judaizer is John Grotkowski, the first minister of the Church of Smiegel, 1580. It is stated in the early Socinian sources that he Judaized:—that he never taught the people from the N.T., only from the O.T., that he never invoked the Son of God and never permitted people to invoke him. He finally recanted and joined the orthodox group of the Anti-trinitarians. (Wallace, 11; p.305ff.)

The most liberal Anti-trinitarian in the whole ~~English~~ Polish school was Simon Budny, who developed a school and theology that was very much akin to that of David of Transylvania with whom he was probably in touch. Daniel Clementinus a Socinian of his



time declared that he embraced Judaism, but this accusation was probably brought forth only because of his very close relation to the Mosaic code. (Krasinski, 11;p.364.) The Socinians called his followers: "Semi-Judaizers". (Mosheim, p.458.)

Socinus the great organizer of the anti-trinitarians in Poland has written a very interesting essay on the "Semi-Judaizantes". (Socini Opera 11; p.804ff. I am indebted to Mr. Abraham Shinedling for the translation of this essay from the Latin)

A Semi-Judaizer he declares is one who observes some of the laws of Moses and does not acknowledge Jesus as the Savior, nor as the Messiah promised by God. Socinus argues against them that the promises of the Torah apply only to those who observe the whole Torah and the promises were made only to physical descendants of the great Hebrew Fathers and for this reason the promises do not apply to the Semi-Judaizantes. The S. Jud. who only observe parts of the divine law cannot call themselves worshippers unless they observe a l l the law. He attacks the Semi-Judaizantes for only observing part of the law. The Jew who observes all the law will receive the reward. (Socinus really means by this that if there is a reward for the observance of the law the Jew who observes it all will receive it.) Socinus constantly repeats his few arguments and sometimes contradicts himself. He states that the reward for the observance of the law can come even to those who are not physical descendants if they observe the whole law. But the Semi-judaizantes who are not physical descendants; who are not of the circumcision and who do not observe all of the Laws cannot hope for salvation thru' Judaism. Then Socinus comes with his crushing argument that even if all the promises of the O.T. are given to those who observe the law it means nothing more than joy in this life; material prosperity,-- nothing in the f u t u r e l i f e. (But Christianity, he says, grants all the good of the future life to its followers.) The Humanistic spirit of Socinus crops out in his attack on those who do not accept Jesus in his statement that the Jews accept the testimony of Moses, but inconsistently reject the testimony of Jesus which has more in its favor than the book of Genesis, which Moses writes without giving his sources. The Semi-Judaizantes believe in parts of the N.T.; yet they reject Jesus as Savior despite the



fact that the evidence for him is as strong as the O.T. if not stronger if one may judge the truth of a movement thru' its wide spreadness among its followers. The Semi-Judaizantes must believe in Jesus if they believe at all in tradition; they must believe that he was the Savior because of the great deeds he performed and the deeds his followers performed in his name. Again the Judaizers must believe in Jesus because he is the Messiah promised by the O.T. for he has the required characteristics of the Messiah set forth in the O.T. The two principle arguments against Jesus as the Messiah, which the Judaizers offered were: (1) Jesus had no reign on earth as promised, (2) he taught, promised and forbade much of the Mosaic law which God said is eternal. The Messiah had no right to change the Laws of Moses. Socinus' answer to the first argument was that Jesus had a reign altho' it was not like other Kings. The answer to the second argument was that Jesus changed the law after being endowed with the power to do so. Furthermore he was king and he had the right to change the law of his people. God gave Jesus the power to change the law. The non-abrogation of the Mosaic law applied to the people only not to Jesus or his approved messengers. The temporal law of Moses must give away to the eternal law of Jesus which gives celestial happiness to those who keep it.



Isaac ben Abraham.

Appendix VIII.

A.	General Description of Manuscripts, Translations and Printed Editions of Hizuk Emunah	Page 1 to Page 5
B.	Name of the Author	" 6
C.	Who was Isaac ben Abraham?	" 6
D.	The Karaite Argument	" 6
E.	The Evidence for Isaac ben Abraham as a Karaite	" 6 " " 8
F.	Examination of the Evidence for Isaac ben Abraham as a Karaite	" 9 " " 12
G.	The Evidence for the Work as that of a Karaite.	" 13 " " 15
H.	Examination of Evidence for the Work as that of a Karaite	" 16 " " 20
I.	Evidence for Hizuk Emunah as a Work of a Rabbinite	" 21 " " 25
J.	Summary of Evidence already presented as to Rabbinic or Karaite Character of Author and Work.	" 26 " " 28
K.	Internal Evidence as to the Date of the Hizuk Emunah and its Author.	" 29 " " 33
L.	The Nativity of Isaac ben Abraham	" 34 " " 35
M.	The Education of Isaac Ben Abraham	" 36 " " 36
N.	The Theology of Isaac ben Abraham	" 36 " " 36
O.	The Jewish Consciousness of Isaac ben Abraham	" 39 " " 41
P.	Isaac of Troki as Student of History	" 41 " " 42
	1. Jewish History	" 42 " " 45
	2. Church and General History	" 45 " " 47
Q.	Isaac ben Abraham the Exegete	" 47 " " 50
R.	Isaac ben Abraham as Polemic	" 50
S.	Summary	" 50



## ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPTS; TRANSLATIONS  
AND PRINTED EDITIONS OF HIZUK EMUNAH.  
APPENDIX VIII.

#IIII-Vollers Catalog. University of Leipzig library; 152 pages, quarto. ALL in one handwriting. Seventeenth and Eighteenth century. The manuscript agrees closely with the collation of the manuscript of Gottlieb Unger given in Wolf, B.H. 111 (end) and IV; 646ff. Eight (8) poems are added to the manuscript. The first has the acrostic: Yizhak hazak; the second: Yizhak hazak; the third: Yizhak ben Abraham hazak, with the date conjectured to be 1570; the fourth; has the acrostic: Yizhak hazak; the fifth: Yizhak; the sixth: Aharon hazak; the seventh: Nahmu hazak; the eighth: Nahmu. These poems are followed by a copy of colophon dated 1502. The colophon states that it was copied from a book written in Kirkeer (a Karaite city) by Moses Heoni, son of Joseph the Gabbai of Troki, of the fugitives of Constantia (Constantinople?) who came from Constantina in the district of Troki in 1488. The copy itself was made in 1502. That the book H.E. was written in 1502 is manifestly impossible for there are a large number of references in the book that show that it could not have been written until many years later as I shall explain in detail. It is possible that this colophon refers to one of the poems. This colophon is followed by the Minhagin of Joseph the son of Mordecai HaKodesh which seems to have been written about 1600. Poem No.3 is ascribed to Isaac ben Abraham and the poem is date 1570 on the strength of the line "and distress has surrounded them these fifteen hundred years". 1500 plus 70 equals 1570. Poem No. 8 above mentioned is by Nahman (Nahmu) HeHazan and No. 7 by Nahmu HaHazan ben Zephaniah HeHazan. There is a Nahmu HeHazan quoted among the leaders of the Karaites in Troki (Orak Zaddikim, p.22a.) There is a Nahmu b. Zephaniah among the Karaite leaders in Troki, (O.Z. 22a) both probably sixteenth century. The copist was Caleb Tarno. (Heb.Bib.Vol.Xi;pp.82-4 (1907) Ed. by Freiman.)



THE M. NATHANSON COLLECTION OF KARAISTIC, LITURGIC  
POEMS.

Geiger received a number of manuscript Karaistic liturgical poems from M. Nathanson of Vilna, three of these poems purport to be written by Isaac ben Abraham.

- (1) The first is identical with the first poem described in Vollers Catalog. #III (v. supra).

With this difference, however, the Voller poem has the superscription: that it is a poem of Rabbi Isaac, but the Nathanson poem has the superscription that it was written by Isaac of Troki, author of the *Hizuk Emunah*, son of Abraham. The acrostic is "Isaac".

- (2) The second poem is ascribed to Isaac ben Abraham and is practically identical with number three of the Vollers collection. The acrostic is "Isaac ben Abraham." There is this significant difference between the two poems. Number three of the Vollers collection has the statement: "and distress has surrounded them these 1500 years". 1500 plus 70 equals 1570. The Nathanson poem in the very same line has the date 1707 plus 70 equals 1777. Geiger insists that this is an emendation of the copyist and arbitrarily sets the date at 1565.

- (3) The third poem has the superscription of "Rabbi Isaac" and the acrostic "Isaac". Among these poems are two by Joseph ben Mordecai HaKodesh the reputed disciple of Isaac ben Abraham of Troki.

The first has a complete acrostic of Joseph's name with the superscription that he is the author of the "Minhagim".

The second has the superscription: "Joseph, son of Mordecai the Holy (Martyr) the Trokite author of the Minhagim." (Zeit. d. Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft. Vol. XII; p. 731; 1858. Leipzig.



### THE WAGENSEIL MANUSCRIPT.

Wagenseil, professor of Jurisprudence and Oriental Language in the University of Altorf in Bavaria, in his travels in Northern Africa secured a manuscript from some Jews in Ceuta which he published for the first time in 1681, in his *Tela Ignea Satanae*, Altorf Hebrew and Latin. This is the basis of all later editions and is the only published manuscript. It has a preface by the disciple of the author signing himself: Joseph, son of the martyr Mordecai of Cracow. This is followed by the introduction of the author, Isaac ben Abraham; then an complete index of the book; then part one; then part two with a short introductory remark of the author. Part one has fifty chapters: In the first eight (8) he discusses some of the various dogmas of Christianity in their relation to Judaism. From chapter 8 to chapter 44 he answers Christian attacks based on Old Testament quotations. From 44 to the end he gives some of the polemics he has carried on with the Christians. Part two begins with a short introduction in which he states that he is indebted for his translation of the New Testament for the most part to Simon Budny's translation of 1572 which he values very highly. This is followed by a short presentation which serves as an initial attack on the New Testament and Christian tradition. He then takes up the body of the second part which has 100 chapters. In these chapters, following the books of the New Testament he selects important passages of the several New Testament books thru' to Revelations and carries on a polemic with Christianity. According to the preface of Joseph his teacher Abraham had finished the book and the index as far as 11-9 when he fell ill and died at the age of sixty, and Joseph finished the index. This would make the age of Isaac ben Abraham from 1555-1615. The date of the writing of the book is 1615. (H.E.1-42;44)

### THE UNGER MANUSCRIPT.

Written in Troki, Lithuania. Described by Unger in 1715. Geiger insists and most scholars agree with him that this is the true and most original of all manuscripts and that the Wagenseil manuscripts of 1615 is nothing more than a reworking of this manuscript of 1593 which is Karaite. It has been available to me as a collation in Wolf B.H.111 (end);IV;648ff. (1727-33) Like the Wagenseil manuscript it contains the two prefaces



of the disciple Joseph ben Mordecai HaKodesh and the author, but with the significant omission of the phrase "ish kraka" found in the Wapenseil manuscript. (B.H.IV-648.) Wolf takes occasion to repeat what he has said before (B.H.III;p.544ff.) that the mere change of the letter "k" to "T" would make the word "Troka" and bring it in harmony with the Unger codex. The text goes as far as 11-30. There are margin notes (Wolf. B.H. IV; 693;4;707) by a glossator who makes them in the name of his teacher Rabbi Joseph the Trokite whom, Wolf B.H.IV;p.694, followed by Geiger considers as Rabbi Joseph ben Mordecai HaKodesh. The date of the writing of this book is 1593 (H.E.1-42-44); the date of the author would therefore be: 1533-93. The text is followed by a polemical note by Nahman (Jacob) of Belcoz, B.H.IV;710; then a note by a Rabbi Isaac the Trokite who appears to be living when the copy is made and a contemporary of Nahman for he is referred to as "our rabbi", as one would refer to a contemporary. This note is followed in turn by one by Rabbi Joseph the Trokite, B.H.IV;p.711, who has been already mentioned. This note is made in his name by one of his disciples. The last note to this manuscript is by a certain Josiah, B.H. IV;-716, whom Geiger declares to be the Josiah mentioned in O.Z.p.22a, wherein is listed the physician Josiah b. Jehuda, who was known to be a friend of Zerach ben Nathan and Joseph Solomon del Medigo. (Melo Hofnayim, p.35;Elim,p.55ff.)

- Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. References are to the "Catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Compiled by Ad. Neubauer. Oxford 1886.
- #2170....Identical with edition of 1857. Copied by Jehuda (Loeb) Sofer. Finished 1645.
- #2171....Finished 1617. (Cf. Wolf B.H.III;p.544)
- #2172....Sefer hanizzahon shehiber behokom hakollel m'h'r'r yizhak kero. No prefaces. Only an extract from the authors preface. Finished 1571. But this date is manifestly impossible for the introductory note to Part II is given which speaks of using the Budny Translation of the Bible dated 1572. This is evidently the manuscript which Geiger refers to in Kalender p.55, which he has seen noted in the Orient, 1850. XIX;p.297) But in the revised note in the N. Schriften Vol.III;p.220, Geiger dates this manuscript 1630 on the authority of Steinschneider. But Geiger has evidently misunderstood Steinschneider for what Steinschneider had in mind must have been a similar manuscript of H.Emunah, under a "Nizzahon" title and listed (later of course) as 2180 in the Neubauer catalog. (vide sub) I have no suggestion to make as to the date that this manuscript was copied.



#2180....A group of miscellaneous writings of which part two is a compendium of Lipman's Nizzahon; then a chapter of controversy against the Karaites. A note is made of a controversy held with a Karaite in Vilna in 1590. Followed by controversial extracts from the book of a Karaite; Yizhak Troki, on the gospels (evidently the Mizuk Emunah). This manuscript is evidently identical with the one mentioned by Wolf B.H.III;p.662, which Geiger later saw. Geiger describes it as an anonymous Safer Mitzhanoth which quotes H.E. in part and introduces the second part with the statement that it was written by a Karaite. Wolf does not give any date for it, B.H.III;p.662. Geiger dates it 1640, but is not positive. Steinschneider; dates it 1630. (Steinschneider M. Catalogues Librarum Hebraeorum in Bod. Berlin 1852-60.) The dates therefore for this interesting manuscript ranges from 1590 Neubauer; 1630 Steinschneider; 1640 Geiger. If this manuscript is identical with the one mentioned by Wolf and Geiger (they both agree that it was an Oppenheim manuscript as #2180 also is) then the date 1630 seems to be the correct one.

1621....Spanish translation in manuscript by Isaac Athias.  
Different from printed text as shown by Rossi (1800) in Bib.jud.Antich.p.128.

1624....Copy. Hebrew manuscript Aaron b. Gabriel Luria of Hamburg. Agrees in part with Unger codex.

1631....5 German translation by Apostate Michael Gelling.

1640....Copies extensively used by Karaites and Rabbinites in Constantinople.

1681....Hebrew and Latin, printed. Wapenseil: Tela Ignea Satanae, Freiberg. 1681. (ALTDORF)  
following manuscript dated 1615.

1690....Used by Isaac Lopez, quotes it extensively but no acknowledgment.

1705....Hebrew Amsterdam. Copying text as it appeared in Wapenseil, minus Latin translation, but some other copy was also used.

1717....Judeo-German translation..Amsterdam.

1845....Hebrew, Jerusalem.

1851....English (incomplete) London. Translated by Mocatta.

1857....Leipzig, Hebrew.

1865....Hebrew-German D.Deutsch. Schrau 1865.

1873....second edition.

Confutations were published as early as 1644, also in 1688;1712;1699 and 1684. (Fuerst Bib.Judaica, Vol.III;p.448)



## ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM.

### NAME OF THE AUTHOR.

The author of the book, *Hizuk Emunah*, is Isaac ben Abraham. (Preface of the Disciple; Introd. of the author.) (All references to *Hizuk Emunah* (H.E.) will be from the second edition of D. Deutsch, Sohrau, 1873.)

### WHO WAS ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM?

It is not yet definitely agreed who Isaac ben Abraham was; where and when he lived and whether he was a Rabbinite or a Karaite. The question is complicated. I have not sufficient data about manuscripts Nos. 2170; 2171; 2172; 2180 or the University of Leipzig manuscript to be able to secure from them any real information about the authorship of the book. The two manuscripts that are of most use to me are those of Wagenseil and Unger and I shall accordingly make full use of them to determine the date of the book, the period of the author and his religious affiliations.

### THE KARAITIC ARGUMENT.

The argument that Isaac ben Abraham was a Karaite, the one most popular and generally accepted by students, has been developed best by Abraham Geiger in his *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Vol. III; p. 178ff, Berlin, 1876, and in the *Liebermann Kalender*, III, p. 7-58, 1854. The Karaite argument is based on the assertion that Isaac ben Abraham was a Karaite and upon certain alleged Karaite evidence in the book itself.

### THE EVIDENCE FOR ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM AS A KARAIITE.

The author of the H.E., Isaac ben Abraham, was always accepted as a Rabbinite until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Gottlieb Unger, a Lutheran pastor, secured a manuscript, written in Troki, Lithuania, which was collated with the Wagenseil manuscript in the B.H. IV; p. 648ff and which Unger declared to be more closely related to the original. Unger stated, 1715, that the date of his manuscript was 1593. (H.E. 1-42; 44) and that the disciple omits signing himself as a resident of Oracow and that a comparison of his ms. shows the printed text (Wagenseil's) to be corrupt. A year previous to this Johann Christian Wolf had published in his *B.H.* vol. 1, the *Dod Mordecai* (Notitia-



Kereorum) of Mordecai ben Nissim, first written in 1698 for Jacob Trigland of Leyden, in which he wrote of a "Hazon Emunah" of a Rabbi Isaac the Trokite, of the Duchy of Lithuania, a book of arguments with Christian scholars. This Isaac died in 1594. Mordecai asserts that this Isaac was one of his own direct ancestors. It is also stated that the disciple of Isaac who finished the book was Joseph Malinowski, son of Rabbi Mordecai Hakodesh. (Wolf, B.H. I-149-156) On the basis of this publication, Unger declares that the single change of the letter "K" to "T" an orthographical or typographical error originally, would give "Troka" instead of "Kraka". Wolf then admitted that he must have misread, "Hazon" for "Hizuk" and accepted the emendation and in his Accessions to Not. Kr. (1721) and in his B.H. III, p. 5444ff (1727) speaks of Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham of Troki in Lithuania, died 1594. It is from this that we know Isaac ben Abraham the Trokite as the author of Hizuk Emunah. Unger's manuscript has notes of the disciple of Isaac (and also a preface by the disciple), "Rav Yosef HaTroki" and this fact compared with the notice of Dod Mordecai (Wolf B.H. Vol. II; p. 147-150) where Isaac the Trokite is spoken of as author of "Hazon Emunah", a polemical work finished by his disciple Joseph Malinowski ben Mordecai Hakodesh is sufficient proof for Wolf that the two are the same and that "Hazon" should be "Hizuk" and that the author is Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham of Troki. Inasmuch as the disciple of Isaac states in the preface that Isaac died before finishing the index and that he, Joseph, finished it, the date of his death as given in Dod Mordecai 1594, would agree with the statement in the Unger manuscript that the book was written by Isaac in 1593. Geiger following Unger declares that Wolf in publishing the manuscript of Mordecai b. Nissim misread "Hazon" and "Troki" which should have been "Hizuk" and "teroka" and that the date 1615 (found in the Wagenseil manuscript) was done either by Joseph b. Mordecai Hakodesh or a later copyist. The strong link in the chain of evidence was that both books, the Hazon of Mordecai and the Hizuk of Wagenseil were both finished by a disciple of the authors named Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodesh and that both books are polemical. The Karaite character of Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodesh was firmly established by the publication of one of his works, and a list of his other works in the Orah Zaddikim of Simcha Isaac, written about 1757, printed in Vienna, 1830. Joseph is thus mentioned in the Dod Mordecai, Chapter XI, end. Wolf B.H. Vol. I; p. 150. (It is very significant that this whole passage of the Dod Mordecai in reference to Isaac the Trokite



and his work Hazon Emunah is not mentioned in the Vienna edition of 1830. Geiger accounts for it as the work of the censor. Furthermore this work does not mention any one of Isaac's works in the list of books altho in the list of Trokite celebrities there is a mention of an Isaac ben Abraham and a Joseph ben Mordecai haKodesh. Altho Geiger maintains that the omission of mention of Isaac's work is due to the censor yet there is mention of the Migdal Oz, a polemical work. (O.Z. p.24b.) The "kizur 'inyan shehitah" of Joseph was published in the Orah Zaddikim of Simcha Isaac, p.28, Vienna, 1830. There are glosses to the Unger manuscript ascribed to Joseph by a disciple of his. He is there known as Rabbi Joseph the Trokite. (Cf. Wolf, B.H. Vol.IV; pp.693-4; 707; 711ff.) Joseph wrote an introduction and finished the index of the H.E. from 11-9 and on. He also wrote some prayers (Cf. J.E. Vol. XII, p.266; Fuerst, J. Bibliotheca Judaica, Vol. III, p.448; Leipzig, 1863) The University of Leipzig manuscripts gives his Minhagim. Geiger has seen two liturgical poems of Joseph's (Mendelsohn collection) thus evidencing that Joseph ben Mordecai is a true character and a Karaite. (Geiger; Lieb. Kal. note XI, p. 50-1.)

There is a manuscript of the H.E. (v.#2172 supra) that speaks of Isaac as Isaac the Karaite.

A manuscript of Joseph Shakrezi, a Karaite leader in Kale, nineteenth century (?) based on the work of Simcha Isaac's Orah Zaddikim, calls Isaac a student of Zephaniah who is also mentioned in the O.Z. as one of the first Karaite authors in Lithuania. This manuscript declares Isaac wrote a work on the calendar, on the laws of shechitah and some poems.

Altho the evidence found in the manuscript #1111 of the Catalog of the University of Leipzig was not offered by Geiger who probably did not know of its existence there is no doubt that the acrostic poems with the name Isaac Hazak and Isaac ben Abraham Hazak would be offered as a proof of the Karaite character of Isaac.

The statement occurs in manuscript No.2180 (v.supra) that it was written by a Karaite.

The Karaite authorship is also said to be proven by the Karaite character of the book itself.



F.

EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR ISAAC BEN  
ABRAHAM AS A KARAITES.

- (1) The statement that Manuscript No. 2180 (Bodleian Library v. supra) was written by a Karaite is evidence to the effect that at the time of the copyist the work was accepted by the Karaites as a work of their school.
- (2) The evidence of the poems ascribed to Isaac ben Abraham and in the Nathanson collection (copied 1777), in a manuscript in the (No. IIII Vollers seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) possession of Karaites and evidencing all the ear marks of Karaism is strong circumstantial evidence for the historicity of a Karaitic Isaac ben Abraham who was identified by the Karaites with the author of the H.E.
- (3) The manuscript work of Schakrezi, the Karaitic leader in Kale, based on the work of Orah Zaddikim, calls Isaac a student of Zephaniah who is also mentioned in the O.Z. as one of the first Karaite authors in Lithuania. This manuscript also declares that Isaac wrote a work on the calendar, on the laws of schecitah and some poems. Altho' I have not been able to use this manuscript from the general description of it I would hardly grant it any validity in this particular contention. It is a generally accepted method of historical research to look strongly askance to any document that gives evidence for the historicity of characters living possibly three hundred and fifty years or more in the past. This work is the product of a nineteenth century Karaite,--the century that saw the attempt of the Karaites, and in his part of the century too, to rehabilitate the antiquity of their sect thru' the forgeries of Firkovitch. Shakrezi was no doubt aware of the passage in the Dod Mordecai (1698) which ascribed the authorship of a Hazon (Hizuk (?) Emunah to an Isaac ben Abraham of Troki; also that the Karaites as early as the seventeenth century believed the author to be a Karaite; also probably aware of the fact that there were some poems written by a Karaite named Isaac ben Abraham, and he no doubt, believed that this Isaac ben Abraham was identical with the author of the H.E. I do not know his authority for making Isaac a disciple of Zephaniah unless it would be that both people according to the O.Z. were somewhat con-



tempanecus. I have no intimation of his source for declaring that Isaac wrote a work on the calendar and the laws of Schecitah. I could find nothing to that effect in the Orah Zaddikim.

(4) Manuscript #2172 (Bodleian Library) (v. supra) speaks of the author as Isaac the Karaite. I do not know the date of this manuscript, -in all probabilities it is at best not earlier than some time in the seventeenth century. The ascription of the authorship to Isaac the Karaite would indicate that in this century the author was thot by some people to be a Karaite.

(5) There can hardly be any question that Joseph (Malinowski) of Troki the son of Mordecai Hakodesh is a historical character.

(6) The Karaitic character of Isaac ben Abraham is a very complex problem. The only evidence for Isaac ben Abraham as a Karaite that has any validity is the notice in the Dod Mordecai of 1698. This is the crux of the whole situation. The fact that an Rabbi Isaac the Trokite of Lithuania had written a polemical work (Hazon Emunah) which had been completed by his disciple Joseph Malinowski b. Mordecai Hakodesh when compared to our printed text which speaks of a Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham who wrote Mizuk Emunah finished by his disciple Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodesh was too obvious to be disregarded. It is however, very significant that the very first mention of Isaac and Joseph as Karaites comes from a man who is interested in setting forth the accomplishments of his sect to an outsider and more important is the fact that his work referred to Dod Mordecai, was not written until 1698, a century or more after the disputations in the book had taken place. In other words there was a whole century available for the development of the tradition that the book was of Karaitic authorship, a tradition inspired by the undeniable fact that the book ostensibly shows no traces of the characteristic rabbinism of Polish Jewry. It is of great significance that the Orah Zaddikim of Simcha Butsk, written in 1757, published in 1830 (Wilna) omits this passage from the Dod Mordecai and in the list of works of the Karaitic writers omits all mention of any work by Isaac ben Abraham, altho it does not hesitate to mention a polemical work, Migdal Oz.



The only evidence for Isaac in all the O.Z. is the mention of an Isaac ben Abraham HaZoken among the Karaite leaders of Troki. This Isaac is of course identified by Geiger and others with the author of the H.E.

The Unger codex is the other strong link in the chain of evidence that Isaac was a Karaite. The Unger codex, dated 1593, circulated for over a hundred years before it was described by Unger. There was ample opportunity during this time for its various owners to tamper with it and to give it a Karaite revamping as Geiger alleges the rabbinites gave the Karaite original a rabbinic revamping. At no place in the Unger codex is there any more evidence than in the codex of 1615 that the author was a native of Troki. The only mention of Isaac ben Abraham is in the two prefaces as in the 1615 codex where he is merely known as Isaac ben Abraham. There are a number of notes both marginal and supplementary in the Unger text written by a d i s c i p l e of a Rabbi Joseph the Trokite. This in itself shows that the date of the copy (1593) may possibly not be the date of the writing of the book by Isaac ben Abraham. Geiger following Unger and Wolf identify this Joseph of Troki with Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodesh. There is absolutely no reason for this unless it is that they feel they are justified in identifying this Joseph with the disciple of Isaac merely on the fact that both men were named Joseph. The Unger codex does not even state in the preface of the disciple where he lived. The name Joseph is a common one and could mean any one besides the Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodesh. It is not without a significance that in this Unger codex there is a polemical note by a Nahman (Jacob) of Belcyze, a well known Jewish apologist of the sixteenth century who in all probabilities was a Rabbinite. This note in Unger is followed by one by a Isaac the Trokite of whom the copyist speaks of as "Morenu harav" implying that he is still living, and evidently not identical with the author Isaac. It is altogether probable that this Isaac could have been the Isaac of Trokite mentioned as the author of Karaite poems and possibly the Isaac ben Abraham mentioned in the chronological lists of O.Z. altho the only basis for this suggestion is the similarity of a common name. The Dod Mordecai it will not be forgotten only knows of a Rabbi Isaac



the Trokite also, not of an Isaac ben Abraham. The hypothesis that Dod Mordecai confused the author of the H.E.; Isaac ben Abraham, which work he considered to be Karaite in his time (1698) with the known Karaite Isaac the Trokite is very plausible.

A prominent Karaite of this period is Zerach ben Nathan who in the chain of teachers in the Orah Zaddikim and in the manuscript of Schakrezi is made a disciple of Joseph ben Mordecai Halkodesh. This will enable us to determine the chronology of our chief characters. Zerach wrote to Joseph Solomon del Medigo in 1620 at the age of forty. Therefore he was born in 1580. At five he was a disciple of a Rabbi Isaac who is identified by Geiger and others thru' this chain of Karaite leaders of which Zerach was one as the author of the H.E. but this Isaac died in 1588. From 1588 to 1593 he was under the tutelage of a Joseph the disciple of Isaac who died in 1593. He had another teacher named Judah in 1593, who died in the same year. (Joseph Solomon del Medigo. Elin. p.34. Odessa, 1864 Cf. Geiger. Lieber. Kal. p.57, Note 23, Melo Hofayim p.XXXV.) This disposes of the originality of the Unger codex dating the death of Isaac 1593-4, and leaving his disciple still living at that time. It is of interest to note that Joseph Solomon del Medigo in his letter to Zerach ben Nathan, who appears to have been a disciple of Isaac the Trokite the supposed author of the Hizuk Emunah, does not hesitate in his bibliography of Jewish works to advise the reading of Hizuk Emunah. Is it possible that Joseph Solomon del Medigo living in Lithuania at this time at the court of Radziwill where he was physician would not have known that the author was a Karaite and would not have mentioned it to man who in his very letter to the physician mentions that one of his teachers was an Isaac? This mutual ignorance on the part of these two men one of whom was a Karaite as to the (Karaite) authorship of a book that had an extensive circulation at this time would seem to imply decidedly that they did not know of it as a Karaite work.



G.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE WORK AS THAT OF A KARAITES,

Geiger feels he has proved his point if he can show that the Wagenseil manuscript is corrupt, or that other manuscripts follow the Unger codex, which he declares to be the original in view of its earlier date: its glosses by Rabbi Joseph etc.

I. In H.E.1-27, with reference to prophetic promises of good the author's point of view is not Rabbinic for if a Rabbinite he would have known (as he does not appear to know) that as for conditional promises God will not revoke his promises "afilu 'al fenai". (Cf. Ber. 4a; Shabbot 55a)

II. The author looks lightly on the fact that Jesus does not follow the practice of washing the hands, (H.E.11-18;38) a Rabbinic custom.

III. The Unger manuscript always spells certain proper nouns such as Peter, Pope, Evangelical and Catholic with a Slavonic ending, while the Wagenseil manuscript spells it with a German ending.

IV. The Rabbinic author knows little philosophy for he does not even understand the phrase "bilti ba'al tahlit".

V. The author is not a citizen of Cracow for he mentions the Polish Cracow bible in four places (H.E.1-43;1-45;11-63;11-72) yet he never says "here" or "in our city" as is the custom.

VI. The chronology of 1593-4 of the Unger codex is established for he speaks of the translation of Budny (1572) being completed "in our time". (H.E. introduction to part 2).

VII. The chronology of 1593-4 is again established for he speaks of the second edition of the Cracow Bible brought out in 1574 as "just published". (H.E.1-43)

VIII. He speaks of Mohammedanism already lasting for a thousand years which would just make the year 1593, one thousand and one years since the Hegira.

IX. Why should a writer of 1615 state that Christianity has only existed for 1500 years or more and not 1600? (H.E.1-4)

X. He does not defend Rabbi Gamliel to the extent that he should if he were a Rab-



binite.

XI. The only directly quoted (here slightly misquoted) reference from the Talmud is omitted in the Unger codex.

XII. In H.E.1-34, the author quotes Rav and Samuel. In the Unger codex there is: "Huderek derash", but the Rabbinical copyists in Wagenseil changed this to "Abal kildibrehem", for he did not think "derash" consistent with Rabbinical honor. The discussion itself comes from B.Bathra 3a.

XIII. The difficulty of the two quotations H.E.1-19;30 from Zemach David, published in 1592 and thus militating against the date 1593, for the author could hardly have used the book so soon after its publication is removed from the fact that Unger's codex does not have these references.

XIV. The phrase "clom shel yobel" (Exodus 11-16) as interpreted Rabbinically that the slave is to go free on the fiftieth year is omitted in the Unger codex. (H.E.1-26)

XV. The author in H.E.1-11 attacks original sin from Deut. XXIV-16. As a Karaite writer he uses Deut. XXIV-16 literally: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children", a Rabbinite would have known that the passage is interpreted differently in the Talmud: The Fathers shall not be put to death on the testimony of the children etc.

XVI. The German translation of H.E. by Gelling still in manuscript, following the Hebrew manuscript of Aaron b. Gabriel Luria agrees very closely with that of the Unger codex.

XVII. The Spanish translation of Athias is also different from the printed text as shown by Rossi (1800) in Bib. Jud. Antich. p.128.

XVIII. The work contains no praise of the Talmud tho' written in Poland.

XIX. The work is not written after the fashion of the Polish Rabbis of that time.

XX. The H.E. was well known to the Karaites.

XXI. The work is not rabbinic for it was not known to the contemporaries.

XXII. The character of the book is altogether different from that of any contemporary Rabbinic book.



XIII. It was accept alike by Rabbinites and Karaites and the latter were unusally  
averse toward accepting rabbinic works.

XIV. The rabbinite copy of 1615 is a Rabbinic working over of the Karaite manuscript  
of the original as best seen in the Unger codex. The Rabbinite made the error of  
making him a dweller of Cracow instead of Troki, and changed the date from 1593 to  
1615.

Thus far Geiger and his school.

XV. In the University of Leipzig manuscript there is a poem by Isaac ben Abraham who  
may be identical with the Isaac ben Abraham of O.Z. among the leaders of Troki. There  
is also a poem there by Nahman (Nahmu) HaHazan, O.Z. has a Nahmi HaHazan among the  
Karaite leaders in Troki, date unknown, who may be identical with this poet. There is  
another poem by Nahmu HaHazan, son of Zephanaiah HaHazan while the O.Z. has a Karaite  
leader, who lived probably in the sixteenth century known as Nahmu b. Zephanaiah.



EXAMINATION OF EVIDENCE FOR THE WORK AS THAT  
OF A KARAITES.

The examination of the evidence for the work as that of a Karaite has shown that practically all of the evidence is of a very arbitrary and untrustworthy character with the exception of certain noteworthy omissions which I shall later discuss. In general it would not be proper to infer from the evidence presented of the Karaite character of the book that the work was originally a Karaite work.

(1) Geiger has no right to expect the author to assume a rabbinic point of view in arguing with Christians to whom the Rabbinic literature is not authoritative. (cf. H.E. p.434, Note ak.) In order to argue with the Christians with a standard that will be mutually acceptable it was necessary to secure a common basis and this was the whole and reason.

(2) Even a casual study of the text (H.E.11-18;38) will convince the reader that not even by the wildest stretch of imagination can one infer from the text that the writer did not approve of the ceremony of hand washing at meals. As a matter of fact the contrary is true.

(3) The spelling after the German fashion of certain proper nouns in the Wagenseil manuscript does not impair its originality, or make it subordinate in approximation to the original, inasmuch as Yiddish (German) was one of the commonest dialects of the Jews of Poland and Lithuania in the sixteenth century.

(4) The argument that the "rabbinic copyist" could not translate the phrase "bilti 'al tahlit" (infinite) is not a convincing factor in inducing us to believe that the text was corrupt and the Unger codex is more correct.

(5) Geiger is fighting a man of straw when he asserts that altho' the author mentions the Polish Cracow Bible in four places he never says "here" or "in our city" as is the custom inasmuch as it is no where even intimated that the author was a native of Cracow. It is only the disciple who signs himself "of Cracow". (cf. D. Deutsch H.E. p.434, Note ak. 2nd edit.)



- (6) There is no reason to believe that the date of the Unger codex is fixed by the statement that the translation of Budny was completed "in our time" inasmuch as this could just as well apply to the Wagenseil manuscript date of 1615 just twenty-two years later.
- (7) For the same reason we can not accept as a proof of the validity of the Unger codex the statement of Isaac (H.E.1-43) in referring to the Cracow Bible "just published". This could well refer to the Cracow edition of the Old Testament and New Testament of 1599, approved by the Papal See.
- (8) Geiger is correct in saying that 1593 would just be 1001 since the Hegira if one accounted time accurately according to the Mohammedan year but inasmuch as the author probably accounted time from a Jewish or Christian calendar conception the year 1615 (993 years after the Hegira) would be more acceptable and more true than the year 1593 (971 years after the Hegira). (Cf.H.E.p.434, note ak.)
- (9) A writer of 1615 could just as well state that Christianity had only existed for 1500 years if it is born in mind that the author both states and implies that these polemics are the results of various discussions that he has had thru' the course of his lifetime which was spent for the major part in the sixteenth century. Especially inasmuch as the author specifically states that he wrote down his various disputations. (Cf. H.E. p.434, Note ak.)
- (10) A reading of the text (H.E.1-4) does not bear out the statement of Geiger that sufficient respect is not shown to Rabbi Gamliel. In truth the contrary is more true. The author very sensibly says that the Jew cannot be expected to accept the authenticity of statement in the New Testament ascribed to Rabbi Gamliel and furthermore he adds in a spirit that is not at all out of accord with the best rabbinic traditions that the Jew cannot accept the statement of Gamliel for he has not the authority of a prophet.
- (11) The omission of the only specifically quoted (rather misquoted) statement from the Talmud in the Unger codex (b<sup>12</sup>odah Zarah 54B) means either with Geiger that the



Wagenseil text has added this or that possibly the converse is true:-the so called "original", the Karaitic text has been altered.

(12) Geiger's sense of rabbinical honor is too keen and too far fetched to assert that rabbinical honor is not completely justified by the statement "hu derek derash". There is nothing convincing in Geiger's contention when the text is read carefully.

(13) The omission of the two references to Zemach David (published in Prague 1592) in the Unger codex of 1593 is justly a strong argument for the originality of the Unger Codex which could hardly have utilized a book published just a year before.

(14) The omission of the phrase "olom shel yobel" (with its rabbinical connotation of a definite limited time) in the Unger codex is another strong evidence of the Karaitic character of that manuscript.

(15) The contention of Geiger that the author's use of Deut XXIV-16 shows his Karaitic character for if he would have been a Rabbinite he would have known that the rabbis give it an altogether different connotation is altogether unfounded for in the first place the author was interpreting the phrase exegetically and not theologically and secondly there was no necessity here nor would it have been in place even for a Rabbinite to employ a rabbinical (Talmudic) interpretation of the phrase. Geiger's method of reasoning is that if a verse has known rabbinic connotation and if the author fails to employ this connotation in his application of the verse then by his very failure to do so he evidences his Karaitic character. The fallaciousness of this type of argument is self-evident.

(16) The fact that the German manuscript of H.E. by Gelling follows the Hebrew manuscript of Aaron b. Gabriel Luria which agrees very closely with the Unger codex does not at all indicate the priority of the Unger codex or its closer approximation to the original. The Unger manuscript can only serve as a criterion when it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that it is the most original of all copies of the manuscripts.

(17) Likewise the fact that the Spanish translation of Athias is also different from the printed text (Wagenseil text) is no evidence of the authenticity of the Unger codex.



- 18) The contention that a work written by a rabbinite must contain praise for the Talmud is based on the wrong historical conception of the Polish Jewish life in the sixteenth century which arbitrarily makes every nominal rabbinite Jew a devotee of the Talmud somewhat in the fanciful and lurid style of the overenthusiastic Nathan Hannover in his *Yeven Mezulah*. Lack of praise for the Talmud no more makes the author a Karaite than praise of the Talmud by Budhy makes him a rabbinite Jew.
- 19) It is quite true that this work was not written after the fashion of the Polish rabbis of that time inasmuch as the subject matter and the purpose as definitely stated by the author in his preface was to prepare a book that would be simple and yet complete as an arsenal of weapons against Christian disputations and therefore must of necessity be in simple language, inasmuch as it would for the most part be used by men of simple intelligence.
- 20) That the H.E. was well known to the Karaites is no argument in itself that the work was of Karaite origin. Specific Rabbinic works were also well known to them.
- 21) The contention that the work is not Rabbinic (in the sense that it was not written by a rabbinite Jew) for it is not known to its contemporaries not true for it circulated extensively in translations and copy all thru' Europe and northern Africa in the seventeenth century. Arguing conversely if the lack of its mention among rabbinites makes it a Karaite work then likewise the lack of its mention among Karaites until 1698 (and even this mention, the only one of any value is not beyond suspicion) makes it rabbinical. The negative and purely a priori method of argument adopted by Geiger for the most part to prove his contention that the book is Karaite, is quite unhistorical and improper in method.
- 22) The statement that the character of the book is altogether different from that of any contemporary rabbinic work is true for it was inspired by different causes and therefore required a different diction especially inasmuch as it made its appeal directly to the simple people.
- 23) The contention that the work is Karaite inasmuch as it was accepted alike by



by Rabbinites and the Karaites and the latter were unusally averse toward accepting rabbinic works is an argument that is not valid and means little for the converse is just as true. As a matter of fact this is the very argument employed by Jost who states that inasmuch as the book was accepted extensively by German Jews he therefore doubts if it could have been a Karaite work. (Jost, I.M. Geschichte der Israeliten, Vol.VIII p.201, Berlin, 1828.)

(24) The statement that the "rabbinite copyist" made the error of making him a dweller of Cracow instead of Troki is purely a hypothetical statement of Geiger's whose only support is the fact that the author is usually identified with a Isaac ben Abraham of Troki. There is absolutely nothing even in the Unger codex that will show that Isaac was a native of Troki. The declaration that a "rabbinite copyist" changed the date from 1593 to 1615 is one of the very contentions that Geiger has set out to prove but has not done so, since the proof of this rests on the proof that the manuscript is both Karaite and original. That the 1615 version is a "rabbinite" working over of the original Karaite manuscript as exemplified in the Unger codex is the contention of Geiger which he has by no means proved inasmuch as there is not sufficient distinctive evidences in the text of the Codex to prove its Karaite character. The arguments are nearly negative and hence not convincing.

(25) The fact that the University of Leipzig manuscript of the H.E.also notes poems written by Isaac ben Abraham and by Nahm<sup>u</sup> He Hazan the son of Zephaniah He Hazan and by Nahm<sup>u</sup> He Hazan all three of whom may be identical with Karaites of Troki listed in the Orah Zaddikim of Simcha Isaac only serve to establish the historicity of these men and to prove that there was an Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, a Karaite, but not to prove that this Isaac is the author of the Mizuk Emunah, nor that the book itself is of Karaite origin.



2.

EVIDENCE FOR HIZUK EMUNAH AS WORK OF A  
RABBINITE.

The belief of those students who claim the Karaite authorship of Hizuk Emunah; that the work does not evidence rabbinical evidences is ill-founded. It is their contention that the work, especially as evidenced in the Unger Codex is Karaite, a fact borne out by the absence of even one acknowledged quotation from Talmudical sources which they assert is noteworthy in a Polish Jewish work of the sixteenth century. They seem to forget that the nature of the work is such that the quotation of Talmudic sources would be altogether malapropos. The author is arguing with Christians at all times and his basis of contention is always the Bible in its literal and accurate sense untouched either by specifically Jewish or Christological interpretations. The author would no more think of giving a specific Jewish interpretation to a verse than of accepting a specific Christological interpretation.

They believe in being consistent even unto death and yet they seem to forget that even Karaite writers do not hesitate to use Talmudic quotations.

Mordecai b. Nissim uses Talmudic and rabbinic authorities; (Cf. Geiger Lieb. Kalend.



p.52, Note 14) and in the University of Leipzig manuscript of H.E. (v.supra) wherein is embodied the Minhagin of Joseph ben Mordecai Hakkodosh there occurs a quotation from Aboth 11-6. In "the preface of the disciple" Joseph ben Mordecai Hakodosh, if Joseph is a Karaite,--then he acknowledges the Talmudic rabbis as "rabbosenu hakkodoshim", "our holy rabbis."

But there is manifold direct and sufficient evidence to show that Isaac quotes constantly from Talmudic and Rabbinic sources. If it can be shown as I shall endeavor to do,--that the author refers constantly to Rabbinic sources I do not think that there should be a question of doubt in any one's mind that the author is not a Karaite and the work is not Karaitic.

The author at once in his preface quotes Aboth:11-19 and introduces the quotation with the statement that "our rabbis have taught us". (All quotations introduced by me are found in both the Unger and the Wagenseil codex which I have carefully compared in all instances.)

In H.E.1-6 the author refers to our rabbis as "our wise sages, may their memories be a blessing" and he uses the same formula in H.E.1-22 for introducing a quotation from Aboth:111-2.

The author in H.E. 1-7 follows the universally accepted rabbinic explanation of the difficult chronological contradictions of the stay in Egypt. (Cf. Deutsch, p.357, Note k2.)

The author in H.E.1-17 speaking of the elements that were missing in the second temple such as the ark, and the cherubim and the urim V'tummin and the like shows that he has had recourse to rabbinic sources. (Yoma 21B; Midrash Rabbah to Shir Hashirim; Cf. Deutsch, p.383, Note.v.)

The casual reference to the phrase "God requires the heart", shows use of a Rabbinic quotation. (T.B.Sanhedrin 106b; H.E.1-23)

The period from the creation to the Exodus is 2448 years. (H.E.1-7). The Remach David also gives this date accounting for it in some detail. But the author



did not necessarily have to have recourse to Gans for as Gans show this same chronology occurs all thru' Talmudic literature.

Commenting on Gen.1-26 the author says H.E.1-10, that God was speaking to the angels when he said: "Let us make man in our image". This is Rabbinic: Rashi Loc.cit.

The comment on John VII-15, H.E.11-46, that Jesus had a teacher Joshua b.Perachia who fled with him to Alexandria during persecution of Jannai shows a recourse to Rabbinic sources: T.B.Sota 47a. Isaac states here specifically that this information is contained in the T a l m u d.

The contradiction in the texts of Ez. V-7 and XI-12 are solved by Isaac by saying that the Jews would follow the evil customs of the nations and reject the good customs of the nations. This explanation is Rabbinic: T.B. Sanhedrin 39b.

The author H.E.1-42, quotes Joseph b.Gorion (Josippon) that the Messiah, Agrippa and his son Mombaz were both killed by Titus three and half years before the destruction of the Temple. As an additional quotation in support of this fact the author quotes the "Sefer HaKabbalah" of Rabad, at beginning of the book. Speaking of the glory of the second Temple the author again (H.E.1-34) quotes the Sefer HaKabbalah of Rabad p.43 and 44.

Frequent references are made to the Rabbinic work Josippon. H.E.1-6 (several quotations)

Isaac quotes the Seder Olom Zuta to show that the seed of David existed even during the period of the High Priests. (H.E. 1-14) Telling of Israel's superiority he declares that the people of Israel are the choicest type of the human species just as the heart is the choicest of all the organs. The phraseology in parts is identical with the famous passage of The Kuzari of Jehuda HaLevi 11-36-44 and a careful comparison of the two will show that Isaac drew for his arguments from this passage of the Kuzari. (H.E.1-22)

Telling of the fact that the ten tribes know of each others tribe in order to facilitate the division of the land on return to Palestine he quotes confirmation of



this in the Itinerary of Benjamin Tudela. (H.E.1-6)

Isaac quotes David Kimchi twice, H.E.1-21 in discussing the mooted "Immanuel" passage. D.Deutsch declares that Isaac is dependant for many interpretations on the commentary of Kimchi and even quotes him verbatim at times. He declares that the influence of Kimchi may be seen in H.E. 1-22;1-28;1-31;1-31; and especially 1-36. (Cf. Deutsch H.E.p.435, Note xx.)

Very interesting is the evident dependence of Isaac on the Ikkarim of Joseph Albo. The edition of Ikkarim that Isaac used was one that had not been tampered with as yet by the censors and is far more full than the current edition. I quote from the German translation of Schlessinger which restores the text as it was originally. Isaac declares the Sabbath was changed by the Christians to Sunday five-hundred years after the death of Jesus by the Popes. (H.E.1-2) Albo has this statement in language which shows that Isaac took his statement directly from the Ikkarim (3-25 editio. Schlessinger, p. 346)(Cf. D.Deutsch p.364, Note y.) Paragraph twenty-five, part three, as it originally stood was a polemical essay against Christians. Isaac evidently used it in its fullness. A number of comparative references herewith given will evidence Isaac dependence:-

- I. Jesus himself requested that the law of Moses be observed. The Evangelium is a story of a Jesus, not a new law. Cf. H.E.11-introduction;1-19;1-20;1-24;1-29.
- II. The Trinity is attacked purely from the basis of pure logical and mathematical impossibility. Cf.H.E.1-10
- III. The Mosaic code offers spiritual rewards in addition to material rewards. Proven by Num. XXVII-10. Cf. H.E.1-18.
- IV. Continued existence of the Jews is a miracle and proof of truth of its religion. The material success of a nation is not proof of the superiority of its religion. Cites the success of the Islamites. Cf. Isaac; H.E.1-5;1-4;11-60.
- V. Albo shows the discrepancies in the two genealogies of Mathew and Luke. Cf. H.E. 11-1.
- VI. The Child Immanuel is proof of the destruction of Aram and Israel. Cf. H.E.1-21.



- VII. The weeping of Rachael is not for the slaughter of the innocents but for the captives of the first captivity. Proved by Jer. XXXI-16-18. Cf. H.E.1-28;11-5.
- VIII. Misquotations from the Old Testament to the New Testament will even convince followers of Jesus not to trust the authenticity of the Christian writings. Cf. H.E. 1-45.
- IX. Albo shows the errors the Christian authors have made in quoting the Old Testament in Acts VII-14-16. Cf. H.E.11-63, follows Albo very closely.
- X. Isaac in commenting on Acts XIII-21 not only follows Albo but quotes him directly as the source of his information. (H.E. 11-67)

Isaac also quotes, dyed in the wool Rabbinic authors of the preceding generation. He quotes the Merkvaḥ Hamishneh of Isaac Abravanel with a comment on "Vo'ethanan" (H.E.1-7). Also a reference to "Hazut Kasha".

Commenting on Daniel IX-26, Isaac acknowledges his indebtedness again to Abravanel for his commentary on Daniel: Mayne Hayeshu'ah. H.E.1-42. D.Deutsch, page 419 note ss, says that the whole presentation of this difficult passage in Daniel is that of Rashi whom Isaac has followed.

He also quotes Isaac Arama and his Akedat Yizhak on the same Sedra in Deut. (H.E.1-7)

Isaac quotes a prayer (H.E.1-22) introducing it: "as we Jews say daily in our prayers". The prayer which then follows is the Sephardic: "Elohemu shebshomayim." I believe the above evidence is sufficient to show that the author is not a Karaite, but a Rabbinite. Altho Karaites are not averse to quoting occasionally from Rabbinic sources the continued series of quotations and dependence on the latest as well as the earliest Rabbinic authorities should be convincing evidence that the author was if anything a Rabbinite.



SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE ALREADY PRESENTED AS TO  
RABBINIC OR KARAITIC CHARACTER OF AUTHOR  
AND WORK.

There is no question that the author of the book is an Isaac ben Abraham. From the evidence presented it is my belief that there was a Karaite, possibly more than one of the sixteenth century, Isaac ben Abraham whose historicity is established to us thru certain poems said to be written by him; and by his inclusion in Karaite chronologies. The evidence is also complete that there was a Karaite of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, author of a number of works now extant, Joseph son of Mordecai Hakodesh. The crucial passage in Dod Mordecai is not unimpeachable. Waiving the objection to the identification of "Hazon" with "Hizuk" (such orthographical or typographical errors are common) the great objection toward accepting Isaac ben Abraham as a Karaite of Troki is the fact that the identification does not come for at least a century after the book has been in common use. The Orah Zaddikim, written about a half a century after the Dod Mordecai knows nothing at all of this identification. It may be that Simcha Isaac, the author knew of no written source that would support the contention of Mordecai ben Nissim. Mordecai was writing his Karaite notes for non-Jewish use and no doubt wished to develop the greatness of the Karaite literary lights as much as possible. But it is not necessary either to assume that Mordecai was consciously committing a wrong in his identification. The facts are, as evidenced by the manuscripts already described that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, if not earlier, the tradition had developed that the work Hizuk Emunah, which at that time had a wide circulation, was Karaite in origin. The impetus to this belief came from the fact that there was nothing distinctively rabbinical about it in direct references to Talmudical or Rabbinical literature, despite the fact that there are numerous quotations, unmentioned, from Talmudical and Rabbinical sources. This much is certain; that by the year 1640 the author had no identity. The manuscript was in constant use by Karaites and Rabbins especially in Constantinople. (Buxtorf: Bibliotheca Rabbinica, p.75,76,1708 Herbarnae Nassaviae...) Tho' this reference is not dated Geiger dates it from some source unknown to me at 1640.



(Geiger N. Schriften, pp.209-210.) Wagenseil's copy it should not be forgotten was secured at the other end of the world, near the straits of Gibraltar in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

It is my belief that Mordecai Nissim because of the similarity of names of the man and the fact that both had disciples with the same name arbitrarily identified the Karaite poet with the author of the Hizuk Emunah. This was possible in his light inasmuch as the work was already accepted by the Karaites as their own. Mordecai in dating Isaac's death at 1594 naturally followed the accepted Karaite codex, (of which the Unger codex is the usual type) which dated the work at 1593. I believe that the so called original Unger codex is nothing more than a codex revamped by the Karaites who changed it to conform with their point of view. The only passage in the work specifically quoting the Talmud was omitted as was the phrase "olom shel yobel" which is notoriously rabbinic. The two passages of the Z.D. published in 1592 were omitted because according to my view the book was written before the publication of the Z. D. I objected to Geiger's criticism of the 1615 manuscript not because I believe that that is the proper date, but because I believe that the greater number of his arguments were without foundation and were employed by him to bolster up the Karaite origin of the book of which he himself had his doubts. I repeat that at no place in the Unger codex is there any evidence that the author was a native of Troki. In this codex he too is only known as Isaac ben Abraham and his disciple is Joseph ben Mordecai Hakkodesh without any qualifying city. The attempt of Unger and Wolf and Geiger to take the "ish kraca" of the 1615 code and change it to "ish troka" is unwarranted and arbitrary and is based on their desire to identify the disciple Joseph ben Mordecai Hakkodesh of Cracow with Joseph ben Mordecai Hakkodesh of Troki. The significance of the complete omission of this qualifying phrase in the Unger codex should be noted. It is possible that it was deliberately omitted by the Karaite redactor. It is true that it is a coincidence that the names of the two men <sup>(disciples)</sup> are alike but this does not justify the identification of the two Isaacs.

That the date 1593 is arbitrary is evidenced (1) by the fact that the notes scattered thru' the Unger codex are made by a disciple of a Rabbi Joseph the Trokite, and this



disciple might well have put in his own date as copyists are wont to do. The whole uncertainty of dating is best seen in the poem ascribed to Isaac ben Abraham. The Vollers collection dates this about 1570 and the Nathanson collection has the date 1777.

(2) The death of Isaac ben Abraham the Karaite of Troki who was the teacher of Zerach ben Nathan according to the evidences of Zerach occurred in 1588. That there was probably more than one Isaac of Troki which may have caused this confusion of identification is evidenced by the fact that there is in this Unger codex a note by an Isaac who is apparently living when the copyist makes the note. Joseph Solomon del Medigo writing to Zerach in 1624 refers to the book without giving the author's name and even advises it, it in a bibliography to a Karaite who lived in the very city of the author and who is reputed to have been the author's disciple as Zerach had already written to Medigo. (Melo Hofnaim p.23, (Heb.) Berlin 1840) Is this not convincing that the same man was not a Karaite and does it not follow that the identification of the author with a relatively obscure Karaite poet is a result of a confusion of similarity of names by later generations of Karaites with whom the book was current?

The evidence for the Karaitic character of the work is all negative i.e. that the book is not Rabbinic and hence it is Karaitic. But the rather complete presentation of evidences of rabbinism pervading the book in its entirety should convince any one that the author was well acquainted with rabbinic literature in its many branches, and assumes at all times the exegesis of a sound rabbinite student. No place in the whole work does he mention a Karaite exegete. There is not one positive piece of evidence that the work itself is Karaitic. (Cf. D.Deutsch H.E.p.435, Note xx.) The writers of more modern times quoted by the author are all Sephardic rabbinites.



K.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE AS TO THE DATE OF THE HIZUK EMUNAH AND  
ITS AUTHOR.

(1) The work is known and apparently in wide circulation in 1624 for it is given in a bibliographical list by Joseph Solomon del Medigo. (Melo Hofnaim. p.23, Hebrew. Geiger Berlin, 1840)

(2) Commenting on Zech: XIII-7 in H.E.1-37 the author makes the statement that most of the Jews are under the control of the King of Turkey who controls three-fourths of the world. The Turkish empire was at its height in 1520-1566 and it was not until the last quarter of the sixteenth century that we notice a gradual, but a distinct decline. This should serve to indicate to us that the author lived and polemized in the 16th century. The Protestant revolution is a divine visitation, says the author, - a punishment on the Catholics for mistreating the Jews. The work was thus written after the Rise of Luther, circa 1517. (H.E.1-46)

At the time that Isaac polemized Hungary was without a King and the Turks ruled over the land. The earliest possible date for this contingency would be 1526 the capture and subjugation of the country by Solyman the Magnificent. The country remained under the subjugation of the Turks for over a century.

(3) France, England and Spain are suffering from internal strife for their persecution of the Jews and because of their expulsion. This makes the extreme year for the book after 1492, the expulsion from Spain. (H.E.1-46) The Papists are persecuted in England. The papal prosecutions started approximately in 1536. Followers of Luther in Spain and France are murdered in a most horrible fashion. This evidently refers to the massacre of St. Bartholomew an event followed by keen interest in Poland inasmuch as Henry of Anjou immediately after the massacre became a candidate for the vacant throne of Poland and the Protestant Poles were very much interested in his attitude toward them. The massacre of St. Bartholomew occurred in 1572.

(4) France, England and Spain are suffering from internal strife due to their persecution and expulsion of the Jews, but those countries that tolerate the Jews have peace.



The Kings are kind to the Jews and they even tolerate all kinds of heretical faiths, "as you see today". (H.E.1-46) The last indicates that the scene of the author's work is in Poland. The Dissidents were formally tolerated in 1573, altho' they were practically tolerated as early as two decades before this: 1552.

(5) The author quotes Zemach David to the effect that the Sunday in lieu of the Sabbath was not established until five hundred years after Jesus and by a Pope. This is not found in Z.D. at this period. Gans has a notice that the Sabbath observance was changed to Sunday in 328, but the statement that the Sabbath observance was changed to Sunday, in the year 500 by a Pope seems to be taken bodily from Albo: Ikkarim 3-25. Schlessinger German. The omission of this passage in the Unger Codex would lead one to believe that it is an insertion in the Wagenseil manuscript by a later copyist. Even if the hypothesis that it is not an insertion cannot be accepted the quotation from Z.D. (albeit a misquotation) evidences knowledge of a work published in 1592.

(6) Isaac quotes (H.E.11-65) the Polish "Great Old Chronicle", that shows that it was a work dealing with the early history of the church. It is possible that this Polish "Chroniko" is to be identified with the work of Andrew Lubienietzki who wrote the "Chronicon", or "a description of the Kingdom of God, commencing with the Nativity of our King and Lord, Jesus Christ." Lubienietzki died in 1623, at the age of seventy-one and in all probabilities his work was written toward the end of the sixteenth century.

(Wallace 11-387.)

(7) The date of the Wagenseil codex is 1615. (H.E.1-42) The date of the Unger codex is 1593. (H.E.1-42) If my hypothesis that the Unger codex is a revamped Rabbinitic work is accepted then the date of the work would be prior to 1593. If it should not be accepted then the date 1593 would mark the latest extreme limit of publication, a date that can be accepted in view of the evidence above presented of the sixteenth century milieu.

(8) The statement (H.E.1-7;1-4) that the Jews have been in exile to the Romans for over fifteen hundred years does not necessarily have to be taken literally and to mean 1570 plus, altho' this implication in view of the evidence already adduced and to be present-



ed would seem to justify this date. The impression one receives from the context is that its a general remark, just as the Lutheran arguing with Isaac (H.E.1-4) says that Christianity is living after fifteen hundred years.

(9) It is not without significance that Isaac in (H.E.1-9) attacking the conception of the Trinity states specifically ~~that~~ that he argued with Catholics and Lutherans; omitting all reference to the Reformed Church. (Calvinists.) The cause of this is evident. The radical church, the Anti-trinitarians and the Socinians for the most part were originally a part of the Reformed Church and we may see in this omission to attack the Reformed Church the period during which the various elements in that church were settling their attitude toward the Trinity and it was felt that many of the Reformed favored the principle of the supremacy of the father: about 1560-70.

(10) References to living contemporaries Simon Budny, Czechowitz and Paruta should help us materially to determine the date of the author and his work.

(a) Simon Budny, Isaac knew of the Bible translation of Budny published in 1572 and he refers frequently to Budny as "the youngest (the latest) among the Christian translators" (H.E.1-11); "the latest Christian translator"; (H.E.1-41)(1-15). The references are rather vague as the term "the latest" is quite relative. Inasmuch, however as our author states specifically that he did use the 1572 translation (part II, introduction) and inasmuch as he does not in any part of the book in his numerous quotations from Budny imply the use of the New Testament annotated translation of 1584 which probably, <sup>he</sup> would have used, if it was in existence, the inference is quite proper that our author can be limited in the latest extreme to the period 1572-1584. Writing of the Apocrypha, Isaac tells how the "later Christians", by which he must mean the Reformed (Calvinist) church before the schism was complete with the Anti-trinitarians in their midst, wrote their version of 1563-the Bible of Brest. (H.E.1-43) The difficulty with the phrase referring to the Bible that was "just published" in Cracow by the Catholics is that it may refer to editions from the second in 1574 to the edition of 1617. In all probabilities he was referring to the second edition of 1574. (H.E.1-43) Simon



Budny wrote in 1573 his Obronu, published in 1576 which Isaac quotes a number of times.

(b) Martin Czechowicz in 1565 wrote his "Dialogues" a sort of catechism in 1575. The work is known and quoted by Isaac (H.E.1-42;1-21, etc.) Czechowicz also wrote "a Conference on Three Days on certain articles of Faith, but especially on Infant Baptism" as early as 1565 but not published until 1575. The work is also known and quoted by Isaac:-(H.E. 1-11;11-50)

(c) Nicholas Partua. Paruta, a Polish Anti-trinitarian was one of the first of the Italian emigré to seek refuge in Poland. Coming as early as 1546. He wrote "Sober and Orthodox Disputations concerning the One true God, Jehovah". Published in Lithuania in 1578. Isaac says: "In our generation there have greatly increased among the wise ones who are called Ebionites, Servetians and Arians who have separated themselves from the Lutherans and the Catholics (notice he does not mention the Reformed. This is evidently at a period also when it was not generally known whether the Reformed church would become Anti-trinitarian or remain orthodox), who acknowledge the unity and deny the Trinity as it is seen in the work of Nicholas Paruta, written in Latin; De uno vero deo, that is 'concerning the one true God'". (H.E.1-10) This last quotation shows that Isaac knew of this work of 1578, but more important is the failure to mention the Socinians among the radicals. Isaac only knows of the anti-trinitarians before they were an organized party; at the time that they were part and parcel of the Reformed Church, or independent thinkers and leaders. He does not even mention the primary organization of Pinzowians. The terms Ebionites, Servetians and Arians were those employed against the radicals before the designations Pinzowians and Racovians and Socinians arose. There is no definite historical reference thru'out the whole book that would show that Isaac knew of Socinus or his work or his school, the man and the school that was predominant in radical Polish thought from 1588 and on. It is thus evident that Isaac held his discussions and wrote his book at a period before the Anti-trinitarians had any organization, which would be between 1550-1560, if not earlier. The fact is Isaac held his disputations over a number of years, in all probabilities a life time



(v. preface) and only recorded them the last year of his life. The last book he quotes is 1578 and his activity, if he started at the age of twenty must have extended from 1538 to 1578, the period that saw the rise and the development of the radical Christian religious movement in Poland. Altho' Isaac does quote liberal writers such as Budny and others, who wrote in the 70's, this does not for a moment imply that he must be limited to their time. He always quotes them merely to support his own views, not to accept theirs. On the basis of what I feel to be a thoro study of the book and its time I am convinced that Isaac ben Abraham was a Rabbinite Jew who flourished and polem-  
ized in Poland between the years 1538-1578. I use the term Rabbinite Jew, but I shall  
qualify this usage.



L.

## THE NATIVITY OF ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM.

The author of *Hizuk Emunah* was probably born either in Poland or Lithuania in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The character and type of the author as presented in his work sometimes inclines one to believe that the suggested thesis of Dr. G. Deutsch that the author might have been a neophyte, should not be lightly thrown aside. A considerable amount of circumstantial evidence could be adduced in favor of this theory tho' none of it is altogether convincing.

The author is altogether unknown to contemporary Jewish writers and in his work the author makes no reference or even gives the slightest intimation that he knows of any of the great Talmudic scholars who came into prominence toward the end of his life during the great outburst of Talmudic learning with the appearance of Isserles and Luria and their schools.

There is nothing specifically Talmudic or Rabbinical either in his method or his language or his attitude. His work is purely literary and scientific written in a clear, simple, sympathetic style for the average man whom he states, he is trying to reach. He uses the type of Hebrew that a student who had studied it scientifically would use. His grammar is good.

He evidences a knowledge of Christian theological literature and dogma gained thru' his contact with Christians of all degrees and ranks and creeds that would apparently seem impossible for an average Jew of Poland in the sixteenth century. Occasionally he uses an expression that shows he has been influenced by New Testament phraseology and rhetoric. (H.E.1-6;-p.54;1-44) The name of his "father" Abraham is in itself suspicious. This is the name that has been adopted by practically all Christians who come over to the Jewish fold. This whole view is of necessity based somewhat on the view that Poland in the sixteenth century could not produce a conforming Jew who would be characterized by the broad education and the liberal culture that characterized this man. I am not inclined to the belief that Isaac was an original Christian in view of the fact that I believe, and shall endeavor to show in detail, that Poland could well produce Jewish men of the



learned and liberal character of Isaac in the sixteenth century and furthermore the whole book is characterized by a powerful Jewish consciousness both spiritual, historical and national that would apparently almost be impossible of simulation by a neophyte.

Another hypothesis worthy of consideration is that the author was of Sephardic training, possibly a descendant of the Spanish or Portuguese emigré. This view is based on the general culture that characterizes the author, a culture that characterized very many Italian leaders of the sixteenth century. As it will be shown a number of the leaders in scientific studies among the Jews in Poland were of Spanish or Italian, Sephardic extraction, some of them physicians. The author it will be remembered in quoting rabbinical authorities and writers of the past ages confines himself exclusively to Sephardim and practically without exception to Spanish writers until the last: Abravanel. The prayer quoted at the end of H.E.1-22 is Sephardic. This theory I believe to have as much weight as the "Christian theory" tho' I am inclined to reject it for the same reasons as the "Christian theory"; the conviction that Poland could and did produce men of the calibre of Isaac.



M.

THE EDUCATION OF ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM.

Isaac received a thoro grounding in Hebrew as evidenced by his splendid, simple and terse style, his evident knowledge of Hebrew grammar (H.E.I-21), and his broad acquaintance with Jewish literature, evidencing even a knowledge of Mediaeval Hebrew philosophical terminology. (H.E.I-10) He had a fine systematic knowledge of the Bible and the Apocrypha; the latter was familiar to him thru' Polish translations. (H.E.I-43)

Evidence has already been adduced to show that Isaac makes frequent reference to Talmudic literature and to later Rabbinical writers such as Joseph ben Gorion (Josippon); Benjamin of Tudela; Jehuda Halevi; David Kimchi; Isaac Arama; Isaac Abravanel and Joseph Albo on whom he shows considerable dependance.

From his earliest days as a youth (v.preface of author) Isaac tells us that he associated with prelates of the Church; prominent Catholic nobles, laymen of all the conservative and radical creeds with whom he discussed the various problems of theology.

Every page of his work evidences a thoro knowledge of the theological principles and dogmas of the Christian churches, a knowledge that must have been the product either of many years of study or intercourse with learned Christians.

Isaac, as evidenced, by his association with Christian leaders and his constant references was well acquainted with the Polish tongue.

He is well acquainted with the works of the liberal Christians; Budny, Parutua and Czechowitz. He quotes a Polish Chronicle which he uses to confirm some of his views. (H.E.II-65) Isaac is especially interested in the writings of Budny for whom he has a great admiration and whose works he commends to his co-religionists. (H.E. 15 etc.) Isaac knew of the Roman Catholic Translations of the Old Testament published in Cracow, of the Reformed Translation of the Brest and the liberal translation of Budny in Nieswiez.

In all probability he also knew the Judeo-German inasmuch as very many Jews spoke this dialect and he uses the German word "pfund" for pound. (H.E.II-23)

Whether he knew any of the classic tongues is very doubtful. He quotes (preface of author): "Altho we love Socrates and Plato we love the truth more." In the introduction



to part one he tells of a heathen God, born of a virgin without intercourse; of a God born from the forehead of a virgin; of a King who boiled his son and offered him to his God who not only refused to eat him, but even restored him to life. Isaac, after giving these quotations gives their source which for him was the Polish Chronicle which he used. (Introduction to part one) Evidently he did not know of these myths in the original Greek.

He explains the meaning of the work "apocrypha" according to the Greek but admits securing his explanation from the introduction to the translation of the Bible by the Reformers (1563) and by Budny (1572). (H.E. 1-43).

He declares that Jesus is the same word as Joshua and declares that Joshua b. Sirach is also known as Jesus b. Sirach. In all probability this information came to him not thru' a knowledge of Greek, but thru' notes of the various translations of the Apocrypha then extant. (The Bible translations of those days contained the Apocrypha as do many of the translations of to-day.) (H.E. 1-43).

Isaac knows of two versions of the mooted phrase in Romans V-14. He does not state his source and there is the possibility that he did know Latin, (H.E. 11-77), a knowledge that was not unusual among educated, especially physicians, who had studied in the Italian schools. He quotes Ambrose of Milan with reference to Romans V-14 to the effect that Ambrose declared that the text of the New Testament was corrupt and that only the Vulgate had the correct translation. It is altogether possible that he may have read of this mooted phrase, affecting as it does the doctrine of original sin, in some Polish theological work. He knows of the daily prayer as the "Pater". (H.E. 1-10) Yet Isaac knows of Jerome's mistranslation of the phrase "vayikra shemo" in Isaiah IX-5, which Jerome for Christological purposes had mistranslated as if written 'vayikore'. (H.E. 1-21) Isaac does seem to know the original text of the New Testament, (Latin probably, or possibly even the Greek) for both the Cracow and Brest translation follow the incorrect text of the New Testament literally and accurately in that they declare that seventy-five people went down into Egypt. But Budny who knew the Hebrew well and was a liberal arbitrarily changes the text in his translation to agree with the Hebrew, to seventy people. Isaac at once calls attention to this error of translation which no doubt could only have been detected by him



by personal reference to the original text either of the Greek or the Latin where "seventy-five" is found. This is by no means conclusive however, for it is altogether possible he could have verified the text with the aid of some of his Polish friends who knew the classics.

He seems also to have had some philosophic training and seems to be conversant with the various arguments of some of the non-Jewish philosophers. (H.E.1-10;1-44)

#### THE THEOLOGY OF ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM.

It is not my intention to go into any detail at all in discussing the theology of Isaac. That in itself would make a separate thesis. His theology is consciously and deliberately orthodox, rabbinical and Jewish thru'out. At no times does he even intimate by word or that or deed that he is not or has not been always in full sympathy with current Judaism. Naturally, as a Jew, his religion even to the most Liberal Christian would constitute him a liberal but as a Jew he is rigidly orthodox. He stands firmly on the scriptures as revealed and absolute authority. (H.E.1-6;1-16) Israel is now in exile, an exile that has been foretold because of the sins of the people, but the Jews are only temporarily in exile and will ultimately triumph. (H.E.1-16) The salvation of the Jews will come thru' the hands of a Messiah, (H.E.1-6) at a time that will mark the destruction of Ishmael (Islam) and Edom (Christianity). Israel's suffering is the divine test of his adherence to the faith of the fathers for which God will reward him at the time of redemption. His God conception, his idea of good and evil and their respective rewards and punishments, repentance, immutability of the Mosaic law and future life are all in accordance with the normally accepted view among the Jews. He is distinguished however by his Millenarianism, a motif that seems to pervade all the liberal Polish groups of that day and is not particularly new in Judaism, and his conception of Salvation thru' Gods grace which altho' supported by him by numerous biblical quotations is expressed in a terminology that is almost Christian. Salvation comes thru' God's grace and not thru' fulfillments of God's commandments. Intentions, not deeds, count. (H.E.1-23)



THE JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS OF  
ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM.

I am fully aware that a discussion of the "Jewish consciousness" of a writer is rather a difficult matter. A "consciousness" may either be simulated or may be nothing but a cumulative amount of stock phrases that characterize every polemical writer either Jew or Christian. But I am convinced by my studies of this author that his phrases are not artificial, but are the inner promptings of his heart. The occasional outbursts that he gives vent to are the exception rather than the rule. He is distinguished all thru' his work by a moderation in argument and a dignity of poise that speaks very high of his own individual culture. Occasionally, however, the sufferings and indignities that his people are bearing is too much even for his imperturbable philosophic calm and he breaks out into invective and bitter denunciation.

At times Christianity comes in for its share of abuse. It is a "lying faith" (H.E. 1-10); a "perverted faith"; (H.E. 1-38). In anger he cries out: "Note how they mistreat the text in order to bring forth a proof of their erroneous faith." (H.E. 11-79). The Catholics are idolators (H.E. 1-4; 1-5) and as for Christians in general they seem to believe in God as the primal cause of all things, yet in their personal faith they believe in idols, made by man, evidently referring to the use of ikons, (H.E. 1-38). All Christianity will ultimately be destroyed because its actions and religion is a desecration of the Holy Name and because of its oppression of the Jews. (H.E. 1-6)

Isaac has no more sympathy for Islam than he has for Christianity. He speaks of the "false Mohammed who gave Ishmael a lying faith", and he even appeals to his Christian opponents for a corroboration of this fact. (H.E. 1-4-5) His hatred<sup>and</sup> anger against both Christianity and Islam is because of their oppression of the Jews. (H.E. 1-6) Most of the Jews of the world are under the scepter of the King of Turkey who controls three fourths of the world. It is the duty of Ishmael to watch God's sheep and take care of them. He stops for a second to make a very interesting psychological analysis and comparison of the Turks and the Christians. The Ishmaelites are very proud and arrogant, but the Christians are altogether different. They are constantly studying statecraft and its artifices and



are studied in the arts of humility and humbleness. But Ishmael who has not taken care of the sheep entrusted to its care will be smitten, Israel will be redeemed and go to Palestine. The Christians, who have charge of the smaller groups of Jews will also be punished for their improper care of the children of Israel. (H.E. 1-37)

Isaac sees the hand of providence evidencing itself in the sixteenth century in France, England and Spain over those countries that had oppressed the Jew. All their suffering in these lands, the internal dissension caused by religious differences initiated by the Protestant Revolution, are signs of God's anger for their punishment and expulsion of the Jews. The countries that expelled the Jews are suffering, those that received the Jews have peace, especially Poland. (H.E. 1-46) The Protestant Revolution is a divine visitation on the Catholics. (H.E. 1-46)

He is full of sympathy for the "martyrs killed by the Christians" (H.E. 1-7). "Who can count all the suffering that you (Jews) have experienced; for many times you have been exiled and killed in a most horrible manner because you persisted in sanctifying the Unity of God", he declares. (H.E. 1-22) Commenting on the famous "suffering servant" passages of Isaiah he makes the Christians say: "While he was in exile under our dominion we oppressed him and humbled him continually. Yes, we plagued him for his money in order to get taxes out of him and besides this much monies through false accusations." (H.E. 1-22) He ends one of his arguments against the Christians with the touching remark: "These remarks are an answer to the Christians because they entice and force Jews to accept their lying faith and their false belief." (H.E. 11-75) One of the most graphic passages in his book is the description he gives of contemporary persecution. He makes the Christians speak: "...and so we killed the rich Jews for the sake of his wealth with ~~aka~~ many manifold horrible means and we even take the poor Jew,--whom we imagine to be as wealthy as the rich Jew,--and we torture him with severe infliction in order that he may tell us where his money is. He has not done any evil for we do not kill him because of any wickedness or any violence but only in order to get his money and because he does not acknowledge our lying faith and because he does not want to speak deceitfully saying he believes in it, yet it is an easy thing to say



something deceitfully where the heart does not agree with the mouth and the tongue, and we would free him from a horrible death that we have decreed against him." (H.E. 1-22)

The Jews scattered thru' the world have a mission to the people among whom they live; "Thus Israel must be the instructor and the teacher to the people of the world,-- among whom they are scattered,--of the word of the living God. (H.E. 1-22)

#### ISAAC ~~REDACTED~~ WAS STUDENT OF HISTORY.

##### JEWISH HISTORY.

The source books available to Isaac in his study of Jewish History were the Bible, the Apocrypha, the New Testament, the Talmudic literature, including Seder Olom Zuta, the Josippon,, (The first half of the Josippon was published in Cracow in 1538. Zunz, p.85) the Sefer HaKabbalah of Rabad; the itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela.

He has a very good conception of the political development of the Jewish people from the Exile thru' to the fall of Jerusalem during the time that they were under the Persians, the Greeks, the Hasmoneans, the Herodians and the Romans. His sources are evidently Biblical, New Testament, Apocryphal and Talmudic. (H.E. 1-17) He does not seem to have known Josephus altho' his most popular work of reference is the Josippon, whom he refers to either as the work of Joseph ben Gorion or as the Josippon. Practically all his references from the Josippon refer either to the Romans or the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

He speaks of Herod murdering Jewish sages and pious ones. His source evidently is also from Josippon, possibly chapter XIII--edit. Breithaupt, altho' there is also a Talmudic reference that he probably knew, Jesus was killed by the Romans. His source is probably the New Testament (H.E. 1-3) inasmuch as he shows in the same chapter that during the period of Jesus' life the country was in the hands of the Romans. Against the Christian contention that it took forty-six years to build the Second Temple (John 11-18) He quotes the Josippon chapter LXV that Herod only ruled altogether thirty seven years and it only took eight years to build it. (Josippon ch.55) (Edition used ~~is~~ is that of Prague 1784 which follows that of Venice 1544, both of which have the same



chapter division as the edition used by Isaac.) (H.E.11-43) Isaac evidently never used the Josephus or he would not have quoted the impossible passage from the Josippon (ch. LXXVII) that Agrippa and his son Mombaz (Monobaz) ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> killed by Titus three and a half years before the destruction of the temple. Isaac also quotes this same passage from the Rabad who probably took it from the Josippon. (H.E.1-42;11-25) He quotes the Josippon twice that the Jews put up a powerful defence before they surrendered Jerusalem. (Josippon ch.87; H.E.1-6;1-17.) He declares that the Roman Historians confirm the bravery of the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem. (H.E.1-17;P.111)

Isaac identifies the Kittim with the Romans and he brings to the support of his contention the opinions of "our sages" i.e. the rabbis. (Cf. Rashi on Daniel XI-30); the statement of Budny and the Josippon, chapter 1. (H.E.1-6) He quotes Josippon to the effect that the city fell because of the dissension between Agrippa and the leaders. (H.E. 11-25) Titus, says Isaac, quoting the Josippon, did not want to destroy the city or the sanctuary, but only asked that the people submit. (H.E.1-42) (Cf. Josippon. LXXVII-Editio Breithaupt.)

The use of Josippon shows that tho' Isaac had a broad and general conception of this period of Jewish history it was of necessity thru' the use of the sources employed very meagre, confused and untrustworthy.

He does not seem to evidence any special knowledge of Jewish history thru'out the middle ages. He is conversant with the Jewish expulsion from England, France and Spain tho' he does not seem to have any special knowledge of the details of Jewish life or history of the past ages.

#### CHURCH AND GENERAL HISTORY.

He has a general knowledge of the general history of the ancient world; of the conquests of the Babylons; and the Macedonians under Alexander. (H.E.1-5;1-6)

Isaac has a rather good conception of Church history probably derived from some of the current Polish chronicles. I question very much if he had any access to the original



Greek or Latin historical sources. He speaks of the death of Peter and Paul by Nero in 750.E. Yet Nero died in 68. (The Unger text has 75 but the Wagaenseil text has 254 which is probably an error for the year 54, which would be much better, tho' the traditional date of his death is 67 C.E.) He speaks of Decius roasting Laurentius in 254 but this took place in 257 or 258 under Valerian. All the Ceasars persecuted the Christians until Constantine who was the first to embrace Christianity. He is quite conscious of the relation of the contemporary anti-trinitarians to the Arians for in the midst of his presentation of the development of Christianity he steps aside to speak of the sectary Arius who had many followers during the reign of the son of Constantine, and who published a book against the established principles of the Christians. He makes the significant remark that "still today there are among them (the Christians) some who follow the creed of Arius and are known as Arians". The early anti-trinitarians thru'out Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century were among other names known as Arians, because they denied the principle of the Trinity. Rather strange he makes Julian the Apostate an Arian, too. His knowledge of Church history in its general development is quite good for he traces the church thru' to the Middle Ages to prove that Non-Jews,-- did not accept Jesus at once, but some of them massacred the missionaries that came unto them as late as modern times. He speaks of Vitek, Bishop of Prague, missionary to the Prussians massacred in 990. (This evidently refers to Adalbert of Prague murdered in 997. Cf. D.Deutsch, H.E. p.355; note d) The Russians and Poles were not converted till the year 1000 and the Lithuanians until 1400. (Cf. D.Deutsch, H.E. p.355-56. Note e.) There are still Christian sectaries continued Isaac in his development of Christianity who worship stones and trees and fire and snakes. This whole development seems to be taken from certain church histories that were available to Isaac. (H.E. 1-2)

He also refers twice to the Polish "Great Old Chronicle" that seems to have been some sort of a church history and may be identical with the chronicle of Lubienietzki. (v.supra)

It is only in dealing with the New Testament that Isaac demonstrates that he is



a historical critic of the first order. He takes verse after verse, compares it carefully with the original text in the Old Testament, shows how it has been misquoted or torn out of its context and in a logical, calm manner completely refutes his opponents. In dealing with the authenticity of Mark and Luke he quotes Jerome to the effect that they wrote what they heard from others and since they are not contemporaries of Jesus, their testimony, Isaac declares, is of necessity doubtful and not reliable since they have only heard of the sayings of Jesus thru' hearsay. The real proof of the unreliability of the New Testament is that the gospel and the writings of the New Testament contradict one another; the Old Testament is misquoted for their own purposes; verses are torn out of their new context, phrases are mistranslated. All of this proves, he said, that the New Testament is not a new divine law, but a human work written by men ignorant of the Old Testament. (Introduction to Pt.II.) (H.E.1-45)

The Epistle to the Hebrews says Isaac has no known author. He quotes the fact that some ascribe it to Luke, others to Paul, others to Apollos. (Luther is the one who ascribed it to Apollos.) (E.B. XI-603a.9th edit.) He quotes Budny's Obronc to the effect that it was not acknowledged by Christianity in the early times. (Allix; pp. 334-5) The New Testament he asserts was written in the time of Constantine, three hundred years after Jesus. (Introduction to part II)

All the errors that are found in the Christian writings such as the virgin birth idea and the like which show ~~the~~ similarities to classical ideas are a classical inheritance incorporated into the New Testament and Christianity. Because they were classical and were studied and believed by the very ancestors of the Christians it was but natural and following the line of least resistance for the Christians to believe these ideas which are otherwise impossible to believe. (Introduction to part I.H.E.)

A brief summary of Isaac as a historian shows that he develops no originality in his conception of Jewish history. However, as a polemist he has the advantage of preceding Jewish works of great critical ability and the arguments of the non-subscribing anti-trinitarians and humanists of Poland of his time. This gives him a splendid



critical heritage and attitude, at least toward the New Testament, which <sup>he</sup> does not hesitate to apply with the results that he reaches a conception of that work that is startlingly modern and that evidences results that are in thoro' consonance with many elements of modern criticism.

The critical method of Isaac is seen at its best in his terse statement: "When witnesses and their testimony do not agree it is impossible that they can contain the truth." (H.E. 1-1)

#### ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM THE EXEGETE.

Isaac had no sympathy with those Christian Exegetes who gave another vocalization to known passages in the prophets in order to secure a Christological interpretation. He objects to Jerome's change of the phrase "vayikra" in Isaiah IX-5 to the Niphal (passive) in order to secure a Christological interpretation. (H.E. 1-21)

Christian theologians and exegetes in his time took Gen. 11-17, the passage speaking of the tree of good and evil and taught from it the usually accepted Christian conception of Hell where all people, even the righteous previous to the advent of Jesus were sent until released thru' the saving power of his death. They prove this by the phrase "mot tomot", usually translated "you will surely die". Isaac stated that it merely referred to a corporeal death, not complete spiritual death <sup>and fine</sup> with exegetical ability translates the phrase: "You will ultimately die". (H.E. 1-11)

Commenting on the much discussed phrase of Gen IX-26, "Let us make man in our image", which the Christians adduced as a proof of the Trinity, Isaac makes the grammatically correct statement that the word "naaseh" is a pluralis Maiestatis.

Sheol usually translated by the Christians as a theological Hell was correctly translated by Isaac as death, the grave, the depths of the earth. (H.E. 1-11)

Against the Christians who argue that the word "olom" in Jer. XVII-4 means forever, Isaac thru' proper and correct evidence from other verses of the Old Testament shows how the phrase "olom" may be both a definite and an indefinite time. (H.E. 1-26)

Isaac does not believe that the Apocryphal works are inspired in any respect.



Only a few have been edited by Jews such as Tobit and Judith and Ecclesiasticus. Others, especially Third and Fourth Esdras and Baruch he maintains, were written by Christians to lend authenticity to their faith. His criticism of Baruch is especially cogent for he points out that the book speaks of seven generations stay in Babylon (Baruch 6-2), which is manifestly impossible since the exile was only to last seventy years. He very ably describes the Apocrypha as a series of Jewish and Christian propaganda works, works of history, science and morals. (H.E. 1-43)

Light is cast on Isaac's attitude towards textual criticism by the interesting comment of Simon Budny on Ezra II-70 with reference to the phrase "and all Israel in their cities". Budny says that possibly at some other time the phrase read "and all Judah in their cities", inasmuch as Israel the ten tribes had been exiled years before to Babylonia and had not yet returned. Isaac refuses to accept the suggested textual emendation of Budny and tries to prove that Israel may mean Judah tho' Judah may not mean Israel and he does prove it accurately and correctly by reference to II Chronicles XXVIII-19. This passage is interesting in giving an insight into Isaac's mind and method. He is not shocked at the suggestion of Budny that the text be emended, but very calmly considers the verse from a purely exegetical standpoint and demonstrates how the suggestion of Budny is incorrect. Isaac who took his stand on the literal inspiration of the ~~deceived~~ text could not conceive of an emendation even in a New Testament passage. Isaac correctly points out that Budny in his translation arbitrarily translates the passage in Acts VII-14, "seventy men" by changing the text which had "seventy-five" to conform with the Biblical text which had seventy. Isaac does not like the idea of emendations even in the New Testament and he makes the caustic remark "He emended this arbitrarily as he does in other places". (H.E. 11-63)

Isaac was keenly aware of the problems of the New Testament Epistles evidencing, as they do, opposite points of view, and he very well points out as all modern exegetes do, that in the Epistle of James the view of salvation thru' works there expressed is altogether opposed to Paul's conception of salvation thru' faith. (H.E. 11-93)



At no time does Isaac assume a radical attitude. He never attempts to impugn the validity of the New Testament texts. He accepts them all, but confutes them out of their own apparent contradiction.

#### ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM AS POLEMIC.

The sixteenth century, the century that saw the rise of a great revolt against the Roman Church was a century of polemics and apologetics and disputations.

The whole literary history of Poland in the second half of the sixteenth century is full of polemical and apologetic works. (Krasinski, 11; p.347)

Isaac Ben Abraham felt called upon to write a book (preface of author) that would be simple and clear and understood even by the average person that would serve as a "Faith Strengtheners" (Hizuk Emunah) against the arguments of the zealous missionaries and disputants. He asserts that he always met with courtesy and that he endeavored at all times to argue quietly and modestly yet with conviction and this we may believe to be true, for the Italian leaders among the anti-trinitarians set an example of courtesy in polemics, that might well have been followed by the German disputants on both sides in Germany. The method adopted by Isaac in his work is to prove Judaism affirmatively on a Biblical and a rational basis and then to disprove the contentions of the Christians thru' the contradictions in their very writings. His arguments are always, clear, simple and concise yet carry conviction and are based on a sound exegetical comprehension of the Biblical text. He is invariably mild and seldom loses his temper.

I am presenting here the list of the people with whom he held disputations according to his record:

- 1-3: A man of the Greek nation. (a Greek Catholic)
- 1-4: A leader of the sect of Martin Luther.
- 1-5: A leader of the sect of Martin Luther.
- 1-6: One of the wise among the Christians.
- 1-7: Christians.
- 1-8: A Christian sage.



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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-9: Catholics and Lutherans. |                                    |
| 1-10: They (Christians ).     |                                    |
| 1-11: Christians.             |                                    |
| 1-12: Christians.             |                                    |
| 1-13: Christians.             |                                    |
| 1-14: Christians.             | 1-29: Christians.                  |
| 1-15: Christians.             | 1-30: Christians.                  |
| 1-16: Christians              | 1-31: Some of the Christian sages. |
| 1-17: Some Christian sages.   | 1-32: They (Christians)            |
| 1-18: Christians              | 1-33: Christians                   |
| 1-19: Christians              | 1-34: Christians                   |
| 1-20: Christians              | 1-35: Christians                   |
| 1-21: They (Christians)       | 1-36: Christians                   |
| 1-22: Christians              | 1-37: Christians                   |
| 1-23: A Christian sage        | 1-38: Christians                   |
| 1-24: Christians              | 1-39 : Christians                  |
| 1-25: Christian sage          | 1-40: Christian sage               |
| 1-26: Some Christian sages    | 1-41: Christian                    |
| 1-27: Christians              | 1-42: Christians                   |
| 1-28: Christians              | 1-43: Some Christian sages         |

Mention is made in H.E. 11-60 at the other end of the book of the argument that he had in H.E. 1-4 with a Lutheran noble. This inclines me to believe that there is no question that Isaac really had these discussions with the people that he designates. An examination of these lists will at once show that he held no arguments with members of the Reform Church. Possibly because his arguments were for the most part anti-trinitarian and for the reason that they would not apply to the Reform Church for evidently at the period that he was active, the Reformed church, from its beginning in the forties until the fifties was in a process of development. Many of its leaders were



anti-trinitarians and it was some time before there was a definite break between the two groups in the Reformed Church. It is especially seen in H.E. 1-9, where in arguing on the Trinity he does not include his opponents as Christians but specifically states that he argued with the Catholics and the Lutherans. In the interesting passage in H.E. 1-10, where he speaks of the fact that of the rise of his generation of the Servetians and the Ebionites and the Arians who acknowledge the Unity and deny the Trinity, he speaks of the facts that these liberals have separated themselves from the Lutherans and the Catholics, but he fails altogether to mention the Reformed Church.

Isaac wrote his book at a time when Polish was understood and read by many Jews. In all probability he wrote his book for those very people who could read and write Polish and came in contact daily with the Poles and would of necessity have to meet Christological arguments from their Polish friends and remain silent if they knew no proper answer.

Possibly also for that type of Polish Jew who did not know his Bible systematically enough to use it as a weapon in fighting Christian polemics. His book could well serve as an arsenal providing the weapons at hand for repelling all attacks.

That Isaac was well conversant with the anti-trinitarian arguments of his contemporaries is very evident from the following passages: "and likewise the sage Martin Czechowitz in his work "Dialogues" which he wrote in Polish.....and likewise in his work which he named "Three Days"....confuted all the proofs of the believers in the Trinity which they bring from the Gospels and similarly many of the sages of these sects,-each one in his work has confuted etc., H.E. 1-10. That this state of affairs is true is evidenced by a study of the preface of the author and especially by his references when advising his friends to use the Budny translation. Speaking of a certain translation of Budny where that liberal agrees with him he states: "This is the way that Budny translates it and any one who reads his translation will note this." (H.E. 1-11) Again referring to another translation of Budny he declares exultingly: "Study it and you will rejoice." (H.E. 1-15) It would have been futile for



him to make these frequent references to the Polish of contemporary writers and of the various translations unless he expected those who read his book to consult them and to use them in other discussions. After an argument he declares to his Jewish readers; "If you read the translation of Budny you will ascertain the truth."

#### SUMMARY.

In view of the evidence presented as to the character and the work and the method of Isaac ben Abraham, I believe there can be little question that he was a rabbinite Jew of Poland, Lithuania, Orthodox in his theology, yet a man of some culture, associating with Christians of all degrees and ranks, possessed with a spirit of Breadth of vision and tolerance yet distinctly Jewish in his whole point of view. A rabbinite Jew who is yet by no means separatistic in his social intercourse. It was because Geiger could not conceive of such a possibility:-a sixteenth century rabbinite Jew of culture and breadth and tolerance accepted by the Christians with some degree of esteem, if not respect and affection-if we may believe Isaac-that he felt that his hypothesis of the Karaitic character of Isaac was positively correct and firmly grounded. It is significant that Zunz in referring to our author speaks of him as Isaac ben Abraham without the qualifying phrase "the Trokite ". (Zunz, III-82)

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