# AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AS SOURCES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH HISTORY FROM 1870.

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# D I G E S T

The principle concern of this thesis has been to analyze four outstanding individuals confronting a hostile environment. The most authentic way to do this was to utilize autobiographical material as the crucial source. The ultimate goal of the author has been to show why these four men and woman, coming from very similar shtetl backgrounds in Russia, inevitably developed very different philosophies of economics and politics. In other words, what were the motivating factors which caused Shmarya Levin, Chaim Weizmann, Leon Trotsky and Emma Goldman to respond to their society in an individual manner. There were several factors found to be responsible. Russia was in the midst of social and economic turmoil. The Tsar Alexander II had been assassinated. Anti-Semitism was being encouraged officially. Pogroms were creating great hardships for the Jews of Russia, especially in the Pale of Settlement. The four subjects of this study grew up in the midst of this terrorism and upheaval. Levin became a literary and romantic Zionist. Weizmann developed into a practical and realistic Zionist. Trotsky found his salvation in Marxist-Leninist ideology, and Emma Goldman grew to be the idealistic Anarchist par excellence. Through the study of their autobiographies, the author has concluded that there was one major reason for the variance of avocations: the distinctive childhood and parental

relationships of each one of our personalities. Shmarya Levin was blessed with a warm Jewish homelife filled with parental love and devotion. His future denotes a secure and positive record of achievement. Chaim Weizmann led a very similar kind of life, but his skills were directed toward science. His career, well-known to most of us, was to yield great scientific discoveries. He used his genius to further the cause of Zionism and thus his people. We can say that he, too, fulfilled positively his raison d'etre. In the case of Leon Trotsky, his life was anything but secure as a child. His early years were a series of one rejection after another. He came to identify more with the peasants than with his suffering co-religionists. No doubt he accomplished his goal in 1917 with the coming of the Revolution. But, his own psychological make-up eventually provoked a riftwithin the Soviety hierarchy, of which he was a part, and he found himself spending the remainder of his life in exile. Emma Goldman had a far more devastating childhood. The result of such a negative period in her life and the circumstances of the labor situation in the United States at the time of her arrival all took their toll in her destiny. She rejected all authority whatsoever. She espoused a radical anarchist philosophy, so idealistic as to be unrealistic. Her lack of self-esteem and hate for all men, stemming from her relationship with her father, blinded her to the proper means and channels to further her

cause. She was black and white, with no grey in between. Thus, her deep psychological problems thrust her into a role in which she found constant frustration and continued rejection, this time at the hands of the very people she was determined to save.

DEDICATED TO JOSEPH AND SARAH MESSING, my parents, whose dreams, hopes, and great faith in their son have reached fruition in the writing of this thesis. AND TO GILDA, my wife, without whose understanding and devotion and help this thesis could never have been written.

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SECTION I

# EASTERN EUROPE IN TRANSITION

## GENERAL CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA FOLLOWING THE CRIMEAN WAR

The aftermath of the Crimean War brought with it the 1861 Edict of Emancipation issued by Alexander II of Russia. The purpose of this decree was to free the serfs and thereby bring about the collapse of feudalism in the Russian Empire. The problems emerging from this break in the old socio-economic system caused the eventual failure of any and all reforms generated by Alexander II following his assassination and the rise of Alexander III upon the throne.

Because the Tsar foresaw insurrection among the peasants, he attempted to remove their bone of contention by the eradication of serfdom. This edict of 1861 brought with it many difficulties for both the nobles and the peasants. Most serious of all was the problem of what to do with the land. A compromise was found and the land was divided amongst the nobles and their serfs. The peasants were taxed for forty-nine years while the landlords were financially compensated by the government. Some of the peasants prospered and others found themselves deep in debt. Those who could not manage gave up their property and took refuge in the urban centers and formed a poverty-stricken class. Those of the nobles who managed their affairs properly emerged unscathed by the reforms; others who squandered their windfall from the government found

themselves without land and funds. The situation deteriorated to the point where both landowners and peasants could not cope with the opportunity to avail themselves of a capitalistic system.

Such a system, however, placed the Jews in a favorable position. The Jews of the Pale, forcibly settled there under Nicholas I, restricted in almost every sphere of life, coerced into following outrageous military requirements, etc., found Alexander II a most benevolent and fair ruler.

Under Alexander II, the conscription regulations were brought into uniformity. The Pale of Settlement was extended for economic reasons. The new government welcomed Jewish entrepreneurs and financiers who could help with the building of highways and railroads, and who could establish industries and means of distribution.[1] Certain categories of Jews were then permitted to move from the Pale to the interior of the country (if they had been paying high taxes) or to any of the great Russian capitals. Another beneficial rule enabled educated Jews holding degrees to have the right of unrestricted residence. By 1867, all veterans, having completed their service in the armed forces, were allowed to settle anywhere in the Empire. Jewish craftsmen, artisans, mechanics, distillers, apprentices, and other skilled workers were encouraged to settle in areas where their services were most needed. They had been overcrowded in the Pale. By 1865, they had the right to travel and settle freely.[2]

The inevitable result of such freedom was the rise of a wealthy middle class: merchants, industrialists, and financiers, who adopted the

Russian language, habits, and education. They became the assimilated Jews of Russia and took it upon themselves as the emancipated Jews to be the leaders of all Russian Jewry. They formed a Society for the Diffusion of Culture among the Jews with headquarters in St. Petersburg and branches in every major community. The chief goal of this society was to enlighten by means of literature and the spoken word those young men desiring to dedicate themselves to handicrafts and science. In other words, "Be a human being upon the street and a Jew in your home."[3]

Thus, we find that when Moses Montefiore returned to St. Petersburg again, he met up with a great many changes in the Jewish community of 1872. He describes this encounter. "I conversed with Jewish merchants, literary men, editors of Russian periodicals, artisans and persons who had formerly served in the imperial army, all of whom alluded to their present position in the most satisfactory terms. All blessed the Emperor, and words seemed wanting in which adequately to praise his benevolent character. The Jews now dress like ordinary gentlemen in England, France, or Germany. Their schools are well attended, and they are foremost in every honorable enterprise destined to promote the prosperity of their community and the country at large."[4]

The emancipated Jews had created, as they had done in former years in other nations, a capitalistic middle class which could conceivably have changed the economic forecast of the Russian economy. As far as

spiritual Judaism was concerned, according to Elbogen, there was no transition. The Jews assimilated so rapidly that they left many of their values behind in their rush to use their new freedom. The young generation rebelled against the Jewish life of their parents, much to the dismay of the older generation. [5]

This great economic upswing and expansion of a middle class had its converse effect upon a great proportion of Jews remaining in the Pale of Settlement. Many of the Jews found themselves in trades no longer economically viable. Money lenders went out of business because credit was more readily available. Improvements in transportation created a hardship for innkeepers and wagoners. The freedom of the peasants prompted an economic crises in agriculture. The Jews had had close dealings with the peasants. When these peasants, unguided in economic freedom, left their land and emigrated to the urban slums, the Jews in the small villages lost most of their customers and income. Often, the sign of economic disaster was signalled by Jewish economic hardships. The Russian economy in the countryside began to suffer. Poverty increased. Starvation and disease came to Russia. The country was not ready for capitalism for several important and basic reasons. The nobility and Tsar still held tremendous power and could change laws as fast as they were made.....no stability. The Church maintained too great an influence in all social and economic realms. The peasants'

emancipation was unguided. Corruption among government officials was rampant. Capital was not used by sufficiently experienced entrepreneurs in a manner beneficial to all classes. The means of distribution were inadequate; and threats of invasion and war was constantly undermining the economy. Between the years 1870-1880, an outflow of emigrants to the United States reached a level of almost 42,000. One of the major reasons, other than economic hardships, for prompting a Jewish exodus from Russia was the pogrom. The Jews became economic competitors of the small existing middle class. The Jews also were blamed for the great suffering and poverty suffered by the masses. In 1871, Odessa experienced its first pogrom. For four days the local authorities would not intervene, claiming that the Jewish exploiters were receiving their just desserts.[6]

In the midst of this socio-economic turbulence, Tsar Alexander II was about to grant Russia a constitution. His life came to an abrupt end when he was assassinated on March 3, 1881. It was apparent that there were many opposed to his plan to give the people a bill of rights. The events following his murder set Russia and her Jews back a hundred years. Responsibility was shifted from the government by a systematic campaign of terror against the Jews. Vitriolic press, clergy, and government attacks were levied against the Jews, and all of Russia's ills were blamed on Russia's weakest minority. Pogroms broke out all over the Empire with

official sanction. The chief intent of these pogroms was to destroy and plunder Jewish property.[7] This is how the American Ambassador at St. Petersburg reported some of the events to the Secretary of State in Washington May 24, 1881: "A disgraceful series of disorders have occurred during the past month in the Southwestern provinces of Russia, directed against the Jewish residents, resulting in the loss of a number of lives and the destruction of an enormous amount of property. The scenes of these riots have been at and in the vicinity of Elisabethgrad and Kief and less serious demonstrations at Odessa and other places. The participants have been almost exclusively of the lowest and most ignorant classes in the towns and cities, joined by the peasants, and the demonstrations in the two localities first named appear to have been so powerful that for days the authorities were paralyzed, and the rioters were able to give full sway to their work of bigotry and destruction. In Kief the work was so thorough, it is stated, that not a single Jewish house escaped, the inmates being driven out, beaten, and stoned, and some of them killed and the contents plundered or thrown into the streets. The damage there is estimated at several millions of roubles, and business has been seriously affected thereby..... Massacre and destruction of property have become so threatening in other localities, where no actual outbreaks have taken place, that the Jews in large numbers have fled from their homes and taken refuge across the frontier in Austria or in Moscow,

where the military force is sufficient to guarantee safety. In some instances the railroad officials have refused to run the train by which the Jews were seeking to escape, for fear of attack from the infuriated mobs debauched with liquor and plunder. Indiscriminate pillage became so much feared, that Christians chalked their homes with crosses or exhibited holy images with lighted lamps before them to save themselves from the fury of the rabble. The acts which have been committed are more worthy of the Dark Ages than of the present century."[8]

These events became commonplace after the Tsar's death since the Jews were also accused of assassinating the Emperor.[9] Alexander II had been more forceful in stopping such atrocities, but they had still occurred, during his reign, in Southern Russia. Alexander III brought about a period of suppression and bigotry almost without parallel. Under Alexander III's Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Petrovich Pobiedonostzev, the ancient Torquemada's work was carried on. All minority groups were suppressed. His goal was to unify the State with the Orthodox Church. We was most diligent in his workings against the Jews.[10] His solution of the Jewish problem was this: "one-third of the Russian Jews should emigrate, one-third must be baptized, and the remaining third starved." Another of the great Pan-Slavic humanitarians was Ignatieu. His dedication was to "ascertain the sad condition of the Christian inhabitants, brought about by the conduct of the Jews in business matters."[11] He made it

clear in a published document by stating that "though he wished to do his best to deliver the Jews from oppression and slaughter, he nevertheless regarded it a matter of urgency and justice to adopt stringent measures in order to put an end to the oppression practiced by the Jews on the inhabitants and to free the country from their malpractices which were, as is known, the cause of the agitation."[12] He thus instituted separate commissions for purposes of investigating the Jewish question.[13] The following are a list of some of the obviously prejudiced questions: "What economic activities of the Jews were particularly harmful? What were the obstacles in enforcing the laws regarding the possession or the leasing and use of land, regarding trade in alcoholic beverages or in money-lending? What changes were necessary in order to prevent circumvention of these laws on the part of the Jews? And, finally, what legislative or administrative measures would be appropriate for making such injuries as the present impossible?"[14] The result of these inquiries was the decreeing of Ignatieu's Temporary Orders Concerning the Jews. The State Council did not have to approve "Temporary" orders. These laws, instituted on May 3, 1882, and therefore referred to as the May laws, constituted a permanent administrative pogrom against the Jews. Though only valid in the Pale of Settlement, the fact that they were legally sanctioned and enforced by the central government was enough to cause their spiritual suffocating power to spread through the Empire.[15]

Poverty, disease, stifling of any free acts, and general misery, prompted a spirit of restlessness, subversion, and underground movements. The Jews were among the leaders - an inevitable resultant.

We see, therefore, a pre-capitalistic society, purged of feudalism, yet still in the social and economic Dark Ages stemming from a semi-theocratic absolutist administration. Lack of individual freedom and education, bigotry and corruption.....all these limitations, plus many others, which suppressed the aspiration of the people, caused the emergence of underground political and economic enclaves. Black marketeering and crime swept the nation. Deterioration of the economy and starvation forced many Russians to resort to one of three choices: go along with the system; emigrate; or turn to the formation of secret political alternatives and by so doing, expose oneself to the danger of imprisonment or execution.

Certainly, the Jews were among the first to suffer and to react. Only the wealthy could co-exist with the establishment. The majority of Jews suffered starvation, economic disaster, and officially sanctioned pogroms. Many left the country, finding refuge in Germany, Austria, England, or North America. The range of avenues of underground escape into political groups or forces varied both within and outside Russia's borders. Many rebels joined anarchist ranks. Others found their means to freedom on the Zionist bandwagon. Most became socialists and

Marxists and devout followers of Lenin. Some of the people joined liberal groups. They all published illegal newspapers and pamphlets at great risk. It is doubtful, in my mind, that most of these anti-government organizations would ever have formed had the constitution of Alexander II come into effect. The rise to the throne of Alexander III either reinforced already existing groups or encouraged the formation of new hostile forces.

In the light of these conditions in Tsarist Russia, we can readily understand the reasons for the development and emergence of personalities like Shmarya Levin, Chaim Weizmann, Leon Trotsky, and Emma Goldman.

## SECTION II

## A SPECTRUM OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE

### CHAPTER I - THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS CAUSE

Shmarya Levin, the romantic Zionist; Chaim Weizmann, the rational universalistic Zionist; Leon Trotsky, the militant Socialist revolutionary; and Emma Goldman, the idealist Anarchist par excellence, each grew out of the environment of a chaotic Russian despotism of the middle and late nineteenth century. The question which must be asked, and upon which this thesis is based, is the following. Why and how were four individuals, rebelling against oppression and subjection, all offspring of Russian Jewish parents, all exposed to similar culture and environment, able to associate themselves with groups so diametrically opposite in nature? In other words, what were the root causes for their individual choices of political philosophy? Why did they adopt one system rather than another, and what was the motivating force in their compulsion to find alternative solutions to the overthrow of the status quo?

Each of the individuals is different, yet several have almost identical family backgrounds. Each chose a radical political philosophy, yet each comes from parents who were adherents and followers of the established system without intrinsic and covert insurrectionary ideologies. These personalities were the children of hardworking people with relative degrees of Jewish consciousness and identity. The remarkable aspect of

their lives is reflected by the fact that they, the children of such homes, all chose, with one exception, different paths of self-expression and personal fulfillment. Zionism, left-wing socialism, and anarchism, are symbolic of the spectrum of confusion and complexity of the Russian Jewish inhabitants and are an indication of the extent to which many individuals went to find escape from the existing turmoil.

The purpose of this section is to examine each of the four individuals, their childhood, their friends, and their parents, and the influential forces which psychologically motivated them to identify with their future philosophy of society and economics. It is my intent to find just causes for the choices they made and to establish a connection between their environment and their politics -- their environment being similar -- their politics radically different.

## CHAPTER II - SHMARYA LEVIN (1867-1935)

A careful reading of Shmarya Levin's autobiography plunges one immediately into the literary fantasy and nostalgic romanticism of shtetl life. Everything about Levin is romantic.....even his approach to Zionism.

Levin grew up in the small village of Swislowitz which, surrounded by two rivers, the Beresina and the Swisla, was also in the heart of the timber trade area of the Pale. Levin was born in 1867. He therefore was fortunate to have come into the world after Nicholas I and during the reign of Alexander II who had issued (see above) the Edict of Emancipation of 1861. The short-lived Jewish freedoms under the Russian bureaucracy were in existence by that time. For Levin's family, however, it appears that because they were in such a remote area of the Empire, they had been left relatively alone and had been able to create for themselves a comfortable livelihood as lumber agents and as raft builders. Only occasionally was graft and "payoffs" exacted by petty and corrupt local officials.[16]

Levin describes his family:

> "On my mother's side I belong to the mystic and passionate sect of the Chassidim: on my father's side I am a cool, logical Misnagid, or opponent of the Chassidim. My grandfather Mendel Astrakhan was a fiery adherent of the Lubowitch dynasty of wonder-working rabbis: he did not let a single High Holiday pass without a visit to the "Court," nor a year without payment of tithes. My grandfather Solomon Salkind was a dry, cool Misnagid, an eternal student of our sacred books. He made it a point to surround himself with the wandering preachers and

> rabbis and emissaries sojourning in our little town. Naturally our house as such was typically Misnagid, and my education was planned and carried out under the direction of my father. But the Chassidic stories and legends which my mother would tell us exerted a profound influence on me: and even more powerful than the lore of the Chassidim was the manner of her life, her individual style. Toward my father my attitude was one of the deepest respect: but in that respect there was not lacking an element of fear. Toward my mother my relationship was one of pure love. She was in my eyes the personification of all that is loveliest and most lovable. She was widely known as a gentle, charitable, and God-fearing woman. In my eyes she was a saint. There were thus two distinct and opposed influences in my life: the severe intellectual Misnagid influence on my father's side, and the gentle and mystic Chassidic influence on my mother's side."[17]

From Levin's own description of his parents, one may draw the conclusion that his father instilled him with an analytical and keen mind, a mind designed to question and to search for meaning in all matters, while his mother passed on to him the romantic warmth only a Chassidic mentality knows and appreciates. The combination of both served Levin well. He developed into a literary genius characterized by great perception and deep sensitivity. Levin describes their influence on him:

> "My father had, as the phrase goes, 'a good head on him.' He was especially clever at figuring, and in later years, when I was a student in the upper classes of the Realschule or Secondary School in Minsk, I convinced myself that my father had a real grasp of the elements of algebra and geometry, subjects he had never studied. He frequently astounded me by the manner in which he approached a problem in either subject: the problem, it is true, would not be a very advanced one, but he had an extraordinary way of resolving it into its first elements by sheer dint of business acumen, or, I am tempted to say, by a sort of instinct for what was logical and just. It was from my father that I inherited a gift for mathematics which in later years was to enable me to overcome some of the heaviest

> obstacles placed in the way of my education. My mother was, in every fibre of her being, a woman of mood and intuition. In all that she did or said -- even if the matter was some daily commonplace -- she made evident such depth of soul, such fineness of feeling, such sympathy and compassion, that she drew me to her with magic power. If it could be put so crudely, I would say that my father's influence was to intellectualize me, my mother's to inspire me: from my father streamed a cool, clear light; from my mother, warmth and emotion. My head was drawn toward my father, my heart toward my mother, and I was forever swinging like a pendulum between these two forces. Which of these forces finally came to dominate? Did I finally emerge a Chassid, with a Misnagid background, or was the contrary the case? The answer will have to be given by others than myself. For my part I can only say that both of my parents played a great part in my life."[18]

Levin goes on to conclude that he did not believe that the difference in character between his father and mother created actual inner conflicts along the path of his development. As he said, however, perhaps he is in no position to know the workings of his psyche.

Levin's home town, Swislowitz, was backward and very poor. Jews and Gentiles equally inhabited its dwellings. Most of the men of the village were employed by wealthy absentee landowners who paid them to harvest the forests of their trees and ship them down the rivers to the larger cities. The townspeople had very little, and the Jews of the area, in whom our major interest lies, were better off than most. Levin portrays for us the living conditions of the inhabitants.

> "The majority of Jewish homes were wretchedly poor. The father was away from home from early morning till late at night. Either he had a regular occupation, and toiled at it twelve and fourteen and sixteen hours a day, or else he was a Luftmensch, living from hand to mouth, petty merchant, broker, commissionman all rolled into one,

running from client to client, from shop to shop, like a wild animal hunting for a bite of food. But not the father alone was thus enslaved. The mother too had her share of it. With few exception, the Jewish mother not only kept her house going, but went out too, took in washing, labored in the gardens of others. She found work as a berry-gatherer: she went looking for feathers in the meadows where the geese were fed, or plucked the feathers of slaughtered fowl to stuff cushions -- the last an occupation which was reserved for the late night, when the little ones were asleep, and the one lamp was trimmed and turned down very low. This was the lot of the average housewife. Still worse was the lot of the shopkeeper, chained to her store from the earliest hour of dawn till late into the night: perspiring in the choking heat of summer, or shivering in the bitter winter cold over the little earthen stove. So poverty stood with lifted whip over Jewish parents, driving them in a blind circle all day, and separating them from their children.

"And children were never lacking. They seemed to come in droves. Every house was a pyramid, with father and mother as foundation and the little ones building it up to the apex. Girls were not so bad; they were quieter at play and more obedient. But when it came to boys, there was only one salvation for the parents: to turn them over, for the length of the whole day, into the hands of the severe melamed. And thus the entire point of the cheder was lost: it might have served as a salvation for the child from the wretched environment of its home. Its actual purpose was to save the poor parents from their own children. Thus the melamed became the lord and master of the Jewish child, and the cheder, the narrow one-roomed school, lightless, unclean, laid its stamp on the Jewish child and brought ruin and misery on its tenderest years. In my time the Jewish cheder was already an institution rotten in every corner. From a folkschool it had become transformed into a sort of reformatory, in which every inmate was regarded as a young criminal. Only the very few, the chosen ones of fortune, escaped from those years of oppression more or less unharmed, with minds and bodies unruined.

"I was one of those happy few. But it was only in later years that I understood how fearful had been the danger from which I had escaped, and to whom I owe gratitutde for the escape."[19]

It can be readily appreciated why Levin had no faith nor love for the cheder method of instruction.

As Levin grew older, he quickly recognized the sad plight of his people. He loved the land and his natural surroundings, but he was embittered because, though he could frolic and play in the woods and meadows, he knew, even at his tender age, that no Jew could really have land of his own.[20]

> "Without understanding why it was so, I was angered as a child that none of the earth belonged to the Jews, that God had given the forests to the nobles and the fields to the peasants. I argued the question frequently with my mother, but she had an eternal answer: 'Wait, my child. The Messiah will come and we will have both forests and field.' My mother took special pains to implant in me a longing for the coming of the Messiah.....she believed greatly in the advent, and she often spoke of it. Her deep faith was in time transferred to us, and as children we helped her to long and to believe, to believe and to long. Our faith in Messiah was born of our faith in our mother."[21]

The seed is planted. Levin is deeply conscious of a need for Jews to have and to own their land. This insight of his childhood becomes intensified in his adolescent years. He is destined to work for the realization of a Jewish homeland. Throughout his autobiography, he is concerned with the plight of his people and their dream for a Messiah.

> "On the afternoon of the eighth day of Passover they gave us Matzoth doubled and bent - a symbol of the fact that Passover was closing. And with it was closing also my first cheder year. I was still a child, but with something of the adult. I already knew much about our people and the lore of our people. I understood something of the meaning of that dark word golus, exile, which recurs too frequently in our talk, and I also understood why the Jews pray so often for the coming of the Messiah. The child in me was still happy, carefree, merry -- but now and again a sigh escaped from my lips -- a sigh which I could not account for, and could not explain."[22]

Before Levin reached the age of five, he had already been sensitive to the needs of his people. The idea of a Jewish homeland was still far from his young mind even though as a child, he pondered Israel's past possession.

> "On the holiday of the fifteenth - the Arbor Day of Palestine (Tu Bishvat) -- the house remained prosaic and unadorned. All that happened was that my mother gave me dried figs, dates, and locust to take to cheder. While she made up the bundle for me, she told me of the glories of Palestine - a land flowing with milk and honey, and set with trees which bore wonderful fruits. The fruits we ate in the exile were of no account there. Even the locust was fed to goats, or the goats came and nibbled them right off the trees.
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> "In the cheder every boy poured out his fruits on the table, and a common stock was made. We ate what we could and the rest remained for Mottye (the melamed). We did little studying that day. Mottye went over a few verses with us, for form's sake, and then told us more stories of Palestine. It was a withered holiday for me. Figs and locust and dates we could buy all the year round in the shops of Swislowitz. What was the point of it? The fruits were dried, hard, old stock with the softness long since pressed out of them. And with these withered fruits they sought to awaken in us soft green memories of a far-off land, and delicate trees which fail even in eternal summer and must be reawakened by the soft breath of the New Year."[23]

The notion of a people linked with its traditional past served to enlighten Levin in his childhood that his people were indeed in exile and would some day return to their land. It is obvious that at that time of his life, the idea of a tie to the Holy Land was related to the coming of the Messiah. Still, the seed for thought was there and it would not be too long before he realized that dreams could be made real without Messianic intervention.

Levin was also forced to deal with corrupt and illiterate Russian-appointed officials. The state often would designate a trusted informer or repay a debt to a "loyal" subject by giving him a title and job way beyond his qualifications. Levin despised such men and is very candid in his remarks concerning them and what they represented.

> "I shall have occasion to write at some length on this entire subject of the state Rabbis appointed by the Russian government in those days. It has been treated frequently in stories and annals of Russian Jewish life, but seldom, I believe, from the proper psychological point of view. In my opinion this institution was the perfect mirror and symbol of the political bondage and the general degradation of the Jews of Russia. I know that from my earliest childhood I learned to hate this institution with a deep and burning hatred, and in my manhood I dedicated a great deal of myself to the struggle for its eradication. So bitter was my hatred of it that I did not hesitate before the most painful sacrifices. I myself became a Kazyonni Rabin (state or crown Rabbi) and I took upon myself the name and the title which I had always regarded as the sign manual of our shame and slavery. It was my dream then to fight against the evils of the institution from within. I believe that the fight which I waged was not without success -- but I could not endure it for long. During my years in Vilna I was no longer Kazyonni Rabin: I was a lecturer and preacher. And when I did throw off the ugly governmental title, I felt as though the yellow badge of the Middle Ages had been taken off my cloak. 24
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> "Now as I look back closely on the course of my life and try to locate the first origins of my lifelong hatred toward the institution of the State Rabbinate, I find it in my memories of Abraham Kazar.....
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> "Abraham Kazar was in my eyes - even then - a meaningless and contemptible person. I did not develop the faintest feeling of affection or respect for him - and yet he was, beyond doubt, a deep influence in my life. From him I derived that hatred of the Kazyonni Rabbinate which in later years gave me no rest. The very name Kazyonni (state, crown) became a negative symbol to me. I knew that by law a Kazyonni forest or field or even dog was passed on, by inheritance, from one district commissioner to the next. Could the same thing hold true for a Kazyonni Rabbi? I was, of course, too young to understand the profound irony which lies in the yoking

> of those two words Kazyonni and Rabbi. But instinct told me that I had touched on some thing base and false, and my uncorrupted child mind protested against it. More than once I had seen Abraham Kazar trembling like a leaf not only in the presence of the district commissioner, but even before the sargeant or the village policeman, the humblest official in Swislowitz. What kind of government or state did he represent? And on the other hand I perceived that he was just an ordinary melamed or teacher of the lower grade, to whom no student of the Talmud would be entrusted for instruction. What kind of Rabbi was he, then?.....[25]
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> "Abraham's place in Shule was among the most distinguished next to that of my father along the eastern wall. This place, I am certain, he must have received by inheritance, for neither his merits nor his social standing entitled him to it. The truth was that beside his official name of Kazar, he was also known as the Kazyonni jackass - a tribute to the man and to his official status."[26] (Levin adds further on that this is all he can remember about this man -- not a thing of what he taught remained in his memory.)

Levin clearly developed a profound hatred for state-appointed rabbis. They were symbolic of the corruption and bigotry of the government. In all matters concerning the Russian state and its relationship to the people over which it stood, the state was only concerned with its own power and dominant position in every phase of human existence. The end result was the suffering of the people and its offspring. Levin's search for a better future beyond the distant horizon for his people drew him to Zionism.

Levin refers quite often to his people, even American Jews, as being homeless. For example, when he discusses some teachers and Rabbis he knew:

> "I recognized in the young lady an American Reform Jewess the reincarnation of the Rabbi of Swislowitz and of my fellow student in Berlin. All three were expressions and symbols of the psychology of exile, the gypsy carelessness and shiftiness of an uprooted and homeless people."[27]

Judah Artzer replaced the melamed he detested and Levin found in this new teacher a powerful personality who changed the course of his life. He became deeply interested in the Bible. Artzer instilled within him a lasting impression and respect for his people's history. More than any other personality, I believe that this teacher was the catalyst which started Levin on the road to Zionism.

> "Until I came to Judah Artzer my imagination worked for itself, in a vacuum, for neither one of my first two Rabbis knew how to feed it, or cared to. They had no living relationship to the stories of the past, and where I had managed to establish a contact, it was by the brute will of the imagination. How different Judah was! He himself was given to seeing all things in a living form. He did not simply translate the stories of the Bible, but added to them a conviction and an intimacy of experience which gave them colour and passion. I heard in the Rabbi's voice a far-off ringing echo of my own being, and new strength drew me to my studies. The opening sentences of the chapters were like gates that gave upon new stretches of life."[28]

The Bible became central in Levin's studies. It inspired him in his solution to the problems of the homelessness of his people. The land of the Near East became more holy and meaningful and acquired the central focus of his attention.

> "With every new chapter of the Bible that I learned, with every new hero I came to know, with every incident that I lived through, I was drawn one step farther from the soil into which I was born, and closer to the sacred soil of ancient heroes and ancient heroisms.

> Fragment by fragment a new life grew up within me, a life which began in Ur of the Chaldees, stretched through Mesopotamia, wound its way across a gigantic desert, held war with the most powerful kings, and at last found a resting-place in Palestine -- the first half of a vast world-drama. I learn steadily, and became a more intimate part of this life. I forget completely that these are the stories and descriptions of a world which has passed away these thousands of years. Strange paradox! The more clearly I understood the meaning of the words "Past, gone," the more potently did I feel the presence of that world. It captured me, I became part of it -- I could not free myself!"[29]

There is another factor which tended to influence Levin towards Palestine and Zionism. This was the Hebrew language. Levin explains his theory regarding Hebrew, its position in the schools of his childhood, and its influence upon the people.

> "The actual time spent in the cheder on Hebrew and Hebrew subjects was between three and four times as long as the time spent on both Latin and Greek in the best high schools of Europe. The cheder boy was simply steeped in Hebrew from morning till night. And in passing, he also learned, as I have already noted, several important Hebrew dialects.
>
> "But the qualitative element was perhaps even more important. In Hebrew, the Jewish child was learning the history of his own race. These were not the stories of an alien world, but events and individuals who had some sort of inner relation to his father and mother. A third factor, of less importance, should be remembered. At the time of which I wrote, the Hebrew language played a much more important role in the daily life of the Jews than it does today. Contemporary Hebrew literature was, it is true, very poor; the language had not yet been adapted to modern life, and the efforts of writers at modern self-expression were clumsy in the extreme. But I allude now solely to the daily life of the Jewish householder. At that time, fifty or sixty years ago, nearly all Jewish shopkeepers kept their accounts in Hebrew, Jewish merchants corresponded in Hebrew, and among the better classes, bride and bridegroom exchanged notes in the same language... And if they could not write Hebrew, they would have their love-letters written for them by their teachers or by special scribes.....

"As far as I am concerned, personally, Hebrew became an absolutely living tongue. The transformation had already begun, I believe, with the second or the third term with Judah Artzer (his teacher). I have an unmistakeable "marker" of the time when Hebrew had become a living tongue for me, or, rather, when I had awakened to it. When a language has become real, it is no longer necessary to translate it, and I remember that in my third or fourth term I was already reading the Bible without translating it - and my Rabbi let it pass.....[30]

"The individual conflicts which arose in me - those that I have already spoken of - did not disturb the general harmony of the Bible (in which I now include the Hagaddah), and I may truly say that the Bible as a whole became the cornerstone of my later life. I devoured, like a famished soul, the individual books: digested carefully the chapters, verses, and individual words: and I did not observe that it was not I who swallowed them, but they that swallowed me up. I did not conquer them, but they me. They determined the path of my life, dictated the currents of my thoughts. I had drawn them into myself, but had drawn me up into them."[31]

Levin thus sums up his feelings.....

"In one word, all my ambitions lay in the Hebrew language, for that along would give me the opportunity to satisfy my pride by giving me the foremost place among my schoolmates. But I doubt whether this was the sole motive which drove me to live myself out in Hebrew. I believe there was a deeper force at work. Although everybody around me spoke Yiddish, it was Hebrew, <u>as a language</u>, that I knew better in my childhood. For a language does not consist merely of words. It is built up by pictures, by ideas which the words awaken in us. A language must possess, besides its ordinary, everyday side, a holiday side, a spiritual aspect. A language is rooted firmly in the mind of a child only by the book; there is no other way of giving a literary force to language, and no other way of making it writable. The language which is not reflected in classic books is doomed to remain a language of the street. It was therefore inevitable that Hebrew should become, for me, the language of the written word. For I learned it from books, from sacred books, the contents of which had become flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone."[32]

The scene has been set. Levin's attitudes, background, education, and spiritual fulfillment could only be gratified and complemented by his entering the Zionist movement. All aspects of his young life pointed in the direction of Zionism. It appears to me that the sum total, the gamut, the composit, of his life experience up until his youth (his later life bares this out) destined him to be active in achieving the dream of a homeland for his beloved people. Every factor is important. The political and economic problems of Russia and her Jews; the social bigotry and official prejudice of her people and her government; the instability of the economy and the poverty of the Jews in the Pale of Settlement; plus the background and personality of Levin -- all these factors joined together to form a dedicated, romantic, sympathetic, and devoted man -- Shmarya Levin, the Zionist.

He explains:

> "In the eighties of the nineteenth century there arose the Chibath Zion (love of Zion) movement, and the ideal, the return of the Jewish people to Palestine, and the abandonment of the exile, sank into the uttermost depth of my soul. The entire course of my studies until that time, everything that I had hard and learned, all my dreams and fantasies, had prepared the ground for this thought. The Messianic dream of long generations found expression in it: I was carried along as by a tremendous whirlwind, and without questions, without reservation, I placed myself at its service. I did not have to look for new sources of inspiration. Did not the old prophets suffice? Was there no balm in Gilead? Are the prophesies of Isaiah not sufficient, and are there not in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and in the minor prophets verses enough that send out streams of fire and light up the souls of men?

> "As a boy, I threw myself into the struggle with all the weapons drawn from my mother's piety and my cheder education. Too young to be a knight of the movement, I was a page who carried the long trailing robes of the queen. But burning with youthful impatience, I waited for the day, when I could play my part in the thick of the fray."[33]

That Levin played his part in later years is ancient history. Our concern is his orientation toward Zionism. In this regard, books also played an important role.

> "My teacher, Judah Artzer, introduced what was then a new course of studies - systematic readings in the new Hebrew literature. Through this we became acquainted with modern prose and poetry, with the works of Naphthali. Herz Weisl, the Luzzatis, Adam Ha-Cohen, Shulman, and the others. On me, as on thousands of others at that time, the deepest impression was made by the Ahavath Zion (Zion's Love) of Abraham Mapu. This was the first novel I ever read. And I chanced to read it just at the time when the youth in me had ripened to the right point for a work in which love was the main theme. I do not remember exactly how old I was at the time, but I still feel the taste of the impatience with which I waited every day for the hour dedicated to this book. True, I was enraptured by the language and the pictures - both of them drawn exclusively from the world which was so peculiarly my own. But more than these, I was taken captive by the heroine of the romance, Tamar. I envied her lover Amnon, for whom God had created such a creature. The realities of love were still a sealed book to me, but I felt their force and attraction obscurely, powerfully. In Ahavath Zion was my morning star, and the Song of Songs was in my heart."[34]

For Levin, this novel symbolized God, Israel, and their rightful place in habitation. Tamar is the land and Amnon is the people "for whom God had created such a creature."[35]

As Levin grew older, his interest in the press increased. He was aware of the pogroms taking place in Russia and thus strived to

consume every word of news published concerning these tragic events. His world soon extended beyond the borders of his country village. He became concerned with matters relating to all of his people - their economic plight, the bigotry of the government, and the concept of Jewish nationalism in such a hostile environment. He claimed that most people have the mistaken viewpoint that the rise of Jewish nationalism was due to a direct cause and effect situation - pogroms - Jewish nationalism. He stated that, in truth, the Chibath Zion movement had its origins - not in Russia, but in Western Europe; not in the pogrom period, but prior to it. He names Germany, the nation of assimilation, as the birth place of the movement. France and England also contributed to its formation. Thus he says:

> "Once again let us note that the idea of a Jewish settlement in Palestine, autonomous and even with sovereign rights, was frequently urged long before the pogroms took place, and more often by non-Jews than by Jews."[36]

Of great importance, we note that Levin quite candidly states:

> "In this matter I bring the testimony of an individual: I can state without hesitation that, as one brought up in an entirely Jewish atmosphere, remote from the currents of Russian life, I found nothing new or revolutionary in the Chibath Zion movement, which began to take concrete form immediately after the first pogroms. It was neither a revelation nor a surprise. On the contrary, I found the movement so natural, so logical, in such complete harmony with everything that I had learned and drawn into myself since my earliest childhood, that I believed myself to have been born - like every other Jew -- a Chovev Zion. I therefore looked upon this movement as our historic heritage, carried down from generation to generation,

> from age to age, the cure provided by God, as the proverb says, before he sent the disease. And this belief was my solace in the darkest hours of my life. My soul was shaken by the first news of the pogroms; the reports that men and women had actually been killed came somewhat later, for the censorship did not permit the whole truth to be printed. And the victims stood forever before me and gave me no peace. In these moments of terror and despair I fled to that ancient world which I carried with me - and it was clear to me that this was the model according to which we were to build our new world, where we might live in independence and freedom. And it was equally clear to me that the new world which we were setting out to create could be in no other earthly place than the old one (Palestine)."[37]

Levin's future was established. He became an active Zionist. His most energetic and productive work was carried on outside Russia. He studied and promoted his cause in Berlin. He then returned to Russia and became involved in politics in order to better the lot of his people. He soon found himself in danger after the Duma was dissolved, he being an outspoken member of it. In order for Levin to carry on his Zionist work, he was forced to leave his native land. He came to the United States and then finally to Palestine where he settled.

It is not my objective to portray Levin's Zionist career or to capsule his biography. My main purpose at this time is to show the reader how he, Levin, became a Zionist - a particular kind of Zionist. Using Levin's own words and knitting them together, thus synthesizing his ideological development, it is obvious that Levin's rich Jewish environment and education, when applied to existential realities of Jewish life in a chaotic society, swayed and promoted him towards the Zionist cause.

What had been for him a Messianic dream came to be an inevitable economic and social necessity to ensure survival of his people. Zionism was his answer to the Jewish problem, and he worked with that solution in mind throughout his entire lifetime.

## CHAPTER III - CHAIM WEIZMANN (1874-1952)

One of the most honored men of all time in Zionist annals was Chaim Weizmann. Not only was he an important link in the development of the movement, but he was, as well, a great scientist. As such, he wielded strong influence within the top echelons of world governments. In this capacity, he was able to help move the minds and hearts of the colonial powers and thus bring about the Balfour Declaration. As was the case with Shmarya Levin, my purpose here is to reveal, with the help of Weizmann's own words, the environment in which he grew up and the motivating forces and influences which destined him to become one of the world's foremost Zionists.

Weizmann was born in Motol, a small town of approximately five hundred families, half of which were Jewish. As was the situation for most of Russia's Jews at that time, Motol was in the Pale of Settlement, the area designated by the Tsar for the majority of the Jewish population. Weizmann thus describes it:

> "I have said that Motol lay in one of the darkest and most forlorn corners of the Pale of Settlement. This was true in the economic as well as in the spiritual sense. It is difficult to convey to the modern Westerner any idea of the sort of life which most of the Jewish families of Motol led, of their peculiar occupations, their fantastic poverty, their shifts and privations. On the spiritual side, they were almost as isolated as on the physical. Newspapers were almost unknown in Motol. Very occasionally we secured a Hebrew paper from Warsaw, and then it would be a month or five weeks old. To us, of course, the news would be fresh. To tell

> the truth, we were not much interested in what was taking place in the world outside. It did not concern us particularly. If we were interested at all it was in the Hebrew presentation of the news.....
>
> "And yet Motol had two peculiar advantages, both deriving from its natural situation and its chief occupation, the lumber trade. There was, in the Jewish population, a small layer which was more traveled than you would expect; and to some extent the effects of the general poverty were mitigated by the contact with nature." [38]

Weizmann's family was quite well off compared to most of the other inhabitants of the village. His father was a wood transporter who had to cut and haul the timber to Danzig using the river for transportation. Weizmann was very close to his grandfather who died at the age of one hundred and one when Chaim was eight years old. They used to spend a great deal of time with each other. The two lived together during the old man's few remaining years. They would get up before dawn and recite Shacharit prayers; then his grandfather would recite to him stories of the deeds of great rabbis and of other heroes of Israel. Weizmann was particularly impressed by accounts of Sir Moses Montefiore. The grandfather left a lasting impact on Weizmann's development.

As far as Weizmann's parents are concerned, he dwells on their great significance in his life but does not spend too much time describing them. He does tell us, however, that his mother was a warm and fine person and that she was forever busy bearing and rearing a dozen children. To feed and clothe so many took most of her time so there were only a very

few moments left for housekeeping. His father spent most of his time away from home trying to earn a livelihood for his family. Weizmann tells us about his father.

> "When I recall how seldom father was with us, and how preoccupied he was with the problem of a livelihood and yet how large an influence he was in our lives, I am filled with genuine wonder. He was a silent man, a scholarly spirit lost in the world of business, and fired with deep ambitions for his children. He did not believe in words of admonishment, and even less in punishment. When he did say something, it carried great weight with us. He was an aristocrat, an intellectual and something of a leader, too - the only Jew ever chosen to be a starosta, or head man, of the townlet of Motol. We loved him, and tried to emulate his example. When he was home, and had a few minutes free from the cares and worries of his daily life - and how few those minutes were! - he usually read. His favorite books were the works of Maimonides, and especially the Guide for the Perplexed. The Shulchan Aruch, he knew by heart. On Sabbaths he would sometimes call over the older children, and speak to them a little on the subject matter of his reading. He did it in the most casual way, so as not to give the impression that there was any obligation on our part to listen to him; this is probably why we all enjoyed these rare conversations, and regarded it as a privilege to take part in them.
>
> "Not particularly robust, he followed as long as he could a hard and dangerous occupation. He worried over much for the future of his children. A Jew of the lower middle class, he aspired to give them the best education. There were twelve of us ultimately, and with his and each other's help nine of us went through universities - an unheard of achievement in those days (and today as well - author!) He belonged to the type familiar to old Russian Jewry as the Maskil, the enlightened and modernized Hebraist; and he took his part, as we'll see, in the Zionist movement.
>
> "Father's standing in the village of Motol, and, later, in the town of Pinsk, was very high; never by virtue of his economic position, which even by the standards of Motol was only fair, but because of his character and his scholarship. Father refused to take sides in public or private quarrels.... Perhaps it was the undignified scenes he had witnessed in the synagogue which imbued my father with his lifelong

hatred of clericalism, and of the exploitation of religion for a livelihood.

"But he was, I need hardly say, a deeply religious man, respectful of the tradition and of scholarship." [39]

We can see from our study ot Weizmann's family background that he was no doubt nurtured on Jewish values and culture. His environment helped instill him with a concern for his people and their destiny. He realized at an early age the burdens and hardships of the Jews in their Russian exile so that when he moved to Pinsk, it did not take him long before he was attracted to Jewish nationalism. He describes his new home in Pinsk, having migrated there at age eleven to attend a Russian school.

"The first fundamental change in my life took place when, at the age of eleven, I left the townlet of my birth and went out into the world - that is, to Pinsk - to enter a Russian school: which was something not done until that time by any Motolite. From Motol to Pinsk was a matter of six Russian miles, or twenty-five English miles; but in terms of intellectual displacement the distance was astronomical. For Pinsk was a real provincial metropolis, with thirty thousand inhabitants, of whom the great majority were Jews. Pinsk has a name and a tradition as "a city and mother in Israel." It could not pretend to the cultural standing of great centers like Warsaw, Vilna, Odessa and Moscow; but neither was it a nameless village. The new Chibath Zion (Love of Zion) Movement, the forerunner of modern Zionism, had taken deep root in Pinsk. There were Jewish scholars and Jewish public leaders in Pinsk. There was a high school - the one I was going to attend - there were libraries, hospitals, factories, and paved streets." [40]

From this point Weizmann goes on to portray for the reader the terrible conditions in Russia which encouraged the Jews to turn their attention to Zionism.

"The years of my childhood in Motol and of my schooling in Pinsk coincided with the onset of the "dark years" for Russian Jewry; or perhaps I should say with their return. The reign of Alexander II had been a false dawn. For a generation the ancient Russian policy of repression of the Jews had been mitigated by the liberalism of the monarch who had set the serfs free; and therefore many Jews believed that the walls of the ghetto were about to fall. Jews were beginning to attend Russian schools and universities, and to enter into the life of the country. Then, in 1881, came the assassination of Alexander, and on its heels the tide of reaction, which was not to ebb again until the overthrow of the Romanovs thirty-six years later. The new repression began with the famous Temporary Legislation Affecting the Jews enacted in 1882, and known as the May Laws [see Section I]. Nothing in czarist Russia was as enduring as Temporary Legislation. This particular set of enactments, at any rate, was prolonged and broadened and extended until it came to cover every aspect of Jewish life; and as one read, year after year, the complicated ukases which poured from St. Petersburg, one obtained the impression that the whole cumbersome machinery of the vast Russian Empire was created for the sole purpose of inventing and amplifying rules and regulations for the hedging in of the existence of its Jewish subjects until it became something that was neither life nor death.

"Parallel with these repressions, and with the general setback to Russian liberalism, there was a deep stirring of the masses, Russian and Jewish. Among the Jews this first folk awakening had two facets, the revolutionary, mingling with the general Russian revolt, and the Zionist nationalist. The latter, however, was also revolutionary and democratic. The Jewish masses were rising against the paternalism of their "nobles," their shtadlonim, the men of wealth and influence who had always taken it on themselves to represent the needs of the Jews vis-a-vis governmental authority. Theirs was, even in the best cases, a class view, characterized by a natural fear of disturbing the status quo or imperiling such privileges as they enjoyed by virtue of their economic standing. In the depths of the masses an impulse awoke, vague, groping, unformulated, for Jewish self-liberation. It was genuinely of the folk; it was saturated with Jewish tradition; and it was connected with the most ancient memories of the land where Jewish life had first expressed itself in freedom. It was, in short, the birth of modern Zionism."[41]

For Weizmann, the scene is set for the beginnings of his Zionist activities. During his course of studies in Pinsk, he says that "I also did some general reading and took a certain part in the Zionist youth activities, such as they were then." As his studies progressed, he became more deeply involved in the movement.

> "School and homework absorbed the minor part of my energies; and even when my Hebrew studies and my tutorial duties were thrown in, there was enough left for general activities, and from my fifteenth year on I was drawn more and more into the life of the city, and into the nascent Zionist movement." [42]

Weizmann tells us how difficult it was for the young movement to obtain financial support from the wealthier Jews.

> "The Jewish magnates were, with very few exceptions, bitterly anti-Zionist. Our supporters were the middle class and the poor. An opposition - in the shape of a labor movement - did not exist yet, for the Bund, the Jewish revolutionary labor organization, was not founded until 1897 - the year of the first Zionist Congress." [43]

Weizmann's relationship to the social milieu around him was of concern to him. He discusses this problem and his feelings about his native land and its relationship to Zionism.

> "The obstinacy and persistence of the movement cannot be understood except in terms of faith. This faith was part of our make-up; our Jewishness and our Zionism were interchangeable; you could not destroy the second without destroying the first. We did not need propagandizing. When Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, the famous folk orator, came to preach Zionism to us, he addressed the convinced. Of course we loved listening to him, for he spoke beautifully, and he invariably drew on texts from the book of Isaiah, which all of us knew by heart. But we heard in his moving orations only the echo of our innermost feelings.

> "This is not to deny that there was a wide assimilatory fringe in Jewish life. For that matter we, the Zionists, did not remain indifferent to Russian civilization and culture. I think I may say that we spoke and wrote the language better, were more intimately acquainted with its literature, than most Russians. But we were rooted heart and soul in our own culture, and it did not occur to us to give it up in deference to another. For the first time we fought the assimilationist tendency on its own ground, that is to say, in terms of a modern outlook. We had our periodicals, we had our contemporaneous writers, as well as our ancient traditions. We read Ha-Zephirah and Ha-Melitz and Ha-Schachar, the Hebrew weeklies and dailies; we read Smolenskin and Pinsker and Mohilever and Achad Ha-am; the protagonists of the Chibath Zion. There was a genuine renaissance in Hebrew, coinciding with the birth of the modern Yiddish classics, the works of Mendele Mocher S'forim, J. L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, which we also read eagerly. Hebrew was the pride and special symbol of Zionism, however. I, for instance, never corresponded with my father in any other language, though to mother I wrote in Yiddish. I sent my father only one Yiddish letter; he returned it without an answer."[44]

It is obvious that Weizmann's intellectually orientated father encouraged his Zionist activities and stimulated him to further his activities within Zionist ranks. Hebrew was the major force which generated the cultural foundation of the cause. Persecution and a concern for Jewish survival was the fundamental driving force upon which the movement based its rationale for existence. Both were needed and were indivisible in their motivating influence. However, there were particular individuals who also exerted strong impressions upon the movement in general and Weizmann in particular. One of these men was Achad Ha-am.

> "It is not easy to convey to this generation of Jewry in the West the effect which Achad Ha-am produced on us. One might have thought that such an attitude of caution, of restraint, of seeming pessimism,

> would all but destroy a movement which had only just begun to take shape. It was not the case, simply because Achad Ha-am was far from being a negative spirit. Though essentially a philosopher and not a man of action, he joined the executive of the Choveve Zion Federation, the Odessa Committee as it was called, which supervised such practical work as was being done in Palestine. His criticisms were likewise exhortations. In his analysis of the spiritual slavery of "emancipated" Western Jews he was forthright to the point of cruelty, and his arguments hurt all the more because they were unanswerable. The appearance of one of Achad Ha-am's articles, was always an event of prime importance We read him, and read him again, and discussed him endlessly. He was, I might say, what Gandhi has been to many Indians, what Mazzini was to Young Italy a century ago. We youngsters in Berlin did not see much of him. At rare intervals we would drop in on him at his modest little home. But his presence in our midst was a constant inspiration and influence."[45]

On the non-literary or practical side of the movement, Weizmann was greatly affected by the work of Menachem Mendel Ussishkin. He describes him.

> "He was a powerful personality, eloquent, clear, logical and businesslike. He has exceptional executive ability, and carried on persistently and ably under difficult circumstances - among which was the illegality of the movement in Russia..... Ussishkin was a man of great energy, vast obstinacy and solid common sense."[46]

Weizmann says that he was attracted to Zionism "by the presence of the many strong personalities in the Zionist movement.....interesting men and women who, giving themselves up as they did to political issues, would have made my abstention all the more difficult. Not all of them have left their impress in the history of Zionism, but I remember them for their intrinsic individuality and attractiveness."[47]

We can see a clear distinction between the Zionism of Shmarya Levin and Chaim Weizmann. Both were interested in helping their people by finding a Jewish territorial state. Both sought such deliverance via the Zionist movement. Yet, their attitudes and approaches to Zionism were different. Levin was the romantic literary messianic orientated personality. Weizmann was more practical, universal and pragmatic of the two. We shall develop this contrast in our final section of this thesis dealing with the "Individual and Society in Ferment."

The influences in Weizmann's life which led to his deep involvement in the Zionist movement are, as we have observed, many and varied. It seems to me, however, that there are only a few basic and overpowering ones. Weizmann's father was a scholar of Jewish philosophy and culture. He instilled in his son a great love of and respect for the Jewish continuum as well as the destiny of his people. His mother had also been active in the community, helping her neighbors and whosoever came to her. Thus, Weizmann's parental activities, which manifested themselves in positive actions, served as symbols of concern for him toward the people of Israel and enabled Weizmann to emulate such exemplary examples of dedication. Undoubtedly, he was impressed by the deeds of his parents. His studies of Jewish history and the eternal turmoil-filled exile of his people strengthened his Zionist tendencies. Conditions in Russia, most of all, contributed, I believe, to Weizmann's entrance into the movement. He

was no romantic idealist. He knew what problems faced the Jews. He knew that they could never achieve any degree of autonomy or fair play in the Russian Empire. He undoubtedly believed the only solution to the Jewish question of survival lay in the creation of an independent and self-governing Jewish state. He did not see the messianic vision in the role of the Zionist movement like, I believe, Levin did. His view was more realistic and divorced from the ever-present shadow of the Shechinah. God was not part of the nationalist cause. Men and only men with the help of the great earthly political powers could carry out such an achievement.

## CHAPTER IV - LEON TROTSKY (Bronstein)(1879-1940)

Trotsky was born two years prior to the assassination of Alexander II. Thus, he, like Levin and Weizmann, grew up in a Russia suffering from turmoil and deprivation. However, Trotsky did not experience the childhood anxieties of most young Jews. He was somewhat isolated from his people because he was raised in an agrarian setting, far from the ugliness of the urban ghetto and somewhat distant from the poverty-stricken towns of the Pale of Settlement. His father had settled on the free stepps of the South where there existed about forty Jewish agricultural colonies. He states that "the Jewish farmers were on an equal footing with the other peasants not only as regards their legal rights (until 1881), but also as regards their property. By indefatigable, cruel toil that spared neither himself nor others, and by hoarding every penny, my father rose in the world."[48]

Trotsky, therefore, spent his first nine years in Yanovka, his native village. The Bronstein (his name before it was changed to Trotsky) family's farm is referred to by Trotsky as the "village" and was quite an adequate estate for a small Russian Jewish entrepreneur. The house they inhabited was a simple mud structure with a straw roof. They had a courtyard, a large kitchen in a separate house, servant's quarters, and a machine-shop. They also had barns, stables, cowsheds, pigsties, a

chicken-house, and a mill. It is certain that the Bronsteins were much better off than their merchant brothers in the towns of the Pale. Trotsky was so isolated from civilization that, he says, "it was twenty-three kilometers from Yanovka to the closest post-office and more than thirty-five to the railroad." From there it was a long way again to Government offices, to the stores, and to a civic center, and still farther to the world with its great events. Life at Yanovka was regulated entirely by the rhythm of the toil on the farm.[49]

At this point, it is important to have a clear picture of a child growing up in a rural setting, far from the corruption and bureaucracy of the Government, and the persecuted Jewish minority, whose life is sheltered and wholesome, and is as secure and as happy as any child could be. Yet, Trotsky's early life lacked one major component - the love and tenderness of parents. He describes his parents for us:

> "My father and mother lived out their hard working lives with some friction, but very happily on the whole. My mother came from a family of townspeople who looked down upon farmers, with their rough hands. But my father had been handsome and graceful in his youth, with a manly, energetic face. He succeeded in getting together the means that later enabled him to buy Yanovka. The young woman who had been taken from the city and flung out onto the lonely steppes found it difficult at first to adjust herself to the stern conditions of life on a farm. But she succeeded at last in adapting herself perfectly, and once in the traces, she did not relinquish her toil for forty-five years. Of the eight children born of this marriage, four survived. I was the fifth in order of birth. Four died in infancy, of diphtheria and of scarlet fever, deaths almost as unnoticed as was the life of those who survived. The land, the cattle, the poultry, the mill, took all my parents' time; there was none left for us. The seasons succeeded one another, and waves of farm work

> swept over domestic affection. There was no display of tenderness in our family, especially during my early years, but there was a strong comradship of labor between my father and mother..... My father was undoubtedly superior to my mother, both in intellect and character. He was deeper, more reserved, and more tactful. He had an unusually good eye both for things and people. My father and mother bought very little, especially during our early years; they both knew how to save every penny. My father never made a mistake in what he bought: cloth, hats, shoes, horses or machinery, he always got his money's worth. "I don't like money," he once said to me later, as if apologizing for being so mean, "but I like it less when there is none of it. It is bad to need money and not have any." He spoke a broken mixture of the Russian and Ukrainian tongues, with a preponderance of the Ukrainian. (author's note: It is of interest that unlike the majority of Russian Jews, Bronstein did not use Yiddish as his daily language amongst his family.) He judged people by their manners, their faces and their habits, and he always judged them correctly.....
>
> "When we children were young, my father was quieter and gentler with us than my mother. My mother would often lose her temper with us, sometimes without reason, and would vent on us her fatigue or her chagrin over some domestic failure. We always found it more remunerative to ask our father for favors than our mother. But as time went on, my father grew sterner. The cause of this lay in the hardships of his life, in the cares which grew as his business increased, and more especially in the conditions growing out of the agrarian crisis of the '80s as well as in the disappointment which his children gave him."[50]

Trotsky's mother used to read a great deal in her spare time. However, his father was very poorly educated and could hardly spell out a few words. It is a strange phenomenon that we find a comparatively wealthy Jew with little or no fluency in simple reading.[51]

Trotsky was close to the multitude of servants of peasant stock who worked for his father. He came to love them dearly and spent more time, I venture to say, with them than with his own family. He was

especially fond of Ivan Vasilyevich Cryeben, the machine-shop operator and jack-of-all-trades, or handyman, on the farm. Yashka, the fireman, Philip, the miller, and many others who were "grass roots" proletariats, gave Trotsky close and perceptive insights into the lives, hopes, dreams, and needs of the Russian peasant. He himself was the son of a peasant - more Russian than Jewish.

Trotsky, throughout his autobiography, speaks very negatively about the Jews. He always seems to refer to the Jews as "they" and never includes himself as part of his people. He describes his relationship to the Jewish people and its religion in the following manner:

> "In the spheres of religion and nationality, there was no opposition between the country and the town; on the contrary, they complemented one another in various respects. In my father's family there was no strict observance of religion. At first, appearances were kept up through sheer inertia; on holy days my parents journeyed to the synagogue in the colony; mother abstained from sewing on Saturdays, at least within the sight of others. But all this ceremonial observance of religion lessened as years went on - as the children grew up and the prosperity of the family increased. Father did not believe in God from his youth, and in later years spoke openly about it in front of Mother and the children. Mother preferred to avoid the subject, but when occasion required would raise her eyes in prayer.
>
> "When I was about seven or eight years old, belief in God was still regarded in the family as something officially recognized."[52]

Trotsky went to school in Odessa. There he lived with the Schpentzer family.

> "In the Schpentzer family, religion was not observed at all, not counting the old aunt, who did not matter. My father, however, wanted me to know the Bible in the original, this being one of the marks of his parental vanity, and therefore I took private lessons

in the Bible from a very learned old man in Odessa. My studies lasted only a few months and did little to confirm me in the ancestral faith."[53]

In the realschule, religious instruction was mandatory. The Jewish students were given a teacher as well.

"A good-natured man by the name of Ziegelman instructed the Jewish boys in the Bible and the history of the Jewish people. These lessons, conducted in Russian, were never taken seriously by the boys."[54]

Thus, we see how limited Trotsky's exposure to Jewish culture and tradition was and of his indifference to the acquisition of a Jewish education. There was one way in which he was affected, however. He came to experience some anti-Semitism.

"In my mental equipment, nationality never occupied an independent place, as it was felt but little in everyday life. It is true that after the laws of 1881, which restricted the rights of Jews in Russia, my father was unable to buy more land, as he was so anxious to do, but could only lease it under cover.[55] This, however, scarcely affected my own position. As son of a prosperous landowner, I belonged to the privileged class rather than to the oppressed. The language in my family and household was Russian-Ukrainian. True enough, the number of Jewish boys allowed to join the schools was limited to a fixed percentage, on account of which I lost one year. But in the school I was always at the top of the grade and was not personally affected by the restrictions.

"In my school, there was no open baiting of nationalities. To some extent the variety of national elements, not only among the boys but among the masters as well, acted as an important check on such policies. One could sense, however, the existence of a suppressed chauvinism which now and again broke through to the surface.....

"It hurt me quite as much to see the concealed cad in Lyubimov's (a teacher of history) attitude toward Poles, as to see the spiteful captiousness of Burnande with Germans, or the Russian priest's nodding of his head at the sight of Jews. This national inequality

probably was one of the underlying causes of my dissatisfaction with the existing order, but it was lost among all the other phases of social injustice. It never played a leading part - not even a recognized one - in the lists of my grievances.

"The feeling of the supremacy of general over particular, of law over fact, of theory over personal experience, took root in my mind at an early age and gained increasing strength as the years advanced. It was the town that played the major role in shaping this feeling, a feeling which later became the basis for a philosophic outlook on life...[56]

"...The social-revolutionary radicalism which has become the permanent pivot for my whole inner life grew out of this intellectual emnity toward the striving for petty ends, toward out-and-out pragmatism, and toward all that is ideologically without form and theoretically ungeneralized."[57]

Trotsky was an aware person throughout his life. He read constantly and tried to acquire every possible type of reading matter available.

"The forbidden world of human relations burst into my consciousness fitfully from books, and much that I had heard spoken of in a casual, and usually coarse and gross manner, now through literature became generalized and ennobled, rising to some higher plane.....[58]

"I was not supposed to read newspapers. But the rule was not very strictly observed (at school in Odessa), and gradually, with a few setbacks, I won the right to read papers.....[59]

"From early years my love for words had now been losing now gaining in force, but generally putting down ever firmer roots. In my eyes, authors, journalists, and artists always stood for a world which was more attractive than any other, one open only to the elect."[60]

The written word, the subjection of the minorities, the bureaucracy of the Government, the contrast of the rich and the poor, and

the conditions and environment of Trotsky's family seemed to direct the young boy towards his ultimate political and economic choice. Most bitter of all he found to be the treatment of the peasant laborers. He describes a typical summer harvest.

> "There were very few permanent laborers who worked all the year round on the estate. Most of them - and there were hundreds of these on the estate in years of large crops - were temporary only, and comprised men from Kiev, Chernigov, and Poltava, who were hired until the first of October.[61] In the years when the harvest was good, the Province of Kherson alone would require two or three hundred thousand of these laborers. The reapers received forty to fifty roubles for the four summer months, and their board. The women received from twenty to thirty roubles. The open field was their home in fine weather, in bad weather they took shelter under the haystacks. For dinner they had vegetable soup and porridge, for supper millet soup. They never had any meat. Vegetable fat was all they ever got, and that in small quantities. This diet was sometimes a ground for complaint. The laborers would leave the fields and collect in the courtyard. They would lie face downward in the shade of the barns, brandishing their bare, cracked, straw-pricked feet in the air, and wait to see what would happen. Then my father would give them some clabber, or watermelons, or half a sack of dried fish, and they would go back to work again, often singing. These were the conditions on all the farms. We had wiry old reapers who had been coming to work for us ten years on end, knowing that work was always assured them. These received a few roubles more than the others and a glass of vodka from time to time, as they set the standard of efficiency for the others. Some of them appeared at the head of a long family procession. They walked from their own provinces on foot, taking a whole month to make the journey, living on crusts of bread, and spending the nights in the market-places. One summer all the laborers fell ill in an epidemic of night-blindness. They moved about in the twilight with their hands stretched out before them. My mother's nephew, who was visiting us, wrote an article to the newspapers about it. It was spoken of in the Zemstvo (an elective rural organization in charge of the administration of country districts), and an inspector was sent to Yanovka. My father and mother were vexed with the newspaper correspondent who was much liked, and he himself was sorry that he had begun it. Nothing unpleasant came of it all, however.

> The inspector decided that the sickness was due to a lack of fat in the diet, and that it was common all over the province, as the laborers were fed in the same manner everywhere, and sometimes even worse.
>
> "In the machine-shop, the kitchen, and the backyard, a life stretched before me which was different from and more spacious than the one I led in my own family.[62] The film of life has no end, and I was only at the beginning. No one took any notice of my presence when I was little. Tongues wagged freely, especially when Ivan Vasilyevich and the steward were absent, for they half belonged to the ruling class. By the light of the blacksmith's forge or the kitchen fire, I often saw my parents, my relatives and our neighbors in quite a new light. Many of the conversations I overheard when I was young will remain in my memory as long as I live. Many of them, perhaps, laid the foundation of my attitude toward society today."[63]

Trotsky was increasingly exposed to the plight of the poor worker. His father's own farm gave evidence to their misery and afforded him all the opportunity to witness the downtrodden peasants. The local constabulary and petty officialdom also had dealings with the estate, and they more than anything or anyone else struck him to the quick. Often when he would return home on vacation from school he would see the peasant's condition manifested in incidents on the farm. It bothered him decisively.

> "As I returned home from the field I saw a barefooted woman at our door-step. She was sitting on the ground, leaning against the wall, having apparently not courage enough to sit on the stone step. She was the mother of a half-witted shepherd boy, Ignatka, and she had walked seven versts to our house to get one rouble that was owed her. But there was no one in the house, and she could not get her rouble; so she had to wait until evening. It made my heart tighten to look at that figure - the embodiment of poverty and submission."[64]

Trotsky recounts many unpleasant incidents which took place on the farm. He makes mention of how he would become very upset (at a very tender age) at his father's harsh treatment of the workers.[65] He was honest but interpreted the terms of the contract or terms of employment in a very harsh manner. The young boy became a mature man in his concern for social justice and equality for the downtrodden peasant. The background for his future political activities became synthesized. He states that in school he held no political views.[66] Yet,

> "I had an intense hatred of the existing order, of injustice, of tyranny. Whence did it come? It came from the conditions existing during the reign of Alexander III; the high-handedness of the police; the exploitation practiced by landlords; the grafting by officials, the nationalistic restrictions; the cases of injustice at school and in the street; the close contact with children, servants and laborers in the country; the conversations in the workshop...."[67]

Another hatred of Trotsky's was the power and influence of the church. He came to see that the church dominated the very fibre of the individual's way of life - his very act of thinking was almost controlled by the religious hierarchy. He witnessed these truths in school and in the homes he visited and the friends he made. He considered the church an extension of feudalism and he could not bear the consequences which manifested themselves in the daily lives of the people.[68]

> "Along with the suppressed hostility to the political order in Russia, I began to create, in my imagination, an idealized picture of the foreign world - of Western Europe and America. From scattered

> remarks and descriptions, I began to visualize a culture which was high in itself and included everybody without exception. Later this became part and parcel of my conception of ideal democracy. Rationalism implied that if anything was accepted as theory, it was of course carried out in practice. For this reason it seemed incredible that people in Europe could have superstitions, that the church could exercise a great influence there, that in America the whites could persecute the negroes.[69] This idealized picture of the Western world, imperceptibly absorbed from my environment of liberal smug citizenship, persisted later on when I was already formulating revolutionary views. I should probably have been greatly surprised in those years if I had heard - if it had been possible to hear it - that the German Republic which is crowned with a Social-Democratic government admits monarchists within its boarders but refuses the right of asylum to revolutionaries. Fortunately, since that time many things have ceased to surprise me. Life has beaten rationalism out of me and has taught me the workings of dialectics."[70]

Trotsky began to travel more frequently, and in the metropolitan and cosmopolitan centers of Russia he met up with the Marxist revolutionaries. He also came to know many in the populist movement. He read intensely in a great variety of areas.

> "Without having finished Lippert (Primitive Culture), I threw myself upon the history of the French Revolution by Mignet. Each book lived separately for me, with no place in a unified system. My striving for a system became tense, sometimes savage. At the same time, I would be repelled by Marxism partly because it seemed a completed system.
>
> "I began to read newspapers, not as I had read them in Odessa, but with a political mind. The most authoritative daily at that time was the liberal Russkiya Vedomosti of Moscow. We studied rather than read it, beginning with the impotent, professorial editorials and ending with the scientific articles. The foreign correspondence, especially from Berlin, was the pride of the newspaper."[71]

Trotsky thought very deeply about the issues of his day and as young as he was, his interest in politics broadened. He was seventeen when he found he faced a fundamental dilemma.

> "Populism or Marxism? The conflict of these trends engrossed me, but several years later than the general break in the intellectual concepts of the country. By the time I was approaching the alphabet of economic sciences, and was raising the question in my mind as to whether Russia must go through the stage of capitalism, the Marxists of the older generation had already succeeded in finding a path to the working man and in becoming Social Democrats..... Too many questions confronted me all at once, without the necessary sequence and order. Restlessly I cast about me. One thing is certain: even then life had stored within my consciousness a considerable load of social protest. What did it consist of? Sympathy for the down-trodden and indignation over injustice - the latter was perhaps the stronger feeling. Beginning with my earliest childhood, in all the impressions of my daily life, human inequality stood out in exceptionally coarse and stark forms. Injustice often assumed the character of impudent license; human dignity was under heel at every step. It is enough for me to recall the flogging of peasants. Even before I had any theories, all these things imprinted themselves deeply on me and piled up a store of impressions of great explosive force."[72]

The year 1896 is called by Trotsky, the turning point of his youth, for it raised within him the question of his place in human society. He began to attend the seventh grade in Nikolayev. In this town he encountered those individuals and political movements which launched his future career.[73]

> "My conduct underwent a radical change after several months in Nikolayev. I repudiated my assumption of conservatism and swung leftward with such speed that it even frightened away some of my new friends."[74]

He was drawn to Marxism and socialism, and began to write, along with some of his colleagues, revolutionary propaganda. He still had difficulty, however, with the complete acceptance of Marxism.[75]

> "I started my revolutionary work to the accompaniment of the Vetrova demonstrations (1887)." This followed the upheavals resulting from the "Weavers' Strike."[76]

Eventually, Trotsky was arrested in 1898, and consequently exiled. It was during this period of exile that Marxism and the ideas of Lenin made their deepest impression upon him. He became a staunch and loyal Marxist. He explains.

> "Since 1896, when I had tried to ward off revolutionary ideas, and the following year, when I had done the same to Marxist doctrines even though I was already carrying on revolutionary work, I had travelled far. At the time of my exile, Marxism had definitely become the basis of my philosophy. During the exile, I had tried to consider, from the new point of view I had acquired, the so-called "eternal" problems of life; love, death, friendship, optimism, pessimism, and so forth. In different epochs, and in varying social surroundings, man loves and hates and hopes differently. Just as the tree feeds its leaves, flowers, and fruits with the extracts absorbed from the soil by its roots, so does the individual find food for his sentiment and ideas, even the most "sublime" ones, in the economic roots of society. In my literary articles written in this period, I developed virtually one theme only: the relations between the individual and society.....
>
> "At that time, official or so-called "legal" Russian Marxism was in the throes of a crisis. I could see then from actual experience how brazenly new social requirements create for themselves intellectual garments from the cloth of a theory that was intended for something quite different. Until the nineties, the greater part of the Russian intelligensia was stagnating in Populist theories with their rejection of capitalist development and idealization of peasant communal ownership of the land. And Capitalism in the meantime was holding out

> to the intelligensia the promise of all sorts of material blessings and political influence. The sharp knife of Marxism was the instrument by which the bourgeois intelligensia cut the Populist umbilical cord, and severed itself from a hated past. It was this that accounted for the swift and victorious spread of Marxism during the latter years of the last century."[77]

Trotsky's work in the movement, his rise to power, his conflicts with Lenin and his break with Stalin, are generally well-known. His three periods of exile are symbols of his struggle against forces and systems with which he could not cope nor overcome. Many of his most fruitful years working for the overthrow of the Tsar and the Kerensky regime were spent abroad. His writings and his efforts to raise the banner of revolution in his homeland were carried on outside the Empire. It is not my purpose to elaborate on Trotsky's life after he had chosen his philosophy of Marxism. My sole intention is to determine how he came to make such an ideological decision. This I have done by using the man's own words to tell their own story.

Like Levin, and Weizmann, Trotsky witnessed the persecution of the weak. Unlike the two Zionists, he was more concerned with the people of Russia rather than the Jews of Russia. Trotsky could not have cared less about the survival of the Jewish people as a distinct nationality or as a cultural entity. He did not identify with the Jewish community. He was part and parcel of the peasant stock, He empathized with them and he intimately knew their sufferings and misery. Circumstances, I believe, thrust him into their midst so that he had ample opportunity to study them.

His parents had no time for him as a child. Their family structure was void of religious warmth and harmony. They did not, in other words, cultivate a Jewish home environment conducive for creating a cultural and historic tie to a viable people. Thus, Trotsky was rejected and void of spiritual and religious concerns. This enabled him to seek comfort and acceptance elsewhere - with the peasant workers employed on the farm. Feeling very much at east in their midst since he had no reason to feel otherwise, he became a part of them but did not suffer their bitterness, hunger, persecution, and poverty. It is quite possible that he might have psychologically chosen an ideology which forced the confiscation of his father's property. Perhaps, he subconsciously hated his father for rejecting him. Perhaps he hated the class of agrarian entrepreneurs who had much but gave little away, his father being a primary symbol of such a landowning elite. There is no doubt that he stood with the peasants, as far as his sympathies were concerned.

> "During my vacation I attended to the bookeeping, that is, I took turn-about with my elder brother and sister, entering in the books the names of laborers employed, the terms of employment, and payments made, whether in kind or in cash. I often assisted my father when wages were paid out, and on those occasions there were sudden, brief flashes of temper between us, which remained suppressed only because of the presence of the laborers. There was never any cheating in the making up of the accounts, but the terms of employment were always interpreted harshly. The laborers, particularly the older ones, sensed that the boy was on their side, and this annoyed Father."[78]

The "boy" proved that he was on their side in the years to come.

It is interesting to note that where there were strong religious and family ties, there were few cases of revolutionary activity. The escape from the torment of the Russian Tsar was made by the dedicated Jews in terms of Jewish nationalism - a founding of a Jewish autonomous state. Where there was a lack of Jewish identity, the escape was in radical change of the old system. Emma Goldman, like Trotsky, bears this out in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V -- EMMA GOLDMAN (1869-1940)

One of the most fascinating and complex individuals involved in this in-depth study is Emma Goldman. The first sixteen years of her life were spent in Russia until she was able to convince her father to allow her to emigrate to America along with her sister Helena. The two girls left St. Petersburg by steamer in December 1885.

> "Another sister had preceded us by a few years, had married, and was living in Rochester. Repeatedly she had written Helena to come to her, that she was lonely. At last Helena had decided to go. But I could not support the thought of separation from the one who meant more to me than even my mother. Helena also hated to leave me behind. She knew of the bitter friction that existed between Father and me. She offered to pay my fare, but father would not consent to my going. I pleaded, begged, wept. Finally I threatened to jump into the Neva, whereupon he yielded. Equipped with twenty-five roubles - all that the old man would give me - I left without regrets. Since my earliest recollections, home had been stifling, my father's presence terrifying. My mother, while less violent with the children, never showed much warmth. It was always Helena who gave me affection, who filled my childhood with whatever joy it had. She would continually shoulder the blame for the rest of the children. Many blows intended for my brother and me were given Helena. Now we were completely together - nobody would separate us."[79]

Most often, insight into the childhood history of people tend to reveal the whys and wherefores of their later behavioral patterns. We know that Emma Goldman, at a very tender age, became a dedicated anarchist. Utilizing our subsequent knowledge, we can trace and examine her early childhood experiences that enable us to draw many conclusions. It is my personal belief that the inadequacies and torments of Emma

Goldman's early life paved the way for her future as a radical idealist. Let us examine her adolescent period as described in her own words.

The first day of her arrival in America she was taken to her sister's home where a group of people gathered to welcome her and Helena. One of the men in the room accosted her. He stared at her for a long while and then came over to her and felt her arms. She had the sensation that she was on the display floor standing naked for those who would come to make a purchase. She panicked. She flew from the room and escaped the shocked faces of her sister's friends. She could hear them talking in the next room about the possibilities of marrying her off. Memories returned.[80]

> "I thought of Father. He had tried desperately to marry me off at the age of fifteen. I had protested, begging to be permitted to continue my studies. In his frenzy he threw my French grammar into the fire, shouting: 'Girls do not have to learn much! All a Jewish daughter needs to know is how to prepare gefullte fish, cut noodles fine, and give the man plenty of children.' I would not listen to his schemes; I wanted to study, to know life, to travel. Besides, I never would marry for anything but love, I stoutly maintained. It was really to escape my father's plans for me that I had insisted on going to America."[81]

Emma Goldman's relationship with her sister Lena was also shot through and through with frustration and tension. She describes one of a series of such incidents.

> "Sister Lena had left for America when I was about 11. I used to spend much time with my grandmother in Kovno while my people lived in Popelan, a small town in the Baltic Province of Kurland. Lena had always been hostile to me, and unexpectedly I had discovered the reason. I could not have been more than six at the time, while Lena was two years older. We were playing a game of marbles.

> Somehow sister Lena thought I was winning too often. She flew into a rage, gave me a violent kick and shouted: "Just like your father! He too cheated us! He robbed us of the money our father had left. I hate you! You are not my sister!" The effect of her outburst on me was petrifying. For a few moments I sat riveted to the ground, staring at Lena in silence; then the tension gave way to a fit of crying. I ran to sister Helena, to whom I carried all my childish woes. I demanded to know what Lena had meant when she said my father had robbed her, and why I was not her sister."[82]

The effect of Helena's answer to Emma's request for an explanation created within her shock and horror.

> "As usual Helena took me in her arms, tried to comfort me, and made light of Lena's words. I went to mother, and from her I learned that there had been another father, Helena's and Lena's. He had died young, and mother had then chosen my father, mine and my baby brother's. She said that my father was also Helena's and Lena's, even if they were his step-children. It was true, she explained, that father had used the money left to the two girls. He had invested it in business and failed. He had meant it for the good of all of us. But what mother told me did not lessen my great hurt. "Father had no right to use that money!" I cried. "They are orphans. It is a sin to rob orphans. I wish I were grown up; then I could be able to pay back the money. Yes, I must pay back, I must atone for father's sin."
>
> "I had been told by my German nurse that whoever was guilty of robbing orphans would never get to heaven. I had no clear conception of that place. My people, while keeping Jewish rights, and going to the synagogue on Saturdays and holidays, rarely spoke to us about religion. I got my idea of God and devil, sin and punishment from my nurse and our Russian peasant servants. I was sure Father would be punished if I did not pay back his debt."[83]

The confusion and remorse which enveloped Emma Goldman at this stage of her early life, stemming from her "father's sins", manifested itself in the form of personal guilt and self-blame for the sufferings

of her sisters. She felt that she must repay them at any cost, or else find rejection once more. Though this rejection was nothing other than a product of her own imagination, it cut her deeply.

Life in St. Petersburg was difficult. Her father was a continual failure. Her mistrust of him eventually led to mistrust of all men.

> "I had worked in factories before, in St. Petersburg. In the winter of 1882, when Mother, my two little brothers, and I came from Konigsberg to join Father in the Russian capital, we found that he had lost his position. He had been manager of his cousin's dry goods store; but, shortly before our arrival the business failed. The loss of his job was a tragedy to our family, as Father had not managed to save anything. The only breadwinner then was Helena. Mother was forced to turn to her brothers for a loan. The 300 roubles they advanced were invested in a grocery store. The business yielded little at first, and it became necessary for me to find employment.
>
> "Knitted shawls were then much in vogue, and a neighbour told my mother where I might find work to do at home. By keeping at the task many hours a day, sometimes late into the night, I contrived to earn 12 roubles a month.
>
> "The shawls I knitted for a livelihood were by no means masterpieces, but somehow they passed. I hated the work and my eyes gave way under the strain of constant application. Father's cousin who had failed in the dry goods business now owned a glove factory. He offered to teach me the trade and gave me work.
>
> "The factory was far from our place. One had to get up at 5:00 in the morning to be at work at 7:00. The rooms were stuffy, unventilated and dark. Oil lamps gave the light; the sun never penetrated the work room.
>
> "There were 600 of us, of all ages, working on costly and beautiful gloves day in - day out - for very small pay. But we were allowed sufficient time for our noon meal and twice a day for tea. We could talk and sing while at work; we were not driven or harrassed. That was in St. Petersburg, in 1882."[84]

oldman's experience in the sweat shops of Russia

er on by her experiences in their American counter-

iet background enabled her to empathize with the emerging labor unions and strikes in Chicago and New York. As we will see later on, one of the major forces which drove her to devote her entire being to the cause of the blue collar worker was the Haymarket tragedy and the execution of the Chicago anarchists in November 1887. It was the Black Friday of November 11th which was the catalyctic event which thrust Emma into the annals of American anarchist history.

Her first encounter with factional politics occured in Konigsberg as a young child. She explains:

> "I recalled the morning in Konigsberg when I had come upon a huge poster announcing the death of the Tsar, "assassinated by murderous Nihilists." The thought of the poster brought back to my memory an incident of my early childhood which for a time had turned our home into a house of mourning. Mother had received a letter from her brother Martin giving the appalling news of the arrest of their brother Yegor. He had been mixed up with the Nihilists, the letter read, and he was thrown into the Petro-Pavlovsky Fortress and would soon be sent away to Siberia. The news struck terror in us. Mother decided to go to St. Petersburg. For weeks we were kept in anxious suspense. At last, she returned, her face heaving with happiness. She had found that Yegor was already on the way to Siberia. After much difficulty and with the help of a large sum of money she had succeeded in getting an audience with Trepov, the Governor-General of St. Petersburg. She had learned that their son was a college chum of Yegor and she mentioned it as proof that her brother could not have been mixed up with the terrible Nihilists. One so close to the Governor's own son would surely have nothing to do with the enemies of Russia. She pleaded Yegor's extreme youth, went on her knees, begged and wept. Finally Trepov promised that he would have

the boy brought back from the etage. Of course, he would not put him under strict surveillance. Yegor would have to promise solemnly never to go near the murderous gang.

"Our mother was always very vivid when she related stories of books she had read. We children used to hang on her very lips. This time, too, her story was absorbing. It made me see mother before the stern Governor-General. Her beautiful face framed by her massive hair, bathed in tears. The Nihilists, too, I saw -- black, sinister creatures who had ensnared my uncle in their plotting to kill the Tsar. The good, gracious Tsar -- mother had said -- the first to give more freedom to the Jews; he had stopped the pogroms and he was planning to set the peasants free. And him the Nihilists mean to kill! "Cold blooded murderers," mother cried, "they ought to be exterminated everyone of them!"

"Mother's violence terrorized me. Her suggestion of extermination froze my blood. I felt that the Nihilists must be beasts but I could not bear such cruelty in my mother. Often after that I caught myself thinking of the Nihilists, wondering who they were and what made them so ferocious. When the news reached Konigsberg of the hanging of the Nihilists who killed the Tsar, I no longer felt any bitterness against them. Something mysterious had awakened compassion for them in me. I wept bitterly over their fate.

"Years later I came upon the term "Nihilist" in Fathers and Sons. And when I read What's to be Done? I understood my instinctive sympathy with the executed men. I felt that they could not witness without protest the suffering of the people and that they had sacrificed their lives for them. I became the more convinced of it when I learned the story of Vera Zassulich, who had shot Trepov in 1879. My young teacher of Russian related it to me. Mother had said that Trepov was kind and humane, but my teacher told me how tyrannical he had been, a veritable monster who used to work out his Cossacks against the students, have them lashed with nagaikas, their gatherings dispersed, and the prisoners sent to Siberia. "Officials like Trepov are wild beats" my teacher would say passionately; "they robbed the peasants and then flogged them. They torture idealists in prison."

"I knew that my teacher spoke the truth. In Popelan everyone used to go about the flogging of peasants. One day I came upon a half naked human body being lashed with the knout. It threw me into hysterics,

> and for days I was haunted by the horrible picture. Listening to my teacher revived the ghastly sight: the bleeding body, the piercing shreeks, the distorted faces of the gendarmes, the knouts whistling in the air and coming down with a sharp hissing upon the half naked man. Whatever doubts about the Nihilists I had left from my childhood impressions now disappeared. They became to me heroes and martyrs, henceforth my guiding stars."[85]

There is no doubt that Emma Goldman's mother played a decisive negative role in her early psychological development. She (Emma) constantly refers to her in her writings with little nostalgia and with great contempt. Emma needed love and attention - but it came not from her family, but from her causes to which she dedicated her life. She found beautiful fulfillment in inanimate objects and nature. They replaced her parents, for they could not reject her. When one day she was talking philosophically about beauty with her lifelong friend and comrade-in-arms, Alexander Berkman, she expressed herself in the following way.

> Berkman: "It is inconsistent for an anarchist to enjoy luxuries when the people live in poverty."
>
> Emma: "But beautiful things are not luxuries, they are necessaries. Life would be unbearable without them. Yet, at heart, I felt that Berkman was right. Revolutionists gave up even their lives - why also not beauty? Still the young artist (Fedya) struck a responsive chord in me. I, too, loved beauty. Our poverty-stricken life in Konigsberg had been made bearable to me only by the occasional outings with our teachers in the open. The forest, the moon casting its silvery shimmer on the fields, the great wreaths in our hair, the flowers we would pick - these made me forget for a time the sordid home surroundings. When Mother scolded me or when I had difficulties at school, a bunch of lilacs from our neighbour's garden or the sight of the colourful silks and velvets displayed in the shops would cause me to forget my sorrows and make the world seem

> beautiful and bright. Or the music I would on rare occasions be able to hear in Konigsberg and, later, in St. Petersburg. Should I have to forego all that to be a good revolutionist, I wondered. Should I have the strength."[86]

Emma Goldman's substitutes for beauty and love stemmed from constant rejection on the part of her parents and others. She was so badly hurt by people that incidents in her childhood came back to her, while writing her autobiography, as though they had only happened the day before. She craved attention and love. She longed to give of herself to others. This need was manifested clearly by the following incident.

> "A child! I had loved children madly, ever since I could remember. As a little girl I used to look with envious eyes on the strange little babies our neighbour's daughter played with, dressing them up and putting them to sleep. I was told they were not real babies, they were only dolls, although to me they were living things because they were so beautiful. I longed for dolls, but I never had any.
>
> "When my brother Herman was born, I was only four years old. He replaced the need of dolls in my life. The arrival of little Leibale two years later filled me with ecstatic joy. I was always near him, rocking and singing him to sleep. Once while he was about a year old, Mother put him in my bed. After she left, the child began to cry. He must be hungry, I thought. I remembered how Mother gave him the breast. I, too, would give him my breast. I picked him up in my arms and pressed his little mouth close to me, rocking and cooing and urging him to drink. Instead he began to choke, turned blue in the face, and gasped for breath. Mother came running in and demanded to know what I had done to Baby. I explained. She broke out into laughter, then slapped and scolded me. I wept, not from pain, but because my breast had no milk for Leibale.
>
> "My compassion for our servant Amalia had surely been due to the circumstance that she was going to have <u>ein Kindchen.</u> I loved babies. Passionately, and now -- now I might have a child of my own and experience for the first time the mystery and wonder of motherhood! I closed my eyes in blissful day-dreaming.

"A cruel hand clutched at my heart. My ghastly childhood stood before me, my hunger for affection, which Mother was unable to satisfy. Father's harshness towards the children, his violent outbreaks, his beating my sisters and me. Two frightful experiences were particularly fresh in my mind: Once Father lashed me with a strap so that my little brother Herman, awakened by my cries, came running up and bit Father on the calf. The lashing stopped. Helena took me to her room, bathed my bruised back, brought me milk, held me to her heart, her tears mingling with mine, while Father outside was raging: "I'll kill her! I will kill that brat! I will teach her to obey!"

"Another time, in Konigsberg, my people, having lost everything in Popelan, were too poor to afford decent schooling for Herman and myself. The city's rabbi, a distant relative, had promised to arrange the matter, but he insisted on monthly reports on our behavior and progress at school. I hated it as a humiliation that outraged me, but I had to carry the report. One day I was given a low mark for bad behaviour. I went home in trembling fear. I could not face Father - I had showed my paper to Mother. She began to cry, said that I would be their ruin, that I was an ungrateful and willful child, and that she would have to let Father see the paper. But she would plead with him for me, although I did not deserve it. I walked away from her with a heavy heart. At our bay window I looked out over the fields in the distance. Children were playing there; they seemed to belong to another world - there never had been much play in my life. A strange thought came to me: how wonderful it would be if I were stricken with some consuming disease! It would surely soften Father's heart. I had never known him soft save on Sukkess, the autumnal holiday of rejoicing. Father did not drink, except a little on certain Jewish fetes, on this day especially. Then he would grow jolly, gather the children about him, promise us new dresses and toys. It was the one bright spot in our lives and we always eagerly looked forward to it. It happened only once a year. As long as I could think back, I remembered his saying that he had not wanted me. He had wanted a boy, the pig woman had cheated him. Perhaps if I should become very ill, near death, he would become kind and never beat me again or let me stand in the corner for hours, or make me walk back and forth with a glass of water in my hand. "If you spill a drop, you will get whipped!" he would threaten. The whip and the little stool were always at hand. They symbolized my shame and my tragedy. After

many attempts and considerable punishment I had learned to carry the glass without spilling the water. The process used to unnerve me and make me ill for hours after.

"My father was handsome, dashing, and full of vitality. I loved him even while I was afraid of him. I wanted him to love me, but I never knew how to reach his heart. His hardness only served only to make me more contrary. Why was he so hard, I was wondering, as I looked out of the bay window, lost in recollections.

"Suddenly I felt a terrific pain in my head, as if I had been struck with an iron bar. It was Father's fist that had smashed the round comb I wore to hold my unruly hair. He pounded me and pulled me about, raging: "You are my disgrace! You will always be so! You can't be my child; you don't look like me or like your mother; you don't act like us!"

"Sister Helena wrestled with him for my life. She tried to tear me away from his grip, and the blows intended for me fell upon her. At last Father became tired, grew dizzy, and fell headlong to the floor. Helena shouted to Mother that Father had fainted. She hurried me along to her room and locked the door.

"All my love and longing for my father were turned to hatred. After that I avoided him and never talked to him, unless in answer. I did what I was told mechanically; the gulf between us widened with the years. My home had become a prison. Every time I tried to escape, I was caught and put back in the chains forged for me by Father. From St. Petersburg to America, from Rochester to my marriage, there were repeated attempts to escape. The last and final one was before I left Rochester for New York.

"Mother had not been feeling well and I went over to put her house in order. I was on the floor scrubbing while Father was nagging me for having married Kershner, for having left him, and again for returning to him. "You are a loose character," he kept on saying; "you have always disgraced yourself in the family." He talked, while I continued scrubbing.

"Then something snapped within me; my love and woeful childhood, my tormented adolescence, my joyless youth - I flung them all into Father's face. He stood aghast as I denounced him, emphasizing

every charge by beating my scrubbing-brush on the floor. Every cruel incident of my life stood out in my arraignment. Our large barn of a home, Father's angry voice resounding through it, his ill-treatment of the servants, his iron grip on my mother - everything that had haunted my days and terrorized my nights. I now recalled in my bitterness. I told him that if I had not become the harlot he repeatedly called me, it was not his fault. I had been on the verge even of going on the street more than once. It was Helena's love and devotion that had saved me.

"My words rushed on like a torrent, the brush pounding the floor with all the hatred and scorn. I felt for my father. The terrible scene ended with my hysterical screams. My brothers carried me up and put me to bed. The next morning I left the house. I did not see Father again before I went to New York.

"I had learned since then that my tragic childhood had been no exception, that there were thousands of children born unwanted, marred and maimed by poverty and still more by ignorant misunderstanding. No child of mine should ever be added to those unfortunate victims.

"There was also another reason: my growing absorption in my new found ideal. I had determined to serve it completely. To fulfill that mission I must remain unhampered and untied. Years of pain and of suppressed longing for a child - what were they compared with the price many martyrs had already paid? I, too, would pay the price, I would endure the suffering, I would find an outlet for my mother-need in the love of all children."[87]

Like the martyrs of the Haymarket incident in Chicago, Emma Goldman deserved no more, in her own mind. She had a penchant for suffering. From the period of Black Friday of November 11th, she had sworn to keep the memory of those two executed boys - Michael Schwab and Samuel Fielden[88] - alive, and she could only do this by carrying out their mission. She made their cause her own. Her background of suffering made it easier and more "comfortable" to make such a decision. She

would repay the system that enabled children and ignorant workers to suffer and starve. She would rebel against authority. She would do this for the people - the only mass of living organic material that she could love and that would not reject her love. Emma Goldman's ideals blinded her to reality. The love she transferred from her parents to the "downtrodden" masses was, unbeknownst to her, a reaction formation, and not based on reasonable and careful considerations. She could not accept her parental authority and so she rejected all forms of authority. She could not risk being a mother to one child and so she became a mother of all children - nameless of course.

Her attitude regarding marriage is closely linked to her perception of authority and confinement.

> "We talked about my life in St. Petersburg and in Rochester. I told him of my marriage to Jacob Kershner and its failure. He wanted to know what books I had read on marriage and if it was their influence that had decided me to leave my husband. I had never read such works, but I had seen enough of the horrors of married life in my own home. Father's harsh treatment of Mother, the constant wrangles and bitter scenes that ended in Mother's fainting spells. I had also seen the debasing sordidness of the life of my married aunts and uncles, as well as in the homes of acquaintances in Rochester. Together with my own marital experiences they had convinced me that binding people for life was wrong. The constant proximity in the same house, the same room, the same bed, revolted me."
>
> "If ever I love a man again, I will give myself to him without being bound by the rabbi or the law," I declared, " and when that love dies, I will leave without permission."[89]

Her rejection of political authority also carried into the domestic arena. There is no doubt that Emma Goldman was consistent in her idealism and in the manner in which she lived. Though she broke the laws of the land many times, she was always prepared to suffer the consequences of her actions - and she did so. Her anarchism was her religion, and if one judges the piety of people by the way they practice their beliefs, she, without doubt, was the personification of self-dedication to her faith.

One of Emma Goldman's early acquaintances, Johann Most, "the leader of the masses, the man of magic tongue and powerful pen,"[90] had an opportunity to probe deeply into her political motivations. One of their frequent meetings ended with Most saying to Emma:

> "....."your childhood was like mine after that beast of a stepmother came to our house." He (adds Emma) was now more convinced than ever, he told me that it was the influence of my childhood that had made me what I was."[91]

Part of this early childhood was spent, as we have described beforehand, in a realschule. For three and a half years, Emma went through the motions of education. Not only was she a holy terror but went through some agonizing experiences which may have scarred her mind permanently. Her attitude towards the Jewish religion was extremely negative. The tortures she encountered at the hands of some religionists may / have / engraved in her this position.

Johann Most once asked her: "Where did you get your silky blond hair and your blue eyes? You said you were Jewish."

"At the pig's market," she replied, "my father told me so."[92]

On other occasions, in Realschule in Konigsberg, she again met with religious hypocracy. She explains:

> "Two of my teachers had been altogether terrible. One, a German Jew, was our instructor in religion; the other taught geography. I hated them both. Occasionally, I would avenge myself on the former for his constant beatings, but I was too terrorized by the other even to complain at home.
>
> "The great joy of our religious instructor used to be to beat the palms of our hands with a ruler....."[93]

Emma Goldman's respect for her religious heritage was shattered by men like her religious instructor and by her father whom she categorized as a hypocrite. Moreover, she was further encouraged to hold contemptible and eventually to depise, all forms of authority. This attitude did not only stem from her hate-love syndrome regarding her father, but also in her frightening confrontation with teachers other than her religious instructor. For example, she tells of her relationship with her geography teacher in the realschule.

> "His methods (of punishment) were less painful, but more dreadful. Every afternoon he would keep one or two of the girls after school hours. When everybody had left the building, he would send one girl to the next class-room, then force the other on his knee and grasp her breasts or put his hands between her legs. He would promise her good marks if she kept quiet and threaten instant dismissal if she talked. The girls were terrorized into silence. I did not know for a long time about these things, until one day I found myself on his knee.

> I screamed, reached for his beard, and pulled it violently in my attempt to wriggle out of his hold. He jumped up, and I felt to the floor. He ran to the door to see if anyone was coming in response to my cry; then he hissed into my ear: "If you breathe one word, I'll kick you out of school."
>
> "For several days I was too sick with fright to return to school, but I would not say anything. The dread of being dismissed brought back the remembrance of Father's fury whenever I returned with bad marks..... One day the teacher whispered to me: "You will remain behind." "I will not!" I whispered back. The next moment I felt a stinging pain in my arm. He had stuck his nails into my flesh."[94]

Emma told her doctor what had happened and the teacher was dismissed. However, she had a parting encounter with her religious instructor when it came time for her to obtain a letter of reference in order to be admitted to the Gymnasium in Konisberg.

> "I needed a certificate of good character from my religious teacher. I loathed the idea of asking the man for anything; but I felt that my whole future depended on it, and I went to him. In front of the whole class he announced that he would never give me "a good character." I had none, he declared; I was a terrible child and would grow into a worse woman. I had no respect for my elders or for authority, and I would surely end on the gallows as a public menace."[95]

We can readily appreciate the reasons for Emma Goldman's hate for authority and her overpowering need for love and acceptance. It seemed to her that the entire world was against her: Mother - Father - men - teachers - government. The only attention and love she received was at the hands of her sister Helena. The only identity she could assume was that of the suffering and rejected Russian peasant - the poverty-stricken, hungry, masses. She made them her raison d'etre, her reason

for existence, and anarchy was her ideal, her ladder to fulfillment of that cause, of that reason for being. She meditated, years later, on her life's role.

> "Memories of my former life with Ed filled me with longing for what had again been just within my reach, only to be snatched away. Recollections of the past compelled me to look into the most hidden crevices of my being; their strange contradictions tore me between my hunger for love and my inability to have it for long. It was not only the finality of death, as in the case of Ed, nor the circumstances that had robbed me of Sasha in the springtime of our lives, that always came between. There were other forces at work to deny me permanency in love. Were they part of some passionate yearning in me that no man could completely fulfill or were they inherent in those who forever reached out for the heights, for some ideal or exalted aim that excludes aught else? Was not the price they exacted conditioned in the very nature of the thing I wished to achieve? The stars could not be climbed by one rooted in the clod of earth. If one soared high, could he hope to dwell for long in the absorbing depths of passion and love? Like all who paid for this faith, I, too, would have to face the inevitable. Occasional snatches of love; nothing permanent in my life except my ideal."[96]

Emma Goldman was so dedicated to anarchy and so pathologically scared of bringing her own children into the world that once she was moved to comment on child-bearing.

> "Well, then, Maria (a fellow anarchist) should guard against having children if she wants to devote herself to our movement."[97]

This idealism may have been caused by an additional force - a biological and psychological one - motherhood. Emma was a lover of children. She deeply wished she could have her own. But, she was afraid of the responsibility of bringing children into such an environment. She was scared that the childhood she remembered might crush the lives of her own offspring. She could not chance their finding the same rejection

that afflicted her own tender years. She asked the question:

> "My starved motherhood -- was that the main reason for my idealism?.....But I had silenced the voice of the child for the sake of the universal, the all-absorbing passion of my life. Men were consecrated to ideals and yet were fathers of children. But man's physical share in the child is only a moment's; woman's part is for years -years of absorption in one human being to the exclusion of the rest of humanity. I would never give up the one for the other."[98]

Emma was terribly afraid of placing herself in a position of weakness. To be laden with child and marriage vows, subjected to choking off the free fresh air of independence. The picture of her mother's status as chattel, the suffering servant of her father was more than she could bear. She could and would never find herself in such an uncompromising posture. No man would have free reign over her nor tie her down to domestic slavery. She therefore lashed out against the institution of marriage and the church's stand against planned parenthood. She lectured on contraception and its great value to the American woman. Often, she found herself locked in a cold, bare jail cell. The authorities could not tolerate such public displays of "anti-social" behavior, and Emma could not tolerate the reactionary maintenance of the status quo. Her stand on "free love" and birth control were nothing but extensions of her anarchist philosophy. She would do almost anything to achieve her idealistic goals, including violence.

> "The inner forces that compel an idealist to acts of violence, often involving the destruction of his own life, had come to mean more and more to me. I felt certain now that behind every political deed of

> that nature was an impressionable, highly sensitized personality and a gentle spirit. Such beings cannot go on living complacently in the sight of great human misery and wrong. Their reactions to the cruelty and injustice of the world must inevitably express themselves in some violent act, in supreme rending of their tortured soul."[99]

Emma Goldman was an anarchist. She approved of violence as a means to an end. Yet, she herself was never party to a violent act. Her tormented psyche, her starvation for love, her fear of rejection, were made manifest in her ability to empathize with those who expressed their frustrations through passionate and inflamed behavior. She could sympathize and comprehend such behavior, but with the understanding that those who carry on their war against the status quo must be prepared to accept just and consequential treatment at the hands of the existing authority. In other words, she might fight for a specific goal, but she was always ready to face her accusers. She never ran from the unfair justice she expected to receive. She used the courts and flaunted "unjust laws" as a mode of protest. In many ways, she has contemporary counterparts in American society today. Often, one finds that if someone in her period acted brutally and outside her own limitations of social protest, she would affirm the right to do so insofar as she felt that they had no other means of directing their aggressions. That is, she herself would state that such people must have had personal problems, either stemming

from their childhood or presently, which offered them no alternatives to their anti-social actions. She would make excuses for all irrational behavior on the part of others. She could not condemn any man. Herein lay her fault. She was not able to bring herself to reject any conduct which was consistent with the cause of anarchy.

Emma Goldman was the most consistent woman I've ever encountered. Her ideals, no matter whether they affected her pleasures or not, were never compromised. She believed in her cause and no force on earth could move her to budge an inch from her ideological position. She fought for anarchism all her life. She utilized the American heritage of "free speech" but was never allowed to use it when her words criticized the establishment. Time after unending time, she was hauled down off of her soap box or platform by officialdom because her tongue bit at the corrupt feet of the existing order. She stood for free expression and defended her opponent's right to the same courtesy; the privilege of freedom of speech and of the press was denied her.

Emma Goldman, a woman of humble origins and unceasing torment, was the embodiment of female independence and emancipation. Her legacy was an unending list of neurosis engraved on her psyche. Her heritage was suffering, rejection, hate, humiliation, and insecurity. Were it not for this background, it is doubtful that the world would have had Emma Goldman. It is precisely her kind of childhood history

which formed and forged her character and personality. Because her rebellion was unleashed against society, rather than against her family or herself, our legacy is enriched. Emma Goldman made us aware of our own inadequacies. She was the rebel most of us dream ourselves to be but do not have the courage to make manifest in our actions. She was the "still small voice in the night" crying out for justice and freedom. We may disagree with her ultimate goals. We may negate her social and political solutions. But we must never forget that during the great period of the prophets, society was determined to maintain the status quo and to reject those courageous enough to challenge it.

SECTION III

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY IN FERMENT

The Russia of the late nineteenth century spawned and gave birth to many talented and controversial personalities. Not the least important of these were Shmarya Levin, Chaim Weizmann, Leon Trotsky and Emma Goldman. Each of these individuals reacted to his environment in their own particular way. The question arises: what were the motivating forces which caused such diversification? We have a variety of solutions to offer. First, what were the alternative possibilities? The shtetl mentality and way of life narrows our choice only slightly, for within the small town atmosphere existed a microcosm of heterogenous ideas and conflicts. The Jewish village personified the observance that where you have two Jews, you find three opinions. Thus, the townlets of the Pale of Settlement seethed with factions and forces, big and small, but nevertheless divisive in their effect. A society in ferment can either force these miniature opposing groups into a cohesive entity, or it can destroy what little unity there remains. The resultant effect is that in the case of the pogroms, we find the shtetl a place of great suffering and therefore, for the Jews, offers only two alternatives. They could, without difficulty, leave the town, or as happened in most cases, find that survival depended solely upon unity of purpose and strength in a community undivided. Levin and

Weizmann were able to learn, through their own authentic experiences, that the solution to the Jewish problem lay in the acquisition of an autonomous Jewish state where the oppressed multitudes of Israel could seek and find refuge.

Each responded in his own way. Levin, endowed with a creative literary ability, wrote about the ethos and pathos of his people and their subsequent need for a homeland free from persecution and rejection. He was a romantic idealist who saw the Jewish people and their needs finding fulfillment only in Palestine. He presented no other course of action. His essays, poetry, and writings all emanated the strong and necessary choice of social and economic salvation in a Jewish state. He portrayed his people's destiny as a great and lofty one should they root themselves in the holy soil of their ancient homeland. He saw no future for them in Russia or elsewhere. What thrust Levin into such a position has been made clear in our chapter dealing with him. His family background, his Jewish education, his self-esteem and identity as a Jew, his social contacts, his sensitive nature, all these criteria formed and fashioned his personality and psychological make-up. As a result, he most likely had no alternative but to react in the way he did. The most important catalyst which initiated him to help his people came from without. The pogrom; the overt anti-Semitic violence which occurred, the turmoil of the conditions in Russia

which precipitated such acts of terror. These forces made it mandatory for a man like Levin to dedicate his life to the salvation of his people. His romantic idealism emanated a Messianic aura, but he did not preclude man helping to stimulate action on the part of the deity.

In the case of Chaim Weizmann, the conditions prompting similar goals and needs drew a response of practicality. Weizmann was not a literary genius. He was a man addicted to science and a rational approach to an axiomatic necessity. The Jews faced destruction and tyranny. What should his response be? His services were required by England. His scientific expertise could be a tool used to shift the winds of dissent in political circles. Thus, he was able to cajole and persuade the leaders and their military advisors that the Jewish need was a legitimate one and of mutual benefit. Weizmann was an extremely practical man. He did not allow his emotions to interfere with diplomacy and debate. In this way he managed to be the most influential force in the destiny of the Zionist ideal.

Both Levin and Weizmann were products of the shtetl way of life and the shtetl mentality. They both were blessed with a secure and warm Jewish family background. They both led constructive and meaningful lives dedicated to positive and legitimate goals.

On the other hand, for Leon Trotsky, we need a totally different

hypothesis. Because of Trotsky's lack of Jewish identity, because of his rejection on the part of his parents, because he did not have an enriching background, because he grew up in an environment which oriented him into the peasant camp, his life goals developed differently from the others. The suffering he saw was not seen through Jewish eyes, but through Russian ones. His concern lay with the "downtrodden" masses - the group with which he identified. They were rejected by their government, landowners, and intellectuals. He was rejected by his family. For Trotsky, there was little difference. The needs were the same. However, the peasants' suffering was overt while his was internal. The means he used to achieve his ends were revolutionary and violent. He turned his rebellion against the established order rather than his parents and the results were devastating.

Emma Goldman shared a similar fate with Trotsky. However, the life experiences she suffered as a child were greater in their psychological effect and history is our witness. Though she did not accomplish what Trotsky was able to, nevertheless, in her personal life, she managed to do more than most radicals in six lifetimes. Because her childhood was so disasterous for her, she went even further than the Marxists and advocated complete freedom in all spheres of society. The anarchism she preached was so idealistic as to be unrealistic. Her reaction to her rejection as a youngster, so much greater in scope than Trotsky's, was to rebel not only against the political system of the United States, but also

against the moral standards of the society.

The conclusions we must draw are self-evident. The destiny of a person is profoundly affected by the manner in which parents raise them. If they receive a wholesome and loving childhood together with a sense of identity, they will lead creative and fulfilled lives..... Levin and Weizmann. If their childhood is nothing but a series of rejection after rejection on the part of the parents, if they are not fondled and loved and given an identity which offers them security in themselves, if they are not afforded living examples of honesty and self-respect, then their future lives will portray this background. They will ultimately reject the society in which they grew up and will rebel against the very forces which played such a negative role in their early years..... Trotsky and Goldman.

We can thus see clearly how a society and some of its individuals reacted to their environment.

The Russian economy, anti-Semitism on an official level, lack of stability in the social and political realms, the mentality of the shtetl Jew, the individual inter-plays of these forces upon the society - all combined to challenge the minds and resources of the period. The role of the individual in such a society is limited. As we stated before, they could either run from it, accept and live with it, or try to change it. All of our subjects, Levin, Weizmann, Trotsky and Goldman, chose change.

The Zionists succeeded in changing the plight of their people by urging them to flee to a place of refuge - Israel. Though the realization of Palestine as a Jewish homeland took time, at least the people were given hope in the midst of despair. The Marxist was able to accomplish his goals by 1917, but did most of his agitation and propagandizing and fund-raising outside his nation. The anarchist found herself fighting her cause in the United States against her adopted American government until she was deported to Russia. She found, to her great dismay, that her hope in the 1917 Revolution was in vain. All that she discovered was that one form of totalitarianism (Tsarism) had been replaced by another (Marxism or Leninism). Her disappointment was too much for her. She fled into exile and eventually spent her remaining years in Canada.

When we look at these individuals and their lives, what can we learn from them? How do we see today's Jewish problems in the light of those which existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? What links should be maintained and which severed? Is our Jewish heritage a force for good or is it obsolete?

The answers to these questions must be pure conjecture and on a highly individual level. The four personalities we have studied were, in many ways, a product of their times and environment. It is doubtful whether they would have arisen had circumstances in Russia and for the

Jews been different. We learn several things from them: No matter what the odds are against a particular personal ambition, if the times and situations are ripe, they can be accomplished. We also glean from their lives the fact that, as in the case of Emma Goldman, to be successful one must also be realistic. In her case, the masses were not ready for her ideas. They themselves rejected her philosophy of government and society. Trotsky had the rank and file in his corner and so he achieved his goal. Wealth is also power, and when there is no money, there is little accomplished no matter how just the cause. An idea is powerful as long as one has the wealth to back up the idea. Levin and Weizmann not only had the wealth and influence and sympathy of much of world Jewry, but Weizmann himself was the iron in the fire. The British Government needed his skills and patents and these he used to further the cause he espoused.

The Jews today face a most difficult dilemma, especially in the United States. Not only do we have money, influence, and thus power, but we also have freedom from overt persecution. Our problem is what do we do with such gifts? Do we risk total assimilation in three or four generations, or can we survive in this kind of environment? Without a personal "cause" for which to fight, without goals involving our people, will Israel cease to exist as a religious or semi-ethnic entity? If the persecutions and anti-Semitism of the past are forgotten, if Stalin and

Hitler are obliterated from our minds and the psyche's of our children, can we survive the liberty of the present and future? In other words, is our heritage strong and practical enough to meet the modern demands of a technological age or must it always be nurtured on past memories?

My personal conclusion is the following. Levin and Weizmann both had goals and motivation to see them through. Our goals are different. They fought for the physical redemption of their people. We are fighting for the cultural and spiritual survival of ours. Our ends are essentially the same though the means must, in essense, differ. Our answer must be a strong Jewish educational system which can teach our children and those of the future that Judaism has much to say and offer in our society; that it speaks with a contemporary tongue. We must also instill in them a notion of history and the role Jews have played in that history. Thus, by offering them the opportunity to identify with a great people and a magnificent heritage, they will benefit. Trotsky and Goldman lacked this identification, education and concern. They inevitably wasted their lives. Both ended in exile, defeated and frustrated because their aims and goals were hostile and unrealistic. Because their childhoods were filled with rejection and a deficiency of parental love, they rebelled against society rather than worked with it to achieve what they proffered. Their methods were what caused their downfall. Though Trotsky was successful in the beginning, he could not retain his power, and the army he built with

Stalin at its reins was turned against him when he fell from grace. Both Trotsky and Goldman were out of step with reality and their personal ambitions and psychological hang-ups interfered with their achievement of what they thought was the needs of the society. They severed the link with their past. They rejected their own identity as Jews and refused to accept the role they were born to play. They were again rejected by society - as they had been rejected by their parents. Levin and Weizmann maintained their link and nurtured it and grew with it; thus they preserved and strengthed their identities and found the acceptance they had always known.

Jews should thus find the lives of Levin and Weizmann symbolic of the importance of maintaining and cherishing a tradition and a cultural inheritance. Should such a link be preserved as the viable solution for Jewish identity, and the lives of these men held up as exemplary illustrations we will have indeed learned our history well and the future of our people will be assured.

## FOOTNOTES

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