

# DUBNOW SIMON

HISTORY OF THE JEWS  
IN RUSSIA AND POLAND.  
VOLUME 3 OF 3. FROM  
THE ACCESSION OF  
NICHOLAS II UNTIL THE  
PRESENT DAY

**Simon Dubnow**  
**History of the Jews in Russia**  
**and Poland. Volume 3 of 3.**  
**From the Accession of Nicholas**  
**II until the Present Day**

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History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Volume 3 [of 3] From the  
Accession of Nicholas II until the Present Day:*

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**Volume 3 [of 3] From**  
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**NOTE**

The present volume, which concludes Dubnow's "History of the Jews in Russia-Poland," contains, in addition to the text, an extensive bibliography and an index to the entire work. In the bibliography an enormous amount of material has been collected, and it is arranged in such a way as to enable the reader to ascertain the sources upon which the author drew. It is thus in the nature of notes, and is therefore arranged according to the chapters of the book. The index, which has been prepared with the utmost care by the translator, is really a synopsis of Jewish history in Russia and Poland, and its usefulness cannot be over-rated.

Professor Friedlaender, the translator of this work, who left the United States at the beginning of this year, did not see the proof of the bibliography and index.

The tragic news has just reached this country that Professor Friedlaender was murdered under the most revolting circumstances. An eminent scholar and writer has thus been removed from American Jewry, and the entire house of Israel together with the Jewish Publication Society of America, on whose committee Professor Friedlaender served with conspicuous merit for a number of years, mourns this irreparable loss.

July, 1920.

# CHAPTER XXXI

## THE ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS II

### 1. Continued Policy of Oppression

In the course of the nineteenth century every change of throne in Russia was accompanied by a change of policy. Each new reign formed, at least in its beginning, a contrast to the one which had preceded it. The reigns of Alexander I. and Alexander II. marked a departure in the direction of liberalism; those of Nicholas I. and Alexander III. were a return to the ideas of reaction. In accordance with this historic schedule, Alexander III. should have been followed by a sovereign of liberal tendencies. But in this case the optimistic expectations with which the new ruler was welcomed both by his Russian and his Jewish subjects were doomed to disappointment. The reign of Nicholas II. proved the most gloomy and most reactionary of all. A man of limited intelligence, he attempted to play the rôle of an unlimited autocrat, fighting in blind rage against the cause of liberty.

This reactionary tendency came to light in the very beginning of the new reign. During the first few months after the accession of Nicholas II. to the throne – between November, 1894, and January, 1895 – the liberal Zemstvo assemblies of nine

governments,<sup>1</sup> in presenting addresses of loyalty to the new Tzar, were bold enough to voice the hope that he would eventually invite the representatives of these autonomous institutions to participate in the legislative acts of the Government. This first timid request for constitutional rights met with a harsh and clumsy rebuff. In his reply to the deputation representing the nobility, the Zemstvos, and the municipalities, which appeared in the Winter Palace on January 17, 1895, to convey to him the greetings of the Russian people, the Tzar made the following pronouncement:

In several Zemstvo assemblies there have been heard lately the voices of men carried away by preposterous delusions concerning the participation of the representatives of the Zemstvos in the affairs of the inner administration. Let everybody know that I shall guard the principle of autocracy as firmly and uncompromisingly as it was guarded by my never-to-be-forgotten deceased parent.

This veiled threat was enough to intimidate the faint-hearted constitutionalists. It was universally felt that the autocratic régime was still firmly entrenched and that the old constitution of "enforced safety"<sup>2</sup>— this charter of privileges bestowed upon the police to the disadvantage of the people — was still unshaken. The hope of seeing Russia transformed from a state based upon brute force into a body politic resting upon law and order was

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<sup>1</sup> See on the Zemstvos, vol. II, p. 173, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. II, p. 246.

dashed to the ground.

The Jews, too, were quick to realize that the war which had been waged against them by Alexander III. for fourteen long years was far from being at an end. True, the addresses of welcome presented in 1895 by the Jewish communities of Russia to the young Tzar on the occasion of his marriage elicited an official expression of thanks, which was not marred by any rebuke for harboring "preposterous delusions." But this was purely for the reason that these addresses were not tainted by any allusions to the hopes for emancipation entertained by the Jews. There was nothing, indeed, which might have warranted such hopes. The same dignitaries who, under Alexander III., had stood forth as the champions of savage anti-Semitic policies, remained at the helm of Russian affairs: Pobyedonostzev, the head of the Holy Synod, Durnovo, the Minister of the Interior – towards the end of 1895 he made room for Goremykin, who was not a whit less reactionary – and Witte, the double-faced Minister of Finance, who was anxious at that time to fall in line with the reactionary influences then in vogue. The thoughts which occupied Pobyedonostzev's mind at the beginning of the new reign may be gauged from the report submitted by him to the Tzar in 1895, concerning the state of affairs in the Greek-Orthodox Church. The "Grand Inquisitor" was deeply worried by the alleged fact that the Jews were exercising a dangerous influence over the religious life of their Christian domestics:

The minors, after living among Jews for several years,

prove entirely forgetful of the Greek-Orthodox faith. But even the beliefs of the adults are being undermined. The priests who listen to the confessions of the domestics employed in Jewish homes are stricken with horror on learning of the abominable blasphemies uttered by the Jews against Christianity, the Savior, and the Holy Virgin, which, through the domestics, are likely to gain currency among the people.

These charges, which might have been bodily quoted from the sinister writings of the mediæval guardians of the Church, were intended as a means of preparing the young sovereign for a proper understanding of the Jewish problem. They were brought forward by the procurator-in-chief of the Holy Synod, the same ecclesiastical functionary who inflicted severe persecutions on the Russian dissidents and soon afterwards forced the Dukhobortzy, an Evangelistic sect, to leave their native land and to seek refuge in Canada. Having failed to realize his great ambition – to clear Russia of its Jewish population, with the help of Baron Hirsch's millions<sup>3</sup>– Pobyedonostzev resumed his professional duties, which were those of a procurator<sup>4</sup> of Jewry on behalf of the Holy Synod, the *sanctum officium* of the militant Greek-Orthodox Church.

Not content with brandishing his rusty ecclesiastical sword, Pobyedonostzev resorted to secular weapons in his fight against

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<sup>3</sup> See vol. II, p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> The Russian title for a prosecuting attorney.

the hated tribe. When, in 1898, the Council of the Jewish Colonization Association in Paris sent a delegation to St. Petersburg to apply to the Government for permission to settle Russian Jews as agricultural farmers in Russia itself, Pobyedonostzev replied: "Nos cadres ne sont pas prêts pour vous recevoir,"<sup>5</sup> and he went out of his way to explain to the delegates that the Jews were a very clever people, intellectually and culturally superior to the Russians, and, therefore, dangerous to them: "The Jews are displacing us, and this does not suit us." When questioned as to the future of Russian Jewry under the system of uninterrupted persecutions, Pobyedonostzev on one occasion made the following candid statement: "One-third will die out, one-third will leave the country, and one-third will be completely dissolved in the surrounding population."

Such being the attitude towards the Jewish problem of the ruling spheres of Russia, any improvement in the situation of Russian Jewry was manifestly out of the question. Even where such an improvement might have been found to tally with the anti-Semitic policies of the Government, it was ruled out as soon as it bade fair to benefit the Jews. Thus, when in 1895, the governor of Vilna, in his "most humble report" to the Tzar, advocated the desirability of abrogating the Pale of Settlement for the purpose "of weakening the detrimental influence of Jewry," since the latter constituted a majority of the population

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<sup>5</sup> "Our frame (of society) is not ready to receive you."

in the cities of the Western region,<sup>6</sup> Nicholas II. penned the following resolution:<sup>7</sup> "I am far from sharing this view of the governor." The leaders of Russian Jewry knew full well that the wind which was blowing from the heights of the Russian throne was unfavorable to them, and their initial hopefulness gave way speedily to a feeling of depression. A memorandum drafted at that time by prominent Jews of St. Petersburg, with the intention of submitting it to one of the highest functionaries at the Russian court, mirrors this pessimistic frame of mind:

The Russian Jews are deprived of that powerful lever for intellectual and moral advancement which is designated as the hope for a better future. They are fully aware of the fact that the highest authority in the land, influenced by the distorted information concerning the Jews, which is systematically presented to it by officials acting from avaricious or other selfish motives, is exceedingly unfavorable to the Jews. They must resign themselves to the fact that there is actually no possibility of directing the attention of the Tzar and Sovereign to the true state of affairs, and that even those dignitaries who themselves act justly and tolerantly towards the Jews are afraid of putting in a good word for them for fear of being charged with favoritism towards them.

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<sup>6</sup> See on this term vol. II, p. 16, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See on the meaning of this term, vol. I, p. 25, n. 1.

## 2. The Martyrdom of the Moscow Community

The attitude which officials of high rank were prone to adopt towards the Jews was luridly illustrated at that time in Moscow. It will be remembered that the small Jewish colony which had been left in the second Russian capital after the cruel expulsions of 1891 was barred from holding religious services in its large synagogue which had been closed by order of Alexander III.<sup>8</sup> In view of the forthcoming festivities in honor of the coronation of Nicholas II., which were to be held in Moscow in the spring of 1896, the representatives of the Jewish community of the second Russian capital petitioned the governor-general of Moscow, Grand Duke Sergius Alexandrovitch, to secure for them the Tzar's permission to have their synagogue open at least during the coronation days, "as a special act of grace, in order that the Jews of Moscow may be given a chance to celebrate the joyful event with due solemnity." But the grand duke, maddened by Jew-hatred, notified the petitioners through the Chief of Police that their petition was "an insolent violation of the imperial will" and could not be considered.

The martyrdom of the Moscow community, the heritage of the past reign, stood out like a black stain even upon the gloomy

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<sup>8</sup> See vol. II, p. 423.

background of the new era. An imperial ukase issued in 1892 had decreed that the structure of the sealed-up Moscow synagogue should be sold to the highest bidder unless it was converted into a charitable institution.<sup>9</sup> The community was naturally anxious to prevent the desecration of its sanctuary and to preserve the edifice for better days to come. With this end in view it placed in the synagogue building the trade school for Jewish children which had been established in memory of Alexander II. The anti-Semitic authorities of Moscow scented in this step a wicked design. The governor-general got into communication with the Ministers of the Interior and of Public Instruction, and, as a result, on May 27, 1896, the executive board of the Moscow community received the following order: To stop the admission of pupils to the trade school and to close the school altogether after the completion of the prescribed course of studies by the present contingent of students. Thereupon the Jews of Moscow made another attempt to save their synagogue by transferring hither their school and asylum for poor and orphaned children, the so-called Talmud Torah. This attempt, too, was frustrated by the Muscovite Hamans. On October 28, 1897, the governor-general announced that, after consultation with the Minister of the Interior, the decision had been reached to close the asylum, which sheltered about one hundred poor children, on the fanciful ground that these children might just as well receive their instruction in Russian educational establishments. The

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<sup>9</sup> See vol. II, p. 424.

underlying motive of the new order was unmistakably revealed in its latter part: Unless in the course of two months the building of the synagogue will be reconstructed and so altered as to be fitted for a hospital or a similar charitable institution, it will be sold at public auction.

Once more the Jewish community endeavored to save its sanctuary, which its enemies had made up their minds to destroy. The synagogue structure was rebuilt to meet the purposes of a hospital and a shelter. But the commission appointed by the governor-general to examine the alterations found that they were not sufficiently extensive and therefore suggested that the interior of the synagogue should be entirely remodelled so as to exclude the possibility of its ever being used for devotional purposes. The struggle centering around the alterations dragged on for another eight years – until the revolution of 1905 and the assassination of the ferocious governor-general. It was then that the Jews finally succeeded in releasing their sanctuary from the death sentence which had been passed upon it.

The motive which animated the Muscovite Jew-haters was perfectly evident: it was their fervent desire to wipe out the last remnants of the local Jewish community by subjecting the Jews to religious and administrative persecutions and thereby compelling them to flee from the center of Greek Orthodoxy. The growth of the Jewish settlement at Moscow was checked in ruthless fashion. The Jewish artisans had been expelled as far back as 1891, but the Jewish merchants who purchased

their right of residence in the second Russian capital at the annual cost of one thousand rubles – the tax levied on first guild members – had been allowed to remain. Moreover, as the largest industrial center of Russia, Moscow naturally attracted a goodly number of Jewish merchants who came there temporarily on business. These "newcomers" were handled more severely than are alien enemies in war-time. Police detectives prowled about on the streets and at the railroad stations, seizing passers-by who happened to exhibit a "Semitic" countenance, and dragging them to the police stations, "with a view to the examination of their right of residence in Moscow." The unfortunate Jews, whose documents did not comply with all the technicalities of the law, were expelled at once. The *Moscow Police News* carried a regular advertisement offering a reward for the capture of "rightless" Jews. In October, 1897, the Moscow Chief of Police announced a premium of equal amount for the capture of one Jew or of two burglars.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the Russian Government took a most effective step towards preventing the increase of the Jewish population of Moscow. On January 22, 1899, an imperial ukase was issued forthwith prohibiting Jewish merchants of the first guild from settling in Moscow, unless they shall have obtained special

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<sup>10</sup> These barbarities were suspended only for a few days during that year, while the International Congress of Medicine was holding its sessions in Moscow. The police were ordered to stop these street raids upon the Jews for fear of compromising Russia in the eyes of Western Europe, since it was to be expected that the membership of the Congress would include medical celebrities with "Semitic" features.

permission from the Minister of Finance and from the governor-general of Moscow, it being beforehand agreed that no such permission should be granted. The same ukase enacted a number of offensive discriminations against the Jewish merchants already settled in Moscow by depriving them of their vote in the commercial associations, and by other similar devices. On a subsequent occasion the admission was candidly made that all these measures were prompted by the desire "to rid as far as possible the government of Moscow of the Jews already settled there on a legal basis."

### **3. Restrictions in the Right of Residence**

Whereas the régime of Grand Duke Sergius in Moscow represented an acute stage of Judæophobia, manifesting itself in cruelties of an exceptional character, the central Government in St. Petersburg exhibited the same disease in a more "normal" form. Here, the oppression of the Jews was pursued systematically and quietly, and was carried on as one of the most important functions of the public administration. The sacrosanct institution of the Pale of Settlement and the other mainstays of political anti-Semitism were zealously guarded by the faithful watchdogs of Russian reaction – the various Ministers of the Interior who followed one another between the years 1895 and 1904: Durnovo (until the autumn of 1895), Goremykin (1896-1899), Sipyaghin (1899-1902), and Plehve (1902-1904). True, during the régime of the last two Ministers the anti-Semitic temperature rose above normal, but it was only due to the fact that the increased revolutionary propaganda of those days had generally stimulated the powers of reaction to a greater display of energy. Quite aside from these exceptional conditions, the rigid consistency in enforcing the restrictive laws was sufficient to account for many tragedies in the life of the Jews, while the despotism of the provincial authorities aggravated the situation still further and turned the tragedies into catastrophes.

As far as the Pale of Settlement is concerned, the Government

continued its old-time policy of cooping up the Jews within the area of the cities and towns by shielding the villages carefully against the influx of Jews. Since the promulgation of the "Temporary Rules" in 1882, the authorities of St. Petersburg had been aiming at the gradual elimination of those rural Jewish "old timers" who had been allowed under those rules to remain in the villages.<sup>11</sup> They had been looking forward to the time when the eyes of the Russian moujik would no more be offended by the sight of a Jew. But this pious wish did not materialize quickly enough. Several governors put forth the simple proposition to expel all Jews from the villages, not excluding those who had been settled there for a long time. This step, however, was deemed too radical. The Minister of Finance, Witte, wished to solve the problem in a different way. He sought to persuade the Tzar that the introduction of the state liquor monopoly would automatically have the effect of forcing the Jews to leave the country-side, inasmuch as the liquor traffic formed the principal occupation of the village Jews.

Witte's conjecture was to a certain degree borne out by the facts. By the end of the nineties the Jewish country population of Russia had been considerably reduced. Nevertheless there was no relief in sight. For the lust of the administration had grown in proportion. The governors and the other gubernatorial

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<sup>11</sup> The "Temporary Rules" were not given retroactive force, and those settled in the villages before the promulgation of the law of May 3, 1882, were accordingly permitted to stay there. [See vol. II, p. 311.]

authorities resorted to all kinds of cunning devices to force the Jews out of the villages or out of the railroad stations which were situated outside the town limits. The Christian land-owners frequently complained about these deportations, and petitioned the governors to permit the Jewish grain merchants, who were engaged in buying and shipping the grain from the manorial store-houses, to reside at the railroad stations. The Senate was compelled over and over again to pass upon the appeals of illegally deported Jews and to enter into an examination of all kinds of hair-splitting questions involved in the manipulation of the anti-Jewish laws by the lower courts, whether, for instance, an old-time Jewish villager who returns to his home after a brief absence is to be regarded as a new settler who has no right to live in the country, or whether a Jew who lives on an estate which happens to be situated in two contiguous villages is allowed to remove from the one to the other. As a rule the authorities decided these questions against the Jews, though the most revolting decisions of this kind were later reversed by the Senate.

In connection with the prohibition of residence outside the cities, a new problem had arisen in Jewish life – the "summer resort question." The authorities frequently prohibited Jewish families from spending the summer in the outskirts of the cities if a particular resort or cottage was found to be situated outside the city line. Thousands of Jewish families were thus deprived of an opportunity to rest in God's free nature during the summer

months, and to breathe the fresh air of the fields and forests, for no other reason than that they were Jews – a new variety of territorially affixed city serfs.

The law was just as merciless in the case of Jews afflicted with disease. The watering-places situated outside the towns were barred to Jewish sufferers who wished to take a cure there. The Crimean watering-place Yalta, in the neighborhood of the imperial summer resort Livadia, was the object of particular vigilance, having been barred to the Jews by order of the dying Alexander III.<sup>12</sup> The Jewish consumptives who had managed to obtain "illegal" access to this spa were pitilessly expelled. The following incident, which was reported at that time in the Russian press, may serve as an illustration of this ruthless policy:

The wife of a [Jewish] physician had come to Yalta to improve her shattered health. While she was suffering from severe bloodspitting, a policeman invaded the bedroom of the sick woman, insisting on her giving a written pledge to leave the place within twenty-four hours. The patient was terribly frightened. On the following day the deportation was stopped, in consequence of the testimony of her physician that the slightest motion was fraught with danger to the invalid. But the fright and uncertainty had intensified the cough; the young woman became worse, and soon afterwards died.

As it happened, the action of the police was subsequently

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<sup>12</sup> See vol. II, p. 428 *et seq.*

found to be entirely unwarranted; for, as the wife of a physician, this victim of bureaucratic heartlessness was, even according to the letter of the law, entitled to the right of residence in Yalta.

A similar case was that of a sick Jewish student who had been sent by his physicians to Yalta to cure his lungs. He was expelled in the dead of winter and deported under a police convoy, together with a batch of prisoners, to Sevastopol, notwithstanding the fact that he was in a feverish condition. The correspondent of a local paper in Sevastopol reported that "along the entire road from the harbor to the prison, which was traversed by the batch, passers-by would stop in their walk, staggered by the extraordinary spectacle." The sufferer appealed to the Senate, but the latter found that the orders of the police "contained nothing contrary to the law." The highest tribunal of the empire went with equanimity on record that a Jewish student was liable to the penalty of being arrested and marched under a police escort, together with criminal offenders, for an attempt to heal his lungs in the warm southern climate.

But no place in the empire could vie as regards hostility to the Jews with the city of Kiev – this inferno of Russian Israel. Though surrounded on all sides by a string of towns and townlets with a dense Jewish population, the southwestern metropolis was guarded by a host of police watchdogs against the invasion of "aliens." Apart from the "privileged" Jews who formed part of the permanent population, the police were forced to admit into the city Jewish visitors who came to Kiev for a few days

to attend to their affairs. Yet, haunted by the fear lest these visitors might stay there too long, the police arranged *oblavas*, or raids, to hunt them down like stray dogs. About once a week, during the night, the police would raid certain hostelries in which the Jews were wont to stop, put those that were caught under arrest, and then expel them from the confines of the city. This additional heavy "night work" called for a larger police staff, and to meet this increased expenditure, an annual sum of 15,000 rubles was appropriated – from the proceeds of the Jewish meat tax. This revenue, collected from the Jews for the purpose of maintaining the charitable and educational institutions of the Jewish communities, was now used to pay the police agents to enable them to hunt down these Jews and expel them in merciless fashion. To put it more plainly, the convict, after being sentenced to be hanged, was forced to buy the rope. The methods of the Russian inquisition gradually reached the top notch of efficiency. Even the "*Kievlanin*" ("The Kievian"), the anti-Semitic official organ of Kiev, was bound to confess on one occasion that "in the course of the month of July (of the year 1901) things have taken place in Kiev which are hardly conceivable."

As far as the general disabilities are concerned, the entire area of the Russian empire outside the Pale of Settlement, though open to foreigners of all nationalities, remained hermetically closed to the Jewish citizens of Russia, and the borders of that prohibited area were guarded even more rigorously than they had been during the previous reign. In the consistent enforcement

of this principle the Government did not shrink from the most revolting extremes. A law passed in 1896 interdicted Jewish soldiers from spending outside the Pale of Settlement even the brief leave of absence which they were granted during their term of military service. A Jewish soldier serving in a regiment which was stationed, let us say, in St. Petersburg, Moscow, or even in far-off Siberia, was forced, under this law, to travel hundreds and even thousands of miles to the Pale of Settlement to spend his month of furlough there, being denied the right to remain in the city in which he was discharging his military duty, and it made no difference even if the furlough was granted to him for the purpose of recuperating his health.

In many places of the empire, the whimsicality of the local authorities in construing the law of residence was of a nature to suggest that they had no other end in view except that of making sport of the Jews. The administration of Siberia, for instance, invented the following regulation: a Jewish merchant or artisan who is registered in one of the Siberian cities shall have the right only to live in the particular city of his registration, and in no other. Since very many Jews resided outside the localities of their accidental registration, a transmigration of Siberian Jewry was the result. The Jews registered, *e. g.*, in Tomsk, though they might have lived from the day of their birth in Irkutsk, were deported in batches to Tomsk, meeting on the way parties of exiled Jews from Tomsk who had the misfortune of having their names entered upon the records of Irkutsk. Human beings were

shuffled like a pack of cards. This revolting practice of the Siberian authorities, which had begun at the end of the preceding reign, was sustained by the Senate in a decision handed down in 1897.

## **4. The Economic Collapse of Russian Jewry**

The result of all these persecutions was the complete economic collapse of Russian Jewry. Speaking generally, the economic structure of the Russian Jews experienced violent upheavals during the first years of Nicholas II.'s reign. The range of Jewish economic endeavor, circumscribed though it was, was narrowed more and more. In 1894, the law placing the liquor trade under Government control was put into effect by Witte, the Minister of Finance. Catering to the prejudices of the ruling spheres of Russia, Witte had already endeavored to convince Alexander III. that the liquor state monopoly would have the effect of completely undermining "Jewish exploitation," the latter being primarily bound up with the sale of liquor in the towns and villages. In view of this, the monopoly was introduced with particular zeal in the western governments, where a little later, in the course of 1896-1898, during the reign of Nicholas II., all private pot-houses were replaced by official liquor stores, the so-called "imperial bar-rooms." In consequence of this reform, tens of thousands of Jewish families who had derived their livelihood either directly from the liquor trade, or indirectly from occupations connected with it, such as the keeping of inns and hostelries, were deprived of their means of subsistence. It goes without saying that, as far as the moral aspect

of the problem was concerned, the best elements of Russian Jewry welcomed this reform, which bade fair to wipe out an ugly stain on the escutcheon of the Jewish people – the liquor traffic bequeathed to the Jews by ancient Poland. Known as the most sober people on earth, the Jews had been placed in the tragic position that thousands of them, in their search for a piece of bread, were forced to serve as a medium for promoting the pernicious Russian drunkenness. The memory of the days when the Jewish saloon was the breeding-place of pogroms, in which the Russian peasants and burghers filled themselves with Jewish alcohol to fortify themselves in their infamous work of demolishing the homes of the Jews, was still fresh in their minds. Cheerfully would the Jewish people have yielded its monopoly of the liquor trade to the Russian bar-room keepers and to the Russian Government who seemed genuinely attracted toward it, had it only been allowed to pursue other methods of earning a livelihood. But in closing the avenue of the liquor traffic to two hundred thousand Jews, the Government did not even think of removing the special restrictions which barred their way to other lines of endeavor. Having been robbed of the scanty livelihood they derived from their country inns, thousands of rural victims of the state monopoly flocked into the cities, only to clash with a host of urban victims of the same reform who had also been deprived of their means of sustenance. The growth of the proletariat within the Pale of Settlement, both in business and in the trades, assumed appalling proportions. The observers

of economic life in the Pale, such as the well-known Russian economist Subbotin and others, called attention to the frightful increase of pauperism in that region. Between 1894 and 1898 the number of Jewish families in need of assistance increased twenty-seven per cent. as compared with former years. In 1897, the number of Jews without definite occupations amounted in certain cities to fifty per cent. and more. The number of destitute Jews applying for help before the Passover festival reached unheard of proportions, amounting in Odessa, Vilna, Minsk, Kovno, and other cities to forty and even fifty per cent. of the total Jewish population. The crop failures of 1899 and 1900 in the south of Russia resulted in a terrible famine among the impecunious Jewish masses. Whereas the peasants who suffered from the same calamity received financial assistance from the Government, the Jews had to resort to self-help, to the collection of funds throughout the empire to which only here and there liberal Christians added their mites.

Many of these Jewish proletarians were willing to take up agriculture, but the "Temporary Rules" of 1882 blocked their way to the country-side, and made it impossible for them to buy or even lease a piece of land. Prominent Jews of St. Petersburg, such as Baron Günzburg and others, petitioned the Government to allow the Jews to purchase small parcels of land for personal use, but, after long deliberations, their petition was rejected. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, the ruling spheres of the Russian empire proved more anti-Semitic than

at the beginning of the same century, when the Government of Alexander I. and even that of Nicholas I. had endeavored to promote agriculture among the Jews and had established the Jewish agricultural colonies in the south of Russia.<sup>13</sup> The mania of oppression went so far as to prohibit the Jews from buying or leasing parcels of land which were part of a city, but happened to be situated outside the city line. A rich Jew of Minsk, by the name of Pollak, petitioned, in 1897, the local Town Council to sell him a piece of suburban property for the establishment of a Jewish agricultural farm, but his petition was refused. This refusal was thoroughly consistent. For the fact that the Jews were forbidden to own land made the training of Jews in the art of agriculture entirely superfluous. It may be added that this prohibition of land ownership was upheld by the Government even in the case of the Jewish students who had completed their course in the school of the Jewish Agricultural Farm near Odessa.

Similar methods were employed to check the development of arts and crafts, which were widely represented among the Jews, but stood on a very low technical level. Even the efforts to organize mutual help among the working classes were blocked by the Government in all kinds of ways. The well-known Jewish millionaire, Brodski, of Kiev, wishing to assist the toiling masses without distinction of creed, offered to open a trade bank in that

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<sup>13</sup> According to the statistics of 1898-1901, some 150,000 Jews in Russia engaged in agrarian pursuits. Of these, 51,539 were occupied with raising corn in the colonies, 64,563 engaged in special branches of agrarian economy, 19,930 held land as owners or lessees, and 12,901 were engaged in temporary farm labor.

city and to contribute towards that purpose the sum of 120,000 rubles. When, in 1895, he submitted the constitution of the proposed bank to the local authorities for their approval, he was required to insert a clause to the effect that the directors and the chairman of the bank council should always be Christians and that the council itself should not include more than one Jewish member. To this insolent demand Brodski made the only fitting retort: "Being myself a Jew, I cannot possibly agree that the constitution of an establishment which is to be founded with the money contributed by me and which is to bear my name shall contain restrictions affecting my coreligionists." He naturally withdrew his offer, and Kiev was deprived of a trade bank. The fact that the failure of the project also affected the Christian artisans did not disturb the authorities in the least. It was enough of a compensation that the Jews were made to suffer not only materially, but also morally, and the purpose of the highly-placed Jew-baiters was accomplished.

## 5. Professional and Educational Restrictions

In the domain of those liberal professions to which the Jewish intellectuals, being barred from entering the civil service, were particularly attracted, the law went to almost any length in its endeavor to keep them closed to the Jews. The legal career had been blocked to them ever since the passage of the law of 1889, which made the admission of a properly qualified Jew to the bar dependent upon the granting of a special permission by the Minister of Justice. In the course of a whole decade, the Minister found it possible to grant this permission only to one Jew, who, it may be added, had sat on the bench for twenty-five years – there were two or three such "relics," dating back to the liberal era of Alexander II. In consequence of this provision, the proportion of Jews at the bar, which prior to the enactment of the restriction had reached from fourteen to twenty-two per cent, was reduced to nine per cent. In 1897, a committee appointed by the Government was considering the proposal to place the disability on the statute books and to establish a ten per cent norm for Jewish lawyers. The reasons advanced by the committee for the proposed restriction were of the distinctly mediæval variety:

The conduct of a lawyer is determined by the impulses of his will, of his conscience, – in other words, that sphere of his inner life which finds its manifestation in religion.

Now the admission of Jews constitutes a menace, resulting from views peculiar to the Jewish race, which are contrary to Christian morality.

Subsequently, the champions of "Christian morality" on the staff of the Ministry of Justice bethought themselves that it might even be better and nobler to stop the admission of Jews to the bar altogether, and the proposal regarding the percentage norm was tabled. Hundreds upon hundreds of young Jews who had completed their legal education at the universities, or who had acted as assistants to sworn attorneys, saw once more their hopes for the legitimate pursuit of their profession vanish into the air.

Jewish physicians were restricted to private practice and robbed of their right to occupy a Government or public position. Even the autonomous Zemstvo institutions adopted more and more the practice of refusing to appoint Jews, and very frequently the printed advertisements of the Zemstvos offering medical positions contained the stipulation *kromye yevreyev* ("except the Jews").

The scholastic education of the Jewish children was throttled in the same pitiless manner as theretofore. The disgraceful school norm which had been introduced in 1887<sup>14</sup> performed with ever-increasing relentlessness its task of dooming to spiritual death the Jewish youths who were knocking at the doors of the gymnazia and universities. In the beginning of 1898, the post of Minister of Public Instruction, which had been occupied by

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<sup>14</sup> See vol. II, p. 350.

Dyelanov, was entrusted to Professor Bogolepov of Moscow. While Dyelanov had been occasionally inclined to soften the rigor of the school norm – it was commonly rumored that this good-natured dignitary could not bear to see a woman cry, and the tearful entreaties of the mothers of the rejected scholars made him sanction the admission of a certain number of Jewish children over and above the established percentage norm – his successor Bogolepov, an academic teacher who had become a gendarme of education, was impervious to any sentiment of pity. In the course of the three years of his administration, he not only refused to admit the slightest departure from the established norm, but attempted to curtail it still further. Thus, orders were issued to calculate the percentage norm of the Jewish applicants for admission to the universities not in its relation to the total number of the annual admissions, but separately for each faculty (1898-1899). This provision was designed to limit the number of Jewish students who flocked to the medical and legal faculties, since, in view of the fact that the Jews were entirely barred from appointments in the general educational institutions, the other faculties did not offer them even a sporting chance of earning a livelihood. The ruthlessness displayed by the Ministry of Public Instruction towards the Jewish youth was officially justified on the ground that certain elements among them were affiliated with the revolutionary movement which, just at that time, had assumed particular intensity in the Russian student body. This sentiment was openly voiced in a circular of the

Ministry, issued on May 26, 1901, which makes the following statement: "The disorders which took place at the end of the nineties in the institutions of higher learning testified to the fact that the instigators of these disorders were, to a large extent, persons of non-Russian extraction."

Bogolepov himself, the reactionary Minister of enlightenment, fell a victim of this agitation among the student body. He died from the bullet of a Terrorist who happened to be of unadulterated Russian extraction. His successor, General Vannovski (1901-1902), though endeavoring to assuage the university disorders by a policy of "kindly solicitude," maintained the former uncompromising attitude as far as the Jews were concerned. In view of the fact that, in spite of all restrictions, the ratio of Jewish students at all universities actually exceeded the norm prescribed by law, the new Minister decreed that the percentage of Jewish admissions be temporarily curtailed in the following proportion: Two per cent for the capitals (instead of the former three per cent), three per cent for the universities outside of the Pale of Settlement (instead of five per cent), and seven per cent for the Pale of Settlement (instead of ten per cent).

Even the restrictions placed upon the admission of the Jews to the gymnazia were intensified. In 1901, Jewish children who had graduated from a pro-gymnazium<sup>15</sup> were forbidden to continue

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<sup>15</sup> A pro-gymnazium is made up of the six (originally four) lower grades of a gymnazium which embraces eight grades.

their education in the advanced classes of a gymnasium unless there was a free Jewish vacancy within the percentage norm – a truly miraculous contingency. The same policy was extended to the commercial schools established with funds which were provided by the merchant class and the bulk of which came from Jews. In the commercial schools maintained by the commercial associations Jewish children were admitted only in proportion to the contributions of the Jewish merchants towards the upkeep of the particular school. In private commercial schools, however, percentages of all kinds, varying from ten to fifty per cent, were fixed in the case of Jewish pupils. This provision had the effect that Jewish parents were vitally interested in securing the entrance of as many Christian children as possible in order to increase thereby the number of Jewish vacancies. Occasionally, a Jewish father, in the hope of creating a vacancy for his son, would induce a Christian to send his boy to a commercial school – though the latter, as a rule, offered little attraction for the Christian population – by undertaking to defray all expenses connected with his education. Yet many Jewish children, though enduring all these humiliations, found themselves outside the doors of the intermediate Russian schools.

It is worthy of note that in this attempt at the spiritual extermination of the Jewish children by barring them from intermediate educational institutions the Russian law followed strictly the ancient rule of the Pharaohs: "If it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live."

The Government schools for girls were opened to the Jewish population without any restriction, and the influx of Jewesses to these gymnasia was only checked unofficially by the anti-Semitic authorities of this or that institution, thereby turning the tide of applicants in the direction of private girls' schools. But as far as the higher schools were concerned, Jewish girls were subjected to the same restrictions as the boys. The Higher Courses for Women and the Pedagogic Courses in St. Petersburg restricted the admission of Jewesses to five per cent. The constitution of the Medical Institute for Women, founded in 1895, provided at first for the entire exclusion of Jewesses. But in 1897, the doors of this institution were opened to the hated tribe – just enough to admit them to the extent of three per cent.

It was scarcely to be expected that the Jewish youths who had been locked out of the Russian school should entertain particularly friendly sentiments towards a régime which wasted their lives, humiliated their dignity, and sullied their souls. The Jewish lad, driven from the doors of the gymnasia, became an embittered "extern," who was forced to study at home and from year to year present himself for examination before the school authorities. An immense host of young men and women who found their way blocked to the higher educational institutions in Russia went abroad, flocking to foreign universities and higher professional schools, where they learned to estimate at its full value a régime which in their own country denied them the advantages granted to them outside of it. A large number of these

college youths returned home permeated with revolutionary ideas – living witnesses to the sagacity of a Government which saw its reason for existence in the suppression of all revolutionary strivings.

## 6. Anti-Semitic Propaganda and Pogroms

The reactionary Russian press, encouraged and stimulated by the official Jew-baiters, engaged in an increasingly ferocious campaign against the Jews. The Russian censorship, known all over for its merciless cruelty, which was throttling the printed word and trembling at the criminal thought of "inciting hatred toward the Government," yet granted untrammelled freedom to those who propagated hatred to Judaism, and thereby committed the equally criminal offence of "inciting one part of the population against the other." The *Novoye Vremya*, the most wide-spread semi-official press organ, and its satellites in the provincial capitals were permitted to do what they pleased. They were free to slander the Jewish religion, the Jewish people, and the Jewish communities. When the famous Dreyfus affair had started in France, the *Novoye Vremya*, the oracle of Russia's ruling spheres, arrayed itself on the side of the Jew-baiters from among the French general staff, and launched a savage campaign of slander against the Jews of the entire globe. Many an article published in the anti-Semitic press was scarcely distinguishable from the proclamations calling upon the mob to massacre the Jews.

By far the most effective propaganda on behalf of pogroms was carried on, sometimes without a conscious realization of the consequences, by the Government itself: by persisting in its anti-

Jewish policy. Observing this uninterrupted maltreatment of the Jews on the part of the Russian legislation and administration, which treated the Jews as if they were criminals, witnessing the expulsions inflicted upon the "illegally residing" Jews and the raids engineered against them, watching the constant mockery at the Jewish children who were driven from the doors of the educational institutions, and seeing the endless multitude of other humiliating disabilities, the unenlightened Russian populace necessarily gained the conviction that the extermination of Jewry was a noble and patriotic duty. Coupled with the usual economic and national conflicts, this trend of mind could not but lead to acts of violence.

At the end of the nineties the Russian horizon was darkened again by the ominous shadow of the beginning of the eighties: pogroms, at first sporadic and within circumscribed limits, broke out again in various parts of the Pale. On February 18 and 19, 1897, an anti-Jewish riot took place in Shpola, a town in the government of Kiev. The following officially inspired account of the excesses, in which the facts were undoubtedly toned down, appeared in the *Novoye Vremya*:

At three o'clock in the afternoon an immense crowd of peasants rushed into our town, and wrecked completely the stores, homes, and warehouses belonging exclusively to the Jews. A large number of rich business places and small stores, as well as hundreds of houses, were demolished by the crowd, which acted, one might say, with elemental

passion, dooming to destruction everything that fell into its hands. The town of Shpola, which is celebrated for its flourishing trade and its comparative prosperity, now presents the picture of a city which has been ravaged by a hostile army. Lines of old women and children may be seen moving [into the town] to carry home with them the property of the "Zhyds." Of essential importance is the fact that these disorders were undoubtedly prearranged. The local Jews knew of the impending disaster four days before it took place; they spoke about it to the local police chief, but the latter assured them that "nothing is going to happen."

Two months later, on April 16 and 17, the Christian inhabitants of the town of Kantakuzenka, in the government of Kherson, indulged in a similar "amusement" at the expense of the Jews. To quote the words of a semi-official report:

A cruel pogrom has taken place. Almost the entire town has been destroyed by an infuriated mob. All Jewish stores were wrecked and the goods found there were thrown about. A part of the merchandise was looted by the rabble. The synagogue alone remained unscathed.

Here, too, it was known beforehand that a pogrom was in the course of preparation. The Jews petitioned the authorities to avert the catastrophe, but the local police force was found inadequate to cope with the situation.

In both devastated towns the governors of the respective provinces eventually appeared on the scene with detachments of troops, but in the meantime the revolting performances were

over. Many rioters were placed under arrest and put on trial. More than sixty were sentenced by the courts to a term in prison from eight to fourteen months. One of the defendants, a Little-Russian peasant, who had been arrested for having taken part in an anti-Jewish riot, voiced his amazement in these characteristic words: "They told us we had permission to beat the Jews, and now it appears that it is all a lie."

A pogrom on a more comprehensive scale, arranged in honor of the Easter festival, and lasting for three days (April 19-21, 1899), was allowed to take place in the city of Nicholayev, the South-Russian port of entry. Bands of rioters, to the number of several thousand, among them many newly arrived Great-Russian day laborers, and a few "intellectual" ringleaders, fell upon Jewish stores and residences and destroyed or looted their contents, complying faithfully with the established pogrom ritual, while the police and Cossack forces proved "powerless." On the third day, when the news of the freedom accorded to the rioters and robbers at Nicholayev reached the villages in the vicinity, a whole army of peasants, both men and women, numbering some ten thousand, started towards the city on their wagons, with the intention of carrying off the property of the Jews – but they were too late; for in the meantime Cossacks and soldiers had been ordered to stop the pogroms and disperse the rioters. The peasants were driven off and had to return to their villages on their empty wagons. Exasperated by their failure, the peasants vented their fury upon the Jewish cemetery outside

the city, demolishing a large number of tombstones, and then, scattering all over the district, made an attack upon the Jewish population in the neighboring settlements and villages. In the Jewish agricultural colony of Nagartava all farm-houses and stores were wrecked and looted, and the agricultural implements demolished. The Russian peasant was unscrupulously ruining and robbing his Jewish fellow-peasant. In the adjacent colonies, the Jews, being of a robust physique, were able to put up an effective defence.

The only protest against this new outbreak of barbarism was voiced by the "Son of the Fatherland" (*Syn Otyechestva*), a liberal Russian press organ:

When at last – questioned the paper – will that terrible relic of the gloomy era of the Middle Ages take an end? When will there be a stop to this breaking of windows, this beating of men and this wrecking of houses and stores?

This time the orders from St. Petersburg were explicit: the local authorities were commanded to prevent the further spread of the pogrom agitation. The reason for this unaccustomed attitude is not difficult to guess. Two weeks after the Nicholayev atrocities, the first International Hague Conference opened its sessions (May 6-18), having been called at the initiative of the Russian emperor to discuss the question of disarmament, and this Conference must have suggested to the Tzar the advisability of first disarming the anti-Jewish rioters in Russia itself. However, he failed to draw the more important conclusion

from the Conference called by him: that it was necessary to stop, or at least to reduce, the constant arming of his own Government against the Jews and to discard the mediæval weapons of oppression and persecution which spelled destruction to an entire nation. This alone is enough to expose the hollowness of the spectacle at the Hague, which had been designed by the feeble-minded Nicholas as a sort of diplomatic entertainment.

That the Russian authorities, when so minded, were fully capable of grappling with the pogrom agitation was demonstrated by the rapidity with which, on a later occasion, they suppressed the anti-Jewish excesses in the Polish city of Chenstokhov (August 19, 1902). In this hotbed of dismal Polish clericalism, the goal of thousands of Catholic pilgrims, who arrive there to worship the Holy Virgin on the "Bright Mountain," a street brawl between a Jewish tradesman and a Polish woman grew, owing to the instigations of Catholic priests, into a monstrous assault upon Jewish houses and stores by a crowd of fifteen thousand Poles. Here, too, the customary shouts were heard: "Beat the Jews! Nothing will happen to us." But the Chenstokhov rioters made a grievous error in their calculation. The protection of the Russian authorities did not extend to the Poles who were not considered politically "dependable," and were known to be equally hostile to the Zhyds and the "Moskals."<sup>16</sup> The excesses had started in the morning, and in the evening they were at an end, a volley from the soldiers having

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<sup>16</sup> A contemptuous nickname for Russians customary among the Poles.

put the tremendous crowd to flight. When the case came up before the courts, the public prosecutor pleaded for the severe punishment of the culprits. The guilty Poles were sentenced to penal servitude and to terms in prison, and in some cases even damages were awarded to the Jewish victims – an extraordinarily rare occurrence in legal proceedings of this kind.

The union of Polish anti-Semitism with Russian Judæophobia brought again to life the old monstrous accusation against the Jews – the ritual murder libel. A Polish servant girl in the employ of David Blondes, a Jewish barber in Vilna, steeped, as she was, in gross superstition and being a pliant tool in the hands of fanatical priests, ran out one night (March, 1900) into the street, shouting that her master had wounded her and had tried to squeeze blood from her for the Matzah. A crowd of Christians quickly assembled, and seeing the scratches on the neck and hands of the girl, fell upon Blondes and gave him a severe beating. The "criminal" was thrown into prison, and the prosecuting authorities, listening to the "voice of the people," were zealous in their search for the threads of the crime. The anti-Semitic press launched a well-planned campaign against the Jews in the hope of influencing the judicial verdict. The lower court recognized the fact of the assault, but denied the presence of any murderous intent, and, leaving aside the possibility of a ritual motive, sentenced Blondes to imprisonment for four months. The counsel for the defence, the well-known lawyer Gruzenberg, and others, fearing lest this sentence might be construed by the

enemies of Judaism as a corroboration of the ritual murder libel, appealed from the verdict of the court, and proved victorious: a decision handed down by the Senate ordered the case to be sent back for a second trial to the District Court of Vilna, and the court of jurymen, after listening to the statements of authoritative experts and the brilliant speeches of the defence, rendered a verdict of not guilty (February 1, 1902). The prisoner was set at liberty, and the nightmare of the "ritual murder Dreyfusiad" was dispelled for the time being.

Even the Russian stage was made subservient to the purposes of Jew-baiting. A converted Jew by the name of Efron-Litvin, who had joined the anti-Semitic business firm of the *Novoye Vremya*, wrote a libelous play under the title "The Sons of Israel," or "The Smugglers," in which Jews and Judaism were made the subject of the most horrible calumnies. The play was first produced at St. Petersburg, in the theatre controlled by Suvorin, the publisher of the *Novoye Vremya*, and in the course of 1901-1902 it made the rounds of the provincial stage. Everywhere, the Russian Jew-haters welcomed this talentless production, which pictured the Jews as rogues and criminals, and represented the Jewish religion and morality as the fountain-head whence the supposed hatred of the Jews against the Christians derived its origin. Naturally enough the Jews and the best elements among the Russian *intelligenzia* looked upon the mere staging of such a play as an incitement to pogroms. They appealed repeatedly to the police, calling upon them to

stop the production of a play which was sure to fan national and religious hatred. The police, however, were not guided by the wishes of the Jews, but by those of their enemies. As a result, in a considerable number of cities where the play was presented, such as Smolensk, Oryol, Kishinev, Tiflis, and others, violent demonstrations took place in the theatres. The Jewish spectators and a part of the Russian public, particularly from among the college youth, hissed and hooted, demanding the removal from the stage of this libel on a whole people. The anti-Semites, in turn, shouted: "Down with the Jews!", and started a fight with the demonstrators. The police, of course, sided with the anti-Semites, attacking the demonstrators and dragging them to the police stations. This agitation led to a number of legal proceedings against the Jews who were charged with disturbing the peace. During the trial of one of these cases (in the city of Oryol), the counsel for the defence used the following argument:

The play inflames the national passions, and makes the national traits of a people the object of ridicule and mockery, – of a people, moreover, which is denied equal rights and has no means of voicing its protest. The production of such a play should never have been permitted, the more so as the police were well acquainted with the agitated state of the public mind.

The argument of the defending attorney was scarcely convincing. For the article of the Russian law which forbids the "incitement of one part of the population against the other" loses

its validity when the "other part" means the Jews.

# CHAPTER XXXII

## THE NATIONAL AWAKENING

### 1. The Rise of Political Zionism

For two decades the sledge hammer of Russian reaction had been descending with crushing force upon the vast community of the six million Russian Jews. Yet in the end it was found that the heavy hammer, to use the well-known simile of Pushkin, instead of shattering the national organism of Jewry, had only helped to steel it and to harden its indestructible spiritual self. The Jewry of Russia showed to the world that it was endowed with an iron constitution, and those that had hoped to crush it by the strokes of their hammer were ultimately forced to admit that they had produced the opposite result. At first it seemed as if the effect of these blows would be to turn Jewry into a shapeless mass. There were moments of despair and complete prostration, when the approaching darkness threatened to obliterate all paths. This stage was followed by a period of mental haziness, marked by dim yearnings for regeneration, which were bound to remain fruitless because unaccompanied by organizing energy.

This transitional state of affairs lasted throughout the eighties and during the first half of the nineties. But by and by, out of

the chaos of these nebulous social tendencies, there emerged more and more clearly the outlines of definite politico-national doctrines and organizations, and new paths were blazed which, leading in different directions, converged toward one goal – that of the regeneration of the Jewish people from within, both in its national and social life.

The turning-point of this process is marked by the year 1897. That year, in which the first International Zionist Congress held its sessions, inaugurated not only the political Zionist movement, but also the development of other currents of Jewish national and political thought. The entire gamut of public slogans rang through the air, all bearing testimony to one and the same fact: that the era of national prostration had come to an end, and that the vague longings for liberation and regeneration had assumed the character of a conscious endeavor pursuing a well-defined course. The careful observer could scarcely fail to perceive that beneath the hammer of history the formless mass of Jewry was being forged into a well-shaped instrument of great power. The organization of the Jewish people had made its beginning.

Among the movements which arose at the end of the nineteenth century there were some which came to the surface of Jewish life rather noisily, attracting the attention of the Jewish masses as well as that of the outside world. Others, however, were imbedded more deeply in the consciousness of the educated classes and were productive of a new outlook upon the national Jewish problem. The former were an answer

to the question of the "Jewish misery," of the *Judennot*, in its practical aspect. The latter offered a solution of the national-cultural problem of Judaism in its totality. The movements of the first kind are represented by Political Zionism and Territorialism. In the second category stand Spiritual Zionism and National-Cultural Autonomism. On a parallel line with both varieties of the national movement, and frequently intersecting it, went the Jewish socialistic movement, tinged to a lesser or larger degree by nationalistic tendencies.

For fifteen years, the "Lovers of Zion," or the *Hibbat Zion* movement, had been pursuing its course in Russia, without showing marked progress in the direction of that universal Jewish goal which had been formulated by its champions, Lilienblum and Pinsker.<sup>17</sup> During that period some fifteen Jewish agricultural colonies had sprung up in Palestine. The Jewish population of the Holy Land had been increased by some twenty thousand souls, and an effort had been made to create a national model school and to revive the ancient Hebrew tongue; but needless to say all this was far from solving the burning question of the six million Russian Jews who were clamoring for relief from their intolerable condition. At the slow rate of progress which had hitherto characterized the Jewish endeavors in Palestine any attempt to transfer a considerable portion of the Russian center to the Holy Land was doomed to failure, particularly in view of the hostility of the Turkish Government

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<sup>17</sup> See vol. II, p. 332.

which was anxious to check even this insignificant growth of Jewish colonization.

At that juncture, the air of Europe resounded with the clarion tones of Theodor Herzl's appeal to the Jews to establish a "Jewish State." The appeal came from Western Europe, from the circles in which the sufferings of their "Eastern brethren" had hitherto been viewed entirely from the philanthropic point of view. It came from a young Viennese journalist who had been aroused by the orgy of anti-Semitism in the capital of Austria (the agitation of Burgomaster Lueger, and others), and by the exciting anti-Jewish scenes enacted in the capital of France, where, as a correspondent of the Viennese daily "*Die Neu Freie Presse*," he followed the Dreyfus affair in its first early stages. Herzl became suddenly conscious of the acute pain of the Jewish misery. He saw the anti-Semitism of Western Europe closing ranks with the Judæophobia of Eastern Europe. He saw the ideal of assimilation crumbling to pieces, and he made up his mind to hoist the flag of Jewish nationalism, scarcely aware of the fact that it had already been hoisted in the East.<sup>18</sup> His pamphlet ("The Jewish State"), which appeared in the beginning of 1896, was in its fundamental premises a repetition of the old appeal of Pinsker. The author of the new publication was convinced, like his predecessor, that the only relief from the Jewish misery lay in the concentration of the Jewish people upon a separate territory, without determining the

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<sup>18</sup> After the publication of his *Judenstaat*, Herzl openly confessed that at the time of writing he did not know of the existence of Pinsker's "Autoemancipation."

question whether that territory should be Palestine or Argentina. But, in contradistinction to Pinsker, Herzl was not satisfied with formulating the problem theoretically; he offered at the same time a plan of political and economic organization by means of which the problem was to be solved: the creation of special representative bodies which were to enter into negotiations with rulers and Governments concerning the cession of an appropriate territory to the Jews under an international protectorate, and were also to obtain huge funds to carry out the transplantation and resettlement of vast Jewish masses. Representing a combination of theoretic enthusiasm and practical Utopias, the "Jewish State" of Herzl revived the nearly smothered political hopes which had been cherished by the *Hobebe Zion* circles in Russia. The Russian Jews, groaning under the yoke of an Egyptian bondage, flocked to the new Moses who announced the glad tidings of the Exodus, and Herzl, beholding the ready hosts in the shape of the *Hobebe Zion* societies, was quick to adjust his territorialistic scheme to the existing Palestinian movement.

In this wise, the organization of political Zionism sprang into life, using as its medium of expression the international party congresses, most of which convened in Switzerland, in the city of Basle. The first Basle Congress held in August, 1897, was an impressive demonstration of the national awakening of the Jewish people. For the first time, the united representatives of Eastern and Western Jewry proclaimed before the world that the scattered sections of Jewry looked upon themselves as one

national organism striving for national regeneration. From the center of Western assimilation, advocating the disappearance of Jewry, came the war-cry, proclaiming the continued existence of the Jewish nation, though that existence was conditioned by the establishment of a separate "publicly and legally assured" territorial center. Of the four articles of the "Basle program," which were adopted by the first Congress, three deal with the fundamental task of the party, the political and financial endeavors looking to the colonization of large Jewish masses in Palestine, and only one voices the need "of strengthening the Jewish national feeling and self-respect."

In the further progress of the Zionist organization, these two principles, the political and the cultural, were constantly struggling for mastery, the Zionists of the West gravitating toward political activities and diplomatic negotiations, while the Zionists of the East laid greater emphasis upon internal cultural work along national lines, looking upon it as an indispensable prerequisite for national rebirth. The struggle between these two principles continued at each succeeding annual Congress (at the second and third held in Basle in 1898 and 1899, at the fourth in London in 1900, and at the fifth in Basle in 1901). On the one hand, the Zionists were feverishly engaged in the external organization of the movement: the consolidation of the Shekel-payer societies, the creation of the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund, the conduct of diplomatic negotiations with the Turkish Government and with the political

representatives of other countries for the purpose of obtaining a guaranteed "charter" for a wholesale colonization in Palestine. On the other hand, endeavors were made to nationalize the Jewish intellectual classes, to promote the Hebrew language, to create a national school, and "to conquer the communities" for Zionism, that is, to strengthen the influence of the party in the administration of the Jewish communities. The Convention of Russian Zionists, held at Minsk in 1902, paid particular attention to the cultural aspirations of the party, and adopted a resolution calling for the appointment of two committees, an orthodox and a progressive, to find ways and means for placing Jewish education on a national basis. The same Convention demonstrated the growth of the movement, for, during the first five years of its existence, the Zionist organization in Russia had succeeded in securing about seventy thousand Shekel-payers who were organized in approximately five hundred societies.

Yet the political and financial achievements of Zionism during that period of bloom – prior to the crisis of 1903 – were insignificant. The diplomatic negotiations of the Zionist leader, Dr. Theodor Herzl, with the Sultan of Turkey and his Government, as well as with the German emperor and several other European sovereigns, failed of their purpose – the obtaining of a Turkish charter for the wholesale colonization of Palestine. The financial instrument of the party, the Jewish Colonial Trust, proved as yet too weak to collect the proposed fund of ten million dollars – a modest sum when compared

with the purpose for which it was destined. The colonization of Palestine proceeded at a slow pace, and its miniature scale was entirely out of proportion to the grand plan of establishing a national autonomous center in Palestine. Withal, Zionism proved during that brief interval a potent factor in the national awakening of Jewry. The strength of the movement lay, not in the political aims of the organization, which were mostly beyond reach, but in the very fact that tens of thousands of Jews were organized with a national end in view. It lay, moreover, in the current national-cultural activities, in the *Gegenwartsarbeit*, which, yielding to necessity, had been raised from a means to an end. In Western Europe, the principal significance of Zionism lay in its effect as a counterbalance to assimilation, Herzl having declared that "Zionism aims at the establishment of a publicly and legally assured home for those Jews who, in their present places of residence, are not able, or not willing, to assimilate themselves." In Russia, however, where Jewish life was dominated by more powerful nationalizing influences, the chief importance of political Zionism lay in this very propaganda of a national rebirth in the midst of those whom militant Judæophobia was endeavoring to reduce by intolerable oppression to the level of moral degenerates. The apathy and faint-heartedness which had characterized public Jewish life during the eighties and the first half of the nineties was followed by a period of noisy bustle, of organizing activity, and of great animation. The Pale of Settlement resounded with the

din of its hundreds of Zionist societies, with the speeches of Zionist agitators at public meetings and in the synagogues, with the intense agitation preceding the elections for each Zionist congress, with the heated debates about the program between the political and the cultural Zionists, between the Mizrahists (the faction of orthodox Zionists) and the Progressives. The public utterances of the Zionist leaders, Herzl and Nordau, were the subject of interminable discussion and comment. The Russian Jews were particularly stirred by the annual Congress addresses of Nordau on the "General Situation in Jewry," in which the famous writer pictured with characteristic vividness the tragedy of the *Golus*, the boundless extent of Jewish misery, having a material aspect in the lands of oppression and a moral aspect among the emancipated sections of Jewry, and which culminated in the thought that Jewry could not exist without Zion.

Nordau's motto, "Jewry will be Zionistic, or it will not be," was differently interpreted in the different circles of the Russian Jewish *intelligenza*. Among the Russian leaders of the party only a minority (Dr. Mandelstamm of Kiev, and others) were fully in accord with the extreme political views of the Western leaders. The majority of the former workers in the ranks of the *Hobebe Zion* movement (Ussishkin, Chlenov, and others) sought to harmonize the political functions of Zionism with its cultural aspirations and combine the diplomatic negotiations concerning a charter with the upkeep of the existing colonization work in Palestine, which latter was contemptuously branded by the hide-

bound adherents of political Zionism as "infiltration." This Babel of opinions within the ranks of the organization could not fail to weaken its effectiveness as an agency for the attainment of the ultimate Zionist goal. At the same time, it brought life and animation into the movement. The crack of the whip of the Egyptian taskmasters remained unheard amidst the clash of ideas and the proud slogans of national liberation which resounded throughout the Jewish Pale.

## 2. Spiritual Zionism, or Ahad-Ha'amism

And yet, political Zionism viewed as a theory failed to offer a satisfactory solution of the great Jewish problem in all its historic complexity. Born of the reaction against anti-Semitism, and endeavoring to soothe the pain of the wounded Jewish heart, it was marked by all the merits and demerits of a theory which was substantially Messianic in character and was entirely dependent on subjective forces, on faith and will-power. "If you only will it, then it is no fairy tale"<sup>19</sup>— in these words the ultimate goal of political Zionism is indicated by its founder, who firmly believed that an extraordinary exertion of the national will would transform the fairy tale of a "Jewish state" into reality. When confronted with the question as to the future of the Jewish nation in case faith and will-power should prove unable to grapple with the conditions over which it had no control, and the "fairy tale" of a united political autonomous center should not be realized, political Zionism either remained silent or indulged in a polemical retort which was in flagrant contradiction to Jewish history: "Without Zion, Judaism is bound to perish." The national conscience, however, could not be reconciled to such an answer. A more or less satisfactory solution of the problem of Judaism could not spring from the external reaction against anti-Semitism, but could only mature as the fruit of profound

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<sup>19</sup> The motto prefixed to Herzl's Zionistic novel *Altneuland*.

contemplation of the course of development pursued by the Jewish people in the Diaspora; such a solution could only be found in the endeavor to adapt the new national movement to this historic course. From this point of view political Zionism was rectified by "Spiritual Zionism," the teaching of the publicist and philosopher Ahad Ha'am (U. Ginzberg).

Even before political Zionism, or "Herzlianism," appeared on the scene, Ahad Ha'am had succeeded in substantially modifying the Palestinian idea as formulated by Lilienblum and Pinsker. In the program of the semi-Masonic order *Bne Moshe* ("Sons of Moses"), established by him in Odessa,<sup>20</sup> he laid down the fundamental principle that the preparation of the land for the people must be preceded by the transformation of the people into a firmly-knit national organization: "We must propagate the national idea, and convert it into a lofty moral ideal." Having become associated with the Palestinian colonization in a practical manner, as a leading member of the Odessa Palestine Society, founded in 1890,<sup>21</sup> Ahad Ha'am indefatigably preached that the significance of this microscopic colonization was not to be sought in its economic results, but in its spiritual and cultural effects, in establishing upon the historic soil of Judaism a nursing-ground for a pure national culture which should be free from foreign admixture, and from the inevitable cultural eclecticism of the Diaspora. After the spectacular appearance of

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<sup>20</sup> It was founded in 1889 and disbanded in 1897.

<sup>21</sup> [See vol. II, p. 421 *et seq.*]

political Zionism on the Jewish stage this fundamental idea of "Neo-Palestinianism" was more fully elaborated by Ahad Ha'am, assuming the shape of a comprehensive doctrine, known as the doctrine of "Spiritual Zionism." When the first Basle Congress was over, Ahad Ha'am declared that the "Jewish State," as formulated by Herzl, was beyond realization, for the reason that, under the prevailing circumstances, it was entirely impossible to transfer to Palestine the whole Diaspora, or even a substantial part of it. Consequently, the Palestinian colonization could not put an end to the material "Jewish misery," whereas a small Jewish center, gradually rising in Palestine, might, with the help of a proper organization, solve the national-spiritual problem of Judaism. The formation of a spiritual center in the historic homeland of the nation, the creation in that center of a Jewish national school, the revival of the Hebrew language as a medium of daily speech, the untrammelled development of a Jewish culture, without the pressure of a foreign environment – such in short he held to be the true goal of the Palestine idea. A "publicly and legally assured home for the Jewish spirit" of this kind would exert an uninterrupted nationalizing influence upon the Diaspora, serving as a living center of attraction for a genuine Jewish culture, and acting like a focus which scatters its rays over a large periphery.

The Zionist doctrine of Ahad Ha'am, as a counterbalance to official Zionism which was hall-marked by the "Basle Program," led to interminable discussions among the partisans of the

movement. It did not succeed in creating a separate party or a special public agency for its realization; yet the elements of that doctrine have mingled in a larger or lesser degree with the views of the political Zionists in Russia, and manifested themselves in the protests of the cultural Zionists against the extreme political advocates of the movement at the Zionist Congresses. The Zionist Convention at Minsk, referred to previously, resulted in a partial triumph for the ideas championed by Ahad Ha'am, who submitted a report on the "Spiritual Regeneration of Judaism."<sup>22</sup> The Convention adopted a resolution calling for a larger measure of cultural work in the schedule of the party activities, but rejected at the same time the proposal of the referee to create a Jewish world organization for the revival of Jewish culture, on the ground that such an organization might destroy the political equilibrium of Zionism.

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<sup>22</sup> [Ahad Ha'am's report is embodied in the second volume of his collected essays (Berlin, 1903) under the title *Tehiyyat ha-Ru'ah*, "The Spiritual Revival." An English version of this article is found in Leon Simon's translation of Ahad Ha'am's essays (Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1912), p. 253 *et seq.*]

### **3. Spiritual Nationalism, or National-Cultural Autonomism**

Both political and spiritual Zionism have their roots in the same common ground, in "the negation of the *Golus*": in the conviction that outside of Palestine – in the lands of the Diaspora – the Jewish people has no possibility of continuing its existence as a normal national entity. Both political and spiritual Zionists have their eyes equally fixed upon Zion as the anchor of safety for Judaism, whether it be in its material or in its spiritual aspect. Neither doctrine had formulated a clear idea of the future destinies of the Jewish Diaspora, that is, of the destinies of the entire Jewry of the world, minus the section settled in Palestine. The political Zionists evaded the question as to the fate of the Jewish people in case their aspirations should not materialize, and, faithful to the motto proclaimed by Nordau, were ready, as it were, to sentence the entire Diaspora to death, or to a life worse than death, in the eventuality of the Palestine charter being refused. The cultural Zionists protested against this hypothetical Zionism, insisting that the Diaspora would preserve its national vitality by mere contact with a small cultural center in Palestine. But how the tremendous bulk of the Diaspora Jewry should be organized for a Jewish life on the spot, how it should be enabled to liberate itself from the political and cultural pressure of the environment – that question remained unanswered by both

wings of Zionism. An answer to this question could not be found by considering merely the last stage of Jewish history, but by viewing the latter in all its phases, beginning with the ancient Greco-Roman and Eastern Diaspora. Such an answer, based upon the entire Jewish past, was attempted by the doctrine of "Spiritual Nationalism," or, more correctly, "National-Cultural Autonomism." Its fundamental principles have been formulated by the present writer in his "Letters Concerning Ancient and Modern Judaism."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> [A number of articles under that title appeared originally in the Russian-Jewish monthly *Voskhod*. They were subsequently enlarged and published in book form in 1907. The first two "Letters" were rendered into German by the translator of this volume and published in 1905 by the *Jüdischer Verlag* in Berlin, under the title *Die Grundlagen des Nationaljudentums*.]

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