

TURKISH JEWRY'S PROBLEMS

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT—Istanbul

THE forty thousand Jews of Turkey are preparing to celebrate the Holy-days in traditional fashion. As in previous years synagogues throughout the country are expected to be filled to capacity on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; all "tickets" are already reported to have been sold.

Religious problems are among the main issues confronting the old, but dwindling, Turkish Jewish community. The shortage of qualified rabbis and the lack of interest in religious tradition among the younger generation are problems which have kept communal leaders busy, but there has been little progress towards solving these problems.

The Religious Council of the Grand Rabbinate—the representative body of Turkish Jewry—today has several of its seats vacant; there are no suitable candidates to fill the gap left by religious leaders who have died in recent years.

The Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Raphael Saban, is an old man—he is 84 years of age—and as Turkish Jewry lacks a single qualified rabbi to take over his post, communal leaders pray that he will continue in office.

Indifference

The community's only hope is the Istanbul Rabbinical Seminary, which, established three years ago, will have its first graduation ceremony in 1959. Meanwhile, an institution called the Machzike Torah is trying to give religious education to Jewish boys and girls, but being of an Orthodox tendency its appeal is not wide. The Reform movement, which might attract a large section of the Jewish youth here to the synagogue, has not yet made an appearance in Turkey.

Another problem of the community is the indifference of the majority of Jews towards communal affairs. The Lay Council of the Grand Rabbinate—it deals with the administrative and social activities of Turkish Jews—has difficulty in finding new members to replace those who have departed. The so-called Co-ordination Committee, representing the eleven Jewish welfare institutions in Istanbul (they include a hospital and an orphanage), has to make great efforts to raise the annual budget of £440,000. As there is no compulsory levy contributions have to be obtained through constant appeals and a large part of the funds for the social institutions and synagogues is raised when a member of the community marries or dies and during the Holy-days at the synagogues.

No Intermarriage

Turkish Jewry does not face two of the important problems confronting most communities in Western Europe and in America—intermarriage and antisemitism. Jews generally do not intermarry in Turkey, not even in the smaller communities where it is more difficult for Jews to find a husband or wife. Jewish boys and girls still live in a closed circle: they do not usually go out with non-Jews. Therefore, parents and communal leaders do not have to worry much about the problem of assimilation.

Antisemitism is not a problem here. Although the question of Cyprus has caused among some Turks an anti-Greek feeling—which sometimes turns into an anti-minority feeling—Jews here generally enjoy equal rights. There were, for example, angry comments about the non-Moslems in the press recently, because of their failure to speak Turkish in public.



The archway of the Ahrida Synagogue in the market-place at Balat, a suburb of Istanbul, where Shabbethai Zvi, the pseudo-Messiah, preached sermons to propagate his doctrine. The synagogue was founded by Jews from Ohri in Macedonia

Sephardi Jews in Turkey generally speak Ladino or French, but the younger generation is assimilating the country's language and culture, a fact that is causing serious concern to communal leaders. Both the Government and the Opposition parties—they are now preparing for a general election—have on several occasions declared that they will never permit any sort of discrimination. However, there are minor cases of dis-

crimination—which the higher authorities certainly ignore—but local Jews lack the courage to fight it.

The economic position of Turkish Jews is fairly satisfactory. Jews here are mostly merchants, business men, and professionals. However, the economic difficulties of the country have also affected the Jews and some of them have decided to emigrate. The current limited Jewish emigration from Turkey is directed mainly to Israel and to North and South America.

Since the creation of Israel about 37,000 Turkish Jews have settled in the Jewish State. Almost every Jewish family here now has one of its members in Israel and interest towards Israel is great among Turkish Jews. As a result of this emigration old Jewish communities in the provincial areas, such as those in Maras, Diarbakir, and Van, have disappeared.

Little Cultural Activity

The largest Jewish centre—with about 33,000 Jews—is in Istanbul, followed by Izmir (5,000); there are smaller communities in Edirne, Bursa, Ankara, and Canakkale. These communities are not directly linked to that of Istanbul, although they maintain occasional contacts. The Grand Rabbinate also maintains contacts with world Jewry without being affiliated to any Jewish organisation.

Turkish Jewry has little cultural activity. The four Jewish weeklies—three of which appear in Ladino—have a poor circulation. While a fair number of Jews play an important part in the country's commercial and industrial life there are very few who play a part in Turkey's political, administrative, and cultural activities. These fields are open to all citizens, but Turkish Jews are apathetic and prefer to leave it to others to run the country's affairs.

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Zealot Theory of the Scrolls

By ANTHONY N. GOODMAN*

THE theory, advanced by Dr. Roth and Professor Driver, that the Qumran Sect can now clearly be identified as the Zealots is not, as yet, incontrovertible. It is understood that a pamphlet is to be produced this autumn setting out the facts in support of the above-mentioned theory; perhaps, however, the following matters may be considered.

(1) How can the following extracts from column 10 of the Manual of Discipline be treated as Zealot—i.e., as the beliefs of some of the most fanatical opponents whom the Romans were ever called to face:

I will heap no evil on any man
I will pursue all men only with good
For only with God
Lies the judgment of all living...
I will have no rancour or anger
Against those who are converted from rebellion

(2) As understood from the paleographical evidence, the script used in the Habbakuk Scroll is pre-Christian; Dr. S. A. Birnbaum, in "The Date of the Habbakuk Scroll" (JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, 1949, pages 161-181) and in a later article, has dated it in approximately the second quarter of the first century B.C.E. As such Scroll is an important source of information with regard to the identity of the Teacher of Righteousness, it follows that Menahem cannot be the Teacher.

(3) Dr. Paul Winter (see JEWISH CHRONICLE, July 5, 1957) has already made some comments about the absence of any fragments from the Book of Esther; the proponents of the Zealot Theory may also be referred to "Second Thoughts and the Dead Sea Scrolls," by H. F. Bruce, Professor of Biblical History and Literature of Sheffield University, at page 58:

"Where so much has been left to the chances of time and tide, we can make but tentative inferences of this kind... we cannot be too sure what to think of the fact that no fragment of the Book of Esther has been identified thus far among the Qumran finds. We know that some Jews, like some Christians in earlier and more recent times, had doubts about the fitness of Esther to be included in the canon of sacred books;... the absence of any fragment... may be accidental, and indeed one may come to light unexpectedly."

Too Great a Coincidence?

(4) Is it surely too great a coincidence to conclude that there were, during the first century C.E., and not a very great distance apart, near the shores of the Dead Sea, two sects, formerly bearing some close relation but later taking different paths, the one, Essene, completely pacifist and cut off from ordinary life, the other, Zealot, formerly linked, according to Hippolytus (Elenchos ix, 26), to the Essenes but fanatical and extremist?

(5) Is it impossible that, following the fleeing of the Essenes, together with their Scrolls, from the monastery to the near-by caves, the defence of the strategic position occupied by the monastery was taken over by the remnants of the Zealots (i.e., those who escaped after the fall of Jerusalem), who, when they were defeated and forced to leave the monastery, left behind them traces of their defence (i.e., the arrowheads) and, as the Essenes might have done earlier, took an ordinary, or, if preferred, apocryphal, military book (i.e., the Battle Scroll) with them to the caves? Professor Driver himself mentioned the possibility of the Scrolls having been deposited in the caves at different times.

As long ago as 1912 Lagrange suggested the identity of the Damascus Covenanters with the Zealots; on pages 332-333 of "Le Judaisme avant Jésus Christ" (1931) this point was further discussed. More recently, H. del Medico, in "Deux Manuscrits hébreux de la Mer Morte" (1951), identified the Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked Priest as Menahem and Ananias respectively; he also suggested the identification of the House of Absalom. Professor H. H. Rowley, on pages 57 and 79 of "The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls" (1952), names other writers and other theories as to the identification of the Qumran Sect, the Teacher, and the Wicked Priest.

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*Mr. Goodman is preparing an exhaustive bibliography of all books, articles, pamphlets, letters, and reviews on the Dead Sea Scrolls published in English, French, Hebrew, German, etc., since 1947.

Continued from previous column start. "We feel and experience that we are eternal." "It is no accident, but arises out of the very nature of reason, that man's highest goods should be common to all... For it appertains to the very essence of the human mind, to have an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God."

A typographical error last week caused a wrong phrase to be printed. It should have read (near the foot of the second column): "It [the State] cannot impose articles of belief."

SPINOZA AND THE RELIGIOUS JEW OF TODAY (2)*

By LEON ROTH

THESE great omissions and evasions culminate in Spinoza's treatment of the Biblical Covenant. The Covenant is not for the Bible a political fact, as Spinoza would seem to hold, but a religious act. This act constituted Jewry as a peculiar people, it created the Jewish people in the Biblical sense. Whether the act is one of bare acceptance on our part, or something more, I leave to the determination of the theologians. But we should note that there is here (as in any other covenant) another side, a partner, a co-signatory, who in this covenant is all-important; for—according to the Bible and in the formulation of the prayer-book—he "chose us out of all the nations and gave us his law; thereby—if I may animadvert to the problem of the survival of Jewry—planting in our midst everlasting life."

Torah Came First

I suggest then that Spinoza has misread his evidence. According to the Bible, the way of life (which is the "way of God") created the nation, not the nation the way of life. Judaism is not the product of any community for the reason that it seeks to produce a community. It was never offered as the cement of the Mosaic Commonwealth, because that Commonwealth was planned as its realisation. Judaism is the idea behind it, not its fruit. It is its programme rather than its present constitution. As the Rabbis put it in their quaint but arresting way, the Torah—Judaism—was created a thousand generations before the world; and I may perhaps be allowed to add the sobering thought that, according to the Bible, the world was created before the Jews.

But we must press on to the deeper issue; and if Spinoza really joins hands with Durkheim and Achad Ha'am, so much the worse for him. But does he? Let us inquire a little further.

In the Treatise Spinoza is arguing to a thesis. As its title, "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," clearly indicates, he is not proposing to deal with religion as such or politics as such but with their interworking and combination. He is treating religion from the point of view of government and legislation; and from the point of view of government and legislation feeling and opinion and the varying creeds and the differing philosophies can rightly be considered irrelevant. What men do is what matters to government, and what men do can be made subject to control. Religion then, so far as government is concerned, can be treated as a matter of public morals. As he says in his praise of the city of Amsterdam:

"Religion and sect is considered of that which...

no importance. It has no effect before the judges in gaining or losing a cause; and there is no sect so despised that its followers, provided that they harm no one, give every man his due, and live uprightly, are deprived of the protection of the magistrat's authority."

But the magistrate's court is not everything. Indeed, I suppose that most of us have not even seen the inside of one. For government and legislation are not the only, and they are not the determining factors in life, and public order is not the only consideration. They are only the external framework of life, and even so, only from a limited point of view. The flavour and savour of life as it is lived lies just in the feelings and emotions and opinions and creeds which are irrelevant to public order and which do not come up in the courts at all. This is ignored in the Treatise, and (in view of its special and limited purpose) rightly. But it cannot be ignored in any comprehensive view of life. And Spinoza does offer a comprehensive view of life, not however in the Treatise but in the Ethics.

Mysterious Propositions

And so we can appeal from Spinoza to Spinoza. Does the religion of the Treatise, the religion of charity and good deeds, tally with the religion of the Ethics? It may be held perhaps to correspond to the religion of the Fourth Book of the Ethics which describes the life of the "Free Man" living in accordance with the rule of right reason. But what of the Fifth Book with its mysterious and suggestive propositions, so calmly enunciated, so elegantly demonstrated, about the eternity of the mind, and the love of man for God and the love of God for man, propositions which would seem to embrace most of what is meant by religion to the ordinary religious man? Our destiny, our highest hopes, our dependence, our independence, our present beatitude, our final salvation—what are these but the great themes of religion as described, or as felt, by all? In the words of Spinoza himself: "We feel and experience that we are eternal"; or, more boldly and more positively: "Man could not exist or be conceived unless he had the power to grasp the eternal and infinite essence of God." If this is religion (and so it would seem), then in religion lies the source, and the support, and indeed the very fruition, of that very freedom the fostering of which, according to the Treatise, is the end and aim of the political organisation of society.

As we pass then from the one of

Spinoza's two great books to the other, we find an expansion and supplementation of values which is almost a reversal. Politics and the political view are not enough. The magistrates' courts are not the whole of life. Man is not only a political animal. The time and place, the community and its organisation, of the Treatise are cradled in the eternity of the Ethics.

"Ever-Ever Land"

Eternity as expounded by Spinoza is an idea of positive quality. It is contrasted specifically with quantitative endlessness. It is the completion of existence, reality in its fullness. It is in no sense a "never-never land." It is rather, if I may so phrase it, an "ever-ever land"—the "absolute affirmation of existence," "the infinite enjoyment of being," says Spinoza—a land which is not there but here, not hereafter but now, a land which, ever-present, beckons us on, and which our highest striving is to go over to and inhabit. It is the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us; and it is notable that Spinoza, when he comes to speak of its central point, the unity of the love of God for man and the love of man for God, and the "stillness of mind," the *acquiescentia in se ipso*, which is engendered in those who attain it, can think only of the Biblical "Glory" in order to express the salvation, the blessedness, the "liberty," so attained. The Bible, he seems to agree, contains more than the political life. Religion means more than the State.

It means more than the State and it is stronger than the State; as, indeed, is suggested by recent experience. Only religion has in our day and before our eyes shown the strength to stand up to the great arrogance of our time, the arrogance of the State. Religion, too, is arrogant. Like the God of the Bible, jealous and terrible, as well as full of mercy and love, it makes its demands, presents its claims, from above. But the arrogance of politics enslaves our humanity. The arrogance of religion creates it and gives it shape. The power of the one crushes and destroys; the authority of the other raises up. It dwells in the high and holy place, but with him also that is of a contrite and humble heart, to give new life to the spirit and to proclaim liberty to the captives and to open the doors of the various prisons invented by the ingenuity of our politicians for our bodies and souls alike.

Thus I suggest that the religious Jew of today may well turn to the Ethics, and particularly to its Fifth Book, for one of the great needs of

our lives, a religious approach to religion. For the "free man" of the Fourth Book of the Ethics, the highest product of the political life, ideal participant in the ideal republic of the supposedly autonomous rule of right reason—the Free Man cannot become himself unless, as is clearly indicated in the last sentence of the Fourth Book, he receives the support of the truths underlying, and expounded in, the Fifth. Humanism is not enough, for the simple reason that man is more than narrowly human.

The Fifth (and last) Book of the Ethics demonstrates in detail the contention of the famous autobiographical passage with which the unfinished Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect opens. In this passage Spinoza sets out from the futility of ordinary experience; and he describes how he came to see that it is only by love directed towards the infinite and eternal that we can rid ourselves of subjection to the pursuit of the fleeting and evanescent pseudo-goods of life: money, fame, desire. Ultimately, the way of right living and the way of right feeling and the way of right thinking are one and the same. Its practical side is the familiar one of detachment. But it is detachment of a special kind. It is detachment through attachment, attachment to the eternal and infinite object which can never alter and never disappoint, the one object which can arouse an emotion strong enough to master all other emotions.

For emotional life remains the truth of man: desire cannot be extinguished. But it can be diverted. Its object can be changed. Its "proper" object can be found.

Infinite and External

Spinoza's philosophy may thus be accounted as his discovery and exploration of the infinite and eternal. But he could not have set out on the quest if he had not in some fashion already known its end. "Thou couldst not find me if thou hadst not known me."

This pre-figuration, or pre-vision, or pre-adumbration, of the infinite and eternal is the first root of religion. We are men, not stones. We start with a sense of eternity; but a sense of eternity is not the knowledge of eternity, certainly not its full consciousness or its fruit. It is a nisus, a striving, a groping which exists in us owing to the facts of our human, and of universal, nature. It is only slowly and with difficulty and through the exercise of conscious effort that we attain the clarity of the real. But the beginnings are in us from the

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*The first article by Professor Roth appeared last week.