

Continued from Casimir

1. Jan Dlugosz, Encyclopedia.com

(1415–1480), Polish cleric and annalist. He acted as secretary to Cardinal Zbigniew Olesnicki in Cracow, who was violently anti-Jewish. After Olesnicki's death in 1455, Dlugosz began a history of Poland, which he concluded in 1479. He was appointed archbishop of Lvov in 1478. A primary source for historical material, his annals include a firsthand account of the massacre of the Jews in Cracow in 1407 and the plunder, forcible conversions, and burnings of Jewish houses which accompanied it. His work set the anti-Jewish tone of medieval Polish historiography.

2. Małgorzata Łacka-Matecka, Jan Długosz Academy, *Jews in the Annals of Jan Długosz – an Eternal, Living Stereotype*

Jan Długosz, the most outstanding Polish writer of the Middle Ages and one of the greatest historians of his time, became famous for writing, with great flair, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae (The Annals, Namely the Chronicles of the Famous Congress Kingdom of Poland)*. The *Roczniki (Annals)* consists of twelve books covering the events of those times in the history of Poland, all the way through to the contemporary time of the author. In writing the *Annales*, Długosz performed a work of titanic proportions, using as sources chronicles, annals, the lives of saints, documents found in church and royal archives and eyewitness accounts. He also included his own accounts because, as a member of the church and political elite, he participated in many important state events himself...

The image of the Jew, which Długosz created in his stories concerning Host profanation and the ritual murder of children, demands us to perceive the Jewish population as murderers, servants of Satan and sorcerers. Was the chronicler overcome by a collective phobia? Did he really believe that Christian children were cruelly murdered? Writing in this manner, as presented above, Długosz further strengthened, in the consciousness of people, the image of the Jew as a persecutor and a contemptible torturer of Christians which Europe, for the first time, came to know at the beginning of the 12th century.

3. Przesław Mojecki (16th century Poland), *Jewish Cruelties*, tr. Chone Shmeruk pg. 17

We know from our chronicles that our Polish Asswerus, Casimir the Great, took Esther in place of his own wife, the despised Adelaide, and begat with her two sons – Niemira and Pelka – and daughters as well, and, persuaded by Esther, he permitted to bring them up as Jews. Likewise, Esther's gentle words induced him to devise by scheme this loathsome law under the name of the Prince Boleslaw, who died a long time ago.

4. S. Y. Agnon, *The Heart and the Eyes* (1943)

And Esther lay in her grave, as the dead lie in their grave, and she could not rest with the dead, for each man and woman whose eyes and heart are not with him will not find rest in the grave. And Esther arose from her grave at night and sought her heart and her eyes, which she had given to her husband the king, and which the king had taken for himself. And Esther wandered from her grave to the place of her pleasure to seek her heart and her eyes, but she could not find the door. For Esther had no eyes, and she could not see, for the king had taken them for himself, with her heart. So Esther would do every night, until her brethren recited Shema. When they read the words of this Torah, "And you shall not stray after your hearts and after your eyes," Esther returned to her grave, to return that night and seek her heart and her eyes, after which she had strayed.

5. Prof. Hillel Weiss, *יהסיים פתולוגיים בין יהודים לגויים*, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/1.1089825>

[Agnon's tale] was a sort of explanation of the pathological, sadomasochistic relationship between Jews and the nations.

The Impact of Casimir III

6. Rabbi Yissachar Tamar (20th century Poland), Aleh Tamar to Jerusalem Talmud, Pesachim 2:5

This is the principle: Exile begins sweet and ends bitter, and Israel was bitter in the beginning and then ended sweet. Lore tells that when the exiles of Germany came to Poland, they said, *Poh leen* ("stay here") – meaning: In truth, this

land is also not our home, but it is an inn in which we can rest until the dawn of redemption arrives. But the destruction of the exiles of Israel in Europe in our day has shown that if Israel has no permanent home in the Land of Israel, then the exile will not serve even as a safe inn. If there is no home for Israel, then even an inn does not exist.

7. Prof. Ruth Wisse, *Jews and Other Poles*, <https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/history-ideas/2015/12/jews-and-other-poles/>

Poland! It's one of those words capable of causing a rift between otherwise perfectly compatible Jewish minds. When I mention an upcoming trip to Warsaw, a friend says: "How can you be going there?! I would never set foot in that place!" On my return, reporting on the country's warming attitudes toward Jews to another friend who was born and spent her childhood there, she stops me: "I don't want to hear any more." I had forgotten for a moment that Polish neighbors had killed her father.

There is no way of simplifying or ironing out the relation of Jews to Poland, Poland to Jews, each to their common history. It is a fact that Poland offered Jews some of the best conditions they ever experienced in exile. Even if one discounts the saying, "Poland was heaven for the nobles, hell for the peasants, and paradise for the Jews," it is plain that the last-named did enjoy unusual opportunities in the country—until they didn't.

8. Times of Israel, *Polish PM Cancels Trip to Israel Amid Spat Over Netanyahu Holocaust Comments*, Feb 17 '19

The crisis emerged after Netanyahu was asked by The Times of Israel in Warsaw about a controversial agreement between Israel and Poland to end a dispute over a law passed by Warsaw that criminalizes blaming the Polish nation for Holocaust crimes. Netanyahu denied suggestions of going along with historical revisionism: "Here I am saying Poles cooperated with the Nazis. I know the history and I don't whitewash it. I bring it up," he said. He added that "a not insignificant number" of Poles had collaborated and said, "I don't know one person who was sued for saying that."

A Jerusalem Post story (later corrected) mischaracterized the Israeli leader's quote as saying the Polish nation collaborated with the Nazis. And in some news reports, Netanyahu was quoted as saying "The Poles cooperated with the Nazis." Netanyahu's office later clarified that he did not say "the," and played reporters a recording of the comments to confirm this...

Poland later said it had received clarifications from the Israeli government that had alleviated its concerns.

The initial news reports led Polish President Andrzej Duda to threaten to block the high-level summit from taking place in Israel. Duda wrote on Twitter that if Netanyahu indeed had made the comments, he would offer to host an upcoming meeting of the so-called Visegrad group himself instead of holding the meeting in Israel. "In this situation, Israel is not a good place to meet," Duda had said.

The Jew of the Future

<http://www.torontotorah.com/futurejew>

Napoleon: An Introduction

9. Mostly Kosher, <http://mostlykosher.blogspot.com/2011/08/napoleon-and-tisha-beav-myth.html> Aug 10 '11

The story is told that Napoleon was walking through the streets of Paris one Tisha B'Av. As his entourage passed a synagogue he heard wailing and crying coming from within; he sent an aide to inquire as to what had happened. The aide returned and told Napoleon that the Jews were in mourning over the loss of their Temple. Napoleon was indignant! "How come I wasn't informed? When did this happen? Which Temple?" The aide responded, "They lost their Temple in Jerusalem on this date 1,700 years ago." Napoleon stood in silence and then said, "Certainly a people which has mourned the loss of their Temple for so long will survive to see it rebuilt!"

This story is so famous, I was sure it was true. However a furious Google search has yet to provide a source for this tale. I did however come across this very same question, posed to J. David Markham - President of the International Napoleonic Society and one of my favorite podcasters. The noted historian of Napoleon answered that he had never heard that story. You can draw your own conclusions.

10. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

In 1819, Napoleon also remembered that the French Revolutionary Army had in early 1799 sent Jewish agents to Damascus and Aleppo. The implication was that their mission was to secretly gather intelligence and discreetly stimulate

local Jewish support... Perhaps linked to one or more of these Jewish agents is a pitch-perfect document that (without payment or other financial reward or incentive) first surfaced in 1940 London... Originating from Nazi Vienna (August 1939), it was an elderly Jewish refugee's last-minute typescript of his family's long-treasured, handwritten, German translation, said to be derived from an earlier text, perhaps partly in French and partly in Hebrew.

This is the purported "Letter to the Jewish Nation from the French Commander-in-Chief Buonaparte," dated April 20, 1799. In that specific year, that date was notably the first day of Passover... There was also a covering letter said to be from Aaron, son of Levi, Rabbi of Jerusalem (dated Nisan 5559). Both letters claim to be written from Jerusalem, falsely identified as the site of Napoleon's headquarters.

In the context of the revolutionary doctrine of self-determination, the alleged Napoleon letter puts great emphasis on Jewish peoplehood. It describes "Israelites" as "lawful heirs" to their "ancestral land" and encourages them to "hasten" home to reclaim their "patrimony." It also quotes from the Catholic *Old Testament* and offers extravagant rhetoric lauding the Revolutionary French Republic. The alleged rabbinic letter refers to building a Temple in Jerusalem and calls to arms all able-bodied Jews, no matter where they live.

11. Prof. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Napoleon, French Jews and the Idea of Regeneration*

At the same time, there were more nefarious aspects to Napoleon's treatment of the Jews. Most notably, he reversed the universalism of the French Revolution (the idea that "all men" were considered equal before the law), and made French Jews work to demonstrate their fitness to be equal. Moreover, he often referred to them negatively, calling them "a contemptible and degraded nation... capable of the lowest deeds" and "a vile people, cowardly and cruel."

12. Some Basic Facts

- 1789 Third Estate forms the National Assembly, by force
- 1789 France's National Assembly: Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
- 1790-1791 *Sephardic Jewish citizenship, then Ashkenazi Jewish citizenship*
- 1791 Constitution accepted by Louis XVI
- 1792 *Napoleon becomes a Captain in the French military, age 26*
- 1792 French Monarchy abolished
- 1795 *Napoleon becomes a General, age 29*
- 1796-1798 *Napoleon conquers Italy, makes a treaty with Austria, invades Egypt*
- 1799 *Napoleon becomes First Consul*
- 1801 *Napoleon's pact with the Pope*
- 1802 *Napoleon becomes Consul for Life*

Napoleon and the Jews

13. Dr. Allan Hertz

Allen Z. Hertz was senior advisor in the Privy Council Office serving Canada's Prime Minister and the federal cabinet. He formerly worked in Canada's Foreign Affairs Department and earlier taught history and law at universities in New York, Montreal, Toronto and Hong Kong. He studied European history and languages at McGill University (B.A.) and then East European and Ottoman history at Columbia University (M.A., Ph.D.). He also has international law degrees from Cambridge University (LL.B.) and the University of Toronto (LL.M.).

14. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

The world seems to have known little or nothing about the "Letter to the Jewish Nation" dated April 20, 1799. But way too soon to have then originated from distant Ottoman "Syria" came remarkable European tidings about an apparently earlier, undated (and perhaps entirely unrelated) Napoleonic "proclamation to the Jews." The latter news perhaps reflects the proclamation to the Jews that the Turks had heard about in the months before September 10, 1798.

In this connection, two or three writers of the last thirty years have referred to an alleged April 1799 report, most appropriately from Constantinople. This news from Turkey was said to have been perhaps initially published, maybe in early May 1799, in the *Gazette de Hambourg*, a city that was neutral during the War of the Second Coalition. Such

vague references are hard to verify directly, because the 1799 numbers of the *Gazette de Hambourg* are extremely rare. I have been unable to find them.

But, let us turn our attention to the press of Berlin, the capital of another neutral power, Prussia. News of an alleged April 22nd Constantinople report featured in the *Vossische Zeitung*, Number 58 (May 14, 1799): "Constantinople, April 22nd. In several African and Asian places, Buonaparte has issued, as it is called, a proclamation to the Jews for the restoration of the Kingdom of Jerusalem."

Too soon to have been copied from the *Vossische Zeitung*, but perhaps derived from a possibly earlier publication in the *Gazette de Hambourg*, was the same story in The True Briton of London. This alleged an April 12th Constantinople report, news of which had just arrived, along with many other items, in the latest mails from Hamburg (May 17, 1799): "Buonaparte, it is said, has published a Proclamation to the Jews dispersed in Africa and Asia, inviting them to restore the Kingdom of Jerusalem."

Likely too soon to have been copied from London, but perhaps derived from Hamburg or Berlin, was the same story in Le Moniteur (Paris). But cited as source there was an alleged April 17th report from Constantinople (May 22, 1799): "Constantinople, April 17th. Bonaparte arranged for publication of a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to come line up under his banners in order to re-establish ancient Jerusalem."

Taken as a whole, the pertinent paragraphs in *Le Moniteur* contain nothing that could not have been copied from the information already provided by the *Vossische Zeitung* which had covered more ground... Nonetheless, the article in *Le Moniteur* was politically significant, because that newspaper was known to regularly publish news, as provided by the Directory. Clearly, the editors would have waited for an official green light for whatever they printed about Napoleon, who was of key concern to the Directors.

15. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

News of an undated proclamation to the Jews reached the Ottoman Turks certainly before Sultan Selim III declared war against France (September 10, 1798)... That is what we learn from the Ottoman Empire's chosen historiographer, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha who intellectually was a towering figure...

Scrupulous about identifying his sources, Cevdet specifically writes that it was then heard "from the mouth of a Jew" that, as "understood from a printed and published official declaration," Jews from all over had been invited to agree on "establishing a Jewish government in Jerusalem." [*Tarih-i Cevdet*, New Edition, 2nd Printing, Hicri 1309, Vol. 6, p. 282.] Who was this Jew who told the Ottomans about such a declaration? It is impossible to say. However, we should bear in mind that Napoleon certainly had Jewish spies, agents or emissaries in the Balkans...

16. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

Another reflection of the public's fascination with the Egyptian campaign was information which fellow Director Merlin de Douai got from Commissioner François, a senior official in northern France. François troubled to report a conversation with a Jew from Germany. According to the latter, Europe's Jews viewed Napoleon as the Messiah whose coming would trigger the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. The German Jew also said that 1.5 million Jews were awaiting Napoleon's signal to leave for the Mideast. The counsel from Commissioner François was simultaneously strategic and skeptical (February 28, 1799): "One can derive a great deal from these people by flattering their religious prejudices. I leave it to your wisdom either to work to develop this idea if you think it of some value, or to just laugh it off as a joke."

17. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

As an exile on Saint Helena, Napoleon carefully read the back issues of *Le Moniteur*. He would thus have been reminded of the proclamation mentioned in the publication of May 22, 1799. Nonetheless, his own account of the campaign said nothing about issuance of a "proclamation" to the Jews. But very much to the point, Napoleon then chose to refer to the Jewish agents sent to Damascus and Aleppo and to "a vague hope" that was "animating" local Jews when spring arrived in 1799. In the third person, he wrote (1819): "News was circulating among them that, after taking Acre, Napoleon would present himself in Jerusalem where he would re-establish the temple of Solomon."

What Napoleon himself had probably been thinking back in 1799 was perhaps revealed more clearly in Paris in the year following his return from the Mideast. As First Consul of the Republic, he told the Council of State (August 16, 1800): "If I governed a nation of Jews, I would re-establish the temple of Solomon." Napoleon had there been making

a broader point about governing to please the majority as "the way to recognize the sovereignty of the people." Thus, in this important democratic context, he chose to rhetorically offer posterity (alongside three other examples) the startling hypothesis of a majority Jewish country centered on the Temple in Jerusalem.

18. Decree of May 30, 1806 (Adapted from translation of Google Translate)

<https://www.napoleon.org/histoire-des-2-empires/articles/document-decret-imperial-n-1-631-du-30-mai-1806/>

On the account which has been given to us that in several northern departments of our Empire, some Jews, exercising no other profession than that of usury, have, by the accumulation of the most immoderate interests, put many farmers from these countries in a state of great distress;

We thought that we should come to the aid of those of our subjects whom an unjust greed would have reduced to these unfortunate extremes;

These circumstances have at the same time made known to us how urgent it is to revive, among those who profess the Jewish religion in the countries subject to our obedience, the sentiments of civil morality, which unfortunately have been amortized in too many of them by the state of abasement in which they have languished for a long time, a condition which it does not enter into our intentions of maintaining or renewing;

For the accomplishment of this purpose, we have resolved to gather in an assembly the first of the Jews...

Art. 1. For one year, from the date of the present decree, all executions of judgments or contracts, other than by simple acts of preservation, shall be suspended against non-merchant farmers of the departments of Saar, Roer, Mont-Thunder, Upper and Lower Rhine, Rhine-and-Moselle, Moselle, and Vosges, when the titles against these farmers were granted by them to Jews.

19. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto* pg. 140

Lending an ear to the complaints of Alsations that Jews still clung to the old attitudes in spite of their new status as citizens, Napoleon decided to tackle the problem at the root. He expected the Jewish population to adapt themselves to their new situation, to give up their unique institutions such as rabbinical jurisdiction, and to be ready for amalgamation with their environment even to the point of intermarriage. This led him to convene an assembly of Jewish notables from France, Italy, and French-occupied western Germany. Here laymen and rabbis discussed the issues put to them in the form of twelve questions on behalf of the emperor... In the course of the deliberations Napoleon realized that whatever the decisions of the assembly, they would not be binding for the Jews unless they were sanctioned by a purely religious authority. This gave rise to the idea of calling a Sanhedrin consisting of religious leaders and rabbis. The assembly, however, turned out to be a rather conservative body as far as its rabbinical members went and they alone counted in terms of religious authority.

20. Prof. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Napoleon, French Jews and the Idea of Regeneration*

When he called the Assembly's successor body, the Sanhedrin, in 1807, Napoleon offered further instructions about the kind of regeneration he expected, and the special measures he now planned for the Jews. These included ten-year restrictions on money-lending; as well as a requirement to local governments that, for every two marriages between Jews that they authorized, a third needed to be a Jewish-Christian intermarriage.

21. The 12 Questions, <https://www.napoleon.org/en/history-of-the-two-empires/articles/napoleon-and-the-jews/>

1 Is it lawful for Jews to marry more than one wife?

2 Is divorce permitted by the Jewish religion?

3 Can a Jewess marry a Christian, or a Christian woman a Jew? Or does the law only allow Jews to marry amongst themselves?

4 Do Jews regard Frenchmen as brethren or strangers?

5 In any case, what duties does their law prescribe to Jews towards Frenchmen who are not of the Jewish religion?

6 Do Jews who were born in France, and who have the legal status of French citizens, regard France as their fatherland? Is it their duty to defend it, to obey its laws, and to accommodate themselves to all the provisions of the Civil Code?

7 Who nominates Rabbis?

8 What police jurisdiction do the Rabbis exercise over the Jews? What kind of police magistracy do they recognise among themselves?

9 Are the forms of election and jurisdiction of the police magistrates laid down by the Jewish law, or merely consecrated by custom?

10 Are there any professions prohibited by Jewish law?

11 Does the law forbid Jews to practise usury in dealing with their brethren?

12 Does it forbid or does it allow them to practice usury in dealing with strangers?

22. The decree of March 17, 1808, establishing the Consistory

<https://www.napoleon.org/en/history-of-the-two-empires/articles/napoleon-and-the-jews/>

A synagogue and a consistory were to be established in each département containing at least two thousand Jews, or in an ensemble of départements united so as to make at least two thousand Jews. Each consistory was to be headed by a Chief Rabbi, assisted by another Rabbi and three lay people, elected by 25 Jewish Notables approved by the authorities. The consistory had also to be approved by the authorities. Rabbis were not to be paid by the state. A Central Consistory was to be sited in Paris, comprising three Rabbis, taken from amongst the Chief Rabbis of the departmental consistories, and two other Jews. The consistories were to be responsible for enforcing the regulations, verifying that the Rabbis taught religion in accordance with the doctrinal decisions of the Great Sanhedrin, supervising the proper management of synagogues, and communicating the number of Jewish conscripts to the authorities. The salaries of the Rabbis of the Central Consistory (6,000 francs) and the Chief Rabbis of the departmental consistories (3,000 francs) were to be found by the Jewish community.

23. The Infamous Decree, March 17, 1808 (Google Translate)

<https://www.napoleon.org/histoire-des-2-empires/articles/document-decret-imperial-n-3210-du-17-mars-1808-concernant-les-juifs/>

(7) From now on, and as of July 1st, no Jew will be able to engage in any trade, commerce or traffic of any kind, without having received, for this purpose, a patent from the prefect of the department, which will be granted only precise information. and that on a certificate, 1. of the municipal council, noting that said Jew has engaged neither usury nor illicit traffic; 2. the consistory of the synagogue in the district in which he lives, attesting to his good conduct and probity...

(16) No Jew, not presently domiciled in our department of Upper and Lower Rhine, will henceforth be allowed to take up residence there.

No Jew, not presently domiciled, will be allowed to take up residence in the other departments of our Empire, except in the case where there is the acquisition of a rural property and will be engaged in agriculture ...

(17) The Jewish population in our departments will not be allowed to provide replacements for conscription; consequently, every Jewish conscript will be subject to personal service.

(18) The provisions contained in the present decree shall have their execution for ten years, hoping that at the expiration of this period, and by the effect of the various measures taken with regard to the Jews, there will be no longer any difference between them and the other citizens of our Empire; except, nevertheless, if hope was deceived, to prolong the execution for such time as it will be considered suitable.

(19) Jews in Bordeaux, and in the departments of Gironde and Landes, which have not given rise to any complaint, and who do not engage in illicit traffic, are not included in the provisions of this Decree.

Napoleon's Motivations

24. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

For example, a printing press was dispatched to the Ionian island of Corfu. There, the French printed a proclamation in Greek and Italian which announced that "with the establishment of a press, those kings still sitting on their shaky thrones tremble, their iron yoke has been lifted from off the necks of the people by revolution." That same press was soon used to print, significantly in Italian, the lectures (*discorsi*) delivered in the synagogue on Corfu. There, local Jews were major beneficiaries of the new revolutionary regime...

Despite more than two hundred years of friendship between France and the Ottoman Empire, Napoleon had little respect for the Sultan's sovereignty. Starting in 1797, he repeatedly aimed revolutionary propaganda at the subject Peoples of the entire Ottoman Empire...

From 1797 the Turks were fully alive to the modern political meaning of all those many French revolutionary references to the glories of ancient Greece. On either side, contemporary diplomatic correspondence and other sources show that the Turks then knew that Napoleon and his local commanders were publishing inflammatory proclamations and dispatching letters and subversive emissaries to spark revolt against the Sultan on the Aegean islands, and in Morea and Rumelia. That last Balkan province notably included the heavily Jewish city of Salonika. But, there were other important Jewish communities in all three of the cited regions, and also in Constantinople and in so many other places of the Ottoman Empire.

The Foreign Minister (*reis-ül-küttab*) and Deputy Foreign Minister (the Phanariote Grand Dragoman of the Porte) repeatedly protested to the French Embassy in Constantinople, as in late 1797 and again in June and July 1798. These Ottoman grievances were embodied in a long memorandum shared with the diplomatic corps simultaneous to Turkey's September 1798 declaration of war against France...

Napoleon placed exceptional emphasis on public relations, including propaganda custom-made for various niche audiences, near and far. During his early campaigns, he was always concerned about the availability of printing presses and foreign-language typeface. For example, he repeatedly signaled urgent need for Greek and Arabic characters, the latter also useful for printing in Ottoman-Turkish.

25. Dr. Allen Hertz, *Jews, Napoleon, and the Ottoman Empire: The 1797-1799 Proclamations to the Jews*

Despite revolutionary secularism, Napoleon took ancient Jewish history very seriously. Before sailing for Egypt (May 19, 1798), Napoleon had prepared a list of the books he wanted on board. There, he classified the Catholic *Old Testament* under the heading of "politics," along with some titles like the *Koran* and Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*. An hour before Napoleon left Cairo for the "Syrian" campaign, he wrote to the Directory (February 10, 1799): "When you read this letter, it is possible that I might be on the ruins of the city of Solomon."

Regarding the "Syrian" campaign, Napoleon reminisced (January 1813): "I constantly read *Genesis* when visiting the places it describes and was amazed beyond measure that they were still exactly as Moses had described them."

26. Prof. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Napoleon, French Jews and the Idea of Regeneration*

The emperor sympathized with complaints that Jews were "abusing" their fellow citizens through usury, yet he also believed in the possibility of their regeneration. Under his wise and paternal guidance, he felt, he might succeed where others had failed, regenerating Jews and cementing his glory in the annals of history. As Ronald Schechter has argued, Napoleon's earlier liberation of Jewish ghettos in Italy had been "performances," aimed primarily at Gentile audiences. These "dramatically staged liberations" had helped feed the myth of Napoleon as a heroic figure who freed the people of Europe from oppression. Completing their regeneration thus promised to add to the image of Napoleon as "a figure who combined the attributes of Moses, the Messiah, and indeed Gd himself."

27. Prof. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Napoleon, French Jews and the Idea of Regeneration*

As I have argued elsewhere, in the eighteenth century, three discourses existed in Europe on the status of the Jews, three ways of thinking about their potential for integration into society. Though these terms were not used during the period, I have labeled them the "impossibilist" discourse, the "unconditionalist" discourse, and the "conditionalist" discourse. Regeneration would fall into the latter category...

[T]he Revolution's granting of citizenship had hardly silenced impossibilists, especially in Alsace. After the Revolution's radicalization in the mid-1790s, their virulence about Jews had even increased... Yet circumstances also made pure impossibilism difficult to express. In a famous pamphlet of the time, the lawyer Louis Poujol portrayed Jews as amoral usurers whose religion authorized them to cheat and steal from non-Jews. He argued that Jews had shirked their patriotic duties and done nothing to make themselves worthy of citizenship; revoking their equality was justified until Jews demonstrated that they had changed. Yet even as the revolutionary years had discredited the idea of complete egalitarianism, so too had they made it difficult to argue that any one group was incapable of regeneration... Napoleon thus opted for a conditionalist approach to the Jews, casting himself as their great restorer.

28. Prof. Jay R. Berkovitz, *The Napoleonic Sanhedrin: Halakhic Foundations and Rabbinical Legacy*

The range of questions brought before the Jewish assembly reveals the novelty of the Napoleonic initiative. At issue was the determination of the regime to resolve the clash between the authority of the state and the authority of religion. Twelve in all, the questions focused on marriage and divorce, attitudes toward non-Jews, civic duties, rabbinic authority, occupational restrictions, and money lending. The ultimate goal, as defined by Napoleon, was to "reconcile the beliefs of the Jews with the duties of Frenchmen, and to transform them into useful citizens, in order to remedy the evil to which many of them apply themselves to the great detriment of our subjects." Napoleon sought formal reassurance that the Jews of the empire were committed to the French civil code and to his program of broad social integration.

Jewish reactions to Napoleon

29. Prof. Jay R. Berkovitz, *The Napoleonic Sanhedrin: Halakhic Foundations and Rabbinical Legacy*

In the case of intermarriage, as in other areas as well, the decisions of the Sanhedrin varied substantially from the responses of the Assembly of Jewish Notables. As a rule, the assembly's responses were more deliberative in tone and reflected a wider range of views than the Sanhedrin, which was predominately a rabbinic body. In its third decision the Sanhedrin stated that although a mixed marriage created *civil* obligations, it was, from a religious standpoint, a prohibited act and halakhically invalid. As for the highly unorthodox formulation in the first part of the assembly's response, there is no trace of it in the doctrinal decisions of the rabbinic body. It appears to have been little more than a rhetorical ploy intended to curry favor with the Napoleonic commission, but it offered no *legal* dispensation from the traditional prohibition against intermarriage. The failure to notice this distinction has led historians to overstate the commonly held claim concerning the general failure of the Sanhedrin to represent the positions of Jewish law and tradition faithfully.

30. Prof. Jay R. Berkovitz, *The Napoleonic Sanhedrin: Halakhic Foundations and Rabbinical Legacy*

Over the next decades the Sanhedrin exerted a double impact. On the one hand it aroused a new genre of criticism; French Jews were regularly taken to task for failing to behave according to the "noble sentiments" of loyalty to the *patrie* declared by the Paris assembly. Within the Jewish community the Sanhedrin was viewed as having defined the essential elements of the ideology of emancipation.

31. Prof. Meir Loewenberg, *Napoleon's Balfour Declaration*

There is one report that after the fall of Jaffo a delegation of Jews visited Napoleon to offer their support and to tell him that they looked upon him as their Messiah. If this report is true, it is an exception because most Palestinian Jews refused to support Napoleon. This was especially true in Acre where Jews joined the Arab and Turkish forces in defending the city against Napoleon's armies. At the head of Acre's Jewish community was Hayim Pirchi who served as finance minister to Ahmad al G'esar, pasha of Acre. Napoleon sent several messengers to Pirchi, trying to persuade him with all kinds of promises to defect to the French side. But Napoleon failed and Pirchi remained loyal to the Turks.

The Jews of Jerusalem also rejected Napoleon's promises... The Arabs of Jerusalem decided to kill all Jewish residents once Napoleon's armies reached the vicinity of the city. An informer told the Rishon L'zion, Jerusalem's chief rabbi, Rabbi Yomtov Algazi, and his assistant, Rabbi Mordecai Meyuhah (who would later succeed Algazi as Rishon L'zion), about this plan. The two rabbinical leaders immediately assembled all of Jerusalem's Jews, men, women and children, at the Wailing (Western) Wall in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and to offer prayers for the defense of Jerusalem. They prayed to the Almighty that He might save the Holy City and prevent its fall to the French.

After the special prayer service at the Western Wall Rabbi Meyuhah met with the Turkish governor of Jerusalem to suggest that the city walls be strengthened and that trenches be dug in front of them. He offered Jerusalem's Jews as volunteers for this work. The city authorities accepted this offer readily and ordered all residents to report for work at the city walls. The chief rabbi, together with all of the city's Jews, was among the first to answer the city's call. The governor then asked the Jews to continue to pray for the city's welfare, but the chief rabbi assured him that the Almighty had already heard their prayers and that Napoleon would not come to Jerusalem.

32. Paul Mendes-Flohr, Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 124-127