

History of Judaism

Directions in Modern Judaism

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Overview

Micro research exercise sharing

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Documentary

Beginning of Modern Judaism

- Traditionally late 17th century
 - Abandonment of Jewish faith by some – Jewish identity retained however
- 1700
 - Beginning of the return of Diaspora to Holy Land
- Second half of 18th century
 - American and French Revolutions freed Jews from discriminatory and segregative laws, gave them citizenship, and allowed them to pursue careers based on talents
 - Common theme to these three perspectives: Jews no longer waiting for messianic rescue, but actively seeking personal and national fulfillment in the here and now

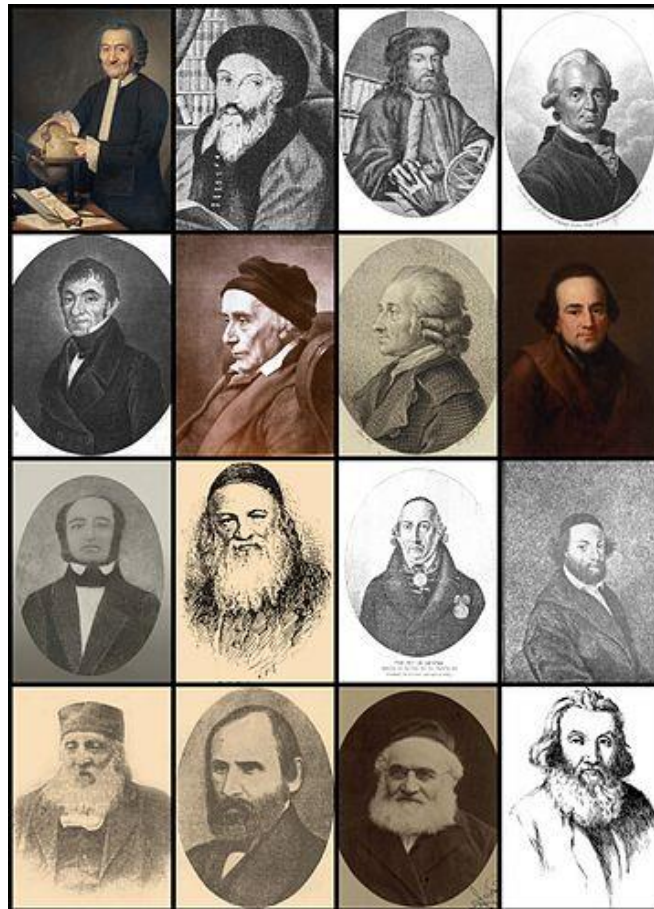
Old Yishuv Communities in Palestine



The Haskala (Enlightenment)

- 18th century Haskala
 - Often taken as starting point for Jewish modernity, but this is only true for Ashkenazic Jews of Central and Eastern Europe; Sephardic Jews exposed earlier to Westernization in Western Europe and Italy (e.g. Amsterdam and Venice, 17th century)
 - Ashkenazim exposed to Western languages, manners, and customs due to new economic opportunities
 - Bankers and brokers; army provisioners; capitalists; also increase in mainstream European Jewish intellectuals – argued for the end of Jewish ghettos

Faces of the 18th century Jewish Haskala



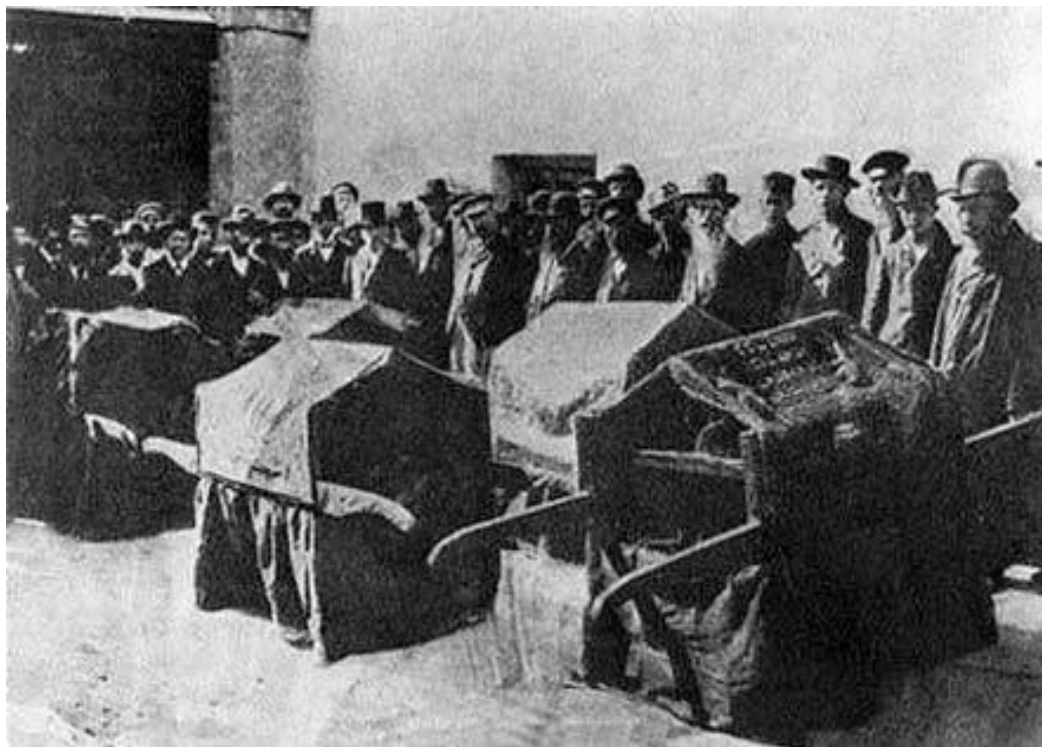
The Haskala in Central Europe

- Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86)
 - Philosopher and prominent figure of 18th century Jewish Enlightenment
 - Published *Jerusalem* in 1783 – defended validity of Judaism as inherited faith and revealed divine legislation; at the same time believed in reason as universal religion – Judaism only one manifestation of this
 - Translated Torah into German with the poet Naphtali Herz (Hartwig) Wessely (1725-1805); combined Hebrew characters with modern German phonetics; wrote modern biblical commentary in Hebrew (the *Be'ur*) – fundamental in introducing Jews to German culture without sacrificing Jewish identity
 - The Berlin Haskala – group of Jewish intellectuals particularly active following Mendelssohn's death; focused on need for secular education over traditional Jewish studies, and emphasized study of Bible instead of Talmud; replaced Hebrew with German – disbanded but put in motion the abandonment altogether of Jewish faith for many

The Haskala in Eastern Europe

- In the Russian Empire
 - Haskala a major force until 1881 – Jews transformed their societies into enlightened centres of secular learning and ‘productive occupations’
 - Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788-1860) – published *Te-uda be-Yisrael* (Testimony in Israel) – pointed out benefits of secular education
 - Joseph Perl (1744-1839) and Isaac Erter (1792-1851) – attacked superstitious folk customs of masses; paved the way for widespread anticlericalism of Russian Haskala
 - Development of modern Hebrew literature in Russia (1840s and 50s): Micah Judah Lebensohn (1828-52) and Abraham Mapu (1808-67)
 - Religious and cultural reform material (1860s): poet Judah Leib Gordon (1830-92) and essayist Moses Leib Lilienblum (1843-1910)
 - Russian nationalists: published Russian-language Jewish weeklies focused on ‘patriotism, emancipation, modernism’; saw themselves as Russians by nationality and Jewish by religious belief
 - Society for the Promotion of Culture Among the Jews of Russia – established in St. Petersburg and Odessa (1863)
 - All of the developments of the Russian Haskala – goal of promoting Jews as loyal Russians whose Judaism was a matter of personal choice
 - Russian Haskala collapsed with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, and subsequent violent pogroms against Jews and severe restrictions on Jewish enterprise and education

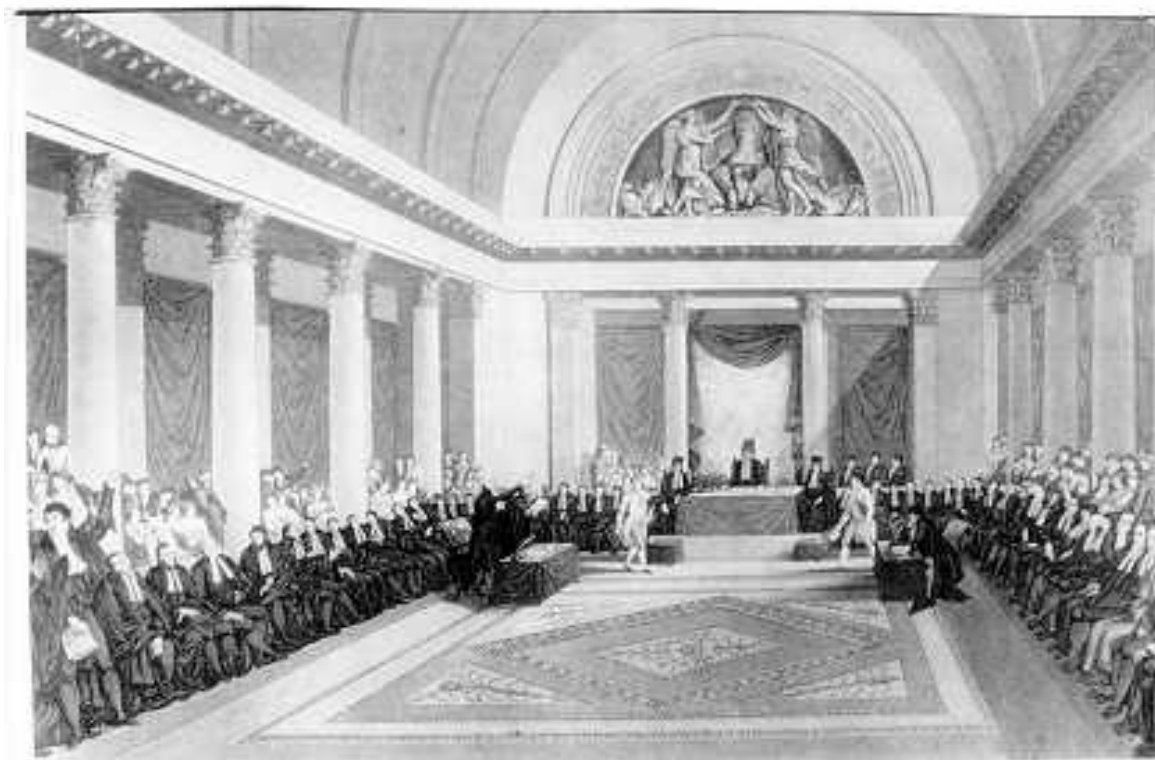
Kishinev Pogrom



The Haskala and Religious Reform

- France, under Napoleonic period (1800-15)
 - Napoleon assembled a Sanhedrin in 1807 to create modern definition of Judaism
 - Denounce Jewish nationhood and national aspirations; assert rabbinical authority in spiritual matters only; recognize civil over religious authority
- Other Western societies
 - External aspects of Judaism rather than doctrine reformed – e.g. Reform temple in Seesen (1810) – organ and choir music; men and women sat together; German instead of Hebrew used for preaching; liturgical references to personal messiah and restoration of Israel omitted; e.g. reformers in Charleston, South Carolina (1824)
 - German reform: synods of 1840s provided theological rationalization for changes introduced – Judaism always a religion in development; Jews no longer a nation and not bound to religious and political code of law; Messianism transformed into active concern for social welfare – limited success in Europe
 - Reform Judaism much more successful in the US – strengthened by Jewish immigration in 1840s – Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900) instrumental in this
 - First conference of American Reform rabbis in 1869, Philadelphia – Jews no longer to hope in a return to Palestine, and rejection of bodily resurrection – the position on Zionism changed for many Reform Jews with establishment of Israel in 1948

Napoleon's Sanhedrin, 1807



The Haskala and Religious Reform

- Development of Reform Judaism in the US
 - Almost all 200 synagogues by 1880s Reform
 - The Pittsburgh Platform (1885) – a manifesto of Reform Judaism
 - Judaism developmental, not national; historical identity beneficial, maintenance of tradition not; the Talmud religious literature, not legislation
 - Pittsburgh Platform remained official position of American Reform Movement until 1937 with introduction of the Columbus Platform – reemphasized concept of Jewish personhood, the Hebrew language, and traditional liturgy and practices; after WWII, Reform split into liberal and more conservative branches of Reform Judaism

World Union for Progressive Judaism



The Haskala and Conservative Developments

- Conservative Judaism
 - Zacharias Frankel (1801-75) and his followers seceded in 1845 from a Reform synod in Frankfurt over limiting of Hebrew to prayer
 - Conservative Judaism – not just ethics but historical expression of Jewish experience
 - Judaism developmental but closely tied to study of tradition and will of the people
 - Unlike traditional Judaism, ordained women rabbis in 1985
 - Closely tied to Jewish nationalism – encouraged study of Hebrew and supported Zionist movement

The Haskala and Orthodox Developments

- Western and Central Europe
 - Frankfurt, Germany – Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-88) – Neo-Orthodoxy
 - Theoretical division between religion and culture: in religion Orthodox, in manners and culture Western
 - Transported to the US – e.g. Yeshiva University in New York City and most English-speaking Orthodox synagogues
- Eastern Europe
 - Orthodoxy rocked in mid-18th century by messianism and dulled by legalistic scholarship
 - Revived through new critical methods of Elijah ben Solomon (1720-97) of Vilna
 - Development of Hasidism (pietism) under Israel Ba'al Shem Tov (c. 1700-60) (mid-18th century) – non-messianic and focused on piety and personal religious devotion; centred around the figure of the charismatic rebbe
 - Hasidism popular in Poland but opposed by traditional rabbinical class in Lithuania – Hasidim in turn classified Lithuanian rabbis as 'Minaggedim' (Opposers); these two groups later united against secularized forms of Judaism

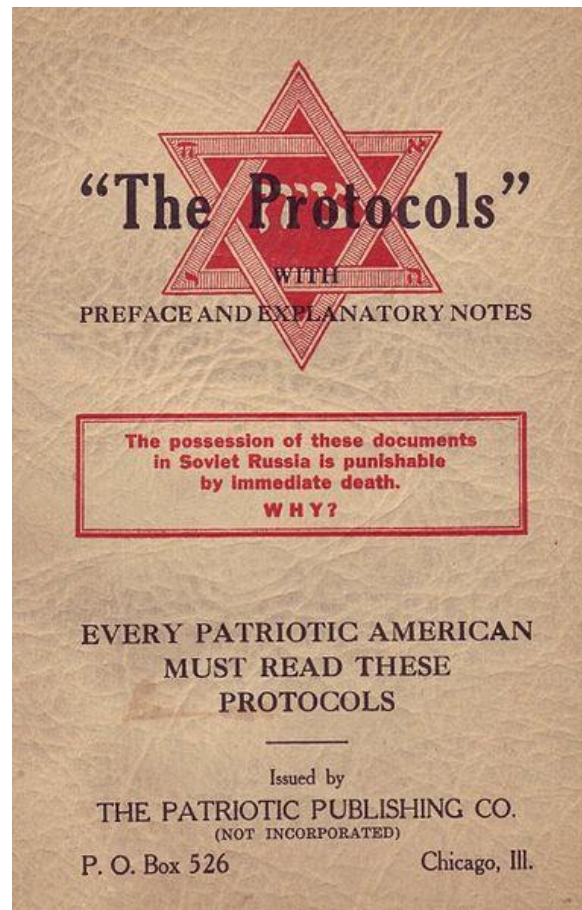
Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews



Jewish-Christians Relations during and after the Haskala

- Roman Catholic church
 - Saw Jews as liberal, secular, and anticlerical – benefactors of the French Revolution; traditional right in France sided with this position – e.g. the Dreyfus Affair (end of 19th century)
- Russia
 - Jews accused of undermining Russian Orthodoxy and the tsar – violent pogroms in 1881-82 and in 1905
 - Blood libel continued – influenced by Russian Orthodoxy – e.g. Jewish bookkeeper in Odessa accused of ritual murder in 1911
 - *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* – fraudulent document concerning a Jewish conspiracy to conquer the world through liberalism, freemasonry, and other modern movements – still used by anti-Semitic groups in 21st century
- During and post-WWII
 - Majority of Christian leaders in Europe remained silent during Nazi persecution of Jews
 - World Council of Churches (1946) – denounced anti-Semitism
 - The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church (1965) – revised church's traditional position on Jews as killers of Christ; Pope John Paul II greatly improved relations between Catholics and Jews

The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion



Zionism

- Evolved from other reforms toward Jewish emancipation
 - A reaction to prevalent anti-Semitism in European society towards end of 19th century – only a Jewish homeland could provide a safe haven for Jews
 - Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) – transformed Zionism into a political movement
 - Exposed to anti-Semitism at school, and later as Paris correspondent for a Viennese newspaper both in Austria and France; The Dreyfus affair which he covered solidified his belief that a Jewish state was the only solution
 - *The Jewish State* (1896) – Jewish state to be settled by World Council of Nations
 - Organized the World Congress of Zionists in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland – Herzl became first president of the World Zionist Organization established by this congress
 - Sought the support of European Jewish and non-Jewish leaders for the Zionist cause
 - Sultan of Turkey refused Jewish mass settlement in Palestine
 - Great Britain: proposed Jewish settlement in British-controlled Sinai Peninsula, then Uganda – this latter proposal accepted by Herzl and some other Zionists but strongly opposed by the Zionist congress of 1903

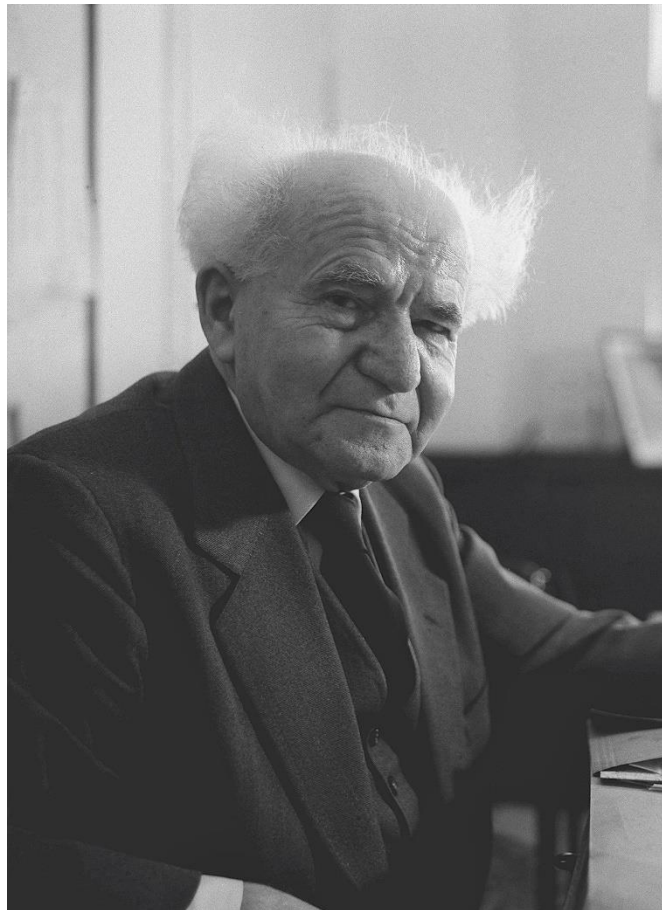
Theodor Herzl (1860-1904)



Zionism in post-WWII Period

- Britain sought to maintain close ties with Arab leaders – bankrupt postwar and needed oil; limit Soviet influence in the region
 - British denied entry of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine; most infamous case the *Exodus*, returned by British to Marseilles in France – led to more militant forms of Zionism
 - The *Haganah*, *Irgun* (with radical fringe group *Lechi* (*Lochamei Herut Yisrael* – Freedom Fighters of Israel) – blew up Palestinian railway in 1945; raids on airfields in 1946; attack on King David Hotel in 1946
 - By end of 1947 Britain was losing its hold on Palestine and other colonies – Jewish independent state supported by Truman in the US and Stalin in the Soviet Union; matter referred to UN – in November 29 1947 the UN approved partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab state (Jews 62 % of land; Arabs 38%) – accepted by Zionists but rejected by Arabs
 - May 14, 1948 – State of Israel declared as independent state
 - Invasion by Arab forces on May 15 – the War of Independence; lasted until January 1949, with Israel gaining 80% of Mandatory Palestine
 - West Bank, including East Jerusalem annexed by Jordan; Gaza Strip annexed by Egypt

David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) - founder and 1st Prime Minister of Israel



Post-1948 Israel

- Subsequent Major Wars
 - Six-Day War (June 1967)
 - Between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Syria (and support from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Algeria, and other Arab forces): Israel gained East Jerusalem, Golan Heights, Sinai, and Gaza
 - Yom Kippur War (October 1973)
 - Between Israel and Egypt and Syria
 - Lebanon War (1982)
 - Between Israel and PLO in Southern Lebanon
 - Ongoing conflicts with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Palestinian terrorist organizations in West Bank and Gaza Strip

