



BUKHARA VII. BUKHARAN JEWS

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vii. Bukharan Jews

“Bukharan Jews” is the common appellation for the Jews of Central Asia whose native language is the Jewish dialect of Tajik. It was first adopted by Russian travelers to Central Asia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, then, apparently independently, by early 19th-century British and Indian travelers. Members of the group call themselves [Y]Isro’el (refined style) or Yahūdī (official/neutral style); the latter term was also applied to them in official Persian (Tajik) and Chaghatay (Čağatāy, Uzbek) terminology before the Russian conquest of Central Asia. Despite a ban since the mid-1920s, a pejorative derivative *ju[h]ud/jut* (from *johūd*) is current and has become so common that Jews themselves use it. In the official and semiofficial Russian ethnographic nomenclature of the late 1920s and 1930s the term *tuzemnye Evrei* “indigenous Jews” (of Central Asia) was used. In the same period Uzbek and Tajik had the euphemistic *mayda-millat* (member of a national [ethnic] minority).

1. Demography.

There are no reliable statistics on Jews in Central Asia before the 19th century. In 1832 an Anglican missionary of Jewish origin, J. Wolff (1795-1862), who



seems to have undertaken a kind of census of Jews “in Toorkestaun,” stated their number to be “13,600 souls” (p. 195). The first census of the Russian empire (1897) counted 11,463 adherents of Judaism in Central Asian territory under Russian sovereignty (Troïnitskiï, p. 258, table XII). It can be estimated that at least 9,500-10,000 of them were Central Asian Jews. Data from various independent sources suggest that there were 6,000-6,500 Jews in the amirate of Bukhara, 4,000-4,500 of them in the city itself (Neymark, pp. 100-07; Olufsen, p. 297; Sukhareva, 1966, pp. 168-69, 1976, pp. 76, 93; Agerov, pp. 103, 111, 115, 119, 124). The total of all Central Asian Jews at the end of the 19th century was probably between 16,000 and 17,000. In 1926, according to the Soviet census, the number of Central Asian Jews in the USSR was 18,698 (Lorimer, p. 55, table 23), of whom 18,172 were dwelling in the Uzbek SSR (including Tajikistan; Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 11, 14). They were already outnumbered even there, however, by Ashkenazis (Jews of European origin, 19,611; *ibid.*, p. 11), who have continued to gain proportionally. Samarkand, with 7,740 Central Asian Jews, was the largest center of concentration (*ibid.*, p. 15) and has remained so (Zubin, p. 177). The first Soviet census after World War II, conducted in 1959, listed 25,990 Central Asian Jews who were native speakers of Tajik (*Itogi ... 1959*, p. 188, table 53, notes 9, 10). At a cautious estimate, about 10 percent of Central Asian Jews who abandoned the Jewish dialect of Tajik in favor of Russian (or Uzbek in a very few instances) must be added to this figure, bringing the estimate of all Central Asian Jews within the borders of the USSR to between 28,000 and 29,000. The low natural increase between 1925 and 1959 is to be explained by emigration beginning in the late 1920s and by a long-term lowering of the birthrate caused by the Great Terror and World War II (see below), when males of procreative age were separated from women and many of them were killed. In 1970, according to data from the Soviet census (*Itogi ... 1970*, pp. 202, table 11; 223, table 13; 284, table 22; 295, table 24; 306, table 27; with somewhat misleading distribution among language groups), there were an estimated 40,000 Central Asian Jews in the USSR (corrected by about 15 percent for Central Asian Jewish native speakers of Russian). This natural increase, about 40 percent in eleven years, is to be explained by normalization in the composition of the procreative age group and a general improvement in socioeconomic conditions. By the end of the 1960s there were also about 8,000 Central Asian Jews living in Israel (Täjer, pt. 1, p. 105) and perhaps 1,000 (primarily emigrants from Palestine/Israel and their descendants) in other countries, mainly the United States and to a much lesser extent Canada, France, Venezuela, Argentina, and South Africa (in descending order). A major demographic event of the 1970s was large-scale Bukharan



Jewish emigration from the USSR (see below). Calculations based on the Soviet census of 1979 (*Chislennost'*, pp. 110-11, table 12; 132-33, table 32), with linguistic distribution corrected by 20 percent for Central Asian Jews who were native speakers of Russian, yield an estimate of about 40,000 Central Asian Jews in the USSR. Taking into consideration different natural rates of increase in different countries and including descendants of Bukharan Jews to the third generation in Israel and Western countries, the estimated total population of Bukharan Jews at the end of 1987 was 85,000, of whom about 45,000 were in the USSR, about 32,000 in Israel, and about 3,000 in all other countries combined.

2. History.

Pre-Islamic Period. Jews are known to have settled in Georgian area undoubtedly under Achaemenid domination sometime after 539 B.C. (Ben-Ören and Moskovich, p. 99), when Babylon, with its large Jewish population, was absorbed into the empire, and it can be suggested that at the same period they reached parts of Central Asia that also belonged to the empire. It is stated repeatedly in the Book of Esther (composed in the early Parthian period, at least several decades before 78-77 B.C.; see, e.g., Bickerman, pp. 202, 207; Eissfeldt, pp. 691, 802) that Jews dwelled “in all the provinces” (3:6, 8; 8:5, 12; 9:20) of the kingdom of Persia, Parthia (covering approximately the territory of the southwestern part of the Turkmen Soviet republic and the northern part of the modern Iranian province of Khorasan), the hereditary domain of the Arsacid dynasty, would certainly have been included among them. The Acts of the Apostles (probably composed ca. A.D. 85) contains an apparently reliable list of Jewish pilgrims to Jerusalem on Pentecost in the year 33 in sequence according to their native tongues (2:9-11), beginning with the group from farthest east, the “Parthians.” The Medes and the Elamites are clearly distinguished, though both groups also came from the Arsacid empire. It is probable therefore that the pilgrims called Parthians were those who spoke the Parthian language as their native tongue, which means that they had to have been settled in a Parthian-speaking area for several generations. Gamli'el the Elder, an early 1st-century president of the Sanhedrin (the supreme religious Jewish legislative body, based in Jerusalem), is said to have addressed a letter “to our brethren, sons of the exile in Babylon and our brethren that [dwell] in Media, and to the rest of the exile of Israel” (Babylonian Talmud, “Sanhedrīn,” 11b). As the sequence of the exiles mentioned is from Jerusalem eastward, “the rest of the exile” must include the Jews dwelling east of Media, that is, in the



eastern part of greater Iran.

The first explicit evidence for the presence of Jews in Transoxania is a story about the sojourn at MRGW'N (Marv) of an early 4th-century Babylonian *āmōrā* (authority on Jewish religious law), a member of the religious academy in Pūmbēdītā (Pērōz-Šāpūr, Anbār, in Mesopotamia), Šemū'el bar Bīsēnā (Babylonian Talmud, “Āḇōdā Zārā,” 30b). A number of Babylonian Jewish religious authorities were engaged in the silk trade, and Marv stood on the Silk Road. Bar Bīsēnā's journey may also have been undertaken in connection with the silk trade. While he was in Marv he refused to drink alcoholic beverages, doubting their ritual cleanliness. Such doubts may indicate that Jews had already been dwelling in Marv for several generations, long enough for a Babylonian *āmōrā* to suspect that they lacked knowledge or rigor in fulfilling the relevant ritual requirements. The end of the 6th century is usually accepted as the time when the authority of the Babylonian academies began to be recognized beyond the limits of Mesopotamia, and, according to the early 10th-century chronicler Nāṭān “the Babylonian,” the Pūmbēdītā academy was “in olden times” the supreme authority on religious law for the Jews of Khorasan (i.e., the entire eastern portion of greater Iran; Friedlaender, p. 753). During 1954-56 excavations near Bayrām-'Alī (in the immediate vicinity of the ruins of ancient Marv) ossuaries datable to the 5th-7th centuries were found with inscriptions in square Hebrew script (Klevan', pp. 91-92). That there were Jews in Kāt (the capital of K̄vārazm) in the 6th century can be assumed on the basis of a remark in the *Šahrestānīhā ī E'ūrānšahr* that Narseh, the founder of the city, was the son of a Jew (*Narseh ī Yahūdagan*; Markwart, *Provincial Capitals*, pp. 11, 43-44; Nyberg, *Manual I*, p. 114.3). This statement is apparently traceable to an earlier legend aimed at explaining the presence of Jews there. Further proof of Jewish presence in the city before the Arab invasion of K̄vārazm (93/712) is a reference by Ṭabarī to *aḥbār* among those consulted by the K̄vārazmšāh (II, p. 1237); this term refers to non-Muslim religious authorities, particularly Jewish rabbis (Barthold, I, p. 239, III, p. 545, has offered no support for his doubts on this point). The Tang-e Āzāo inscriptions, in Persian in Hebrew script dating from the beginning of the Islamic period (1064 Seleucid era/135/753-54; Henning) in the Ġūr (Ġōr) region of Afghanistan, suggest that Jews may also have been present in that area somewhat earlier (Henning). There may have been a Jewish population in the Kabul region as well: The grandfather of Abū Ḥanīfa No'mān (founder of the Hanafite *madḥab*, d. 150/767) was a slave (afterward a *mawlā*) from Kabul named Zūṭā (Aramaic “little”; Schacht, p. 123), who must have been either a



Jew or a Christian. An 8th-century Jewish merchant's private letter in Judeo-Persian from Dandan Uiliq (Margoliouth; Utas) can be interpreted as proof that Persian-speaking Jews were engaged in barter of clothing or cloth for sheep, apparently with local Turks, in eastern Turkestan. It is unlikely that this trade was new in that turbulent period; it must have continued a tradition. No matter where the author of this document and other traders came from, they may have made sabbath stops in Jewish communities along the way.

Early Islamic period (to the Mongol invasion). The absorption of part of Central Asia into the caliphate (completed ca. 130/747) introduced two elements that fundamentally affected Jews of the region throughout subsequent history. The first was the status of *ahl al-ḍemma* (the *ḍemmīs*, or “protected people”) and the concomitant *ṣorūt ‘Omar* (“conditions” of ‘Omar II, r. 99-101/717-20), which defined the rights of and restrictions on them. The second was conversion to Islam. ‘Omar had forbidden both destruction of synagogues existing in Khorasan since pre-Islamic times and construction of new ones (Fischel, p. 34). A report by Ṭabarī (II, p. 1688) is to be interpreted as proof that no later than ca. 130/747 the Jews (as well as the Zoroastrians and Christians) of Marv had been recognized as *ahl al-ḍemma*, an autonomous fiscal entity with an administrative head responsible to the Muslim administration for payment of relevant taxes by the community. About 400 years later an apparently identical structure was attested in Samarkand: The late 12th-century Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela (Hebrew text, p. 54; cf. Eng. tr., p. 59) reported that a certain ‘Oḅadyā “is appointed upon” the Jews there and called him *nāšī’* (lay head of the community). This title also appears in the inscription on a tombstone in the 11th-13th-century Jewish cemetery near the village of Jām, close to the site of Fīrūzkūh in Ġūr (Rapp, 1971, p. 21 no. 21; Shaked, p. 80). Two other inscriptions from there contain the honorific *rōš haq-qāhāl* (head of the community; Rapp, 1971, p. 38 no. 34; p. 40 no. 37; Shaked, loc. cit.), which may have had the same social meaning. During this period Jewish communities all over Central Asia were clearly structured on the pattern that had emerged in the 8th century. As for the taxes to be paid by *ahl al-ḍemma*, two were mentioned by Ṭabarī (loc. cit.): the *jezya*, the special poll tax, and the *karāj*, the land tax. Neither is mentioned in connection with the Jews again until the 19th century, when the former was still being collected (see below). Apparently some other taxes, not covered by regulations on *ḍemmīs*, could also be imposed upon a Jewish community: According to Abu’l-Faḏl Bayhaqī, sometime after 396/1006 a tax destined for the maintenance of a garden in Balḵ was shifted from the Muslim population of the city to the Jews (Barthold,



I, pp. 350-51). There is evidence that the Jews of Central Asia wore yellow garments in compliance with a requirement in the *šorūṭ* ‘Omar as early as the late 4th/10th century (Lazard, *Premiers poètes* II, pp. 164-65, *bayts* 204, 206) and in the late 5th/11th-early 6th/12th centuries (de Fouche, *couf*, p. 224).

As for conversion to Islam, it undoubtedly took place, though the relevant data are scarce. The example of Zūṭā, Abū Ḥanīfa’s grandfather, has been mentioned (see above). A certain Khorasani Jew, Abū Ḥafṣa, was a *mawlā* of the caliph Marwān I (r. 64-65/684-85), hence a convert (Brockelmann, *GAL* I, p. 74 n. 4; Barthold, VI, p. 553; his son Marwān has a reputation as a poet in Arabic). An episode mentioned in the biography of the Sufi Foḏayl b. Īāz Tamīmī (d. 187/803) involves conversion of a Jew from Bāvard (Abīvard; ‘Aṭṭār, I, p. 80). According to Yāqūt (III, p. 184), about the middle of the 3rd/9th century Šahīd Balkī’s father, Ḥosayn, left his native Jahūdānak (lit. “little Jewish place”), in all probability a Jewish suburb of Balk (see below), for Balk itself—a change of residence probably reflecting a convert’s choice to live among those whose religion he had embraced. The head of the Karrāmīya in late 4th/10th century Khorasan, Abū Ya’qūb Eshāq b. Maḥmašād (d. 383/993), is said to have converted to Islam more than 5,000 Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians (Barthold, II/1, p. 233). It may be assumed that the proselytizing activities of the Karramites were carried on throughout the eastern part of greater Iran. However, Jews are the only pre-Islamic religious group in Central Asia to have survived in that region to the present.

The only available data on the number of Jews in the region immediately after the conquest are some unreliable 12th-century figures (see below). Nevertheless, according to Nāṭān “the Babylonian” a bitter controversy took place in 296-305/909-16 between the exilarch ‘Uṭqēḥā and the head of the Pūmbēdītā academy over revenues from Khorasan (Friedlaender, *loc. cit.*). The Jewish population there at the beginning of the 4th/10th century must have been sizable for such a controversy to have arisen. According to Maqdesī (Moqaddasī, 2nd ed., p. 323), there were “many Jews and few Christians” in the region in the 370s/980s. In the early 6th/12th century Mōšē Ebn ‘Edrā quoted a conveyance that “[there are] in ... Ġazna about 40,000 Jews and in other inhabited places of Khorasan approximately the same number” (ed. Kokovtsov, p. 219). Later in that century Benjamin of Tudela (*loc. cit.*) gave the number of Jews in Ġazna as 80,000 and in Samarkand as 50,000. These figures, fantastic as they are, attest to a contemporary belief that the Jewish population was quite numerous.



Cisoxania. As far as is known the majority of Jewish population centers in the region were situated south of the Oxus, extending as far as Ġazna. The poet ‘Onṣorī reported that Jews were one of four religious communities addressing praises to Sultan Maḥmūd Ġaznavī (p. 318, *bayt* 3034, and n. 4), which suggests that they formed a noticeable segment of the population in the early 5th/11th-century Ghaznavid state. The Ghaznavid court poet Manūčehrī likened the singing of birds to utterances in Syriac and Hebrew (p. 90 *qaṣīda* 42, *bayt* 2, and n. 4), which means that he must have heard these languages uttered, and Gardīzī mentioned “the Jews of this time” in *Zayn al-aḳbār* (ed. Ḥabībī, p. 222), which was probably composed in Ġazna. According to a legend retold by Jūzjānī (I, pp. 383-85; cf. tr. Raverty, I, pp. 314-16), Banjī b. Nahārān Šansabānī obtained from Hārūn al-Rašīd (170-93/786-809) the governorship of Ġūr after having learned *adab* from a Jewish merchant; as a condition for this instruction, Banjī promised that he and his heirs and vassals would allow Jews to dwell in Ġūr and would protect them. The Jewish element in this legend was undoubtedly aimed at explaining the presence of Jews in the Mandēš area of Ġūr, where the Šansabānīs were chieftains. Attribution of the role of *he, ros civilisateur* to a Jewish merchant may reflect the functioning of Jews as transmitters of the “larger” culture that they knew from trade contacts to the remote, still pagan population of mountainous Mandēš. The remains of the Jewish cemetery near the village of Jām in the vicinity of Fīrūzkūh, the main town of the Varšād[a] (Varsād) area of Ġūr, are evidence that there had been Jewish inhabitants in that area for at least 150 years before the Ghurid Qoṭb-al-Dīn Moḥammad Šansabānī founded Fīrūzkūh ca. 540/1145-46: The earliest burial date read so far is 1424 Seleucid era/1012-13 (Rapp, 1973, p. 57). It is not certain whether the settlement of Jews in Varšād/Fīrūzkūh resulted from mass migration from Mandēš to Varšād or whether a Jewish community also continued in the former area. The Jewish presence in Varšād probably ended soon after the destruction of the city by the Mongols in 619/1222: The last known burial inscription is dated in the year 1557 of the Seleucid era (A.D. 1246; Shaked, p. 73). At Balḳ there were Jewish settlers from at least as early as the 3rd/9th century, when Yāqūt mentioned Jahūdānak (see above) as “[one] of Balḳ’s settlements.” It must have been a settlement within the limits of “the big wall,” which, according to Ya‘qūbī (*Boldān*, p. 228), surrounded “the environs of Balḳ.” Probably it was located near Bāb al-Yahūd (the Jews’ gate), mentioned by Eṣṭaḳrī (2nd ed., p. 278). In addition to Bayhaqī’s story of a special tax on the Jews of Balḳ (see above), Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow also mentioned the Jews of the city in the 5th/11th century (p. 128, *bayts* 6-8). Jahūdānak was evidently so called in order to be distinguished from the nearby settlement of Jahūdān



(*Hodūd al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 107), also known as Yahūdīya (Eṣṭakrī, p. 270; Moqaddasī, pp. 298, 347, 348; Yāqūt, III, p. 167) and Jahūdān al-Kobrā (Yāqūt, loc. cit.). Although no known source mentions a Jewish presence in Jahūdān in the Middle Ages, the name itself indicates that Jews had founded it or had constituted a substantial part of its population at some point. The middle of the 9th century is the *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of this toponym. Sometimes between 378/988 (the year of the 2nd version of Moqaddasī’s work, in which the form Yahūdīya is found) the name of the town was changed to Maymana, which is already found in Bīrūnī’s *Qānūn* (II, p. 571) from 421/1030.

Transoxania. There is no information on Marv aside from Ṭabarī’s report (see above) of a Jewish presence there at the beginning of the Islamic period. Abīvard, too, must have had Jewish inhabitants, but the only reference to them is the story of Foḏayl’s conversion of a Jew from the town (see above). As for K̄vārazm, aside from Ṭabarī’s mention of *aḥbār* in Kāt at the time of the Arab invasion (see above), there is some circumstantial evidence for the 4th/10th century. Bīrūnī provided an exceptionally detailed systematic description of the Jewish calendar in his *al-Āṭār al-bāqīa* (pp. 275-87; cf. Krause, p. 9), which was undoubtedly based to a great extent on information from Jewish informants (Bīrūnī, *Āṭār*, introd. p. XXXIII; Schreiner, p. 258). One of them was a resident of Jorjān (Gorgān) Ya‘qūb b. Mūsā Neqresī (*Āṭār*, pp. 276f.), but there were others whose names Bīrūnī did not give. It is likely, however, that he relied on one or more Jews from Kāt in one of the suburbs of which he was born. Furthermore, his report about the writings of his teacher Abu’l-‘Abbās Īrānšahrī, who must have been a resident of Kāt, suggests that the latter had there good informants on Christianity, Manicheism, and Judaism, but bad ones on Indian beliefs (*India*, pp. 4-5, 206, 276). For Samarkand, aside from information from Benjamin of Tudela (see above), there is preserved in the *Qandīya* the legend of a Jewish sage who showed its residents how to work wood, to build big buildings, to tile their walls, and to build a leaden aqueduct (Vyatkin, p. 226; Barthold, III, p. 276 n. 9, cf. p. 275 n. 4). This legend predates the Mongol conquest of Samarkand in 614/1220, after which the section of the city where the aqueduct was situated was abandoned. Again, as in the Ghurid legend mentioned above, a Jew plays the role of *he,ros civilisateur*. Jews also lived in the border area between the Iranian world and that of the Turks. Rašīd-e Vaṭvāṭ dedicated to Kamāl-al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the ruler of Jand, a *qaṣīda* in which he declared that, because of him, “ ... the name of the Jews did not remain” (p. 151 *bayt* 1915). The poet must have been referring to some kind of destruction of the Jand Jewish community around the middle of the 6th/12th



century. In the 4th/10th century a settlement named Yahūdleq (Yahuliq), on the frontier between Farḡāna and Īlāq, is mentioned without further details (*Ḥodūd al-ālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 117). This Turkic name means something like “place of abundant Jews.”

East Turkestan. Finally, in the 4th/10th century Abū Dolaf mentioned a settlement named Bahī in what is today Xinjiang (Sinkiang): It was inhabited by Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and idolaters (listed in that order; Yāqūt, V, p. 413). This Jewish settlement in a territory inhabited mainly by Turks appears to have been unique.

Central Asian Jews undoubtedly participated in the activities of the Jewish Rādhānīya (Rāhdānīya) traders: One of their routes crossed Central Asia (Gil, p. 307), and two documents from the Cairo Geniza contain evidence of cooperation between Khorasani, North African, and Spanish Jewish merchants in the international trade (Goitein, p. 60). Nezáāmī ‘Arūzī’s reference to a certain “Eshāq the Jew” in connection with a lead mine in Varšād (*Ūahār maqāla*, p. 86) and the legendary role of the Jew in constructing the aqueduct at Samarkand show that Jews were considered experts in mining and processing this metal. No other explicit data on the occupations of Central Asian Jews in the early Islamic period are available. Already as early as in the 10th century a specific Central Asian Judaic rite (Minhag Khorasan), was mentioned in Jewish sources (Fischel, p. 45). In the Khazar correspondence (mid-4th/10th century) Khorasanians are named among those who had propagated Judaism among the Khazars (Golb and Pritsak, p. 111). Ḥiwwī Balkī who wrote in the late 3rd/9th century, formulated at least 200 critical comments on the text of the Jewish Bible; they are known only through quotation by his opponents. Recent scholarship has revealed that, taken together, they may have constituted a long poem in Hebrew (Fleischer). In the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries there were also Karaites among the Jews of the region (Qerqesānī, ed. Harkavy, p. 319), but nothing is heard about them after that time.

Later Islamic period (to the Russian conquest). References to Jews in Central Asia in the 7th-9th/13th-15th centuries are rather sparse. In the early 7th/13th century a Jewish presence in Bukhara is first mentioned (Fischel, p. 43). In the early 8th/14th century the number of Jews and Christians permitted to settle in “Ḳvārazm,” that is its capital Gorgānj (Organj, Urganč), was restricted to 100 “houses of each community (Tiesenhausen, p. 221). In 1651 Selcucid era/739-40/1339, Šʿlōmō b. Šʿmūʿel compiled in Gorgānj an exegetical



dictionary on the Bible in Judeo-Persian, *Sep̄er ham-mēlīṣā* (the book of eloquence; Bacher, 1900; Netzer, pp. 45-46). An anonymous Arabic work dated in 1336 (1917-18) describes a religious disputation between two Christian monks and the head of the Jewish community that took place in Marv (Steinschneider, p. 158 no. 137) not much earlier. Family legends of Central Asian Jews suggest that by the end of the 8th/14th century or the beginning of the 9th/15th a number of Jewish silk weavers had been transferred by Tīmūr from Sabzavar (Yūsofov, p. 1), Shiraz, and Baghdad (Sukhareva, 1958, p. 88; 1966, pp. 166-67) to Central Asia, where they gradually became integrated with local Jewish communities.

When Iran became a Shiʿite state under the Safavids the links of Central Asian Jews with their coreligionists in Iran were almost entirely severed. In the 10th/16th century Bukhara became their main center, apparently absorbing many Jews from territory disputed between the Safavids and the Shaibanids. By the turn of the 11th/17th century a Jewish quarter, Maḥalla-ye Kohna (old quarter), was established in the city (Amitin-Shapiro, 1928, p. 7; cf. Sukhareva, 1966, p. 167; 1976, p. 269 and n. 589), and Jews were forbidden to dwell outside its boundaries. At mid-century Central Asian Jews were joined by Jews who had fled forced conversion in Iran (Bacher, 1906, p. 84). From the mid-12th/18th century on hostility between the Dorrānī rulers of Afghanistan (1160-1258/1747-1842) and the Maṅgīt rulers of the Bukharan amirate (1160-1339/1747-1920) put an almost total end to ties between the Jewish communities ruled by the two houses. Thus virtually isolated, the Bukharan Jewish community experienced a sharp decline in religious observance as the century wore on, a decline that was accelerated by a policy of forcible conversion to Islam, which persisted up to the Russian conquest and stimulated gradual formation of a crypto-Jewish, or *čala* (lit. “half-finished,” “incomplete”), community (Babakhanov; Sukhareva, 1966, pp. 173-78; Reshetov; Poujol, p. 184). The Bukharan Jewish community was unable any longer to maintain its own religious leadership. In 1793 Rabbi Yōsēf Mamān Maḡrebī (1752-1823), a native of Tetuan, Morocco, arrived in Bukhara to raise funds for the community of Safad in Palestine, where he had settled a few years previously. In a fragment of his account of this journey he described with sadness the serious deviations from religious observances that he found in Bukhara (Yūsofov, pp. 17-21; see also Meyendorff, pp. 174-75, for the Rabbi’s account of the disastrous religious situation of the local Jewish community prior to his arrival). He decided to remain there and succeeded in bringing about a religious revival. Among his most important reforms were



replacement of the Khorasani rite with the so-called “Spanish rite” (*nōsaḥ séfāradò*), establishment of a sort of religious academy to ordain rabbis and ritual slaughterers (*šōḥāṭīm*), and introduction of regular study of the *Zōhar*, the main work on the cabala. It appears that by the beginning of the 19th century a second Jewish quarter, Maḥalla-ye Now (new quarter), had been established in Bukhara, followed by a third, Amīrābād, administratively a subsidiary of Maḥalla-ye Now some time before 1820 (Meyendorff, p. 173; Amitin-Shapiro, 1928, pp. 7-8; cf. Sukhareva, 1966, p. 168). In the 1830s about 13 percent (300 families of about 1,500 persons, see Arandarenko, p. 458 n. 1) of the Jewish population of Bukhara were *čala* (Wolff, 1835, p. 198), living mainly in quarters bordering Maḥalla-ye Kohna and Maḥalla-ye Now (Sukhareva, 1976, pp. 79-82, 92). By the eve of the Russian conquest the Jewish community of Bukhara had developed a rather sophisticated dual structure. It was headed by the *kalāntar*, chief administrator, and *mollā-ye kalān*, chief rabbi. At times both positions were held by the same person. The administrative and religious substructures, though related, functioned autonomously.

The *kalāntar* was supposed to be formally elected by all adult male members of the Bukharan Jewish community, though in fact it was the upper social stratum that determined the outcome (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 13; Ya. Kalontarov, p. 613). The election had to be ratified by the *qūšbēgī* and then formally confirmed by the amir’s *yarlīg* (rescript; Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, pp. 12-13; Ya. Kalontarov, p. 613). The *kalāntar* represented the community vis-à-vis the authorities and was responsible to them especially for payment of the *jezya*. He also functioned as mediator between the government and the community and as a kind of arbitrator in litigation within the community when judgment could be based on common sense and Minhag of the land (*hammēdīna*), rather than on Jewish religious law (*hālākā*). He was assisted by two *āssāqāls* (from Uzbek *āqsāqāl* “white-bearded”), the chiefs of Maḥalla-ye Kohna and Maḥalla-ye Now (including Amīrābād). Each *āssāqāl* was to be elected by the adult male inhabitants of his quarter, and the election had to be ratified by the authorities. The *kalāntar* and the *āssāqāls* served for life unless removed at the request of the authorities. The *āssāqāl*’s main responsibility was to oversee the routine life of his quarter. He too could act as arbitrator of disputes within his jurisdiction. No salary was paid to the *kalāntar* or the *āssāqāls*, but it was customary for litigants to pay an honorarium. The women of each quarter elected a *kayvānī* (from Pers. *kadbānū*), whose main tasks were to settle disputes, to organize the women’s part in weddings, to instruct brides



on nuptial behavior, and to organize the performance of mourners. In the mid-19th century the Jewish community of Bukhara was obliged to evaluate its members' properties for the *jezya*; a special body of twelve *kalāntarān-e jezya*, subordinate to the *kalāntar*, was established for this purpose (Neymark, p. 105; Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 12; Ešel, pp. 33-35; Sukhareva, 1966, p. 170). Jews were taxed in three categories: *a'lā* (high), 48 *tanqa* a year; *awṣat* (medium), 24 *tanqa*; and *adnā* (low), 12 *tanqa* (Eversmann, p. 82; Spasskiĭ, 1825, p. 306 [erroneously 3 instead of 4 *razryads*]; Meyendorff, p. 173; Radloff, p. 36; Semēnov, pp. 53-54; Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 12; Sukhareva, 1966, p. 173 [the *awṣat* category erroneously called *adno*]). In the city of Bukhara the *jezya* was collected four times each year, and the Muslim collector was required to slap the taxpayer twice on the cheek (at least for respected Jews, this gesture was merely symbolic; Charnyi, p. 319; Estampe, pp. 9-10; Abrēq, p. 2). In the early 1860s the annual total *jezya* in the city of Bukhara was 2,000 *tillo* (*ṭellā*; Vámbéry, p. 423), the whole sum being regarded as earmarked for the personal needs of the amir (see Boḳārī, I, text p. 66).

Mollā-ye kalān was the supreme authority in the sphere of religion, including religious law and education. He heard all suits involving religious law. He could deliver judgment alone, as president (*ab*, lit. "father") of the religious court (*bēt dīn*), or jointly with the *kalāntar* (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 13). He was also headmaster of the religious academy and ordained rabbis and ritual slaughterers. His responsibilities included overseeing preparation of ritually clean (*kāšēr*) food, serving as rabbi at the main synagogue in Maḥalla-ye Kohna, and supervising the rabbis of seven other Bukharan synagogues (one in Maḥalla-ye Kohna, five in Maḥalla-ye Now, and one in Amīrābād; Sukhareva, 1976, pp. 76, 93). Every synagogue also had an elected administrator (*gabbāy*) whose specific duties included collecting money for needy members of the congregation twice a year, before Passover (*qimḥā dē-fishā*) and before the cold season (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 14). Affiliated with every synagogue there was a *kāmā* (from Pers. *kāna-ye mollā*), an elementary religious school for boys under the age of thirteen; the headmaster was the rabbi, who was assisted by a *kalfa* (from *kalīfa*; Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 63; Ya. Kalontarov, p. 614). The *kalāntar* and *mollā-ye kalān* of Bukhara were considered chiefs of all the Jews in the amirate).

Less is known about the structure and taxation of other Jewish communities in Central Asia, but what data there are suggest a similar pattern. At the beginning of the 19th century the second largest concentrations of Central Asian



Jews were at Šahr-e Sabz and Balk (Meyendorff, p. 173). Some Jews were also living under the protection of Turkmen in Marv (Wolff, 1835, pp. 176-77). In safar 1259/March 1843 a piece of ground was sold to the Jewish community in Samarkand (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, pp. 41-43), and a *maḥalla* was founded. There was also a considerable number of *čala* in that city; they even had a *rasta* (trading row) of their own in the town market (Ešel, pp. 74, 75; see also Radloff, pp. 38-39, on his visit to a secret [i.e., *čala*] synagogue in Samarkand after the Russian conquest of the city). After 1840 the Jewish population in several Central Asian towns, especially Marv and Samarkand, was augmented by Jews who had left Mašhad when the community there was forcibly converted to Islam in 1839 (for Marv see Abbot, p. 40, and Wolff, 1846, p. 201, cf. p. 205; for Samarkand see Ešel, pp. 64, 109, 113, 126, and Pinēhāsī, 1978, p. 15; see also Deylamīyān, pp. 35-37). On the eve of the Russian conquest Jews also lived in Serakṣ (Serakhs; Wolff, 1846, p. 205), Ūahārjūy (Chardzhou; *ibid.*, p. 222), Qarši (Karshi; Khanykov, p. 72, Vámbéry, pp. 265, 423; Olufsen, p. 300), Ketāb (Kitab; Kun, p. 218 n. 1), Katta-Qūrgān (Kattakurgan; Khanykov, p. 71; Radloff, p. 41), UŪrā Teppa (Ura-Tyube; Kushakevich, pp. 50, 52), Kojand (Leninabad; *ibid.*, p. 50), Dushanbe (Ya. Kalontarov, p. 612 and n. 1), Khiva (Wolff, 1846, pp. 380-81; Estampe, p. 7), Tashkent (Wolff, 1846, pp. 381, 404; Dobrosmyslov, 1912b, p. 81; Ešel, pp. 70-72, 99), Koqand (Kokand; Wolff, 1846, pp. 11, 381, 404; Estampe, p. 7; Nalivkin, p. 8; Neymark, p. 208; Āšērov, p. 75), Ūimkand (Chimkent; Dobrosmyslov, 1912a, p. 191), Ḥažrat-Soltān (Turkestan; Wolff, 1846, p. 404; Dobrosmyslov, 1912a, p. 126), Āq-Masjed (Perovsk, Kzyl-Orda; Dobrosmyslov, 1912a, p. 77), and Kazalinsk (founded in 1853; Dobrosmyslov, 1912a, p. 18), the last two situated in the Kazakh steppe, which came under Russian control in 1853.

The chief occupation of the Jews of Central Asia on the eve of the Russian conquest was dyeing yarn and cloth (Meyendorff, p. 173; Eversmann, p. 83; Burns, p. 275; Wolff, 1846, p. 260; Arandarenko, p. 349 n. 1; Nalivkin, 1910, p. 13), particularly cotton, with indigo (Lehmann, p. 162; Kirpichnikov, p. 158; Kalontarov, pp. 614-15; Sukhareva, 1966, pp. 170-71) and weaving and dyeing silk (Burnashev, p. 66; Meyendorff, p. 173; Eversmann, p. 83; Khanykov, p. 89; Lehmann, p. 162; Savel'yev, pp. 12-13; Gens, pp. 33-34; “Die Juden in der Bucharei,” p. 8; I. Krause, p. 210; Arandarenko, p. 349 n. 1; Ešel, p. 69; Sukhareva, 1966, p. 171). Craftsmen sold their own products, and until the 1820s-30s the number of Jews engaged in wholesale trade was small (according to Meyendorff, p. 173, there were only two rich capitalists—probably big merchants—among the Jews of Bukhara; see



Eversmann, p. 83, on rich Jews as wholesalers; Spasskiĭ, 1825, p. 308, and 1826, p. 175, on the participation of Jews in the Central Asian barter trade; Spasskiĭ, 1826, p. 178, and Gens, p. 102, on wholesale purchase of raw silk; Spasskiĭ, 1825, pp. 307-08, and Gens, p. 99, on their participation in trade with Kāšgar). However, by the turn of the century some Bukharan Jews did finance the commercial activities of Muslim fellow townsmen engaged in wholesale trade with Russia (Beylin, Hebrew text p. 277). Apparently about 1825 Bukharan Jews also entered the wholesale trade with neighboring areas of the Russian empire, importing Russian goods in exchange (Spasskiĭ, 1825, p. 307). The Russian authorities encouraged this commerce by permitting Jewish traders to become members of merchant guilds in Russian guberniyas (provinces) where Jewish settlement was forbidden (1833; Levanda, p. 331) and to participate in the fairs in the Orenburg guberniya (1842; *ibid.*, pp. 541-42), and at Nizhni Novgorod (1843 or 1844; Gessen, col. 206). In 1866, when Russian forces were already fighting troops of the Bukharan amirate, the governor of Orenburg was authorized to grant Russian citizenship to “Asian” Jews accepted into the merchant guilds of the guberniya, thus exempting them from the law denying Russian citizenship to alien Jews (Levanda, pp. 1056-57).

Tsarist period. Because of tsarist policies toward Central Asian Jews on the eve of the conquest the latter were Russian sympathizers; the Jews of Samarkand even sided with tsarist troops when local insurgents and a task force from Shahrīsabzan sought to recapture the town in May, 1868 (Neymark, pp. 107-08; Simonova, 1900, pp. 138, 140-42, 144, 146, 149, 151; 1904, pp. 963-65; Sāmī, 84b; Weissenberg, p. 395; Levinskiĭ, p. 327; Ešel, p. 65; Āšērov, pp. 10-11). The Bukharan-Russian treaties of 1868 and 1873 included paragraphs that gave “all the subjects of the amir of Bukhara” equal rights to live and to trade freely in the Russian empire and to purchase real estate within its borders (see pars. 2, 3, 5 of the treaty of 1868 and pars. 11, 12 of the treaty of 1873 in Zhukovskiĭ, pp. 175, 176, 186). In territories annexed and incorporated into Turkestanĭi Kraĭ the only indigenous ethnic group considered loyal to Russia was the Jews (Radloff, p. 35; Kostenko, p. 52; Yakubovskiĭ, col. 890). Tsarist authorities did not interfere with Jewish autonomy, except to impose the office of *kazonnyi ravvin* (official rabbi), with functions identical to those in other areas of the empire (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 30; Kalontarov, p. 613). In 1872 the 1866 decree granting Russian citizenship was renewed (with slight differences; Levanda, pp. 1140-41). This liberal policy encouraged sharp growth of Central Asian Jews’ share in trade among the Bukharan amirate, Turkestanĭi Kraĭ, the rest of Central Asia, and Russia proper. Because of their familiarity with



local conditions, Bukharan Jewish traders had the advantage over their Russian competitors, who were new to the area, and a number of them established prosperous trading companies, as well as factories for primary processing of local products, especially cotton. The Va'adiyaev, the Pātīlaḥov, and the Dāvidov were among the largest cotton manufacturers not only in Central Asia but also in the Russian empire as a whole (Dmitriev-Mamonov, pp. 361, 383, 386, 393; Masal'skiĭ, p. 701; *Kokandskiĭ Birzhevoĭ Komitet*, pp. 2, 3, 180, 181; Aminov, p. 161; *Istoriya Bukhary*, p. 170; *Istoriya Uzbekskoi SSR II*, pp. 204-05, 207; Ginzburg and Deeva, p. 132; Khotamov, p. 16; Ben-Dāvid, pp. 103-15). The lower strata of the Jewish population of Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ were, however, becoming poorer (Galynkin, col. 1414; Dobrosmyslov, 1912b, p. 434 n. 179; Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 93-94), for they depended on dyeing, a craft threatened by a glut of Russian textiles factory-dyed to suit Central Asian tastes. Meanwhile, the authorities of the Bukharan amirate exacted from the Jews of the city of Bukhara three quarters of the city's share (40,000 *tillo*) of the total war indemnity (125,000 *tillo*; Zhukovskiĭ, pp. 162, 177) imposed on the amirate by the Russians (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 131; see also Radloff, p. 3 6). Whereas in Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ the *jezya* and *šorūt* 'Omar had been *de facto* abolished and the *čala* were permitted to return to Judaism (Ešel, pp. 78-79), in the amirate nothing had changed in these respects (Krestovskiĭ; Neymark, pp. 102-03; Abrēq, p. 2; Zaks, col. 279; F. Schwarz, pp. 442-43; Markov, pp. 402-03; Landsdell, cols. 626-28; Olufsen, pp. 298, 300; Weissenberg, pp. 402-03). The result was mass emigration of Jews from the amirate to Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ (Rivlin, col. 34; Zaks, col. 280; Levinskiĭ, p. 327, Pokrovskiĭ, p. 34). The number of Jews in Samarkand increased greatly (according to Levinskiĭ, p. 324, there were 168 "house owners" in the Jewish *maḥalla* in 1873, i.e., ca. 840 Jews; and according to Virskiĭ, p. 249, there were 3,792 "indigenous" Jews in 1888-89), and a significant Jewish population emerged in Ҷoqand (Kokand), capital of the former khanate of Ҷoqand, annexed by Russia in 1876 (in 1876 only 6 Jews according to Levinskiĭ, p. 322, but 20 according to Neymark, p. 108; in 1888 ca. 200 families [ca. 1,000 persons] according to Rivlin, col. 34), as well as in Tashkent (at the Russian conquest of the town in 1865 there were according to Dobrosmyslov, 1912b, p. 81, 27 Jewish families [ca. 135 persons], and in 1897 [p. 80] 1,719 persons of Judaic faith, of whom ca. 80% were Central Asian Jews). Central Asian Jews also began to settle in neighboring Stepnoĭ Kraĭ. Most of the immigrants clearly came with little or no money, for they had to pay heavy bribes to leave the amirate; as they too had mastered no craft except dyeing, they helped to swell the poorest segment of the Jewish population in the *kraĭs*. Most poor Jews became small peddlers, shoe repairmen, and hair-



dressers; the last two occupations were almost Jewish monopolies by the end of the century. It was apparently this rapid growth of the Jewish population that led, from the late 1880s on, to the imposition of discriminatory measures against Jews in Central Asian territories under direct Russian rule. In 1887-89 Central Asian Jews living in Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ were divided into two categories: “indigenous Jews,” those who had lived there before the conquest and their direct descendants, on one hand, and those who could not prove such a connection, on the other (Gimpel’son, pp. 186-88; Mysh, pp. 264-55, fols. 241, 242 and note to fol. 242). Only the former were to enjoy rights equal to those of local Muslims; the latter, excluding those who had been granted Russian citizenship in accordance with the regulations of 1866 and 1872, were defined as resident aliens with no legal status. In 1892 the governor-general of Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ issued a secret circular severely restricting the entry into the *kraĭ* of Jews from the amirate of Bukhara (Pokrovskiĭ, pp. 34-35). This restriction was also applied to the *čala* of the amirate, despite the fact that they were officially Muslims (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, pp. 21, 44). Tsar Nicholas II (1894-1917) demanded that his government take steps “to bar them [the Jews] from Turkestan and the Steppe regions before it was too late” (note to the protocol of the session of the Cabinet of Ministers on 19 August 1898; see Z. Radzhabov, p. 400). In 1900 “the Central Asian Jews-foreign citizens” were permitted to live in only three small towns, where there was no industry and poor facilities for trading: Osh, Katta-Qūrgān, and Petroaleksandrovsk (Turtkul; Gimpel’son, p. 833 n. 4; Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 21; Yaroshevskiĭ, p. 91), and it was stipulated that they were “to return to their place of residence” (i.e., to the amirate of Bukhara) no later than 1 January 1906. By 1906, however, it had become obvious that there was no possibility of enforcing the regulation of 1900, primarily because a number of high-ranking administrators who favored Jewish industry and trade, opposed it (Levinskiĭ, pp. 325, 331; Yaroshevskiĭ, pp. 90-91), and the lower echelons of officialdom were often bribed to turn a blind eye to the presence of “aliens” (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 22; 1933, p. 134; see also the hints at corruption of officials in the documents published by Levinskiĭ, pp. 323-25). The deadline for the implementation of the regulations was postponed until 1909 (Rogovin, p. 479 n. 4.2; Yaroshevskiĭ, p. 91), then until 1910 (Rogovin, p. 479 n. 5). In the meantime, after a long and intricate legal struggle, Koqand, Marġilān, and Samarkand, where most of the “alien” Jews were already living, were added to the list of towns where they were permitted (Rogovin, p. 480 “interpretation” 3; Gimpel’son, p. 844 fol. 25). Also in 1910, however, the von Pahlen commission, appointed to investigate the situation in Turkestanskiĭ Kraĭ,



recommended additional restrictions on Jews there (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 134). The same year Governor-General A. Samsonov publicly accused the Jews of being “robbers of the people” and “counterfeiters of documents” (Levinskiĭ, p. 318). The next year a high official of the *krai* declared in classified memoranda that “the natives [i.e., the Muslims] have demanded the banishment of Jews” (ibid., pp. 321, 328) and requested “permission to kill them off” (ibid., p. 321). Depictions of the Jewish (and Armenian) traders and industrialists as major threats to local Muslim business became commonplace in the *jadīd* (modernist) press and literature of the early teens (Z. Radzhabov, pp. 399, 401-02; Allworth, pp. 74 [Turki text], 85 [Eng. tr.]; this notion continued at the beginning of the Soviet period in the writings of the *jadīds*, who allied themselves with the Soviets, see ‘Aynī, p. 38). It was against this background that the first substantial wave of Central Asian Jewish emigration abroad took place. Between 1889 and the beginning of World War I, about 1,500 Jews left Central Asia for Palestine (Ben-Zvi, p. 179; Fozaylov, pp. 122-25), where they settled almost exclusively in Jerusalem, establishing a quarter of their own in the early 1890s (*Sefer taqannōt* ̄; Graevskiĭ, pp. 3-9; Ya‘ārī, pp. 17-18; Ben-Ya‘āqōb, pp. 106-07; Fozaylov, pp. 126-30). The problems faced by the tsarist administration in Central Asia during World War I, particularly the Muslim revolt of 1916, forced nearly total abandonment of anti-Jewish measures, but anti-Jewish documents continued to be circulated secretly during this period (Levinskiĭ, p. 335; Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, pp. 24, 45-46).

Between 1910 and 1914 a newspaper in Bukharan Jewish dialect, *Raḥamīm* (mercy), was published in Skobelev (modern Fergana) from 18 Iyyār 5670 Hebrew calendar/14 May 1910 Julian calendar to 22 Tammūz 5674 Hebrew calendar/3 July 1914 Julian calendar (last issue known). But, owing to the first wave of emigration, it was Jerusalem that became the center of book publishing in the dialect: About 120 books in Judeo-Tajik appeared there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Ya‘ārī, pp. 21, 25-67).

Soviet period. Military tensions in Central Asia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 were regarded by most Central Asian Jews as a further stage of the conflict between Russians and Muslims, in which the Muslims were not once hostile to the Jews and the Russians came to their rescue (Āšērov, pp. 104-08; Bačaev, pp. 12-17). So despite anti-Jewish measures under the tsarist regime, Central Asian Jews still sided mainly with the Russians, hence with the Bolsheviks. Some members of the intelligentsia were, however, sympathetic to the demands and aspirations of the *jadīds*. Several members of the Yūnosov



family were among the victims of the massacre of *jadīds* in Bukhara in March, 1918 (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 34). Rēfā'el Pātīlaḥov served as minister in the Muslim modernist government of the short-lived autonomous republic of Turkestan (late 1917-early 1918; *Istoriya grazhdanskoī voīny*, p. 140; Tājer, pt. 2, p. 10; *Pobeda*, pp. 150-53, no. 203), which had its capital in Ҷoqand. With the establishment of the Turkestan Soviet Republic in 1918, the control over Central Asian Jews there was handed over to the Jewish section (Evseksiya) of the Communist Party, which consisted almost entirely of Ashkenazis who had little knowledge of the local Jews (Gēršunnī, p. 266; Pīnēhāsī, 1973, pp. 16-17). By the beginning of 1919 the “Native Jewish National Central Bureau” of the People’s Commissariat of Education of the Soviet Republic of Turkestan was set up with Communist Party functionaries to head it (Urazaev, p. 125; *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo*, p. 386 n. *). The Bureau’s main task was to establish a network of schools by which the new ideology was to be disseminated. Although the Evseksiya was bitterly opposed to the use of Hebrew it was at first the language of instruction in Soviet Central Asian Jewish schools (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 68-69; Gēršunnī, p. 266) as the only language Ashkenazi teachers and their pupils had in common. Only in late 1921 did the Turkestani People’s Commissariat of Education finally order that Judeo-Tajik should be substituted for Hebrew as the language of instruction in these schools (Amitin-Shapiro 1933, p. 69). The first graduates of the Tashkent teachers’ seminary (founded in 1920; Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 74-75) apparently began teaching in Judeo-Tajik during 1922-23 (see Pīnēhāsī, 1973, p. 17). When the Bukharan Soviet Popular Republic was established in 1920, the last *kalāntar*, Pīnēḥās Rabbīn (1868-1920) was shot by a firing squad, buried while still alive, and, though he was able to escape, died of his wounds (Ṭellāev, pp. 79-80). The traditional communal structure was dissolved, and the Jewish Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was put in charge (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, pp. 52-53). Local Jewish committees were also established in several towns of the Bukharan republic (Amitin-Shapiro, 1931, p. 52). In the so-called “national-territorial delimitation” of Central Asia in 1924 (see [bukhara iii](#)) almost all Jewish population centers became part of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Tadzhikistan remained an autonomous republic within the Uzbek Soviet Republic until 1929). The Jewish committees were dissolved. All activities led by the Evseksiya were suspended (the Evseksiya itself was dissolved in January, 1930; Slutsky, col. 781). The only bodies that retained some specific organizational prerogatives regarding Jews were the closely interrelated Uzbekistan branches of KomZET (Komitet Zemleustroīstva Evreev Trudyashchikhsya, committee for the agriculturization of Jewish workers) and



OZET (Obshchestvo Zemleustroïstva Evreev Trudyashchikhsya, society for agriculturization of Jewish workers) established in 1926 (“Meropriyatiya”; “Uzbekistan”; Itkin, p. 16), which were engaged in setting up Jewish kolkhozes (collective farms; see “V tsentral’nom pravlenii”; Kalendarov; Yagudaev, 1928a; Itkin; Yagudaev, 1928b; Saidov; Nakheïman; “Kul’tobsluzhivanie”; “V KomZETe”; “Khozyaïstvennoe ustroïstvo”; “Evreïskoe zemleustroenie”; “Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie)”; Miral). The consolidation of the Soviet regime effectively put an end to the class of Central Asian Jewish businessmen and industrialists. All of them, along with smaller tradesmen, became *lishentsy* (without legal rights). Petty peddlers were “made productive” by being forced by means of heavy taxation to work in factories and on collective farms. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Central Asian Jews formed the overwhelming majority of workers in the silk mill and soap factory in Samarkand and the cotton gin in Kōqand. In 1930 there were 1,379 Central Asian Jewish factory workers; in 1933 their number had increased to 2,500 (“Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie),” p. 232). In 1928 there were 28 Jewish kolkhozes in Uzbekistan with the membership of 418 families (1,729 persons; Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 23, table; slightly different data for the same year in “Soveshchanie”: 29 kolkhozes, two of the Ashkenazi; Kalendarov, p. 12: 27 kolkhozes; Kantor, p. 21: 29 kolkhozes, one in Tajikistan). In 1936 there were 15 Jewish kolkhozes there, with a membership of 600 families (3,000 persons; Miral, p. 27). Only two Jewish kolkhozes survived into the early 1950s, when they were closed. After the mid-1920s heavy taxes were imposed on craftsmen in order to force them to become either factory workers and collective farmers or members of craft cooperatives (“Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie),” p. 232). Cooperatives of cotton and silk weavers, shoe repairmen, hairdressers, dyers, soap makers, and tailors, all with exclusively Central Asian Jewish membership, were formed in several towns of Uzbekistan in the late 1920s. In 1928 there were in Uzbekistan 37 cooperatives of this kind, with a membership of 796 families (Kantor, pp. 27-28, table). Usually the head of the family could be helped by other members of the family belonging to the cooperative (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 59). In this way many cooperatives were merely registered as such and were actually enterprises run by extended families or jointly by two or three families. In 1933 about 3,000 Central Asian Jews were officially registered as members of cooperatives. Most cooperatives did not survive after the mid-1930s. In 1928 a massive attack on religion had been launched, and by the mid-1930s most of the synagogues were closed. In January 1930, the authorities undertook massive expropriation of property from those who refused to give up the—officially still permitted—private small trade (Bačaev, pp. 187-201) and in



autumn 1932 massive confiscation of valuables (known among Central Asian Jews as *ṭelāgīrī*, taking gold; *ibid.*, pp. 248-57). Blood libels, unknown in Central Asia before the Russian conquest, occurred in 1928 in Ūahārjūy and in 1930 in the village of Āgālīq near Samarkand (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 137-40). All these events provided stimuli for the second large wave of Central Asian Jewish emigration abroad. The overwhelming majority of emigrants crossed illegally into Iran or Afghanistan, then went to Palestine (see Y. Kalāntarov, nos. 5-9, pp. 3-6; Āšērov, pp. 135-57; H. Mahvašev, nos. 27-29 (147-49), 31 (151), 33-35 (153-55), pp. 6-8; Ṭellāev, pp. 34-47; Nīāzov, pp. 114-20; on illegal emigrants and the Iranian Jewish community see Levī, p. 969; illegal emigrants and the Afghani Jewish community see Mīšā'ēl, pp. 68-72; the Central Asian feedback of the illegal emigration see Bačaev, pp. 222-34, 291-92, 301-04). A few left the USSR with foreign passports (Ben-Zvi, p. 176; Mīšā'ēl, p. 113; apparently also Sūfiēv, p.1; Tājer, pt. 2, p. 91) and went to Palestine or stayed in Europe, mainly in France. Between 1924 and 1935, when the Soviets succeeded in halting this emigration, about 4,000 Central Asian Jews left the USSR (Immānū'ēlī, p. 207).

In the 1920s and early 1930s the Soviet authorities invested much energy and funds in Central Asian Jewish education, cultural institutions, and mass media. On 16 November 1925 the Judeo-Tajik weekly (from 1933 daily) newspaper *Rōšnā'ī* (light; later *Bayrāq-e meḥnat*, flag of labor) was launched (*Gazety*, p. 196; see also Saidov, 1935) and in 1931 the Judeo-Tajik bimonthly literary and political magazine *Ḥayāt-e meḥnat* (working life; later *Adabīyāt-e sovetī*) was founded (Saidov, 1935, p. 23; Bačaev, pp. 245-46, dates the foundation from early 1932). In 1929-32 the so-called “Latinized alphabet” gradually replaced the Hebrew alphabet in written and printed Judeo-Tajik. Possession of books published in Hebrew language or characters before the advent of the Soviet regime was considered seditious, and most of them were destroyed or buried (the only public mention of this practice is Gēršunnī, p. 267, who dates it to 1937-40). In the late 1920s to early 1930s the number of books published in Judeo-Tajik continued to rise steadily, though the overwhelming majority of them were textbooks and political brochures translated from Russian. However, from the mid-1930s their number began to decrease, and in 1925-26 only one book in Judeo-Tajik was published, in 1928-29 six books, in 1931 76 books, in 1932 177 books (Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 82), and in 1935 62 books (from data given in *Knizhnaya letopis'*, 1935, 1936). The same decrease occurred in the number of schools: In Uzbekistan in 1930 there were thirty schools in which the language of instruction was Judeo-Tajik, with 3,000 pupils



and 120 teachers; by 1934 the number of pupils had increased to 4,000 and the number of teachers to 170 (“Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie),” p. 232; cf. the much higher numbers for 1931 and 1932 in Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 71, 73, which apparently refer to all Jewish pupils, including Central Asians studying outside Jewish schools, as well as Ashkenazis). However, in 1938 the number of these schools decreased to 15 with 2,420 pupils (half the total number of “local Jewish school children”; S. Radzhabov, p. 60 and table 7). In 1932 a state theater, where performances were in Judeo-Tajik, and in 1931 a Jewish historical and ethnographic museum were established in Samarkand, expanded from a basic collection founded in 1922 (on the theater see “Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie),” p. 232; Bačaev, pp. 286-89; on the museum see Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, pp. 123-26; Bačaev, pp. 151-52). In 1933 there were fifteen clubs and twenty-eight “red” teahouses (*čāy-kānas*) for Central Asian Jews in Uzbekistan (“Uzbekistan (Mitl-Azie),” p. 232).

The Stalinist Great Terror also affected Central Asia, and in 1937-38 about 1,000 Central Asian Jews were arrested, among them the people’s commissar (minister) of Justice for the Uzbek SSR, Aḅrāhām ‘Abdarraḥmānov (on whom see Bačaev, pp. 428-29; on his arrest, *ibid.*, p. 467), as well as many of the new Central Asian Jewish cultural elite and almost all the members of the pre-Soviet upper class of Central Asian Jews who were still alive and almost all actively involved in religious life (on the course of arrests and partial lists of arrested see Bačaev, pp. 463-68; on arrests of persons actively involved in religious life see Gēršunnī, p. 276; Nīāzov, p. 79; on the arrest of “almost all rabbis” in Bukhara see Margulis). The number of those arrested perished in prisons and forced labor camps can be estimated at about 700. In 1938 the authorities apparently decided to phase out all cultural activities in Bukharan Jewish. Publication of *Bayrāq-e meḥnat* (last registered issue 27 May 1938; *Gazety*, p. 197; cf. Bačaev, pp. 469-72) and *Adabīyāt-e sovetī* was discontinued, and the Jewish theater and museum in Samarkand were closed (the museum closed in April 1938; Bačaev, pp. 476-77). In 1938-39 the clubs were also closed, and in 1940 instruction and publication of books in Judeo-Tajik were halted. By the end of the 1930s as a rule only one synagogue was allowed to operate in each large town, and this is the situation still today (Tayar, pp. 19-21, 26, 34-35; Poujol, pp. 180-81, 185-86, 190-93, 195), the only exception being Tashkent with three Bukharan Jewish (Poujol, pp. 196-97) and one Ashkenazi synagogue (Yodfat, p. 20; Tayar, p. 39). Religious activities, though very limited in scope, did continue underground; congregational prayers and study of religious texts were conducted in private houses, and an unofficial “parallel Judaism” thus



developed (Aleksandrov; Yodfat, p. 20; Gēršunnī, pp. 266-67; Nīāzov, pp. 56, 59, 61, 127-30, 138-39, 161-62). During World War II (1941-45) about 4,000 Central Asian Jews served in the Soviet army, both in the field and in the so-called Labor Army; about 3,000 of them died (on the Jewish participation see Ben'yaminov, pp. 90-92, 96-97; “Šā'er-e nāma'lūm”; “Yūsef Abramov”; for partial publications of the names of the dead see Ben'yaminov, pp. 91, 92; “Kāṭera-ye nīk-e ānhā”). The campaign against the Jewish religion, which had been suspended briefly during the war, was resumed during the “black years of Soviet Jewry” (1948-53). In 1950 thirteen men active in the Central Asian Jewish religious community in Samarkand were arrested and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment (Gēršunnī, pp. 194-95, who gives their number erroneously as 15; Nīāzov, pp. 92-105). Similar arrests took place in Katta-Qūrgān and Bukhara (Gēršunnī, p. 267). The press of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, both in local languages (e.g., *Kārpošt* and *Moštom*) and in Russian, printed “satirical feuilletons” in which the villains were Jews. Since the late 1940s Central Asian Jews have been excluded from quotas favoring indigenous Central Asians seeking admission to regional universities and institutions of higher learning in the major academic centers of the USSR (the situation became known to this author in 1951). Nevertheless, though the most widespread Central Asian Jewish occupations have remained shoe repairing, hairdressing, and selling in government stores (replacing petty trade; see, e.g., Tayar, p. 27; Poujol, pp. 183, 185, 192, 195), there has been a great increase in the numbers of physicians, lawyers, school and university teachers, and engineers (see, e.g., Ben'yaminov, pp. 57-58, 61, 63, 66-67). Most Central Asian Jews, regardless of education and social status, have continued to follow traditional religious observances related to the life cycle: circumcision, marriage, and burial practices; on the other hand, observance of *kašrūt* and events in the calendar (daily prayers, the sabbath, festivals, and fasting) is more common among those of lower education and social status (see, e.g., Tayar, pp. 19, 21, 24, 26, 33, 35, 39; Šērāgay; Poujol, pp. 180-86, 194-96).

Since the late 1950s the Uzbek and Tajik press has frequently published vehement articles, sometimes signed by Jews, against Israel and its alleged propaganda among the Central Jewish population (see, e.g., Tankhel'son; “Ruki proch”; Medvedko; Kozanchuk, 23 June 1967, 29 June 1967, 12 July 1968; Varfolomeev; Egorov; Shapiro; Samenkov; Suchkov; Grigor'ev; Gerasimov; Mavashev; Mordukhaev et al.; Khaimov; Borisov; Galkin; on this kind of publications see Danielov, pp. 7-9, 28-30, 43-44). In an atmosphere of increasingly anti-Jewish public sentiment new blood libels occurred. In 1961



an elderly Jewish woman in Marḡīlān was accused by an Uzbek of kidnapping his two-year-old son and killing him for ritual purposes (the boy was found shortly afterward in perfect health), and a similar event occurred in Tashkent in 1962 (S. Schwarz, pp. 355-57). Anti-Jewish sentiments ran high also in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and reportedly also in the 1980s (Ġāzīt, p. 61; Tayar, pp. 28-31; Poujol, p. 192). In 1971 the third large-scale emigration of Jews from Central Asia began as part of a massive exodus of Jews from the USSR. By 1987 about 17,000 Bukharan Jews had left the Soviet Union; approximately 15,500 settled in Israel, the rest in the United States, Canada, and Austria (in that order; for the period 1971-80, containing the overwhelming majority of emigrants, calculated from ş. Neşer, table 3; for the second half of 1980-87 from statistical information from various sources).

See also [JUDEO-PERSIAN COMMUNITIES OF IRAN](#).

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