

THE JEWISH PERSECUTION—ITS FINANCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS.

THE whole civilized world is saddened by the acts of a Christian government against five or six millions of its subjects. One asks involuntarily, whether the inhuman laws brought to bear against the Jews of Russia are to be pursued to the end; whether there will not be among the nations of Europe a general rising of public opinion against the barbarities which are dishonoring our nineteenth century, so vainly proud of its light and its progress. Is there really a means of stopping the Russian persecution? and will western Europe, seized with indignation, rouse itself, and cry out to the autocratic Czar and his counsellors, "Enough of this! you shall go no farther"?

Some people in America seem to believe in the possibility of action, or at least of a demonstration on the part of the civilized world, against Russia and the Czar, regarding the persecution of the Jews. Such an idea is a chimera, and, I venture to say, a dangerous chimera.

Russia—and by this I mean not only the government, but every thing that counts in the Russian Empire—Russia is justly proud of her power; she is sensitive; she is easily hurt: and every appearance of intimidation on the part of Europe or America, far from improving the situation, will only make it worse.*

The Jews are not the only ones who suffer from the orthodox fanaticism, or, to speak more exactly, from the national fanaticism, of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The Christian dissenters, Protestants or Roman Catholics, are equally exposed to Muscovite hatred and to the ill will of the government, and on the same score, too, as the Jews—less on account of their heterodoxy than as foreigners. So all the representations made to the Russian Government by western associations, all the demonstrations made in England, in Germany, or even in France, in favor of the Catholics or Protestants, have always been without effect. The appeal made to the Czar by the Swiss section of the Evangelical Alliance has not yet been forgotten. The Czar Alexander III. answered it through the procurator-general of the Most

* This is so if we are to trust the opinion of Baron de Hirsch and his representative, Mr. White.

Holy Synod, M. Pobédonostsef, the very incarnation of Russian intolerance. M. Pobédonostsef, in a letter written in French, maintained, in the face of the civilized world, that Russia understands and practises religious liberty. The Imperial Government none the less continued to arrest, to imprison, and to exile the Lutheran pastors of the Baltic provinces who were so bold as to dispute the Russian propaganda.

What the Imperial Government did not tolerate in favor of Lettonian and Esthonian peasants converted fraudulently to official orthodoxy, it will tolerate still less in favor of the Jews. These last, it is true, are more unfortunate than the Protestants. The persecution of the Israelites is carried on with more violence and fervor. But, much as they have to complain of, the Jews are not the most unfortunate of the subjects of the Czar. There are, even in Europe,—in Poland, on the borders of Austrian Galicia, in what is called Podlachia,—men who suffer yet more, and who suffer for their religion alone. I speak of the Ruthenians or United Greeks, that is to say, of the Christians of the Oriental Rite who recognize the authority of the Pope of Rome. They number about three hundred thousand. The Russian Government has officially suppressed their little church.* It has forced them to return to the Greco-Russian schism; and those of these “Uniotes” who have not been willing to hear mass in the Russian form have been torn from their country, deprived of their patrimony, and even exiled to the Urals. They are there yet, and every attempt at intervention on their behalf has failed, though their small number takes from their conversion all political value.

If the civilized world wishes to bring pressure to bear on the Russian Government, it should not be exclusively in favor of the Jews: it should be also in favor of our Christian brethren, Catholic, Protestant, and United Greek. Now Europe, especially England, has tried several times to bring this pressure to bear, by meetings or by the press, without any good result. Even we in France, in our foremost Parisian journals and reviews, have many times tried to move Russian statesmen in favor of persecuted Christians or Jews; but our efforts have been vain. Sadly enough we are not even sure that, by our representations and pleas to the Imperial Government, we have not injured the Russian dissenters, instead of procuring relief for them.

Formerly the representations or the observations of the European

* See my large work, *L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes (La Religion)*, vol. ii. book ix. chap. ii.

press had, it is true, a certain influence, a certain efficacy, in Russia. The Russian Government prided itself on being a civilized government. St. Petersburg and Moscow even feared to scandalize Europe: they were afraid of seeming, in our eyes, to be barbarians, Tartars, Asiatics. The opinion of Europe had thus a certain weight in the Russian balances. To-day it is not the same. Imitation of Europe is no longer in fashion on the banks of the Neva. The examples of the West have no more authority among the Russians, or at least in their official circles. Instead of striving to clothe herself in our manners, the Russia of Emperor Alexander III. tries to show herself in all things Russian and national. After having shown her pride in copying the Occident, she shows her *amour propre* in distinguishing herself from it. This explains the entire domestic policy of the present Czar. His conduct toward the Jews forms a part of his whole system of government: it conforms to a programme whose first article is the purification of Russia from the stains of contact with the Occident.

After this, how can we wonder that our meetings or our newspaper articles have no more influence on the acts of the Imperial Government? They would have such influence only among men who still care for our opinion, for our esteem; and, if there are any such men in Russia,—and many do still remain,—they are all without authority with the government of their country. They grieve in secret with us over the acts of their administration. I have received many confidential expressions in this regard—but they know that they are fated to be powerless: they scarcely even dare, in Russia, to express their opinions.

Manifestations by private individuals in Europe and America cannot, then, stop the Russian Government in the execution of its plans. Would national public manifestations, official representations by the different governments, have a better effect?

There is a point here which is worth the trouble of examining; and, in the first place, on what grounds could the states of Europe or of America make representations to the Russian Government on its conduct regarding its Jewish subjects? It is a principle generally admitted by modern nations, that each nation is mistress in its own domain. This is often called by a quite improper name,—the “principle of non-intervention.” There are cases where this principle of non-intervention ought to be held lightly, where the interest of humanity counsels to throw it aside; but in practice, except in the case of one of those petty states whose weakness endangers its independence,

nothing is more difficult, and in fact nothing is rarer, than the diplomatic intervention of European states in one another's domestic affairs.

The case of the Russian Jews is surely interesting. In the way in which they are treated there is something that shocks our modern conscience. If the interference of foreign countries in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state could be allowed, it would be in such a case. But such interference would be contrary to all diplomatic tradition and usage. If it should take place, we should be sure to see the Russian Government reject it with arrogance. To take an example in America: could one imagine France or England, before the war of secession, making official representations at Washington, to the government of the United States, regarding the existence of slavery? In what manner would the President and the secretary of state of the United States have responded? Nevertheless, if any thing ever wounded Christian humanity and conscience, it was the persistence of slavery under the star-spangled banner.

I know that certain examples of diplomatic intervention in behalf of the Jews in recent times may be cited, especially in the petty states of the Orient. Europe, in the Berlin congress of 1878, demanded of Roumania and Servia the emancipation of the Israelites. Europe also made this emancipation the condition of Roumanian and Servian independence. It was at this price only that she consented to the erection of the two principalities into kingdoms. There, surely, was an important fact; and France, faithful to her traditions of religious liberty, has the right to be proud of having taken, at Berlin, the initiative of this measure. But no one can see here a precedent for the Jews of Russia. The present affair is entirely different.

At Berlin, in 1878, it should be noted, Europe was in congress assembled. She was proceeding to re-arrange the boundaries of the East; she was making, on one side and another, a re-partition of the lands taken from Turkey; she gave or awarded to two petty principalities, up to that time vassals of the Sultan, the rank of independent kingdoms. Europe, then, could lay down conditions to the new kingdoms: the latter were obliged to submit to them, at least in words and on paper. In fact, when the congress was once dissolved, and the new thrones had obtained recognition, Roumania and Servia could act as they pleased. No one is ignorant that in Roumania the promises made at Berlin were far from being fully kept. The situation of the Israelites there remains precarious. Emancipation and the rights of citizens have been granted only to a very small number of Jews.

The masses remain, as in the past, under special laws quite similar to those of Russia; and Europe shuts her eyes. The cabinet of Bucharest continues to regulate in its own way the situation of the Jews of the Lower Danube.

Thus it may be seen that the process used toward Roumania cannot be applied to Russia. Besides, when we have witnessed the manner in which the little Roumanian nation has regarded the injunctions of Europe, we may well ask what the great Russian Empire would do in such a case. Granting that she would answer with fair words the representations of European diplomacy, how could we trust, in such a matter, the promises of the court of St. Petersburg? But Europe would not be sure even of receiving fair words from St. Petersburg. Europe, by meddling in the domestic affairs of the Russian Empire, would expose herself to a rebuff whose humiliation would weigh heavily on all the states imprudent enough to join in so ill-considered a demonstration.

We may cite, even in this century, one case of the intervention of foreign diplomacy in the domestic affairs of the Russian Empire. The example furnishes us with no encouragement. It was in 1863, in favor of a cause not less interesting than that of the Jews,—in favor of the Poles. The intervention of the powers could then be supported by treaties: it was to maintain the convention of Vienna, which, in giving to Russia the greater part of Poland, had guaranteed to the Poles a certain autonomy. The representations of the powers were thus easy to justify, since they demanded simply the execution of a treaty. On this ground, in fact, France and England, drawing Austria with them, placed themselves in all their notes to the Russian Government. The intention was good; the representations of the three governments were founded on a common fact of law; but they had a no less sad result: by wounding the self-love of the Russians, by exciting the national sentiment, they worked against the unhappy Poles. The *protégés* of Anglo-French diplomacy became its victims.

And it could scarcely be otherwise. The intervention of the foreigner in behalf of the subjects of the Czar could only irritate their master against them. It would be the same with regard to the Jews to-day. A diplomatic intervention, under whatever form, can have no force unless it is supported by arms. To succeed, it is necessary to have behind diplomacy the *ultima ratio*. Otherwise it is only a sterile and dangerous demonstration. The excuse of the French Government in 1863 was, that, in addressing remonstrances to Russia, it

seemed inclined to support the notes of its ministers with its fleet and armies. But neither England nor Austria showed herself disposed to go to extremes. They contented themselves with words; and words not followed by actions have no power to accomplish any thing.

Can it be thought that what Europe did not venture to do in 1863 on behalf of the Poles, she will try to do in 1891 on behalf of the Jews? To understand what the unhappy Israelites can gain by diplomacy, it is necessary to glance at the present situation of Europe. Is it favorable to an intervention—even to a simple moral intervention—on the part of the European powers in behalf of the Russian Jews? It seems to me that it is not.

It is well known what dissensions there are in Europe. Because of these dissensions, Russia is never obliged to regard European opinion in the least. The war of 1870–71 between France and Germany—or, more precisely, the Treaty of Frankfort, which tore from France Alsace-Lorraine—had the fatal consequence of cutting in two western Europe, the old Europe of Germano-Latin civilization. Studying it well, here is seen the principal, and perhaps the saddest, result of that ill-fated war. For a long time Russia will run no risk of finding a united Europe opposed to her.

It is, above all, from this point of view with regard to Russia, that it is proper to say, "There is no more Europe." In this sense, Bismarck and Von Moltke labored for the Russian Czar. They have made a new Sebastopol impossible. By changing the French frontier, they have forced France to look to the north with other eyes; to see in the Muscovite colossus no more a common danger for Europe, but an eventual ally for France, menaced by the cannon of Metz and Strasburg.

This is not the place to explain the cause and the character of what is called "*l'entente Franco-Russe*." That would force us to make too long a digression. Suffice it to say, that, in the situation made for France and for Europe twenty years since, that relation was inevitable. One has even the right to be surprised that it has taken so long to show itself and to strengthen itself. The renewal of the Triple Alliance during last summer ended by bringing about the ostensible *rapprochement* of the two powers threatened by the Triple Alliance. That France and Russia should remain separate, it would have been necessary that the three other continental powers should renounce a league, that, under pretext of maintaining peace, condemns Europe for all time to the ruinous *régime* of extreme armaments.

It is sometimes thought, that, in joining hands at Cronstadt, Russian Czarism and French Democracy have shown bellicose intentions. Nothing could be more false as far as France is concerned. Every one in France, except a weak minority, wants peace. Wrong or right, the French believe that peace is better assured if France is not isolated, face to face with the Triple Alliance. The character of the young emperor of Germany, and the morbid nervousness of that versatile sovereign, inspire in Paris little confidence. We always fear on his part some foolhardy action, and, though France feels that she is ready for any event, it seems to her wiser to assure herself, in case of need, that there will be a diversion in Germany's rear.

As to Russia, I believe her equally pacific, at least to-day. The autocratic emperor, whose will is law from the Vistula to Kamshatka, has few military tastes. He has made war in Bulgaria, and in witnessing the horrors of war he seems to have taken a dislike to it. If he is compared to his young neighbor, Kaiser William, the Czar Alexander III. is surely, of the two sovereigns,—the only two men whose caprice can throw Europe into a great war,—the one who by his temperament, by his tastes, by his habits, gives most sureties for peace. This is the opinion of all those who know a little about Russian matters. This is not the only point on which there is often misapprehension at Berlin, at Vienna, at Rome, even at London—perhaps also in New York. Surprise is often affected at the Franco-Russian understanding, which people are often pleased to name “an alliance against nature.” And, to be sure, if the two states are compared, they are at the two opposite poles of Europe. All their institutions, all their tendencies, separate them. Only, it is forgotten that these are not always the governmental affinities that decide the policy and the alliances of states. When King Louis XVI. allied himself against England, with the American rebels, it was surely not to foment the spirit of revolt at home. Likewise, to-day, if France draws near to Russia, it is not at all through sympathy for autocratic rule; it is simply in defiance of Prussian militarism and of the covetousness of the Triple Alliance.

Though they play in their public places the *Boje Tsaria Khrani* [the Russian national anthem], the French guard none the less their love of political and religious liberty. They do not believe that they are obliged to imitate the actions of the Russian Government. Because the latter persecutes the Jews, the Jews are not less tranquil in Paris. In no country in the world do the Israelites rank so high in propor-

tion to their number. The fugitives that come to us from Russia find our frontiers open. Still more, all the French press that counts for any thing has nobly condemned the excesses of Muscovite anti-Semitism. The Jews of Russia know this, and they have several times thanked the Parisian press for the aid that it has tried to give them. It might be hoped that the voice of friendly France might find more echo in St. Petersburg or Moscow than the suspected voices of Germany or of England: unfortunately, notwithstanding the well-wishing and discreet tone of our remonstrances, the Imperial Government has hitherto remained deaf to them.

But if France, like all Europe, reprobates the acts of Russian *tchinovnism* toward the Jews, does it follow that French diplomacy, if the demand should be made of it, would consent to give countenance to demands made on the Czar by other powers? Surely not; and we have already given the reasons. France knows that such intervention could succeed only if behind the notes of ambassadors should be seen the mouths of cannon. Now France is peaceable. She desires to maintain peace, and, besides, she does not wish uselessly to offend the Russian Government. For this reason alone, if others should take the initiative, the French Republic would hold itself back officially from such steps.

It is not to be thought, in short, that any European state would venture to present observations on this subject to the Czar's government. All feel the uselessness of diplomatic representations, and no one would wish to expose itself to a war in defence of the Russian Jews. The remedy, in fine, would be worse than the disease. Without going to a possible extreme, if certain powers—if the Triple Alliance, for instance—should think best to assume on this occasion a threatening attitude toward Russia, the Jews would run the risk of being the first victims. Neither in Germany, nor in Austria, nor in Italy, would people pardon them for complicating European difficulties, and for thus increasing the chances of a conflict. It would be bad for the Jews if one should see in them a danger to peace. That would be the saddest thing that could happen to them, from one end of Europe to the other. Anti-Semitism would gain^d new force everywhere, and would point them out more than ever as public enemies. Thus, far from desiring for the persecuted race the aid of diplomacy, I dread nothing so much for Israel as the open intervention of governments in her favor.

But that is neither to be feared nor hoped for. For all the reasons

that we have analyzed, Europe will not move. The Russia of M. Pobédonostsef is not less free than the Spain of Torquemada to do to her Jews as she wills. No one will interfere. If Moscow wishes to renew the *autos-da-fé* of the *quemaderos* of Castile, no power will make war to extinguish the fagots. This is the sad truth. If the persecutors of the Jews do not have recourse to the executioners and the tortures of the middle ages, that is simply because, in spite of her systematic isolation, the spirit of humanity of our century has made itself felt even in the steppes of Russia.

The Jews, then, have no aid to look for from the governments or the diplomats of Europe. They must be content with the Platonic encouragement that can be given them by individuals, the press, and private associations. It is thus alone that we may hope to influence the directing powers of Russia, and, if not arrest, at least soften, the rigors of the persecution. It is not by threats that Europe and the civilized world have some chance of working on Russian opinion, and on the counsels of the Czar; it is by showing that their actions toward the descendants of Jacob are unworthy of a great nation; it is by proving to them, above all, that this anti-Semitic campaign, far from serving the Russian people, is contrary to the best interests of state and nation. This proof the facts themselves must give; and perhaps the lessons of the facts will be listened to by the masters of Russia more willingly than the importunate voice of the philanthropists and liberals of the Occident.

Here, however, we must keep ourselves from illusions. Certain persons once imagined that the Jews had a means of bringing the Russian Government to terms, that is, through the national finances. It was said, that, Israel being in a large degree master of the financial markets of Europe, it would be easy for her to force the enemies of the Jews, by means of the Paris bourse and the London stock exchange, to render account to the Twelve Tribes. And this idea seemed to be not without foundation, seeing that the treasury of the autocratic empire cannot do without the aid of foreign money-markets. It seemed that St. Petersburg had too much need of placing loans, deliberately to alienate the cosmopolitan Jewish bank by making war on its own Jewish subjects. This was even the opinion of some Russians, and even of certain inspirers of the ultra-national policy of the Czar Alexander III. It was notably the opinion of Katkof, the celebrated director of the "Moscow Gazette." Katkof was one of the most ardent promoters of the Muscovite national fanaticism; but he declared

against anti-Semitism. He feared that, in making a too zealous war on the Jewish "factors" and pedlers of Poland, Russia might expose herself to the vengeance of great European financiers. Unfortunately for the Jews, Katkof is dead, and, instead of having confirmed his apprehensions, the event seems so far to have gone contrary to them.

Here is a curious phenomenon, unforeseen by all, whose explanation it is worth while to seek. Contrary to the predictions of all experts, Russian finances seem to have suffered nothing from the attacks made by the Russians on the race that includes the majority of financiers. On the contrary, since the opening of the campaign against the Jews, Russian funds have not ceased to rise. The Imperial Government has been able several times to borrow considerable sums on the most advantageous terms, and to bring to a favorable conclusion the most lucrative conversions. To make the ruble fall notably in value, nothing less has been necessary than a veritable famine in a great section of the empire.

How explain this phenomenon? Is the much-vaunted solidarity of Israel in face of the enemies of her people to fail this time? I know people who are astonished to see Jewish bankers lend their aid to the Russian loans of recent years. Perhaps the Israelitic houses that have been associated in these operations have been influenced by this double consideration: 1. The bankers may have thought, as business-men, that the Russian loans would succeed in spite of their abstention, and that, accordingly, not being able to prevent their success, it was better not to leave the profits to others; 2. They may have thought, as Jews, that to shut their doors to Russian loans would be to risk irritating the Czar and his ministers, and to aggravate, instead of ameliorate, the situation of the Israelites in the empire.

The most recent of the Russian loans, the one subscribed in Paris last October, was not brought before the public by the Rothschilds. None the less did it succeed. The cause of its success is easy to point out. There is among us in France some one richer than the Rothschilds. It is "Mr. Everybody." Now, in France, at this moment, "Mr. Everybody"—that great capitalist, more powerful than all the bankers—is well disposed toward Russia. He offers her his money willingly. In intrusting his savings to the Czar, the *bourgeois* or the peasant thinks that he is doing a patriotic deed. The attacks aimed from Berlin or London against Russian finances only stimulated the host of French subscriptions. Here is an immense advantage for Russia. In this alone she has received from France a greater service

than, perhaps, she knows how to return. And—is it difficult to remember?—this financial aid from France, the richest nation of the Old World, is yet again one of the consequences of the European situation. Here again, though he is innocent of it, the Jew is its victim. Historic events sometimes rebound thus in the wrong direction: in this sense one may say that the Jews are paying for the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. Without this fatal cutting in two of Europe, which opens the purse of France to Russia, the Jews would probably have kept enough control over the markets of Europe to cause all the Russian loans to fail. They would have had an almost certain means of forcing Russia to ask an end of hostilities. To-day, thanks to the divisions of Europe, they see the people of France putting a check on their financial power. They are passed by: great loans are subscribed without them. They see themselves thus temporarily deprived of their most powerful weapon. This event, new in Europe, has at least this much of good for the Jews: it has shown at their expense, that, in spite of all the clamor of the anti-Semites, the Jews are far from having absorbed all the wealth of Europe, and monopolized the financial affairs of the globe.

Thus Europe and the civilized world, in this lamentable affair, have no means of moving Russian Czarism. Europe can act on Russia to the profit of the persecuted neither by diplomacy, nor by arms, nor by money. In reality, we have only one means of working on the autocratic Czar and his counsellors,—our example. To the measures of persecution at St. Petersburg, we must oppose European and American liberty. To the short-sighted Russians who pretend that the Jew is but a death-bearing parasite, we must show what liberty and equality have already made, in two or three generations, of the Jews of the West. This response to the accusations of their Muscovite detractors, the Israelites particularly must give by their labor, by their honesty, by their good will toward the Christian nations who have received them well. For the civilized peoples of Europe and America there is still one way of acting on this foreign and re-actionary Russia. It is to give an asylum to the fugitives who come to ask us for a land where they can live and die free. To shut our ports and our frontiers against them is to take part against them; it is to approve, in the eyes of the world and before God, those who have driven them out; it is to say to the Czar's police, "You are right in banishing them from your country, the proof is that we do not want them in ours."

That the Russia of Emperor Alexander III. is imitating at the end of the nineteenth century the barbarous acts of the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, should not, in fine, astonish us greatly. Russia, by those who know her, cannot be judged after the same standard as the other Christian states of Europe or America. The Russia of Alexander III. is not, properly speaking, a nation contemporaneous with the England of Queen Victoria. Russia is in reality a state of another age, not only a state of the old *régime*, but in many respects, by her institutions and her customs, a state of the fifteenth century. Is it surprising that she should often reproduce errors that we consider most shocking and disastrous? In doing as she does with her Jews, Russia is acting, after all, in the Russian fashion,—an old obsolete fashion, which happily is no longer that of the Occident. What would be truly a scandal and a shame for our civilization would be to see the civilized countries of Europe and America repel from their territory the unfortunate victims of Russian persecution. Our feeling of humanity must be quite narrow, and have little depth, if the Russian exiles do not find among us in 1891 or 1892 the refuge that Holland, Italy, France, and the Grand Turk accorded three or four centuries ago to the exiles of Spain and Portugal.

ANATOLE LEROY-BEAULIEU.

FRENCH FEELING TOWARDS GERMANY.

It is only too certain that the existing antagonism between Germany and France constitutes to-day the chief threat of a bloody war in Europe, and that it is strong enough to have transformed the Old World, after twenty years of peace, into a vast camp bristling with guns and cannon, always on the *qui-vive*, always ready to take up arms at the first alarm.

One may say that nearly all the alliances formed or attempted in this period have been conceived with a view to the strife always anticipated between these two powerful nations. The conflicting interests of Austria and Russia in the Balkan Peninsula, and the prospect of gathering up the last spoils of the Turkish Empire, or of dominating the petty states born of its former dismemberments, certainly constitute a second cause of possible conflict, which would exist without the first. But the rivalries and distrust excited by this other question should be subordinated to the situation of Germany with regard to France, on account of the preponderating influence wielded during the last twenty years by the German nation. In this way all the great continental powers, from the Caspian Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, have formed two groups, which recent occurrences have brought to light, but which the force of events and the community of interests had long ago practically established, or at least prepared.

This is not all. Even states of small dimensions to which treaties, always hitherto respected, have assured the benefits of neutrality, are bound to share the general alarm. Belgium, marked out as the possible field of battle for her two neighbors,—a country whose king has been suspected of joining with Germany in order to pave the way for a new invasion,—is obliged to fortify her frontiers, and to increase her armies. Switzerland is exposed to the same perils by the same neighbors. Is it necessary to add, that neither the Low Countries nor the Scandinavian states can claim that they have no interest in the matter?

The New World, which has the good fortune to be able to devote all her resources to the fertile labors of peace, must be stupefied by the way in which the constant anticipation of an imminent conflict