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PROTESTANTS AND JEWS OF FRANCE IN FIGHT FOR EMANCIPATION, 1789-1791

By ZOSA SZAJKOWSKI

According to some sources, the Edict of November 1787 decreed in favor of the French non-Catholics (Protestants) is supposed to be considered as one of the forerunners of the emancipation of the Jews. In the present study we shall try to analyze the sources and the common interests of these two religious minorities: the Protestants and the Jews.

During the preparation of the Edict and subsequent to its issue a large number of pamphlets was published in favor of the Protestants or against them¹ and on this occasion some pamphleteers also expressed their opinions on the Jewish problem. Perhaps the most important of such opinions was voiced in 1787 by Chrétien-Guillaume Lamoignon de Malesherbes himself in a pamphlet on the legal status of marriage among Protestants. His role in the preparation of the Edict of November 1787 is well known. Later he headed the so-called Malesherbes Commission which, on the eve of the Revolution of 1789, prepared the groundwork for a new status in favor of the Jews.² Malesherbes collected a great number of notes on Jews, and, according to his early biographers, wrote a study on Jews which, unfortunately, is lost.³ This loss makes de Malesherbes' opinion of 1787 on Jews

¹ Arnaud Lods, *Centenaire de l'Edit du 17 Novembre 1789. Les partisans et les adversaires de l'Edit de tolérance. Etude bibliographique et juridique 1750-1789*, Paris, nd.

² ז. שייקובסקי, משלחויהם של יהודי ברדו אל ועדה מאלורב (1788) ואל האסיפה הלאומית (1790). צ' י' ו' י"ח, חשי"ג, 31-62.

³ *Catalogue des livres de la Bibliothèque de feu Chrétien-Guillaume Lamoignon-Malesherbes . . .*, Paris 1797. (p. 10: "... il avoit recueilli beaucoup de matériaux concernant les Juifs dont on trouve les manuscrits dans sa Bibliothèque"; "No. 5059. Recueil des pièces manuscrites, concernant les Juifs, ramassées par M. de Malesherbes, pour faire un travail sur cet objet, comme il en avoit fait un sur les Protestans; dans un carton in-fol."); Jean-Baptiste Dubois,

even more valuable. According to Malesherbes, the Jews were more favored than the Protestants in the matter of the legal registration of births, marriages and deaths. He was in favor of the inclusion of the Jews in a general law regulating the *état civil* which, surely, would have favored the Jewish emancipation.⁴ He even expressed a desire to reduce the hatred against the Jewish people by wanting to see Christians contented in detesting only the Jewish religion. Malesherbes' main reason for adopting a more favorable attitude towards the Jews was his conviction that such a change would contribute greatly toward the conversion of the Jews.⁵ In fact, Malesherbes was then one of those

Notice historique sur Chrétien-Guillaume Lamoignon-Malesherbes, 2nd ed., Paris, nd. (p. 32: "j'indiquerai un travail immense qu'il a fait sur les Juifs, et qui est resté manuscrit. Je ne connois aucun ouvrage sur cette matière, qui renferme des recherches aussi multipliées et aussi curieuses.") This is not mentioned in Dubois' first edition of 1788 and the third edition of 1805. Malesherbes' manuscript on Jews was not mentioned by M. Guillard in his: *Vie ou éloge historique de M. de Malesherbes*, Paris, 1805. The Comte de Baissy-d'Angelas mentioned Malesherbes' manuscript in his *Essai sur la vie, les écrits et les opinions de M. de Malesherbes . . .*, Paris, 1819, II, 52-53.

⁴ [de Malesherbes,] *Second mémoire sur le mariage des Protestans*, Londres 1787. (p. 70: "il y a des Provinces où ils ont des lois qui leur sont propres. Leurs Rabbis ou Rabbins sont non-seulement des Officiers publics, dont le certificat constate leur état, mais des Juges que le Roi nomme dans quelques lieux . . . que sont tellement reconnus que les Cours supérieures reçoivent l'appel de leurs sentences . . . il n'est pas inutile d'observer qu'à cet egard ils sont mieux traités que les Chrétiens Protestans ne le sont en present en France"; pp. 68, 73: "il sera aisé d'y inscrire aussi les décès des autres Hérétiques & Schismatiques, des Juifs . . . il suffit de ne point nommer spécialement dans la loi, les sujets du Roi de la R. P. R. . . . Par ce moyen, les Calvinistes & tous ceux dont je viens de parler, se trouveront compris dans l'énonciation générale, sans que le Roi ait à statuer particulièrement sur les Lutheriens, les Anabaptistes, les Juifs & c.")

⁵ "Il serait bein à desirer que l'horreur pour la nation juive s'affoiblit chez les Chrétiens, & qu'on se contentât de détester leur religion: 1°. Parce que la tache indélébile d'être d'une famille originairement juive est un grand obstacle à leur conversions, rien n'étant plus fait pour redoubler leur attachement à leur Religion que de savoir que s'ils la quittent, ils seront en horreur à toute leur nation & éternellement méprisés parmi les Chrétiens: 2°. Parce que trouvant exclus presque par-tout de la plupart des professions, ils sont obligés de se livrer à l'agiotage et à l'usure: 3°. Parce que n'ayant nulle part l'appui des loix communes à tous les citoyens, ils sont dans la nécessité absolue

pro-Jews who favored the emancipation of the Jews as a means toward their conversion to Christianity. It is known that a similar opinion was expressed by the great fighter for Jewish emancipation, Abbot Henry Grégoire.⁶

Did the Edict of November 1787 really apply to the Jews? The text of a number of articles in the Edict could easily be so interpreted. Article 1, for instance, speaks of non-Catholics, without mentioning the Protestants.⁷ As we shall see the Jews of Nîmes did actually ask for certain rights on the basis of this article. According to P. Angeras, author of a study on the application of the Edict in the Seneschalship of Nîmes, its article 25, which deals with the registering of the births of newborn children whose parents did not recognize baptism, applied as well to Jews.⁸ The attorney Louis-Francia Beaufleury, author

de suivre les loix qui leur sont propres, d'avoir des juges et des tribunaux de leur nation. Il en resulte que la plupart des particuliers juifs étant fort malheureux, la nation juive est un corps puissant, & qui fait souvent de la puissance un abus très-préjudiciable à la société, car tout corps a de la puissance; j'en ai vu de cruels effets, j'en ai vu aussi de très-cruels de la haine acharnée de quelques Chrétiens contre les Juifs. Si on vouloit s'occuper de cette nation, on pourroit lui appliquer une grande partie des principes établis dans ces deux Mémoires; car si pendant la durée de l'Edit de Nantes, les P. R. étoient en France *Imperium in Imperio*, les Juifs sont dans l'univers entier *Imperium in Imperiis*. Il n'est pas dans le pouvoir des Souverains de détruire en peu de temps cette horreur pour la nation Juive que est sûrement portée trop loin. Mais je croix que l'Edit qui, sans les nommer, leur permettra de procéder dans leurs actes & de paroître dans les Tribunaux, sans y perdre la qualification de leur Religion, pourra contribuer a en rapprocher quelques-uns du Christianism": *Ibidem*, 71. Reprinted by de Boissy-d'Angelas in his *Essai . . .*, 183-84.

⁶ M. Ginsburger, "Zwei unveroeffentlichte Briefe des Abbé Grégoire." *Festschrift zu Simon Dubnows siebzigstem Geburtstag*, Berlin, 1930, 201-206.

⁷ "à ceux de nos sujets qui professant une autre religion que la religion catholique."

⁸ "La naissance des enfants de nos sujets non catholiques . . . sera constatée . . . soit par l'acte de leur baptême . . ., si ce n'est que l'enfant fût de père et de mère d'une secte qui ne reconnait pas la nécessité du baptême, auquel cas, ceux qui le présentaient déclareront la naissance de l'enfant, la secte dans laquelle il est né et justifieront que le père et la mère ont été mariés sous la forme prescrite par le présent edit"; P. Angeras, *l'Edit de 1787 et son application dans la sénéchanssée de Nîmes*, Nîmes, 1925, 177-78.

of a history of the Jews in Bordeaux and Bayonne (1799) stated that article 37 of the Edict, which spoke of "other subjects" than Lutherans, applied to Jews, because they were the only other religious minority legally residing in France.⁹

The Jews of Nîmes, where a large part of the population was Protestant made an attempt to use the Edict in their favor. On the basis of article 1, Izaak Monteil took up a request already brought forth in 1784, asking that Jews be accepted in the guild of tailors. The guild's syndics tried to obtain the opinion of the Intendant of Languedoc, Ballainvilliers, who, in turn, consulted his Nîmes Sub-Delegate, Pheline. According to Pheline, who advised his superior to take the opinion of the Minister in Paris, this was a "delicate affair." But Ballainvilliers was advised by Paris that the Edict did not apply to Jews. A similar demand by the Jews of Nîmes was repeated by the syndics of the guild of the dealers in linen. But, as they were not sure about the spirit of the Edict concerning Jews, the syndics advised the Intendant to reject the Jewish demand without discussing the character of the Edict. The Jews could be told that they were foreigners, who could not benefit from article 1. Of course, the Jews were more than just tolerated foreigners, so the Intendant again asked for the advice of the Government and on April 13, 1788, he was advised that the Edict did not abolish the restrictions against Jews who, therefore, could not benefit from the Edict without the King's opinion in connection with his plans

⁹ "N'entendons, au surplus, déroger, par le présent édit, aux concessions faites aux luthériens établis en Alsace, non plus qu'à celles faites à ceux des autres sujets auxquels l'exercice d'une religion différente de la religion catholique, a pu être permis dans quelques provinces, à l'égard desquelles les réglemens continueront d'être exécutés." [Article 37.] Il est bien évident que l'on a entendu parler des Juifs, puisqu'il n'y avoit que leur secte et celle de luthériens qui fussent établies alors en France par l'autorité publique, et qu'on a voulu leur conserver leurs privilèges pour eux être d'avoir des cimetières particulières": L. F. Beaufleury, *Mémoire à consulter et consultation* [par: Francia-Beaufleury, Ferey, Cambacérès, Dobonnieres], *pour les citoyens Français, professant le culte Judaïque à Bordeaux, connus sous le nom de Juifs Portugais et Avignonnais*, np, an 7, 171-72; Reprinted in: L. F. B. Beaufleury, *Histoire de l'établissement des Juifs à Bordeaux et à Bayonne, depuis 1550*, Paris, an 8, 169-70.

concerning Jews. But the Jews did not give up their fight. On April 25, 1788, Mardochée Carcassonne of Nîmes requested the Intendant and the Government that the articles of the Edict mentioning non-Catholics without any specification of Protestants should be applied to the Jews. He wrote that the Jews of the neighboring papal province of Avignon and Comtat Venaissin would then emigrate to France and create prosperity in the province of Languedoc. His request was not granted.¹⁰

But it seems that, in spite of the Government's negative reply, the local authorities were not sure if it would be legal to exclude the Jews from the benefits of the Edict. Thus, they registered Jewish births, marriages and deaths in the registry now opened to Protestants for this purpose. The Jews of Nîmes, as well as those of Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon and L'Isle-sur-Sorgue in the neighboring papal province from where the Jews of Nîmes originally came, had their own registries kept by the Rabbis.¹¹ It is known that the registries problem of a legal *état-civil* was a major issue in the preparation of the Edict because the official registration of the birth, marriage or death of a non-Catholic constituted a recognition of his legal status. The Jews of Nîmes knew this and between March 19 and December 31, 1788 they registered their births, marriages and deaths in the office of the Judge, and many signed their names in Hebrew characters. Births and marriages of Jews which took place prior to 1787 — some in 1775 — and were already entered in the Jewish registries of the papal Province or of Nîmes, were now again registered by them in the French territory, in registries reserved for Protestants of Nîmes, Remoulins, Aix, Saint-Esprit, etc. Surely, the judges who kept the registries knew of the Government's advice of April 13, 1788. Still, eight months later the Jews requesting to be entered were inscribed by the judge of Nîmes in a registry reserved for Protestants and thus established a legal status for them. Jews were registered together with Protestants in other

¹⁰ Alphonse Jobez, *La France sous Louis XVI*, Paris 1893, III, 326; D. Kahn, *Notice sur les Israélites de Nîmes (1672-1808)*, Nîmes, 1901, 14-18; N. Roubin, "La vie commerciale des Juifs Comtadins en Languedoc au XVIII-e siècle." *REJ*, XXXIV, 1897, 279; P. Angeras, *op. cit.*, 164-68.

¹¹ These registries will be the subject of special study.

parts of France, too, but this was done only in an administrative manner, without taking position on the problem of Jewish emancipation. Thus, e. g., two Jews were registered on the *état-civil* of non-Catholics in Versailles.¹²

After the publication of the Edict, the Metz Parliament, according to some documents, undertook to study the Jewish problem. According to an unpublished memorandum by Pierre-Louis Roederer, who initiated the contest of the Metz Academy on Jews in 1786–1787, the Metz Parliament inquired in Paris about this matter. Roederer himself requested that the rights granted to Protestants also be given to the Jews.¹³ It is known that many provincial Parliaments were delayed in the registration of the Edict and it is possible that the discussion on Jews was the cause of such a delay in Metz, where the Edict was registered with the Parliament only on March 10, 1788.¹⁴ Later, in 1789, the Metz Deputy, Abbot François-Martin Thiébaud who fought against Jewish emancipation in the National Assembly wrote that, in 1787, the Jews of Metz tried to use the Edict in order to force their entry into the guilds, to own real-estate property. In order to appease the protesting Catholics, the City officials of Metz were compelled to state that the Edict favored only Christians.¹⁵

It is possible that the discussions on the Jewish aspect of the Edict were one of the reasons for the establishment of the

¹² Archives départementales du Gard, UU 106 (Registry of Protestants); Angeras, *op. cit.*, 168–72; city archives of Versailles, GG.

¹³ City Library of Metz, ms. 1100–25–II; Archives nationales, 29 AP3; Z. Szajkowski, "The Jewish Problem in Alsace, Metz, and Lorraine on the Eve of the Revolution of 1789." *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XLIV, 1954, 231–33.

¹⁴ Roger Chastanier, *L'Etat civil des Protestants 1550–1792*, Nîmes, 1922, 213; *Edit du roi, concernant ceux qui ne font pas profession de la religion Catholique . . . Novembre 1787. Registré en Parlement le 10 Mars 1788*, Metz, 1788.

¹⁵ "a peine l'édit de 1787 fut enregistré au Parlement de Metz, que les Juifs dirent, ce qu'ils répètent dans leur mémoire, pag. 22, qu'ils pouvoient être *affiliés au corps d'artisans*, acheter des maisons, & c. aussi-tôt ce n'est plus, de la part de la bourgeoisie, que craintes, qu'inquiétudes, que murmures, jusqu'à ce que le Magistrat repond que l'édit ne concerne point les non-baptisés": F.-M. Thiébaud, *No. ou Récit IV, et suite du compte rendu à ses comettans . . . Sa Discussion de la demande des Juifs, d'avoir désormais droit de cité indéfini*, Metz, 1789, 14–15.

Malesherbes Commission set up to prepare a status for the Jews. Thus, it is worth while to note the opinion of the Bordeaux chronicler Pierre Bernardau, a talented man with a very vicious tongue, who wrote that the Sephardic Jews in 1788 sent their delegation to the Malesherbes Commission in Paris because they were afraid that the Edict of November 1787 would limit the privileges accorded to the Sephardic Jews.¹⁶

The Edict of November 1787 was referred to in many Christian and Jewish chronicles, newspapers and pamphlets in connection with the Jewish problem on the eve of 1789 and during the Revolution. The well-known Zalkind Hourwitz writes that, on the basis of the Edict of 1787, many Jews bought masterships and that Paris Jews stated their religion in registrations at the Office of properties (*Bureau des Domaines*).¹⁷ An attorney and author of a *factum* for the Carpentras Jewish debtors of Christian creditors related in the year VII, that, on the eve of the Revolution, the Comtadin Jews, thanks to the Edict, were able to take up legal residence in France.¹⁸ Earlier, on June 21, 1789 the First Consul of Carpentras repeated the statement that the Edict was an attraction for the Comtadin Jews to emigrate to France.¹⁹ The author of a pamphlet on the emigration of Comtadin Jews, published in Carpentras during the Revolution, wrote that the

¹⁶ "Lundi XXI [avril 1788]. Les Juifs établis à Bordeaux craignant que l'Edict concernant les non-Catholiques ne portassent atteinte aux privilèges qu'on leur avait accordé durant le dernier Règne, ont député en Cour les sieurs Furtado et Lopes du Bec, pour savoir à cette occasion l'intention du Gouvernement, et mettre tout en oeuvre pour maintenir leur état-civil, dont la nouvelle loi peut restreindre beaucoup la liberté" (Tablettes de Bernardau, ms. 713-1 of the Bordeaux City Library, April 1788, p. 206).' M. Furtado Juif portugais que sa Nation avait député vers le Ministère pour traiter des intérêts des Iraélites qui semblaient compromis dans l'Edit de Versailles concernant les non-Catholiques est de retour de sa mission qu'il a remplie au gré des intéressés. Ses Frères lui ont temoigné la plus grande reconnaissance pour la manière heureuse avec laquelle il avait négocié en Cour" (*Ibidem*, Aug. 7, 1788, p. 277).

¹⁷ Z. Hourwitz, *Apologie des Juifs*, Paris, 1789, 87.

¹⁸ *Mémoire pour le Citoyen Jassé-Haïm Crémieu . . .* [signe: Chamaud], Aix, an VII, 19.

¹⁹ H. Chobaut, "Les Juifs d'Avignon et du Comtat Venaissin." *REJ*, CII (1937), 5-6.

Edict of 1787 gave all civil rights to the Jews.²⁰ On September 9, 1789 *Le Courrier français* asked the Abbot Henri Grégoire why he was fighting for the Jews, since the latter were already given civil rights by the Edict of 1787.²¹ We have mentioned the Abbot Thiébaud's statement on the effects of the Edict in Metz. Unfortunately the above reports were only misrepresentations of the official interpretation of the 1787 Edict. A more sober Jewish pamphleteer, Isaïe-Berr Bing of Metz, wrote that the Edict was beneficial to everyone except the Jew.²²

There were a few legal holes favoring a pro-Jewish interpretation of the Edict, but the events of Nîmes and Metz prove that the anti-Jewish elements saw to it that Jews should not benefit from the Edict. The Decree of the National Assembly of December 28, 1789, which completed the emancipation of the Protestants²³ — “without intending to prejudge relative to Jews on whose status the Assembly intends to pronounce itself” — definitely sanctioned the official interpretation that the Edict of 1787 was not applicable to Jews.

Still, the legend that the 1787 Edict affected the status of the Jews continued to exist even in the later, post-Revolutionary years. In the 1820s the Lorraine Jewish leader, Berr-Isaac Berr in a request to the Nancy Consistory to do honor to the memory of Malesherbes, wrote that he obtained the Edict of 1787 in favor of the Jews.²⁴ E. Coquebert-Monbret, author of a report

²⁰ *L'Enfant du patriotisme* [by J. J. Raphaël, or Cottier Julian], Carpentras, 1789, 5–6.

²¹ *Le Courrier français*, Sept. 9, 1789; L. Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris pendant la Révolution*, Paris, 1898, 21.

²² Isaïe-Berr Bing, *Mémoire particulier pour la communauté des Juifs établis à Metz*, [Metz, 1789], 22.

²³ A. E. Halphen, *Recueil des Lois . . . concernant les Israélites . . .*, Paris, 1851, 183–94.

²⁴ “. . . d'exprimer notre reconnaissance pour la mémoire du vertueux Mr. de Malesherbes, reconnaissance qui était sans doute partagé par tous les Israélites du Nord de la France pour qui il fit briller le premier l'aurore de la liberté civile en obtenant en leur faveur l'édit des non-Catholiques et l'autorisation de nommer des députés pour apporter aux pieds du Trône leurs vœux et doléances.” (In the archives of the Historical Society of Israel.) On August 19, 1819, the Nancy Consistory decided to mark the memory of Malesherbes;

on the French Jews, wrote in 1821, that the Edict contained also some dispositions in favor of the Jews²⁵ and the Jewish historian J. Bédarrides wrote that the Edict "was the forerunner of the complete emancipation of the Jews."²⁶ Perhaps the first acceptable thesis on the value of the Edict for the Jewish emancipation was given in 1909 by Théodore Reinach who wrote, that since citizenship was no more dependent on the adherence to the Catholic faith there was no more reason to ignore the Jews.²⁷ The Edict in favor of the Protestants was the first major victory in a fight for the emancipation of a religious minority, and this paved the way for the later emancipation of the Jews, too.

It would be hard to find a common rule for all French Protestants in their attitude towards Jews. We do not know of any active anti-Jewish movement among Bordeaux Protestants during the Revolution; but, in Alsace, the Protestants joined their enemies, the Catholics, in a common fight against Jewish emancipation. Both, Jews and Protestants, were persecuted in Bordeaux, but being busy with the persecution of the Protestants the Catholic Church sometimes neglected its anti-Jewish policy. In some respects the situation of the Protestants there — but not in Alsace and neighboring provinces — was even worse than that of the Jews. Until 1751 the Bordeaux Protestants had to bury their dead like animals and only in 1780 they were officially allowed to have a cemetery of their own. In 1757, the Bordeaux Protestants complained that as Christians they had to suffer, but that the Jews who had crucified Christ were tolerated. In 1787 an anonymous Protestant pamphleteer again complained that the status of Jews was better than that of Protestants. It is true, in the eyes of the Catholic Church the Sephardic Jews

the "Ministre fidèle, ami incomparable de l'auguste et infortuné Louis XVI." (*Ibidem*).

²⁵ E. C.[oquebert-] M.[onbret], *Notice sur l'état des Israélites en France . . .*, Paris, 1821, 43.

²⁶ I. Bédarrides, *Les Juifs en France, en Italie et en Espagne . . .*, Paris, 1859, 391.

²⁷ Théodore Reinach, *Les Juifs et la Révolution française. Résumé de la Conférence faite à l'Université Populaire Juive de Paris le 16 Mai 1909*, Vincennes, 1909, 3.

were less dangerous than the Protestants. The activities of these Jews were directed mainly toward the acquisition of economic riches and, therefore, they were useful for the monarchy and the city of Bordeaux. Intellectually they were less active than the Protestants who, although richer than the Jews, through their religion, Freemasonry and other media were able to help prepare the new ideas of 1789 in this Southwestern part of the country.²⁸ During the Revolution the Protestants of Bordeaux showed more initiative and courage as a religious minority than the Jews. They took the initiative to send the Bordeaux militia against the anti-Revolutionary Catholics of Montauban. Of course, Bordeaux was greatly interested in safeguarding its economic position and from the Montauban region came a large part of wheat exported by Bordeaux to the colonies. Still, this was not the only reason for such a punitive action. The Bordeaux Protestants maintained liaison with their Montauban coreligionists who were partisans of the Revolution and they were eager to help them.²⁹ But the Bordeaux Jews never even tried to help their coreligionists in other communities.³⁰

²⁸ In 1698, there were about 3,000 Protestants in Bordeaux, and over 1,700 Jews in 1753: A. Nicolaï, *La Population de Bordeaux au XVIII^e siècle, 1700–1800*, Paris-Bordeaux, 1909, 184; G. Cirot, *Recherches sur les Juifs Espagnols et Portugais à Bordeaux*, Bordeaux, 1908, 137; A. Leroux, *Les Religionnaires de Bordeaux de 1685 à 1802*, Bordeaux, 1920, 81; *Idem*, *Etude critique, sur le XVIII^e siècle à Bordeaux*, Bordeaux, 1921, 61; *Essai sur la tolérance des non-Catholiques en France. Poème adressée à M. M. les Députés des Trois Ordres*, Bordeaux, 1789, 12.

²⁹ L'héritier, *La Liberté, 1789*, Paris, 1947, 310; R. M. Brace, *Bordeaux and the Gironde 1789–1798*, New York, 1947, 2, 98–121; P. Marion, "Etat des classes rurales au XVIII^e siècle dans la généralité de Bordeaux." *Revue des études historiques*, LXVIII, 1902, 455.

³⁰ On the attitude of the Sephardic Jews to other Jewish groups see: Z. Szajkowski, "Relations among Sephardim, Ashkenazim and Avignonese Jews in France from the 16th to the 20th Centuries." *Yivo-Bleter*, XXXIX, 1955, 70–103. The anti-Jewish minded historian E. Labadie wrote that both, Protestants and Jews, continued during the Revolution their religious practices, but they persecuted the Catholics: *La Presse bordelaise pendant la Révolution*, Bordeaux, 1910, 57. It is worthy of note that the editors of a Bordeaux Protest of 1791 against the anti-Pope pamphlet *Rélation véritable . . . du grand voyage du Pape au Paradis* mentioned Protestant and Jewish signa-

In spite of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) the rights of the Alsatian Protestants were often restricted. The antagonism between Alsatian and neighboring Catholics and Protestants was amplified during the Revolution. The Catholics lost everything, their influence and power, while among Protestants the new regime was accepted as a logical consequence of the religious reform started by them.³¹ Of course, Protestants and Jews were not as dangerous to the Revolution as the mighty Catholic Church. Both were the target of Catholic attacks.³² Very often the Catholic anti-Revolutionary actions expressed themselves in a combined attack on both, Jews and Protestants.³³ In the region of Nantes, the Marquis de Juigné made propaganda against both religious minorities.³⁴ A counter-Revolutionary pamphleteer denounced Protestants, Jews and atheists as "the sole creators of the Revolution."³⁵

Jewish pamphleteers wrote about the Catholic hatred of the Protestants, and the Jacobins asked that the "good relations" existing in certain localities between Catholics and Protestants should serve as a pattern for the adoption of a friendly attitude toward Jews.³⁶ But this did not prevent the persecuted Protestants from attacking another persecuted religious minority. On

tories to their protest: *Dénonciation d'un article scandaleux & impie, inséré dans le Journal de Bordeaux . . . No. 79, Bordeaux, 1791. 15 p.*

³¹ Charles Hoffman, *L'Alsace au XVIII^e siècle*, Colmar, 1906, I, 187-94; *Dénonciation. On veut donc encore nous désunir*, np., nd. 1 p.; Emile Dard, *Hérault de Séchelles*, Paris, 1907, 136-37; Hubert Thomas, *Le Tribunal Criminel de la Meurthe sous la Révolution 1792-1799*, Nancy, 1937, 483; L. Bourguignon, *Bischwiller depuis 100 ans*, Bischwiler, 1875, 143.

³² In the year VI the Paris police wrote that Jews and Protestants *ne sont pas dangereux*: A. Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire*, Paris, 1898-99, IV, 730.

³³ L. Kahn, *op. cit.*, 48-49.

³⁴ Letter of May 24, 1790, to the *Comité des recherches*, Archives Nationales, D-XXIX bis 6 (81/15).

³⁵ *Les intrus juges au tribunal de la religion*, par l'auteur du Catéchisme nouveau et raisonné. Seconde édition, Paris 1792, 6.

³⁶ Zalkind-Hourwitz, *op. cit.*, 69; *Pétition des Juifs établis en France, adressée à l'Assemblée nationale, le 28 janvier 1790 . . .*, Paris, 1790, 33; Abraham Lambert, *Lettre à M. Reubell . . .* np, 1790, 3; *Rapport de l'Assemblée de la Société des Amis de la Constitution, le 27 février 1790 . . .*, Strasbourg, 1790, 14.

May 29, 1791, shortly before the emancipation of the French Jews, the Alsatian Protestant Pastor Jean-Laurent Blessig (1745–1816) wrote to Abbot Henri Grégoire on the difference in culture between the noble Sephardic Jews and the “mongrel” Alsatian Jews. According to him the latter should not be given full citizenship at once by the National Assembly.³⁷ The official attitude of the Alsatian Protestants towards Jewish emancipation could best be illustrated by the activities of the well-known Alsatian Protestant leader, Professor Christian-Guillaume Koch (1737–1813), who was also Deputy from Alsace. In the National Assembly Koch, together with the anti-Jewish Alsatian Deputy E.-J.-F. Schwendt was active in fighting Jewish emancipation. Koch’s ideas about Jews were clearly expressed in an unpublished memorandum of June 1790, in which he repeated the anti-Jewish accusation of his momentarily Catholic friends.³⁸

In his memorandum Koch reiterated one of the major arguments against Jewish emancipation, namely, that the Jews would continue to exist as a separate Jewish nation. Over a year later, after the Jews had been granted full citizenship

³⁷ “Il y a à peu près un an que nos assemblées primaires ont énoncé sur leur compte un voeu très fortement prononcé, qui dans une adresse particulière a été mis sous les yeux de l’Assemblée nationale. J’ai essayé de calmer alors un peu les agitations de ma section; mais quoi’on m’ait toujours écarté avec bonté, quique j’aie présenté le côté défavorable aux Juifs avec autant d’impartialité que les motifs qui limitent en leur faveur, j’ai vu que je ferais très bien de descendre de la tribune pour éviter d’en être rappelé avec trop d’énergie. Ma profession de loi au sujet des Juifs était alors et elle est constamment le même: il faut bien distinguer les Juifs Hollandais, les Juifs de nos ports d’avec les Juifs allemands qui ont inondé notre province; ceux-ci, sont à peine des metis, des quarterons, quand les autres seraient des grands blancs, des blancs nobles et titrés . . . Il est infiniment à désirer que l’Assemblée nationale veuille placer incessamment les Juifs au parvis et ne leur fermer encore l’entrée du temple que pour leur donner le temps de s’y préparer dignement.” “Lettres de Blessig à Gregoire.” *Revue d’Alsace* XI, 1910, 479–80. On Blessig see: Ed. Dollfus, *Biographien berühmter Elsässer*, Mülhausen, 1873, 158–72.

³⁸ “Réflexions sur les Juifs, redigés par M. Koch au mois de Juin 1790.” Archives du Chapitre de St.-Thomas (Strasbourg), No. 148-b 77–6 (II–2), see the Appendix. On Koch see: J. G. Schweighaeuser, *Vie de Christ. Guil. Koch*, Strasbourg, nd. 78 pp.

(on September 27, 1791), the National Assembly voted an amendment proposed by the Alsatian Deputy prince Victor Broglie, that the Jews should renounce their privilege of maintaining separate communities. In letters addressed to the Mayor of Strasbourg dated October 28 and 29, 1791, Schwendt and Koch interpreted this amendment as a victory over the Jews who would cease to exist as a *corps de nation* (national body).³⁹ In Koch's position on the Jewish problem the fact is interesting that he himself played a major part in the fight against the abolition of separate Protestant communities and the privileges accorded them prior to 1789. Thanks to Koch and his oratorical and legal ingenuity, and some arrangements with the Catholics and promises made to them, the Protestant Chapter of Saint-Thomas of Strasbourg was not nationalized and sold as Church property. Declared private property belonging to the Protestant University, the Chapter, to this day, benefits from pre-Revolutionary annuities and other prerogatives. The Deputy Pierre André of Lower Rhine stated in February 1799, that the Protestants who suffered from religious intolerance should not fight for the maintenance of privileges whose destruction could only help to bring about social happiness.⁴⁰ It is worth while to note that the Jewish community of Bordeaux tried a similar scheme, but on a much more limited scale involving only the Jewish cemetery, without trying to save privileges of an open counter-Revolutionary character. They fought against the nationalization of the Jewish cemetery, which was bought before the Revolution in the names of a few Jewish individuals. When the cemetery was confiscated and put on auction the Jews attempted to have some

³⁹ *Extrait de deux lettres de MM. Schwendt et Koch, Députés à l'Assemblée Nationale, à M. Dietrich Maire de Strasbourg, datées de Paris 28 et 29 Septembre 1791, Strasbourg, 1791.* 4 pp.

⁴⁰ R. Reuss, *Les églises protestantes d'Alsace pendant la Révolution 1789-1802*, Paris, 1906, 27-28, 31-33; Jean Richerateau, *Le rôle politique du Professeur Koch*, Strasbourg, 1936, 33-77; *Opinion de Frédéric Herman, Député par le département du Bas-Rhin, sur le projet de résolution concernant les biens . . . protestans. Séance du 9 ventôse an 7*, Paris, an 7. 26 pp.; *Opinion d'André (du Bas Rhin), sur le projet de résolution tendant à supprimer les établissements protestans, et à nationaliser les biens qui en dépendent. Séance du ventôse au 7, np., an 7, 22.*

Jews buy back the cemetery in their own names. But when this failed the Jews demanded that the transaction be declared null and void, because the cemetery was not an official communal property, but only a philanthropic undertaking. The departmental administration acceded to the Jewish demand, but this conflict stirred up anti-Jewish feelings and became the subject of many polemics between anti-Jewish and Jewish pamphleteers.⁴¹

One reason for the anti-Jewish attitude of the Protestants was the lack of stability in the Protestant attitude toward the Revolution itself, which had given them full freedom. In many provinces the Protestants were, of course, the best partisans of the new regime. Still, the French Protestants — as the historian Dr. J. F. E. Robinet notes — did not as a body and on a national scale endorse the Revolution, its principles, its fight against the anti-Revolutionary Church, etc. The Protestant dislike of the Revolution can easily be traced in histories dealing with the Protestants' situation during the Revolution. Alsatian Protestant leaders were suspected as aristocrats and traitors by the Strasbourg Jacobins and Prof. Koch spent eleven months in prison during the Terror.⁴²

Later, in post-Revolutionary years, Protestants and Jews often fought together against the Catholic reaction. In 1804, the author of a *factum* warned that an anti-Jewish policy would bring about the emigration of Jews in the same way as the repeal of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV had driven Protestant capitalists, merchants and artists out of France.⁴³ In 1806, the

⁴¹ *Mémoire . . .* [cf. note 9]; *Réponse à un Mémoire imprimé sous le nom des Citoyens français, professant le culte judaïque à Bordeaux*, np., nd.; *Rapport fait par Prévot, sur une pétition des citoyens Pujol et Despiau, habitans de la commune de Bordeaux, soumissionnaires de biens appartenans aux Juifs établis en cette commune. Séance du 21 germinal an 7*, Paris, an 7. 7 pp.; *Opinion de F. B. Darraçq dans l'affaire des Juifs de Bordeaux. Séance du 18 floreal au VII*. Paris, an VII; Beaufleury, *Histoire . . .*, 157–95; Z. Szajkowski, "Jewish Participation in the Sale of National Property During the French Revolution." *Jewish Social Studies*, XIV, 1952, 311.

⁴² Dr. J. F. E. Robinet, *Le Mouvement religieux à Paris pendant la Révolution*, Paris, 1896, I, 306, 311, 314; R. Reuss, *op. cit.*, 119–20.

⁴³ *Mémoire et consultation sur pourvoi en grâce pour Baer Abraham . . .*, Paris, [1804,] 53.

author of a pamphlet written against Napoleon's anti-Jewish policy warned that the persecution of the Jews would be followed by an anti-Jewish policy.⁴⁴ In 1815 a pamphleteer defended the common interests of Protestants and Jews.⁴⁵

APPENDIX

PROF. KOCH'S MEMORANDUM AGAINST JEWS

Réflexions sur les Juifs, rédigés par M. Koch au mois de juin 1790.

La loi de Moïse fait des Juifs une nation distincte de toutes les nations de la terre; elle prend les plus grandes precautions pour qu'ils ne puissent jamais être mêlés ni confondus avec d'autres nations . . .

Cette loi n'embrasse pas seulement les opinions religieuses, elle s'étende également sur le civil qui est si intimement allié à la religion même par l'identité de l'auteur de l'une et de l'autre loi qu'on ne saurait les séparer ni attribuer à l'une plus d'autorité qu'à l'autre . . .

En admettant donc les Juifs comme sectateurs de la loi Moïse, dans un état quelconqué, on ne peut les admettre que comme une nation ou, si l'on aime même comme une corporation distincte qui non seulement communiquera pas avec la nation qui les reçoit quant à ce qui touche le culte et les opinions religieuses mais encore ce qui est relatif à l'exercice des droits civils.

⁴⁴ Masson, avocat, *Sur les Juifs*, Paris, mai 1806. 3 pp.

⁴⁵ B. D . . . t, *La Boîte à perette des Protestants et des Israélites*, Paris, 1815, 8 pp. In Nîmes the animosity between Catholics and Protestants prevailed in the 1830s and even later: S. Posener, "La Révolution de Juillet et le département du Gard." *Mercur de France*, 1930, 607-36. On the anti-Protestant attitude of the Alsatian Catholic leaders in the 19th century see the pamphlet *L'Alsace . . .*, Clermont-Ferrand, 1874, by the Alsatian Jewish leader Julien Sée and the bibliography on the same subject in his diary *Guerre de 1870 . . .*, Paris, 1884.

Les Juifs ne se marieront jamais avec les Chrétiens; ils n'habiteront, ils ne mangeront pas avec eux; ils conserveront leur jurisprudence particulière.

Il en resultera nécessairement une masse de privilèges en leur faveur, dont voici les principaux:

1. Celui de ne pouvoir être astreints à aucuns travaux publics ni privés les jours de Sabbat et pendant les autres fêtes que leur sont prescrites par leur loi. Ces fêtes d'ailleurs n'étant pas coincidentes avec celles des Chrétiens troubleront nécessairement l'ordre de la société, si les Juifs participaient à quelques fonctions publiques dans l'état.

2. Celui de ne se marier qu'entre eux seuls, de conserver leur race pur et sans le moindre mélange et de concentrer par conséquent aussi leurs biens dans leurs familles.

3. Celui d'avoir leurs habitations, leur logements et même leurs auberges à part.

4. Celui d'avoir les boucheries particulières.

5. Celui d'être jugés d'après leur loi civile et d'avoir leurs Rabbins pour interprètes de cette loi et pour premiers juges.

Il leur est impossible de renoncer à aucun des ces privilèges sans renier leur loi, sans cesser d'être Juifs.

Une renonciation quelconque faite par quelques individus de la nation à l'un ou l'autre de ces privilèges ne diront absolument rien; il faudroit de toute nécessité que leurs Rabbins et tous les chefs de famille y adhérassent formellement; et encore ne craint-on pas d'avancer qu'une pareille renonciation générale ou partielle, ne serait jamais sincère de leur part, qu'ils la désavoueroient intérieurement et qu'elle leur vaudroit plutôt le mépris que d'approbation de tous les gens de bien.

Comme il leur donc est impossible de renoncer aux droits et privilèges qui en font et qui en feront toujours une nation distincte, il est également impossible que la nation qui les reçoit dans son sein puisse leur communiquer indifféremment tous les avantages tandis qu'ils ne communiqueroient que très imparfaitement avec elle ceux qu'ils pourroient eux mêmes répandre sur

la société si on les considérait comme simple hommes et non comme Juifs et comme privilégiés.

Leur accorder sans aucune restriction, sans examen préalable de leur facultés . . . tous les droits de la cité Française, ce feroit attirer de Juifs étrangers chez nous, se seroit blesser essentiellement les droits des autres citoyens, se seroit faciliter les moyens aux Juifs de faire des conquêtes légales sur les Chrétiens qui bientôt ne pourroient plus soutenir leur conqurence et seroient obligés de leur céder en tout et partout la place.

Cependant si les privilèges exclusifs des Juifs sont, généralement parlant, destructifs de la société, celui de leur union conjugale exclusive avec des conjoints de leur race seroit déjà plus que suffisant pour empêcher qu'ils ne puissent jamais devenir nos frères, ni nos concitoyens, attendu que pendant qu'ils empréteroient continuellement, de mille manières, sur nous, à la faveur de leur privilèges, nous ne pourrions jamais recouvrir, pas même par la réciprocité du bien conjugal, ce qu'ils auroient acquis ou gagné sur nous . . .