

Jews of Siberia in the 19th Century

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Abstract

Siberian Jews have long been a well-established subject of research in Jewish Studies. Scientific publications of the 19th – early 21st century mainly focus on the problems pertaining to social adaptation of Jews in Siberia in the 19th – early 20th century. At the same time, much fewer works describe features distinguishing the economic development of the Jewish community and its place and role in the growth of specific economic sectors in Siberian regions. The article deals with the starting period that saw the formation of the Jewish community in Western Siberia. This period has not been closely looked at in historiography. The analysis here is based on archival data and elaborates on governmental policies by Alexander I and Nicholas II towards Jews living in Siberia as well as the consequences of these policies by the mid 19th century. The paper is using materials from various archives and published sources to formulate key features of the economic activities undertaken by the Jewish community in Western Siberia in the 19th century.

Keywords: Jewish community, the Jewish question, Siberia, migration, domesticities, trade, distillation, education, medicine.

1. Introduction

The formation of local Jewish communities in the Russian Empire throughout the 19th century was a reflection of the national policy. Short periods of liberalism gave way to lengthy bans prohibiting Jews from settling beyond the Pale (the Pale of Settlement was introduced by Catherine II and determined the provinces in which Jews were allowed to reside; it remained in force until 1917). One of the regions, which featured continuously forming Jewish communities, was Siberia.

Russian historiography established a tradition of dating back the history of the Jewish community in Western Siberia to 1836. V.N. Nikitin was one of the first historians who raised this topic in his study *"Evrei zemledel'tsy" ("Jewish agriculturists")* (1887). One chapter in his work was devoted to the unsuccessful movement of Jews in the Tobolsk province and Omsk region under Nicholas I in 1835–1836. An undoubted merit of the author was the introduction of archival documents from the Interior Ministry into scientific use. Although he did not add appropriate references to the text, a comparison of materials from the corresponding fonds leaves no doubt of it. Using multiple sources, Nikitin not only presented a detailed picture of the project development and nuances of its implementation, but also tried to expound on the reasons why it was suddenly scrapped. Unlike researchers in the years to come the following years, he gave no quantitative data on Jewish settlers of this time but only referred to the text of the 1837 manifesto that prohibited Jews from resettling and living in Siberia and stated that "1,317 adult males (except those who voluntarily went to Siberia-- and nobody knew the right number)" wished to move to Siberia (Nikitin 1887: 207).

Booming legal trends in Russian history contributed to the appearance of new studies. In 1905, St. Petersburg saw the publication of the work by lawyer G.B. Belkovskii *"Russkoe zakonodatel'stvo o evreiakh v Sibiri" ("Russian legislation on the Jews in Siberia")*, where he could not ignore the question of the Jewish 1835 – 1836 resettlement. Writing about the prohibitive measures in 1837, he pointed out that they were not extended to those "who had time to voluntarily settle down in 1836. There were only some 1,367 people " (Belkovskii, 1905). But one of the sources in Belkovskii's study was the article by exiled populist F. Volkhovskii *"Evrei v Sibiri" ("Jews in Siberia")*, published in the *Voskhod* journal (Volkhovskii, 1887).

A paper by a lawyer I.O. Ostrovskii *"Sibirskie evrei" ("Siberian Jews")* (1911) also mentions the 1835–1836 resettlement campaign. Without giving specific information on the number of people who migrated, the author writes about the "willingness of 1,317 Jews to resettle" (Ostrovskii 1911: 13).

Finally, a lawyer M.M. Mysh gives the historical background of Jews in Siberia in the section "The right of residence of Jews in Siberia" in the book entitled *"Handbook to the Russian laws on the Jews"* (1914). Their appearance is connected with the 1835–1836 campaign when "in 1836, willingness to relocate from different provinces was

expressed by 1,217 Jews" (Mysh, 1914). As he provided data on the number of people willing to resettle, the author referred to the text of the provisions by the Committee of Ministers "On the suspension of the resettlement of Jews in Siberia" dated January 5, 1837. However, the text of the provisions gives different information: "1,317 Jews willing to resettle on these plots during 1836" (Mysh, 1914).

When describing the legal framework for the founding of Jewish communities in Siberia, authors paid little attention to challenges the Jews faced in adapting to their new circumstances. This resulted from the more common external approach to the study of the history of the communities, which dealt with the history of Jews in Russia on the basis of non-Jewish documents (S. Dubnov et. al.). An exception was the work by B. Voitiński and A. Gornstein "*Jews in Irkutsk*" (1915).

Jewish Studies in the second half of the 20th– early 21st century were dominated by research works of Siberian historians (L. Kalmina, 1998, V. Rabinovich, 2002, N. Galashova, 2004, N. Orekhova, 2007, V. Shaidurov, 2013 etc.). The main attention is given by authors to issues of the interior life of the regional communities.

Foreign experts are not particularly interested in the region. This situation was reflected in historiography. One of the few studies in which we find references to the Jews of Siberia before 1917, was a monograph by J. Klier "*The origins of the "Jewish question" in Russia, 1772 – 1825*". The author in his monograph mentions the contacts of the Russian government with Jews before 1772. For example, the general historical context indicates Siberia as a place of exile at the beginning of the reign of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. In the future, the practice continued (Klier 1986: 61).

2. Material and Methods

In this paper, we consider the impact of national policies on the formation of local Jewish communities (case study of Siberia) and characterize the place and role of Jews in the regional economy in the 19th century.

Thus, on the one hand we will use some principles of the regional approach, addressed by Andreas Kappeler (1992) in his monograph using the Russian material, in the form of reconstruction of specific aspects of the history of Jews in Siberia. On the other hand, I will also apply some features of the situational approach that lately has been lately widely used by Russian and foreign historians to describe history as resulting from the interaction of various actors (A. Miller et. al.).

The work is mainly based on archival documents and published sources (legislative and recordkeeping materials). These resources will enable complete the tasks set above.

3. Discussion

In mid-March 1810, the Committee of Ministers at its meeting heard a note from the Interior Minister, O.P. Kozodavlev, presenting them with the project of a Courland nobleman, a councilor of the Courland provincial board, G.F. von Felkerzam, to relocate Jews from Courland to the Tobolsk province (Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA). F. 1263. Op. 1. D. 20. L. 148 – 149). However, the government at the time did not think it was necessary to examine this issue, and therefore it made a decision "upon hearing the projects ... to leave them without attention" (RGIA. F. 1263. Op. 1. D. 20. L. 149).

The Interior Ministry had to deal more than once with the question of the Jewish population in Siberia in the first quarter of the 19th century. In this period, Jews found themselves beyond the Urals as a result of enforced court judgments or were sent there as exiles. For example, in 1814, Siberian Governor General I.B. Pestel to Interior Minister O.P. Kozodavlev on the measures taken by Irkutsk civil governor N.I. Treskin regarding Jewish settlers (settlers were the persons who finished or served their term in exile or penal servitude and were left in Siberia to live under police surveillance– V.Sh.) (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 273. L. 1). Local authorities faced the fact that Jews "by nature of their lives are not inclined to undertake any farming activities and because of their dissolute behavior may not be useful to that region" (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 273. L. 3). To correct the customs of Jews and Gypsies, it was proposed to send those who had no craft skills for penal settlement in the areas of the Irkutsk and Nizhneudinsk uyezds (An uezd was a secondary-level of administrative division. In the 18th – early 20th century, the Russian Empire was divided into provinces, which in their turn were divided into uyezds, and uyezds into volosts.), that were remote from Irkutsk.

A visit to Ural plants by Alexander I allowed local authorities to initiate radical actions to fight against the "Jewish evil." Already December 19, 1824 witnessed a secret order that prohibited Jews from settling in Ural state-owned and private plants and in the Altai mining district in order to prevent Jews from stealing precious metals and "corrupting the local population." Measures to exterminate Jews were carried out simultaneously by the Finance Ministry and the Interior Ministry. In the above document, the Finance Minister, E.F. Kankrin, was instructed regarding "Jews so that they were not

tolerated at the mining plants" (RGIA. F. 468. Op. 23. D. 2728. L. 9). A week later the Managing Head of the His Imperial Majesty Cabinet, Count D.A. Guriev, communicated the content of the secret document to the directors of Kolyvan-Voskresensk, Nerchensk and Yekaterinburg mining plants.

On December 9, 1825, Western Siberian Governor General P.M. Kaptsevich reported to the Siberian Committee on Jews living in the Omsk region and activities that were planned to be carried out in relation to this group. Surviving documents, in particular, decisions by the Council of the General Directorate of Western Siberia, allow us to speak that the attitude of the local authorities and society to exiled Jews was negative. They, for example, indicated that "the Semipalatinsk City Hall spoke very harshly of them (Jews – V.Sh.), and also Petropavlovsk city-provost could not vouch for their trustworthy behavior" (RGIA. F. 1264. Op. 1. D. 260. L. 3).

Provincial authorities were in a difficult situation: they had to relocate Jews not only from mining plants of the Altai mining district, but also from the border settlements along the Siberian Line. Based on the above secret order, provincial authorities made a decision: "Banish all the Jews who are staying... and residing in districts according to their passports and without them, from their former places of residence, and henceforth keep them out of the Line for what purpose to order municipal and rural police departments to make strict observation of the Jews ranked as petty bourgeois and peasants and settlers having households" (RGIA. F. 1264. Op. 1. D. 260. L. 4). Jews were further proposed to be relocated from Semipalatinsk and Petropavl fort to the interior of the Tobolsk and Tomsk provinces and to ask the Tobolsk *Pikaz* for Exiles (*Prikazes* were orders or administrative departments in the 18th century Russia), that no exiled Jews "were sent by it in future both to the Line and other places, that are close to mining plants" (RGIA. F. 1264. Op. 1. D. 260. L. 5).

Thus, already in the 1820s, Siberia was the place where measures were implemented aiming at restricting the rights of the Jewish population. In spite of barring Jews from living in certain parts of Siberia, the authorities, nevertheless, left them there as settlers, and therefore prohibitive measures could not exclude Jews from the number of Siberian inhabitants. According to the Interior Ministry, by 1834, Siberia was the place of residence for "18 merchants, 659 townspeople, craft and town workers, and the Omsk region for 13 settlers" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 960. L. 4) of Jewish confession.

By the mid-1830s, sharp deterioration was marked in the situation of the Jewish population inside the Pale, who were relocated in the second half of the 1820s from rural areas to cities and towns, as overcrowded conditions made it impossible for most Jews to become employed. This was repeatedly reported by the regions to St. Petersburg. In April 1835, Nicholas I approved the "Regulations on the Jews", which were supposed, according to their developers, to improve the situation of the Jewish population. In particular, one of the principal aspects of the new provisions was the intention to "relieve" cities and towns in Pale of the excessive weight of the indigent Jewish population by relocating it to rural areas. New settlements grew up on vacant marginal lands.

With the bureaucratized state apparatus in the reign of Nicholas I, the formulation of measures to tackle the Jewish question involved various institutions in the mid-1830s.

One of the key bodies preparing and carrying out the relocation of Jews to rural areas was the Finance Ministry. Its functions not only included allocating settlers allowance for traveling expenses, but also preparing places of residence.

The main region for the placement of Jews was to become Siberia, despite the fact that the local authorities were extremely ill-disposed towards them ever since the governorship of Speranski. Following the report by Finance Minister Kankrin, November 12, 1835, Nicholas I ordered for Jewish the allocation of 5 vacant plots of state-owned lands in the Tobolsk province and the Omsk region. It should be noted that by that time, the office of the Interior Ministry had piled up a large number of petitions from Jewish communities of different provinces, which contained requests for better situation for Jews. The greatest number of petitions came from the Jews of the Baltic and Belarusian provinces. For example, a petition addressed to Interior Minister Bludov came from Jewish families of the Mitava city in Courland, in which petitioners complained about the "enormous difficulties in earning an honest livelihood" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D.. 959. L. 3).

The overpopulation of cities by Jews and impossibility for them to support their families were pointed out by Vitebsk Governor General Dyakov in his memorandum which indicated, for example, that "petty traders and craftsmen due to the lack of customers and consumers have to be limited to petty trade, which is hardly worth maintaining a shop; craftsmen, who are numerous among Jews, are unemployed. Mogilev alone is known to have more than 600 tailors, while the 100th fraction of this number is sufficient for the total of people who need their skills" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D.. 959. L. 44).

Many Jewish families tried by all means to escape from the poverty in which they found themselves because of the tsarist power. As a result, internal prerequisites were developed in the mid 1830s in Jewish communities for their inclusion in the colonization process.

But not everyone in Jewish communities supported the resettlement in new areas. This process was opposed

among others by Kahals. In his memorandum to Benkendorf, Major General Drebusch pointed out that "they (Jews – V.Sh.) have accepted as a blessing the most gracious permission to become agriculturalists [...] in the Tobolsk province, granted to them, but they are facing difficulties on the part of Jewish Kahals» (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 959. L. 50). Kahals together with city and zemstvo police tried to conceal the relative decree from Jews.

It should be said that the "Regulations on the Jews" spoke in generalities, and many of its theses required further clarification and detailed work. This led to the fact that several approaches to the relocation of Jews from the cities to rural areas were planned in the depths of officialdom. The first opinion was voiced by the Finance Minister E. Kankrin, according to which, it was necessary to resettle Jews on lands allocated in Siberia by the government at the expense of public funds. This position is consistently traced in the departmental correspondence between the Finance Ministry, on the one hand, and other agencies (the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of State Property), on the other hand.

A special opinion on the subject was expressed by Adjutant General Dyakov, who held the post of Chief Executive of the Vitebsk, Mogilev and Smolensk provinces in 1836. He agreed on the need to improve the situation of the Jews in the Pale, which was reported in a memorandum drawn up in Vitebsk on July 19, 1836. According to him, Belarusian provinces had enough vacant lands for Jewish grain farmers to be placed. For example, he proposed "in advance early and without waiting for requests, designating in the Vitebsk and Mogilev province vacant and obrok public lands plots of 200 dessiatines or more; announcing the designation to Jewish communities in cities and towns so that they know where they can settle down pursuant to the 1835 Regulation" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D.. 959. L. 46). These actions were to be implemented by the Interior Ministry and treasury chambers under the Finance Ministry.

Another position was made clear in a memorandum by the Chief of District IV, gendarme corps Major General Drebusch. Like Dyakov, he believed that the deteriorating situation of the Jews was caused by the measures taken in 1823 that plunged them into destitution and them deprived of "all the means to feed themselves and numerous families" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 959. L. 50). Drebusch outlined in his memorandum details on his vision of a mechanism for the relocation to the lands allotted in Siberia, which actually was to be controlled by the Corps of Gendarmes (at the local level – of Corps field officers). This view was supported by the chief of the Corps, Count Benkendorf. Thus, there was an obvious clash of interests among of various departments and people.

Both documents reached Interior Minister Bludov. The latter had a covering note from Benkendorf. Bludov decided to shift the responsibility for the final decision to Finance Minister Kankrin, to whom both documents were submitted for consideration. At the same time Bludov respectfully wrote Benkendorf that upon receipt of the Finance Minister's reply he would certainly notify him of the future course of the case (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D.. 959. L. 57).

The position of Finance Minister Kankrin remained unchanged. In his reply to Bludov dated August 26, 1836, he wrote that, based on the information available in the Ministry, he thought allocating lands in Belarusian provinces was impossible, as there were no free lands (RGIA, L. 59). As for the proposals by Major General Drebusch, they were not accepted either, because the principles of supplying Jewish resettlement groups with money and controlling their movement to the area of placement were already formulated. These principles were set out in a letter to Bludov as early as May 1836 (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 959. L. 17-20).

This was the general opinion shaped regarding the issue of the Jewish resettlement in Siberia.

The spring of 1836 saw the start of the resettlement campaign, as it was planned by the Finance Ministry. Small groups of Jews went from the Pale, mostly from the Mogilev province, to Siberia. The very first contacts between settlers and provincial authorities along the route revealed the latter were unprepared to accept resettlement groups. Jews whether in Simbirsk or Vladimir requested for financial support, while local authorities entered in long correspondence with St. Petersburg, asking for instructions. The solution to the problem was radical: Kankrin issued an order for treasury chambers to allocate necessary funds and clothing to Jewish settlers. Thus, officials dealt with problems of immigrants, as they arose.

In mid-December 1836, Kankrin sent Bludov another letter. There he summarized intermediate results of the 1836 resettlement campaign. In particular, he pointed out that "based on the affairs of the Department of State Property, it can be seen that during this 1836 the number of people that wished to relocate from various provinces to the state-owned plots allocated to them, amounted up to 1317 souls". The Office of the Interior Ministry had at that time lists of potential migrants from various Belarusian and Lithuanian provinces, that totaled over 3 thousand people. These results were so inspiring for the Finance Minister, that he announced his intention to allocate in the next year ten plots for Jews to resettle in the Omsk and Petropavlovsk districts spanning total a total area of 13,363 dessiatines. Provincial and regional treasury chambers already planned Capital grants for relocated people. For its part, the Interior Ministry was to inform Jewish communities inform through governors, as well as notify the Governor General of Western Siberia.

On December 22, 1836, a regular meeting by the Committee of Ministers took place, considering among other things the issue of facilitating the Jewish resettlement in Siberia using the proposal put forward by Finance Minister

Kankrin. The Committee of Ministers made a decision to "approve the order request for the Imperial permission" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 959. L. 120).

Already on January 5, 1837, Nicholas I passed a resolution on the provision of the Committee of Ministers: "Suspend the relocation of Jews to Siberia" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 959. L. 120). This undermined all efforts previously made by various departments. The specialist literature has repeatedly raised the question: why Nicholas I changed his position regarding the resettlement issue. It seems to us, a negative role in these developments was played Interior Minister Count D.N. Bludov, who in his surviving memorandums to His Imperial Majesty repeatedly spoke against the Jewish settlement in Siberia. The above memorandums and covering documents to them imply that Bludov repeatedly had conversations with the Emperor on this subject, which received its further expression in various documents, including those that received the Imperial extracts from these documents to support the argument. According to Bludov, the most important purpose was to prevent any negative influence of Jews on Russian Orthodox and non-Russian population (Tatars, Kirghiz, Altai and others) (Kafmina 1998: 10). To achieve this, it was necessary in every possible way to avoid increasing numbers of Jews in Siberia, and convert those who already lived there to Orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, the resettlement of Jews in Siberia was not simply suspended. It was soon followed by an order to return all resettled parties to their places of residence or send them to the Kherson province, where their placement was to be provided for by the newly created Ministry of State Property, headed by Count P.D. Kiselyov. This order was sent by Bludov to all governors whose provinces Jewish migrants could by pass. Using follow-up reports from governors it is possible to assess the actual scale of the resettlement campaign. According to them, as of the end of 1836 – beginning of 1837 the number of Jews on their way to Siberia was no more than 100 people who took advantage of the right granted to them to settle down in the Tobolsk province. All of them were sent to Kherson.

However, one group of migrants managed to arrive at the Tobolsk province in late 1836. Bludov's order, received after that, caused confusion among the provincial authorities. On July 5, a report was sent to St. Petersburg that a party of Jews from the Mogilev province and Bialystok region numbering 36 persons of both sexes came to Siberia before January 5, 1837. The question arose what to do? The answer required the interference of Nicholas I, who passed a resolution of this matter in the hands of the Jews themselves. State Secretary Taneyev wrote to Bludov on this subject: "Lord Emperor, having considered the humble ... memorandum dated July 8 addressed to His Imperial Majesty... deigned to believe that it is unfair to relocate these Jews once again. But His Imperial Majesty commands that they be presented with a choice as to either resettle in the Kherson province, or remain in the place and comply with the rules adopted for the Jews who are now located in Siberia" (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 29. D. 960. L. 185). The Jews exercised this right – 32 chose to remain in Siberia, and only 4 decided to return to European Russia.

This story what's the question the stereotype existing in the literature that more than 1 thousand Jews resettled in Siberia in 1836 (Belkovskii 1905: 5; Ostrovkii 1911: 4). Work with archival f.s revealed an interesting case that sheds light on the fate of the Jews who settled in the Omsk region. In the mid-1840s, 32 Omsk Jews reminded of themselves. This was connected with the matter of exempting them from taxes and duties. In January 1843, a Supreme Order was issued by Nicholas I, regarding the Committee of Ministers' decision, following the report from the Minister of State Property, Count P.D. Kiselyov: "Permit these Jews to remain forever on the plot allotted to them in the Omsk region, and then exempt this plot from taxation". As a result, they received 480 dessiatines of convenient land in free use for 25 years (Shaidurov 2013: 81).

The practical effect of the 1835–1836 resettlement campaign was ambiguous. The main outcome can be considered to be the introduction of an official ban on resettlement and residence of Jews in Siberia. The "Rules" developed by D.N. Bludov, shaped the life of the small Jewish community in Siberia. First of all, they affected exiles and penal servitude convicts caught in this area. It was penal servitude and exile that became the main source to replenish the Siberian Jewry in the second third of the 19th century: as of 1849, the Tobolsk province was the place of residence for only 785 people of both sexes, and the Tomsk province for 1,482 people of both sexes, which means that means only in 15 years, the official number of Jews in the two Siberian provinces almost tripled. In the middle of the 19th century, one of the main centers of Jewish life in Western Siberia became Kainsk, the town in which, according to a contemporary, "most of the population ... are Jews relocated for their crimes and above of all for smuggling."

Thus, despite the opposition of the authorities, by the beginning of the post-reform period (1861 - 1900), Siberia brought about active processes in formation of the Jewish community. Exile, and later the natural growth of the population became principal sources in this process. Living conditions, different from the Pale, and ignorance of segregation forced Jews to strive for emancipation in order to find their place in the economic and socio-cultural life of Siberia.

Bourgeois-democratic reformations of Alexander II affected the Jewish Diaspora life. Thus, a variety of legislative acts were adopted in the early eighteen sixties that permitted some categories of Jews to migrate from pale of settlement to inland guberniyas (provinces) of the Russian Empire. The Siberian guberniyas were among them. Those persons who

had higher education, academic degrees, as well as chemists, craftsmen, et alias, began to migrate in great numbers first to guberniyas adjoining the Pale of Settlement (Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, et alias). Gradually the migration flow reached the Urals and Siberia.

Partial liberalization of the Russian legal system that concerned Jews was important for a number of regional areas including Siberia. The advent of a considerably great number of people with university and professional education laid the foundation for the modernization of economical and sociocultured life in these areas. The Jews who arrived in Siberia voluntarily changed the Judaic community image, the latter attaining regularized form, structure and its interior life.

Having turned out to be in Siberia the Jews were scarce of sources of revenue. As long as they resided in the same area as the exiled they could count on an insignificant drawing pay which was only just enough to buy basic goods. That disastrous state forced them either to apply for financial support on the part of relatives or seek for extra money locally. Begging was one of the common occupation among the Jews. According to the newspaper "Siberian Life" in Tomsk as of 1885 it was the source of subsistence of approximately 40 Jews. Some of them turned beggarism to professional occupation, whereas to others it was their lifestyle, "obtaining profitable deal (Geschäft)" (Shaidurov 2013: 101).

During the first after-reform (1861 - 1894) decades privately owned capital prevailed in Siberia, including Judaic capital in the sphere of gold mining. Siberian Jews from among "nouveaux riches" became proprietors of gold mines, many of which were in the territory of the Altai mining okrug (territorial district). For example, there were 281 privately owned gold mines in the Maryinsky okrug in 1873, 10 of which were owned by Tomsk and Maryinsky tradespeople of Jewish origin. Thus, mention should be made to B.L. Khotimsky, who obtained an entitlement certificate to be engaged in prospecting and gold mining as far back as 1862. By 1873 he had become a proprietor of 5 gold fields in the Maryinsky okrug.

The Jews in Siberia strived for prospecting precious stones and mineral development as well. Thus, in 1873 G.O. Khaimovich forwarded an appropriate petition and received permits from the Mining administration of the Altai okrug to carry out such works.

As early as the after-reform period official work contracts turned to be conventional industry for Judaic entrepreneurs. In eighteen sixties V. Gudkovich who was referred to above continued his activities. In eighteen sixties – eighteen eighties the B. Khotimsky the numerous family played an active part in that sphere. As far back as 1864 his wife Marina who was recognized as a first class guild tradeswoman dealt actively with commercial business and mining gold fields. She struggled energetically for official construction contracts.

It was not always that Jewish businessmen with regard to the obligations. In one case they got away with it. But there were adversary circumstances. Thus, in 1883 all property of the above mentioned Marina was seized, as it was stated "the Khotimskaya property is seized to cover expenditures connected to the case of abnormal construction of the Bolshe-Kosulskiy Bridge which is in the Maryinsky okrug and other cases". A month later (on April 13 1883) "according to decision of the Tomsk okrug court the Tomsk first class (guild) tradeswoman Marina Grigorievna Khotimskaya is adjudicated bankrupt" (Shaidurov 2013: 104).

Siberian press of eighteen eighties held an active discussion on the problem of official contracts. Newspaper correspondents from different Siberian towns wrote about corruption of the system with specific references. That concerned not only construction contracts but also contract work in relation to the Military Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Justice, et alias.

Contractors seemed to make money out of nothing. Thus, in 1885 "Siberian Gazette" published an article from Verkhneudinsk. It gave information about the making and consumption of prison footwear and clothes. The author wrote that "a contractor is entrusted to make clothing... After the work contract is executed, the contractor transfers the finished articles of clothes to the commission that accepts the delivery and assesses its quality using clothes models received from the regional administration". A similar procedure should exclude improper or wrongful practices. However, according to the newspaper correspondent, "a Jew by reason of small profit will not undertake the deal (Geschäft) but even in this case he can profit at the expense of another due to his adroitness. A visiting official assigned to inspect the accepted delivery and finds the clothes to be of low quality; he compares them with the models and finds the latter even worse. The seal bearing the name of an official on the models clears the Jewish contractor's reputation whereas public money has been let go down to the wind". Corruption took place very often in such cases, as the official who sealed the models received his fair share of the profit. And there were a lot of similar instances.

Participation of Jews in the development of the business sector as we see was personified. During the after-reform period a number of rich clans were formed. They gathered wealth by different methods. The Mariupolskiys were ones of the great representatives of the Judaic business capital of the region that were engaged in various branches of primary processing industries. Tradesman Mikhail Mariupolskiy undertook activities as a proprietor of the rendering factories in

the Tobolsk guberniya. At the end of the 19th century 1,700 poods (16 kilograms) of fat was rendered annually in for the total amount of 5,000 roubles. At the same time, 100,800 poods of final products were processed at 28 rendering works in the Tobolsk guberniya valued at 820,000 roubles. Accordingly, the share of M. Mariupolskiy was 1.6% of the total volume and only 0.6% in the rouble equivalent (Orlov 1900: 202).

The Fuksmans were another example of Judaic family business in the Tomsk guberniya. The Tomak merchant Elias Leontyevich Fuksman was one of the large producers of grainy wheaten flour during that period. According to official figures, flour milling founded by him in 1878 ground approximately 42,000 poods of flour to the amount of about 50,000 roubles annually. The Fuksman's company could be referred to as an average company average category, as there were 35 workers employed in it. The following criteria testify to the rank of the mill at the flour market of the guberniya, viz. its share of volume of ground wheaten flour was 5.1% in the total volume of ground wheaten flour, that totaled as much as about 6.5% in money terms. The number of workers employed in that mill was 10% to the general employment in the industry (Orlov 1900: 200).

The Fuksmans were not engaged only in the flour milling business. For instance, a tanyard belonged to them too in Tomsk. Grigoriy Ilyich, the son of the above mentioned Elias Leontyevich owned one of the largest wine distilleries. Tomsk newspapers disputed about the participation of the Fuksmans in the so-called "strike of the Tomsk distillers" in 1888. In particular, "*Siberian News*" wrote, that "he being a Jew cannot have a hand in distillation directly; meanwhile he is in possession of the wine distillery "Grigoryevsky". What should be done? A nimble businessman succeeds in taking at the flood possession of his distillery, but he also sees right participation in a tempting strike. In September, just prior to the bargain he had his son Grigoriy baptized in a Lutheran Church and he gives in 3 months annual rent his distillery under a contract to his son" (N.a. 1888).

In addition to this, G. I. Fuksman held one of the largest breweries based in Tomsk. In terms of volume it was the third brewing plant in the Tomsk guberniya. Fuksman's brasserie was considerably inferior to the Tomsk beer "king" of the Prussian subject R.I. Kruger and another representative of the Jewish industrial communities M.O. Reihzelingman.

Later on Fuksman set up shipping company. At the beginning of the 20th century, for instance, the light passenger steamship "Vladimir" belonging to him which had electric lighting and steam heating plied voyages between Tomsk and Barnaul.

One many weaknesses of Tomsk tradesmen were horse breeding and horseracing, the latter taking place at the Tomsk race track. That was related to I.L. Fuksman as well who competed with such tradespeople as Korolyov, Pastukhov. Samsonov. In 1897 N.V. Muravyov, minister of justice, while on a visit to Tomsk purchased three black color horses that were shipped to Saint Petersburg. That all witnessed that Judaic entrepreneurs at the end of the 19th century were not inclined to niche specialism, but they did business in diverse spheres of activities as far as available capital permitted.

One of the largest brewers in Tomsk was Mikhail Osipovich Reihzelingman who had built the first brewery in Tomsk that was inferior only to Kruger's brasserie. That plant was considered to be the most advanced brewery of the time. In 1897 one of the Tomsk brewing masters wrote in the columns of the "Tomsk paper" that "the plant has been in operation for 18 years and within those years has gained solid reputation, therefore I believe, that no advertising of my plant is required". A similar statement was not unfounded which testified to the results of investigations of the burtons that were sold in beerhouses, viz. in order of merit beer brewed by plants of Reihzelingman were inferior only to numerous burtons brewed at Kruger's brewery.

The share of Fuksman and Reihzelingman's brewing at the end of the century in the Tomsk guberniya was 1/3 (Shaidurov 2013: 97).

Distillation in individual okrugs of the Tomsk guberniya was entirely in the hands of the Jews. Thus, at the end of eighteen eighties – eighteen nineties Fainberg, Yudalevich, Butkevich were the leaders in that business in the Mariyinsky okrug. One cannot leave out one more feature of the imminent monopoly capitalism, i.e. carve-up of sphere of influence against actual either one suffices aimed at raising the price of vodka

It is noteworthy that censure of enumeration in 1897 recorded a relatively large number of Jews engaged in distillation, brewing and honey extraction. There were 30 persons in the Tobolsk and Tomsk guberniyas, as well as in the Akmolinsk region incorporated in the business mentioned including members of their families that totaled 182.

Not only large enterprises of food industry proved to be in the hands of the Jews. By the end of the 19th century the latter had begun to occupy themselves with forest products and woodworking industries of Siberia. The Tomsk merchant M.I. Minskiy was one of the path breakers in that area to put into operation in 1887 a match factory which in terms of output products volume was inferior in Siberia only to the Tomsk tradesman M.A. Vorontsov. The share of Minskiy by 1900 had been more than 30% in terms of roubles. 60 people (salary and wage earners) were employed at the factory that amounted to nearly 30% of those engaged in the industry sector over Siberia.

By the early 20th century, Russian industrialists did not manage to make effective use of the wealthy timber reserves in Siberia, viz. Russian timber was exported to China in the form of lumber, which "was totally unsuitable for loading on vessels and was reluctantly purchased by the Chinese" (Korobov 1916: 125). Contribution of the Jews to forestry and wood processing industry, according to contemporaries, was good for business not only in Siberia but in Russia in general. "Rationality and mobility of a Jewish woodmonger" gave business activities a new push, i.e. "by bringing fresh, new blood to the clumsy organism of the Russian forestry" (Ibid. 126).

Available capital was appropriated by the Judaic businessmen not only at the production sphere. They set up their own credit agencies to practice usury. Thus, in 1885 a pawnshop belonging to Evgeniy Edelstain was launched and it immediately became the competitor of the only public money office in town, Yappo being its owner. Starting his business, Edelstain offered his clients a lower mortgage interest and favorable credit payment terms. That resulted in a real warfare between the businessmen which ended in a victory of the latter.

A high concentration of the Jewish population predominantly in guberniya towns led to a vigorous business life in Tomsk, Tobolsk, Omsk. Among other things, petty trade enterprises, service and medical establishments happened to be in the hands of Jews-lower middle class. Thus, there was an accommodation house belonging to Malky Abramovich in Bochanovskaya street in Tomsk who had to bid for clients against houses owned by Nosovitskaya and Rokhe Bobovich (Shaidurov 2013: 99).

Tomsk inhabitants bought meat at butcher shops belonging to Lazarus Moshkovich, Leontiy Shmuilovich, Isaiah Kholdin, Mikhel Rakhman, et al. As Tomsk journalists put it sanitary conditions of meat packing were not always up to the mark. Publication of articles about such state of things forced shopkeepers to get everything under control so as not to lose customers.

At the end of the 19th century newspapers were one of the most efficient advertising tools. Therefore, numerous advertisements were published in periodicals in which a business proprietor was to be referred, as well as the work performed by his enterprise. As a result the latter contributed to finding information concerning other businesses in Siberian towns where Jews were engaged in enterprises such as, for instance, medical practice. Thus, Anna Leontyevna Tseitlin held her own dental office in Tomsk¹³. That could also relate to the activities of attorneys of law and their assistants. During the period under consideration the Novorossiysk university graduate Raphael Veisman had his own law practice in Tomsk being personally acquainted with T. Hertsel. Successful advocacy gave him an option of earning colleagues' respect. Hereafter he became a treasurer of the Tomsk board of attorneys.

At the end of the eighties – early nineties the first representatives of the Judaic community appeared in the educational system. A conventional system of primary education in the form of heder and Talmud-Torahs prevailed in the areas of dense Jewish habitation before the forties. From the beginning of the forties, a ban was imposed as part of the Russification policy, which prohibited Jewish teachers who had not accomplished training at specialized public schools and had not obtained a teacher degree were not allowed to work. Nevertheless, underground heder where home-bred teachers continued working for a long time.

The system of Judaic education began to shape during the after-reform period in Western Siberia. Before the eighties it was represented in Tomsk merely by a small Talmud-Torah (Jewish traditional elementary religious school) which as a contemporary noted "dissatisfied even the unpretentious taste of an average Philistine-Jew of that time" (Yu. O. 1912: 1). The level of teaching in it was fairly low. But aspiration of the Tomsk Jews to give their children primary education led to the fact that the establishment turned to be overoccupied and the only melamed (teacher) had to withhold parents the enrolment of pupils. In 1873 a school was founded in partnership with the reeve of the Kamennyi synagogue I.L. Fuksman where 25 pupils studied as early as the following year (Yu. O. 1912: 2). But deficiency of professional teachers retained at a low educational level of school leavers a long time. A major task of the establishment was reduced to the opportunity "to arm the Jewish young spawns with knowledge of Judaic prayer requests and that of the Bible translated into Russian" (Yu. O. 1912: 3). Later on the curriculum was gradually enriched and pupils began to study concise history of the Judaic people, catechism in the Russian language, Judaic writing and went in for gymnastics. In the course of time school became available to girls too. 32 boys and 8 girls had been studying there by 1885 (N.P. 1885). The curriculum development required front-rank teachers who were to be Judaists.

On the whole it may be stated that the Jews occupied their "economic niches" by the end of the 19th century. But against that background there arises a question of a niche of a Jewish community within the economic structure in Western Siberia. Formerly with reference to Tobolsk it was seen that the Jews played a significant role in some spheres of business. It can be found out to what extent the situation changed by the end of the 19th century by when comparing census statistics of 1897 having estimated the share of Jews in this or that professional category or group of categories in reference to all people engaged in it.

In spite of an insignificant share of Jews in this or that line of business a number of tendencies in the Siberian

crafts sector could be highlighted where they had stood first. Primarily, it concerned gold-work and the making of art objects and that of luxury items. Despite the absolute predominance of Russian craftsmen in that sphere Jewish goldsmiths in the Tobolsk and Tomsk guberniyas held for a full due the second rank, i.e. 3.3% and 2.7% of the labour market accordingly.

There were even more Jews in the sphere of distillation in the Tomsk guberniya where their number amounted to 4.3% being inferior only to the Russians (79.3%) and Poles (5.3%). The number of Judaic tailors amounted barely to 2.7%, whereas in terms of master hands they were fourth being inferior only to the Russians (82.4% engaged in the sphere), Tatars (4.2%) and Ukrainians (3.9%) (Shaidurov 2013: 165).

Summarizing all that it can be noted that the Judaic community during the after-reform period represented a dynamic system which responded adequately to these or those challenges. First and foremost it resulted from a steady growth of mass limit of "theirs" (insiders) that made the community well-consolidated and impeded absorption of its members by the better part of Christians (Siberia was home to Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Lutherans). However, sources that helped replenish the community still remained changeable, as the legislation was continuously amended.

Economic changes taking place over that time in Siberia transformed the community to a certain degree. As, for instance, by the end of the 19th century it turned to be dense in the okrugs of Western Siberia which expanded most dynamically owing either to railway construction or rural sector development. All Siberian transitions resulted in a change of economic interest, viz. Provided in eighteen fifties – eighteen nineties the main profit earners for the Jews were lease, labor contracts, gold fields, then during the last quarter of the 19th century they put capital into the development of such businesses as primary processing industries, transport, credit sphere holding there frequently enough the leading position.

As a result of changes in the economic structure of the Siberian Jewry it became evident that by the end of the 19th century its representatives secured their footing in well-defined "economic niches" that created favourable terms for functioning various social institutions, relating to the religious sphere, education, charity, et alia.

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