

Brafmann  
DAS  
BUCH  
VOM  
KAHAL  
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JACOB BRAFMANN  
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in the Brachet of the year 118 A.D. Hit.

( June 711 or 2007 AD )

### Notes:

- The original scan (in Fraktur) can be downloaded from the Neuschwabenland Archive: <http://nsl-archiv.com/Buecher/>
- Formatting, page numbers, etc. have been taken from the original. Only the last lines have been rounded up or down for a neat presentation of the page breaks.
- There were difficulties with the letters I and J during proofreading, as they use the same character in the original: J. Errors may also have crept in with <sup>TM</sup> and f, e.g. "aus" instead of "auf".



**Jacob Brafmann**

# **The Book of the Kahal**

Based on a new German translation of the  
Russian original published by

**Dr Siegfried Passarge**

o.ö. Professor of Geography at the University of Hamburg

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Erste r Ban d :

Materials for the study of Jewish customs

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Second volume:

The book of the administration of the Jewish community

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**Hammer-Verlag / Leipzig \* 1928**

Jacob Brafmann

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## Foreword

In his "Volkskunde der Juden" (1881) Richard Andree made some announcements about the Kahal organisation of the Eastern Jews on pages 135 to 139. His source was the publication by a certain Brafmann, published in Russian by the government: "Das Buch vom Kahal". Andree's account was quoted by several other writers, but nothing really in-depth was learned. Brafmann's accounts now seemed important for my landscape studies of Judaism. When the opportunity arose to have Brafmann's two books on the Kahal translated, I jumped at the chance and do not regret having taken on the work. The introduction may provide the rest.

May the book serve to deepen our knowledge of Judaism and offer new important points of view. For what we are particularly lacking is a correct assessment of Judaism and its inner structure.

With regard to the Hebrew names and quotations, a theologian known to me very kindly assisted me and did the main work. I would like to thank him for his assistance.

As far as the transcription of the Hebrew words is concerned, since this text is not only intended for scholarly circles, we have refrained from using the "faithful" transcription that is often used today, which only makes reading more difficult for the layman and is by no means uniform in every book. "Bechukkotai" reads much more easily than "behuggotai", "Mischna" better than "Misna", "soth, habberacha" easier than "zot ha-berachah", "tezawwe" than "teçavveh". A special designation of the stress also seemed all the more superfluous, since the Eastern Jew (like the Polish language) stresses the Hebrew words, with few exceptions, on the first syllable and says, for example, "tezawwe" instead of "tezzawwah" (on the last syllable).

syllable stressed). Even the Christian Hebraist and Rabbinist today simply says "Shabbat" (like "Sabbath" stressed on the penultimate) and not stiltedly "Shabât" (or "Shabâth": sabbât). As a rule, even the reader who is unfamiliar with Hebrew will involuntarily emphasise correctly and say z. For example, the word "cherem" (curse) should be read as "chèrem" or "chàrem" (stressed on the penultimate, with a hard ch as in roof), not "cher em", or "Kahal", but not "kahal" in the correct manner. - Where an emphasis seemed necessary, it was occasionally given, e.g. "achare moth", which makes a scholastically accurate "aharé moth" superfluous. - Everyone will read "Bet Din" just as correctly as if it were "Bét, Dîn". At the most, "schelach lecha" could usefully be pronounced like "schelàch lèchâ" (schlàch l'chá).

The pronunciation of the words chosen is the one that has been in use since Reuchlin (so-called Sephardic) which, for example, grammatically correctly says "Béreschith" and not (as the so-called Ashkenazic, i.e. Eastern Jewish pronunciation, the so-called "Jargon", says) "Breischiss" (= "In the beginning") (i.e. Eastern Jewish pronunciation, the so-called "Jargon") "Breischiss" (= "In the beginning", as the Old Testament begins), as well as "Aaron" (Ahârôn, Moses' brother) and not Eastern Jewish "Airen". - Only in the case of a few specifically Eastern Jewish expressions was the Eastern Jewish pronunciation permitted in part (e.g. "Zewi" instead of "Zebi" or "Iuwim" instead of "Iobim"). - Some "jargon" sentences that appeared in the Russian original were reproduced according to their meaning, since the original wording could no longer be unravelled due to the slovenly transcription into Russian letters. This was partly due to the fact that the Russian language does not have a sound for "h", and this is then partly omitted in the transcription, partly replaced by "g" (e.g. in the original "Gerz" instead of "Herz" or "Girsch" instead of "Hirsch" and "Hersch" furthermore "gamedrosch", which should mean "hamidrasch" (hammidrasch) etc.). - Such a transcription method will certainly suffice for the practical purpose of the book. -

The publication of Brafmann's books in a sense represents a side work to a larger publication on Judaism as a landscape problem, which is to deal mainly with the Jews in Palestine.

Even if, in accordance with the purely scientific approach, the aim here is merely to understand and recognise, there may also be a number of practical points of view.



arise in passing.

Thus, in my opinion, mistakes have been made so far, because of the insufficient knowledge of Judaism, and "anti-Semitism", has perhaps done more good than harm to the rabbis and the demoralising powers within Judaism. I would only like to say the following briefly in advance here, Volume II will bring more about this.

The disintegrating effect on the host peoples comes only from a minority within Judaism. Accordingly, in order to identify this group, one should not use the general term: Jews, but a characteristic name. Since the H a s s e r is a main characteristic of these people, let them be called the H a s s e r - the O d i s t e s . Those who do not count themselves as haters among the Jews do not need to refer to themselves the objections made against the Jews up to now, and thus misinterpretations and inaccurate representations are avoided.

Finally, I would like to gratefully point out that the Hammer publishing house, and especially its senior, Mr Theodor Fritsch, spared no effort and no expense in making the worthy publication of the book possible.

Hamburg, early November 1927S

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# Introduction by the German Editor

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When an old, long-forgotten, lost book is translated or reprinted, there will be certain reasons for this. These will generally be of a historical or otherwise scholarly nature, and one can expect that there will probably be professional interest, but that the general public will not see the publication of the "old book" as a "topical, sensational" event. Thus it could be assumed that Brafmann's writings, which were published by the Russian government around 1870, and about whose most important content Andree writes in his "Volkskunde der Juden" (Folklore of the Jews), would not be seen by the general public as a "current, sensational" event.

has already reported, are no sensation.

But things turned out quite differently! No sooner had it become known through an invitation to subscribe that Brafmann's two publications of the Kahal had been translated from Russian and were to be published by Hammer-Verlag than a storm of indignation broke out in the Odist\* ) and in the press dependent on it. It was significant that first the publisher and then the long-dead author Brafmann were showered with a hail of dirt. But that was not all: from certain quarters it was noted with indignation that such an "anti-Semitic diatribe" was published by a member of the Hamburg University allegedly founded by Max Warburg (!).

The following view of the Jewish doctor and anthropologist Fishberg (Rassenmerkmale der Juden, p. 168) is suitable to throw light on the cries of fear in the Odist press about the appearance of the Brafmann translation and the fear of coming pogroms. Fishberg writes:

"The only pathological processes that can be observed among Jews

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\*Cf. the preface.

more frequently than in others are the functional disorders of the nervous system. Nervous and mental diseases, as well as diabetes, are obviously a "privilege" of the Jews. That this is not a result of any anatomical or physiological peculiarity is proved by the fact that it is only the functional nervous disorders that one encounters more often. Hysteria - even male hysteria, which is so common - may be regarded as something almost natural in people who, like the Jews, have a history of unspeakable suffering and almost continuous martyrdom behind them. They cry out even before they are beaten' applies not only to the individual but also to a whole class. One has to read the Jewish press, in general the press written in the 'Jewish-German jargon' of the Polish and Russian Jews, to appreciate the hysterical grief and terror that always spreads among the Jews when disaster threatens their co-religionists in Russia, Rumania or Morocco."

It is regrettable to have to conclude that Germany's odist press shows just as much nervous degeneration as the press of the ghettos. This, as we shall see in Vol. II, is an extremely important point; for nervous degeneration is the mortal enemy of humanity, from which it will perish if it is not stopped.

It must seem striking that the agitation against Brafmann and the editor began - explosively ? as it did against K o m m a n d o . One cannot help but have the impression that the press has received a message from a central source.

The following considerations also speak for the correctness of such a view:

- a) All publications directed against Brafmann and the editor are written in the same tone, i.e. they strive to make both of them look contemptible.
- b) What emerges most clearly is the intention to derail the publication through a scathing critique.
- c) Not only political dailies, but even professional journals - even those devoted to art (!) - felt it necessary to warn against - let's say - the publication of the Kahal book.

d) All the "warning articles" are based on the same source, apparently communicated by the Central Office, namely Dubnow's account, which will follow below.

e) All the "warning articles" prove perfectly that the warners, before they received instructions from the Central Office, had no idea of Brafmann and his books. Their accounts clearly show that even now they have no idea of the contents of those books. They have merely parroted phrases taught to them by the Central Office. The editor of a Hamburg art magazine, who is unrestrainedly indulging in his indignation, has had the mishap of consistently writing of a "Grafmann".

The whole hullabaloo is obviously just a central agency-arranged machination, artificially provoked by interested parties.

In addition to this newspaper gossip, there has been no lack of the usual anonymous name-calling, precisely as if the opposing side were endeavouring to confirm the correctness of the scientific finding that its members - at least for the most part - consider personal courage and the qualities of the noble character triad - love of truth, pride, noble sentiments and chivalrous sense of honour - to be dispensable or even harmful qualities, i.e. sartorially degenerate unfortunates.

But that's not all: they even tried to make it clear to me in a friendly way that a publication of Brafmann's books would not be in the interest of German science in general and of Hamburg University in particular!

It is not without interest that these warners, who undoubtedly meant well, had only heard of Kahal and Brafmann since the outrage spectacle.

No one will blame them for their ignorance; there were probably only a few in Germany who knew both of them even by name, but it will probably be necessary above all to turn to the question: Who was this Brafmann?

Brafmann was a Jew - a Ghetto Jew - in Vilna, brought up in the strict faith. He remained a ghetto Jew until he was 34, then he freed himself, converted to Christianity and became a teacher of Hebrew at a state school in Vilnius in 1860. Convinced of the hopelessness of Jewish mummy life, indignant at the bondage of the masses of poor Jews by rabbis and the rich, he had publicly turned against the oppressors of his people in order to fight henceforth for conversion to the Christian Church. He was unsuccessful. Judaism remained the victor. Brafmann had to fail: at that time, time had not yet progressed so far that a conversion of the ghetto Jews could have taken place en masse. He died at the end of the last century; as a Jewish source says, he did not have a good end.

If one believes Odist's account, he was one of the most inferior human being who has ever lived - a degenerate good-for-nothing, a miserable schoolmaster who became a Christian out of fear of military service\*) and persecuted his former co-religionists as an informer\*\*) with lies and deceit, falsifications and slander. It is well known that many an Odist is able to extract almost inexhaustible amounts of dirt from the depths of his mind in order to crush his opponent. Accordingly, it would be, in and of itself, therefore, it would be quite possible that the accusations made against Brafmann were justified.

When a hateful Odist criticises an opponent, one is generally appalled by the tone, by the unbearable lack of nobility, sense of justice, pride and chivalrous sense of honour. Even respected scholars such as Prof. Graetz, Lombroso and others lose their mental equilibrium as soon as they start talking about Jewish opponents. Then they even shy away from

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\* It was not very prudent to point out the military fear of the Orthodox Jews. First of all, military service in old Russia was not a pleasure for anyone, but secondly, in the eyes of the Orthodox Jew, it meant downright spiritual death. The crimes that the Jew had brought upon himself for years by eating non-kosher food, were simply irreparable, hell was his. And the Reform Jews? What about the atheist Jews? Were they ever enthusiastic about serving?

\*\* The founders of "factorism" would have done better to look at the beam in their own eye.



The people did not hold back on their invective, hopelessly compromising themselves and their cause.

The reader who fears something similar from Brafmann will be pleasantly disappointed. His explanations are so matter-of-fact, so noble in tone, so lacking in harsh words (there are no swear words at all) that no one would suspect him of being an Odist, especially not a hateful, revenge-snorting renegade. This speaks strongly against the credibility of his modern Odist critics, who completely renounce nobility!

Furthermore, the Odists stress emphatically that he was not a light in Talmudic science. In this case, however, it does not matter at all, and it is even more indifferent whether he understood Latin or not. It is extremely significant that in the recently published "Judisches Lexikon" (Vol. I, published in 1927) the meaningless joke is told that Brafmann once asked in the St. Petersburg State Library for a book "Ibidem", to which all the books referred.

It is bad for the refutation of B. if this great world encyclopaedia cannot give more convincing reasons!

Brafmann may not have come close to matching the learned rabbis in Talmudic erudition; in terms of noble sentiments, he puts his critics to shame. Decency of mind and honesty are decisive in this case, not knowledge of Talmud and Latin.

One will be allowed to doubt the correctness of the Odist judgements all the more because Brafmann has a warm heart for his compatriots, namely for the poor, for that part of his compatriots who are enslaved by the rabbis and the rich. He wants to free them from the polyp arms of their tormentors, and it is these tormentors who want to bury him under a pyramid of dirt. That too is suspicious.

If we now summarise Brafmann's allegations incriminating the Jews - bribery, firm organisation for the purpose of economic ruin of the host peoples, perjury before Christian courts, destruction of opponents by secret persecution, slander, false testimony in court, etc. - these are accusations which, on the basis of an overwhelming abundance of incriminating facts, have been made again and again in public for centuries.

Brafmann, by the way, is not the only ghetto Jew who strongly advised his co-religionists to escape the shackles of rabbinism and go underground among the masses of Christian hosts. Just like Brafmann, the ghetto Jew Jacob Fromer is a scoldless, noble-thinking Jew, although he ruthlessly hurled truths in the faces of his co-religionists. One cannot recommend strongly enough the reading of Fromer's essay: "Das Wesen des Judentums" (Future 1905, p. 440 ff., code name Dr. Elias Jacob). (Also as a book: Berlin 1905, Hüpeden & Merzyn.)

"Go underground, disappear! Disappear with your oriental physiognomies, with your being that stands out from your surroundings, with your mission and above all with your exclusively "ethical" world view! Adopt the customs, traditions and religion of your host peoples, seek to mingle with them and see that you are absorbed into them without a trace!"

So Brafmann does not bring new points of view, but merely explanations for a well-known striking complex of facts that has repeatedly agitated all European peoples for about 1800 years.

The documents are said to be forged according to the Jewish Encyclopaedia! Well, the invention of 1072 documents of such versatility, sobriety, calmness and certainty of presentation, of documents, which bring such a large material of facts, events, names of persons, decrees, resolutions, etc., is hard to imagine! Since such a falsification in itself presupposes an unusual human spirit, which one would not well expect behind the odistic description of Brafmann's character, this miserable schoolmaster - a second Moses - would virtually have to be considered a giant genius, if he had invented such an ingenious organisation as, according to his account, the Jewish people possess.

What should the forgery actually consist of? How is it to be prove? The American Jewish Encyclopaedia says that the main evidence is that about two thirds of all documents are said to have been written on the Sabbath; but a Jew is not allowed to write on the Sabbath; so the documents are forged.

A trained Semitist would refute this objection as follows:

"It is either a sign of ignorance or an attempt to deceive. Already in the Talmud it is reported (Tractate Sanhedrin 88 b) that the Sanhedrin (the Synedrion, i.e. the highest Jewish court of 71 judges) regularly met and heard cases on the Sabbath, namely from the morning to the evening sacrifice in the room Chel belonging to the sanctuary (Kelim I, 8). The decisions made there, on the Sabbath were, because of the prohibition of writing on the Sabbath, of course only recorded on the following day. Of does "one" want to declare this inconvenient Talmud passage, which is found in every Talmud copy and is more than one and a half thousand years old, to be "forged"?

The Kahal was a Russian government-approved organisation until 1844, when it was banned. So if a clever forger - it is not easy to fabricate forged manuscripts - had wanted to denounce the Jews to the Russian government, he would certainly have chosen dates that fell in the period of the Kahal ban, but not so long ago (around 1800). There is no doubt that the fact that the incriminating protocols were all written down half a century or more before Brafmann's announcement is a great weakness in terms of their anti-Semitic inciting effect on the Russian government and the host peoples as a whole. But this weakness is precisely proof of Brafmann's honesty. For one can say: the documents, which are almost all old and yellowed, refer to past times. The Kahal conditions described are certainly historically interesting, but they were no longer "current" in 1870.

However, the authenticity of Brafmann's documents is not supported by only the fact that they are in excellent harmony with the world of facts known for centuries, but also the following consideration. In order that it should be possible for the Jews in the dispersion to maintain themselves as a people with their own nationality, their own religion and a pronounced national feeling, very special measures were necessary. A fighting organisation of unusual capacity for resistance and attack had to be created, a fighting organisation which made it possible for the small, united Jewish communities to gain the victory over the host peoples. This fighting organisation had to be created in such a way that the small Jewish

units, because they were united, were superior in power to the non-organised gentiles. How Judaism achieved such an organisation is clearly shown for the first time in Brafmann's book.

Furthermore, Brafmann's account does not contradict the Talmud; on the contrary, the Kahal organisation is rooted in the Talmud; it is ancient, and together with the hostile attitude of the Jew towards all non-Jews, with the rejection of all recognition of the right of other peoples to their own views, to their own code of law, morals and ethics; it had to become a weapon which, similar to the hidden activity of wood-boring worms, finally brings the strongest tribe to collapse.

Then there is the Maaruphia, this extremely important institution based on Talmudic regulations, i.e. the right of ownership of the Jew to the movable possessions of Christians and the distribution of this right of ownership in exchange for money! Maaruphia hardly appears at all in the minutes of the sessions. Why? Because the Bet Din gives them. If Brafmann were a forger, he would certainly not have refrained from inventing some juicy cases of Maaruphia. He did no such thing. Brafmann's documents are two fell o s e c h t. This is also proved by the excitement that seized the Jewish Central Office when it became known that Brafmann's books were to be published in translation. Why the excitement when it is a matter of forgeries that took place at a time when the political conditions in Russia were quite different from those of today? Forgeries of documents of a state-recognised authority, supposedly made around 1800, really need not upset today's Jews! One would think so. If a storm of indignation has broken out, it can only be due to the fact that Brafmann's publications are not indifferent to the Odists of the present day, but rather appear uncomfortable or even dangerous to them. Indeed, Brafmann's books are suitable for contributing to the unveiling of the "wandering secret" - as Heine famously called Judaism. The Jewish associations, which appear outwardly in the Masonic lodges, but also in many Jewish societies, have their roots in the old Jewish traditions.

organisations that Brafmann illuminates. These are a continuation of these organisations and appear to those who know the old East Jewish associations almost as a self-evident necessity. But what does Dubnow, the chief witness of the Jewish Central Office, say about the minutes of the meetings?

Dubnow does not claim that the documents published by Brafmann are false! Neither does the above-mentioned "Jewish Library" which, by the way, is already upset about the Kahal translation by the "Hamburg anti-Semitic university professor". Students had stolen it.

On p. XXXII ff. the reader finds Dubnow's account of Brafmann's time. It lacks any allegation of forgery. The only thing Dubnow objects to is that "Brafmann gave the whole thing such illumination" that the Russian government had to intervene.

He therefore only complains about the analysis, i.e. the assertion that the documents contain more than they appear to, but not about the authenticity of the minutes of the meetings, which are legal decrees of the municipal administrations, which at that time had far-reaching rights.

Dubnow's view is important for the scientific usability of the protocols.

Brafmann's book is divided into two quite different parts, firstly into the explanations he wrote, then into the minutes of the meetings of the Kahal and Bet Din.

Let us first take a brief look at the protocols.

The volume published in 1869 contains 285 documents, the one published in 1873 1055. By far the majority of the documents published in 1869 are also included in the 1055 minutes. Only 17 - some of them very important - are missing from Volume II. In total, there are 1072 minutes.

Brafmann's method of publication was not a happy one scientifically. The documents should have been published in Hebrew or in Jargon, at the same time as the Russian translation. This did not happen. Rather, one was content with the Russian translation. Furthermore, some of the documents are

The Russian translation shows some discrepancies with regard to the protocols published simultaneously in Volumes I and II, but only in indifferent respects. The Russian translation shows some deviations from the protocols published simultaneously in Volumes I and II, but only in indifferent matters. The core is always the same in both. Where deviations were somehow noteworthy, both translations were brought. There are only a few protocols. Since some of the minutes repeat the same topics with tiring verbosity, some of the less important minutes in Volume II have been published here in excerpts or in a completely abbreviated form.

According to the Russian publications, the translation was done by two Russians who spoke German quite fluently and who lived in a southern German town, but who are now, according to my information, abroad. Since some of their relatives still live in Soviet Russia, their names are not mentioned here.

The minutes of the meetings are of the greatest value in terms of folklore, because they provide an intimate picture of the life and activities within the Jewish community in Minsk, and through them one gains an insight into even small, seemingly indifferent, but in reality quite significant circumstances. They are very interesting because of their constant repetition.

In some cases they are quite tedious, but they share this fate with many other invaluable source works.

These protocols are supplemented by Brafmann's explanations. It is precisely these explanations that are contested by the Jews. It will be a question of clarifying their value; some points should already be pointed out.

Once - to the chagrin of later generations this always happens - the historical facts are assumed to be known.

As a result, the reader of the present

who is not familiar with the conditions in Russia at that time will be misled in many ways. An attempt is made here to provide the reader with notes to help him avoid them. Then the Hebrew words have been transcribed into Russian according to the German-Polish dialect, and by no means uniformly. As a result, one and the same word is often enough written quite differently. The confusion is sometimes terrible. Attempts have been made to implement a uniform spelling, namely the one that has been used since

Reuchlin in Christian scholarship common "Sephardic" way of speaking and writing.

The reader will find many folkloric references in the explanations, but it will be expedient to give certain general points of view immediately, so that he can orientate himself quickly. Even after such an introduction, it will not be easy to find one's way around. In the Protocols as well as in Brafmann's explanations there is such an abundance of interesting but strange questions that a single perusal is by no means sufficient, and only a close study can lead to a full understanding of the great importance of Brafmann's book and to the realisation that probably no other publication is so suitable for showing Judaism in its inner organisation and in its relationship to the host peoples.

The reader will mainly learn about terms such as Kahal, Bet Din, synagogue and, furthermore, about the relationship between religion, ethnicity, nationality and legislation among the Jews, before he can approach the study of Brafmann's books.

In order to avoid errors, it should be emphasised that all the following explanations refer to the orthodox Ghettojudentum of the East and have nothing to do with the Western Reform Jews or the atheistically free-minded Jews of the present day. What changes Orthodox Judaism may have undergone since the entry of the ghetto Jews into the modern worldview and into the cultural sphere of the economic peoples is a second problem that is not relevant here.

Judaism appears to be a mystery to those who do not know the Orient. If we were to return to the Orient, however, it would not be perceived as anything special there. In terms of the landscape, Judaism is a landscape in our country, just like the Nile in the desert, like the African desert dust that winds sometimes bring to Central Europe.

The Jews form a religionsvolk. We lack the term "religious people" in Europe. However, it already begins in the Balkan Peninsula.

as a result of the strong oriental influence of Byzantium and the 600 years of Turkish rule. In our country, religion has never had the power to form peoples and nations. In the Orient, on the other hand, the members of the religion feel themselves to be a people separate from all other peoples - a nation. So does the Jew. Whether European or Oriental, Indian or Chinese, Negro or Abyssinian, the Jew feels on a religious basis as a unit - as a people, as a nation.

The Jewish religion developed from the cult of a national god or, probably better, of God, i.e. the followers of Yahweh originally formed a religious order. This already indicates that originally ethnicity was indifferent. Hebrews, Amorites, Hittites, Canaanites and other peoples initially made up the order. Only since Ezra's reform did the concept of "Abraham's seed", i.e. "people united by descent", prevail.

The God of the Order concluded a contract with his followers: You are to obey my commandments, and in return you shall be the chosen people to whom I will give dominion over all nations. - Instead of the expected world domination came the destruction of Jerusalem, the scattering, the division into small communities. Now the idea prevailed that the misfortune was a consequence of sins, a punishment of the national god who, because all other gods were nothing to him, had gradually assumed the form of a general world god. At that time, the idea prevailed that the chosen people had to live in humiliation here on earth in order to receive their reward in heaven one day. The Messiah idea prevailed: when the exile ended, the Messiah would come, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and establish the world dominion of his people purified by suffering and humiliation. The firm conviction of being God's chosen people, the unshakeable faith in the Messiah and in the former world dominion formed the firm cement that held everyone together for over 1800 years. Without the work of the Talmud scholars and without very special measures of closure, Judaism would hardly have survived. For the time being, only the most important institutions for reading Brahmans' books are briefly discussed here.



Before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, it and its High Priest, priests and Levites were the religious, cultural and national centre of the Jewish religious people. After the destruction, the Nasi (prince) as the head of the Bet Din ha'Gadol (= Synhedrion, Sanhedrin) became the centre of religious, spiritual and national life. Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai founded the Bet Din. Until 500 AD, the Nasi of Bet Din can be traced in Palestine, after Babylonia had long before made itself independent by creating its own exile archbishop. Since 500 AD there is said to have been no recognised centre for all Jews. But central authorities for larger areas in Europe and the Orient will always have existed.

The larger and smaller Jewish Kehala's, i.e. communities, had consistent institutions built on religious traditions and laws. Since religion, or rather religious law, determined the entire life, thinking and actions of the Jewish people, the various religious, judicial, social and pedagogical organisations are so intermingled that it is often difficult to distinguish between them.

In every community, three fixed institutions are of utmost importance: the synagogue, the Bet Din, i.e. the court of justice, and the council. In addition, there is the rabbi as authority in all religious learned matters.

The Synagogue probably originated during the Babylonian exile. Before the Dispersion (70 AD), Jerusalem numbered 394 (480 according to another source) synagogues. They served as houses of prayer during the exile and were the centre of worship for all or parts of the community. In Alexandria and Cyrene, in Cilicia and Asia Minor, there were synagogues everywhere. After the destruction of Jerusalem, they became centres of religious life and, at the same time, educational and political institutions. For religion without national-political aspirations does not exist among a religious people.

It is strictly enforced that prayers are only held together in the synagogue; private prayer rooms are forbidden. Only in exceptional cases, against high payment, is a private prayer house - mihtan - permitted. This is sometimes evident in the minutes of the meetings.

If a congregation consists of ten members, it must build a synagogue. This religious and political meeting place is considered so necessary that when a new synagogue is built, the old one may only be demolished after the new one has been completed. At least ten people must be present at each service. To ensure that this number is never fallen short of, ten people - the ballanim - are obliged to be present at all times in return for payment. The synagogue servants are the shammashim (singular: shammash). In addition, the chasan is the precentor and musician - alone or accompanied by a music corps. Among the procedures at the services, apart from the specific prayers, the most important is the reading aliyah from the podium. The passages read from the Pentateuch every Sabbath serve precisely as time determinations. In the minutes of the sessions, words constantly occur that designate the "parashas" - the passages from the 5 books of Moses that are read out on each Sabbath. This "Pentateuch" is read continuously in 54 sections; one begins where one left off on the previous Sabbath. (S. Appendix!)

Furthermore, reference should be made to the establishment of the proclamation of

The Takken calls for these proclamations - Takkanot - to be issued by the Takken in order to protect the rights of the people. The Takken calls out these proclamations - Takkanot. All these things play an important role in the minutes of the sessions.

Next to the synagogue, the court of justice - B e t D i n - is a thing of crucial importance. After the great Sanhedrin - the Bet Din ha Gadol - with the Nasi as its head had perished, there was a Bet Din in every community. On their own, there may well have been centrals for larger areas. Since the law was based exclusively on religious concepts, the judges - Dajjanim - be learned Talmudists and rabbis. Originally, the chief judge was appointed by the nasi. He was the supreme authority in all cult, civil and political matters. Sometimes very distinguished men from other communities were brought in. In Brafmann's time there were three judges; elsewhere and at other times it was different. Thus Krakow had three classes of judges. The

The first decided money cases up to 10 gold ducats, the second those of 10 to 100 gold ducats, the third those of over 100 ducats. The first two departments met daily, the last twice a week. In matters of law, cult and religion, the Bet. Din. was above the council of the Kahal, i.e. the municipal administration. This is often expressed in the minutes of the meetings.

The Jewish view of the position of the judges and their decisions is extremely important. In biblical times, priests and Levites were the judges at the same time. From 200 to 0 BCE, the sages (sofrim or chachamim) were judges in all places. The judges were infallible, their decisions unimpeachable, even when they were apparently wrong, right and left. The unbounded respect for the judicial decisions, the environment of the Volk and a u t o r i t y is an extremely important phenomenon in Jewish folklore.

The actual administration of the community was in the hands of the council. The municipality included full citizens who had lived in the town for at least twelve months, semi-citizens (twelve to one month), and passers-by (less than one month).

The community was led by the community council (Kahal). This consisted of at least three members; usually there were seven or even twelve. The council had a s o l u t e a u t o r i t y and was in charge of the entire administration, such as taxes, the supervision of trade, buying and selling, and of the weights, measures and coins. He set the prices for foodstuffs, in short, he was responsible for the welfare of the community. One of the most striking things was his absolute p o l i c a t i o n. According to old rules sanctified by custom and experience, he could interfere in the private affairs of families. But he also had control over the affairs of the state. The care for the poor - the proletariat - is exceedingly characteristic of the Jewish communities. Taxes were used to maintain the alms fund and distribute both weekly gifts of clothing and food and special gifts at Passover and Purim. Furthermore, the Kahal had the right to levy extraordinary taxes. In addition, there was the administration of the communal

He was also in charge of the assets of the synagogues and schools, as well as the funeral fund, in short, the entire administration was in his hands.

The schools played an important role in the Jewish communities at an early stage. At times, i.e. during periods of intellectual prosperity, schooling was compulsory for all children; accordingly, Jewish general education was much higher than among the host peoples, especially in certain periods of the Middle Ages.

Of greatest importance are the guilds within the Jewish communities. These were the guilds, and, as Bratmann explains at one point, these guilds in the various Jewish communities of Europe were interrelated and mediated the international connection. The first and most important guild was the Chebra (Chabura) Kadisha - the holy guild of the undertakers of the dead. Its origins go back a long way; it began in Talmudic times. The brotherhood or guild of undertakers in particular was extremely important. Dealing with corpses is not everyone's cup of tea. In addition, there were all kinds of regulations about not working (e.g. on the Sabbath), about contamination through touching corpses, etc., which made special ordinances necessary. Undertakers were exempt from all such restrictions. The family of the deceased was free of all obligations as soon as they had handed over the body to the brotherhood. The brotherhood received certain monies in return and used its power in a harassing, extortionate manner in times of expiry.

Numerous other fraternities are also mentioned in the Bratmann's book, namely those of the kosher meat shechers, but also those of ordinary craftsmen. It is important to note in the Jewish Encyclopaedia that most of today's Jewish orders in the United States developed from such brotherhoods. This confirms Bratmann's statement about the international significance of the Jewish brotherhoods, for the great Jewish orders are also spread throughout the cultural countries of the entire globe.

Thus the Jewish communities formed closed state units - republics, r e p u b l i c s. - with their own administration, legal and religious, tax, school and social institutions.

They were state structures of extremely solid organisation, ruled oligarchically, and indeed the oligarchs were a union of money and intellectual aristocracy. Plato's ideal state had become a reality in the sense that the wise - the sozrim, the rabbis - were in charge. The people were educated in blind faith in authority, slavishly obedient, but at the same time oppressed by the oligarchs. But these small Jewish republics lived in the midst of host peoples, had to be in constant contact with them, and thus also had to adjust to the state in which they lived.

In medieval times it was a common occurrence that foreign parts of the people were scattered in the midst of a larger nation. They were partly remnants of subjugated peoples, partly voluntarily immigrated or forcibly settled serfs. They enjoyed protection and the right to settle and in return had to pay tribute - mostly in kind or also in money - and also perform military service or do various kinds of labour. The Jews were treated no differently from them, but since their religion demanded the strictest segregation and everything about them was different from that of the others, they strove under all circumstances to live according to their own rights, customs and traditions. In any case, they had to negotiate with the government of the host people, and accordingly a mediating body arose within the Jewish community, which was in contact with the foreign government. The form of this mediation was not the same everywhere. In England, for example, before the expulsion, there was a "presbyter" of all English Jews, appointed by the king; in Poland in the 16th century there was a chief rabbi who collected the taxes. In the main, there were two issues: taxes, which were particularly high because the Jews did not do military service and were disproportionately rich, and their own jurisdiction. Especially the trials between Jews and non-Jews caused great difficulties.

In Poland, as is well known, the Jews lived during the Middle Ages until in the middle of the 17th century (1638), they lived as if in Elysium. There were no persecutions; as a favoured merchant and artisan caste, they stood between the economically incapable,

strongly anti-Sartan\*) warrior nobility and the dull, enslaved, serf peasants. There they succeeded in completely enforcing their community organisation with its own council, its own Bet Din, its own schools (cheder). There, the council of the communities entered into a special relationship with the Polish crown. Under the name Kahal (= congregation), the council of the numerous Jewish congregations, which were closely connected and probably under a central leadership, became the privileged authority of the state, which had to collect the taxes for the government and administer the congregation. The newly created Kahal, according to some Jews, was in reality the ancient council organisation.

The situation in Lithuania-Poland was as follows: The fact that the Council of Jewish Communities became the authorised community representative to the state under the name of Kahal was connected with the principle that the community as a whole was responsible for the payment of taxes. It was not the individual, but the whole community that was responsible for taxes. Thus the council, which was responsible for the collection of taxes within the small Jewish council republics, was the given body to which the state taxes were transferred. New - probably only seemingly new, because it had always existed in secret, but now officially coming to public attention - thus seemingly new, was the Kahal restoration of the Kahals of Poland-Lithuania, which arose throughout the country in the course of the 15th and 16th centuries. Every larger town had a kahal, to whom the kahals of the small country towns and the "prikahalke" of the villages were subordinate. The centre of the administration was the Jewish S y n o d e - the Council of the Four Lands. It saw to the settlement of any disputes and ensured for the whole country - as each provincial council did for its own area - that ne quid detrimenti capiat respublica judaica, i.e. that the privileges were permanently extended. The unity of the communities went so far that all the property of the Jewish families belonged to the kahal - comparable to the Mir of the Russian villages. This was the Cheskat jischsuschub = Chasaka, which plays such an important role in the protocols - admittedly with a completely different face. The state

\* Cf. Passarge: "Grundzüge der gesetzmäßigen Charakterentwicklung der Völker", Berlin 1925.

In contrast, the Cheskat jischnub formed the guarantee fund, so to speak, which ensured the punctual and correct delivery of taxes.

Thus the state in Poland-Lithuania - naturally at the request of Jewry - had virtually created the Jewish soviet republic as an independent state within the state.

But now to the new Kahal - the old council - itself, which is the focus of the minutes of the meetings! The number of Kahal members varied according to the size of the community. For example, Krakow had 40 members, Vilnius 35. Mostly there were 20 to 35. The election took place annually, during Passover week. It was not an election from the broad masses of the people; rather, the Jewish council republic of Poland was a strictly oligarchic institution in the hands of the rich. Thus the elections actually always consisted only of a regrouping of offices; the persons remained the same.

The Kahal was headed by the Parnes chodesh, the monthly elder, who changed every month. He called the members of the Kahal in the Passover week for a new election. Before the election, they had to assure that they had not made an agreement and that they would not cheat. Then, under the direction of the Shammash (Kahal notary), the paper slips with the names of the candidates were placed in the ballot box, and first 9 people were elected, who were not allowed to be related to each other. These 9 had to appoint among themselves the 5 actual voters, and these 5 final voters determined the Kahal members.

This form of election is well reflected in the minutes of the meetings, and it is clear that with such a mode of election - 5 determine the Kahal members - the wishes of the oligarchic families could be best taken into account.

The Kahal broke up into four classes in Poland-Lithuania:

1. The elders, Raschim = heads (Rosh in the singular), - 4 in number - stood at the top, and from them the monthly elder was elected.
2. The Topim or Tuvim (Tob in the singular), called the "representatives" in the minutes of the sessions - the Jewish Encyclopaedia calls them the "honourary members" - 3 to 5 in number.

1 and 2 formed the actual Kahal authority. So that the decisions

In order to be legally valid, at least 7 members had to be present. Admittedly, the Jewish council or kahal constitution knew a mode practised since the Middle Ages, namely that the council (later the kahal) assigns a specific task to a single member and for this purpose gives him the power of 7 members, i.e. this single member decides as he sees fit. In this way, the official business was undoubtedly greatly simplified.

3. The Ikkarim (Ikkar in the singular); the Jewish Encyclopaedia translates the name as "active members". There were 4 to 10 of them, and in a sense they represented the reserve from which replacements were made after the death or other departure of a Tob or Rosh. Their number even exceeded 10 at times.

4. The department of the special officials, the auditors, and the judges (Dajanim). In addition, there were also female officials for welfare and furthermore the sub-officials, the shamashim (sing. shamash) with notary duty.

All together they formed the General Assembly - Asifa. All these bodies appear repeatedly in the minutes of the meetings.

The expenses of the Kahal consisted - just like those of the former Council of Communities - in the management and administration of the Jewish community, supervision of trade and commerce, monetary transactions, coins, weights and measures. In addition, there was street cleaning, the admission of Jewish travellers, care of the poor, but above all the levying of taxes, the school system, the right of residence of newcomers, negotiations with the state authorities and other external dealings of the Jewish soviet republic. It is precisely these and many other things that the minutes of the meetings introduce. The Kahale not only had to pay their own civil servants, but also the salaries of the Polish civil servants, who were specially employed to deal with Jewish affairs. In addition, there were rations and various supplies of goods for the quartered military, Christian clergy and officials passing through, and so on.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Judaism dominated the  
The main thing was to Poland-Lithuania. It exploited the economically incapable nobility and the enslaved peasants at the same time. It was rich and extremely influential. Like everywhere else where the Jews are doing well and they



participate in the cultural life of the host peoples, a free-thinking group also arose in Poland, consisting especially of the wealthy, who withdrew from the rabbinical suzerainty. Therefore, as the Jewish Encyclopaedia states, civic and spiritual administration were strictly separated in those times. Towards the middle of the 17th century (1638), however, the uprising of the Cossacks and the excessively bitter peasants broke out, which was accompanied by a horrible murder of Jews and led to a tremendous decline of Jewry in terms of numbers and prosperity. Since then began the terrible impoverishment of the masses, the sinking into filth and misery, the ossification in orthodox ghetto life. - even if there were not ghettos everywhere. In contrast to the proletariat, however, a plutocratic-clerical upper class ruled in the kahals, which was less concerned with the common good than with its own advantages. The communities became more and more indebted to the few rich families who held the Kahal offices. So new taxes had to be imposed on the people. Squeezed out, exploited in the most refined way, the tormented people turned to the state with complaints against the Kahale, but it was no use. The influence of the rich families was stronger than the lamentation of the poor masses. It was a bad time. The following figures may show how the situation was.

In the middle of the 18th century, the budget of some Lithuanian

Kahale the following:

Vilnius	5316	Jews	722.800	Gulden	Debts,	34.000	Gulden	Intake
Brest Litovsk	3175	"	222.720	"	"	31.200	"	"
Grodno	2485	"	386.571	"	"	21.000	"	"
Pinsk	1277	"	309.140	"	"	37.500	"	"

Some of the creditors were the state and Christians, but most were probably the Kahal administrators themselves.

When Poland-Lithuania became Russian, everything remained the same. The financial burdens increased, and it is precisely this financial and moral misery that the minutes of the sessions introduce the reader to. It is a nasty atmosphere of dirt, exploitation, bribery - unedifying, but of great interest in terms of cultural history. All these abuses are openly admitted in the Jewish Encyclopaedia.

After the Kahal organisation had already been changed once in Poland, but then restored under the influence of the rich creditors, and after the existing grievances had also been fought against in the Russian period, the Kahals were banned in 1844. Now the period begins to which Brafmann refers in his explanations. The Kahale are said to have remained secretly and to have continued in office. The Jewish writer Dubnow describes the conditions of the time in which Brafmann developed and published his writings as follows. His description is given here on purpose, since the Jewish Central Office, which staged the outrage theatre against the publication of the Kahal book, relies precisely on this historian. Such an outrage publication brings this section itself with the following genuinely Odist introduction:\*)

S. M. Dubnow: The informer Jakob Brafmann.

The geography professor at Hamburg University, Dr. Siegfried Passarge, has unearthed the lost work of a Tsarist police spy of the sixties, Jakob Brafmann, "Book of the Kahal", and is now promoting it as a source work of inestimable value\*. Who this Jakob Brafmann was, one learns from S. M. Dubnow's "Die neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes", II. vol. (Jewish Publishing House, Berlin). We place the relevant chapter (p. 412 ff.) here:  
The turn towards political reaction which became apparent in the second half of Alexander II's reign also influenced the Jewish question. The general reaction was shown by the fact that after the first reforms - of serfdom, the judiciary, and the Semstvo institutions - the government considered the work of renewing Russia as a

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\* I do not know which paper published the article. It was sent to me anonymously with the following comment:  
"Did you know what a filthy source you draw from? Do you really believe that there are fewer decent and worthy people among the Jews than among those descended from other races?  
Here is the answer: 1. judging by your handwriting and logic, you are a woman. 2. certainly there are decent and valuable people among the Jews, e.g. Weininger, whose judgement of women you may know. 3) You are pleasantly touched by the decency of your attitude, which one hardly ever finds in anonymous letters. So why the incognito?"

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and stubbornly refused to "crown the construction", as it was then called, with political reform; with the proclamation of a constitution and the granting of civil liberties. The result of this was the deepening of the chasm between the government and progressive-minded Russian society, which was striving for a renewal of the Russian state system. The freedom movement, pushed into the "cellar hole" by police measures, took the form of a revolutionary ferment among the youth and, when it encountered harsh reprisals from the political police, turned into terrorism.

In this atmosphere of growing reaction, a final emancipation of the Jews was impossible. The bureaucracy, which had stopped the work of the "great reforms" in Russian life, did not want to continue even the small reforms in the situation of the Jews. The tendency to improve the situation of the Jews "gradually" and in an advisory manner was abandoned; instead, the old chancery-like treatment was resumed, with the endless deliberation of the Jewish question in all kinds of commissions, the collection of the wise statements of governors and governors-general on the behaviour of the Jews, etc. The police question of whether the Jews were useful or harmful to the state was addressed anew. Under Nicholas I, the chancelleries had been busy finding ways to fight against the segregation of the Jews and against their "harmful professions"; in the first years of the new emperor's reign, trade was no longer seen as "harmful" - but when the Jewish merchants developed economically under the wing of freedom of trade and competed successfully with the established merchants, there was again a clamour about "Jewish exploitation", which had to be curbed. The strong growth of Russian industry in the age of reforms, and especially the flourishing of railway construction in the sixties and seventies, also provided the energy of the Jewish capitalists with a wide field of activity. After the abolition of the system of leasing the brandy excise, part of the Jewish capital turned to railway construction. Thus a new Jewish plutocracy was born, whose growth aroused envy and unrest. The government, which had introduced the division of the citizens into

The government, which had not yet given up on the favoured, and tolerated, prepared repressive measures against them. Then it was faced with another question: to what extent had the hopes of "merging the Jews with the established population" come true? The answer was most unsatisfactory. The naive expectation that the Jews would "merge" en masse with the Russians immediately after the first reforms had not been fulfilled. However great the tendency towards Russification among the new Jewish intelligentsia, there could be no question of the same tendency among the Jewish masses. And the government became thoughtful again: perhaps the clever Jews will lead them and not pay for the "conferred" rights with the "fusion"? Thus new material was gained for considerations to which the chancelleries could indulge for years and decades....

Some phenomena of that time gave the government the occasion, to make the internal life of Jewish communities the subject of embarrassing investigations. At the end of the sixties, a man emerged in Lithuania who made himself available to the authorities as a braggart and informer. It was the baptised Jew Jakob Brafmann, who came from the Minsk governorate and had been baptised in the last years of the Nicolaitans' recruiting regime in order to escape the "captors" of the Kahal (the Jewish municipal administration, D. Red.). In his hatred of the Kahal officials, who had been demoted to police agents, Brafmann decided to take revenge on the Kahal and undermine the Jewish communal organisation. When the slogan of "amalgamation" was given from Petersbtrg, the skilful renegade began to make a career out of revealing the causes standing in the way of this amalgamation. A memorandum that he presented to Emperor Alexander II in Minsk in 1858 paved the way for him to the Synod; he became a teacher of Hebrew at a seminary and had to find the means that would have induced the Jews to be baptised. Brafmann did not succeed in this task of facilitating renegadeism, and his informer services were not appreciated either; but when a reactionary wind blew around the mid-sixties, demand for such services arose. Brafmann rushed to the centre of the reaction, to the country tamed by M u r a w j e w .

Vilna, and began to expose "the inner secluded life of the Jewish communities" before the highest authorities of the province. He claimed that the Kahal, which had been officially abolished in 1844, still existed in reality and exercised a widespread administrative and judicial activity; that it represented a dangerous secret organisation which exercised despotic violence in the communities with the help of such means as "Cherem" (ban) and "Chasaka" (right of possession), incited the Jewish masses against the state, against the government and against Christianity, and maintained fanaticism and "harmful" national segregation in these masses. This Jewish "secret government" could only be eradicated by destroying the last remnants of Jewish communal autonomy: all religious and charitable associations and brotherhoods had to be abolished, the Jewish communities dissolved and their members distributed among the urban and rural Christian classes.... The high authorities of Lithuania listened eagerly to the gloomy revelations of the new Peppercorn. In 1866, Governor General K a u f m a n n appointed a commission, which included Jewish experts, to investigate the material supplied by Brafmann. This consisted of the minutes of the meetings of the Minsk Kahal from the first half of the nineteenth century, which contained perfectly legal decrees of the municipal administration, which at that time was endowed with extensive autonomous rights. In a series of essays in the official newspaper "Vilna Messenger" and then also in his own work "Book of the Kahal" (1869-1871), Brafmann combined all this material with quotations from the Talmud and rabbinical works, and gave the whole such an illumination that the government found itself faced with the alternative: either to destroy the Jewish community with all its cultural institutions or to expose Russia to the danger of being conquered by the "world-encompassing Kahal". The "Book of the Kahal" published at state expense, was sent to all official bodies in Russia, so that it could serve as a guide for the officials in their fight against the "enemy within". In vain, Jewish writers exposed in pamphlets and essays Brafmann's ignorance in the field of rabbinical law and the misrepresentation of the role of the Kahal in the past and in the present.

present; in vain the Jewish members of the commission convened by the Vilna governor-general fought against the denunciator's insane proposals. In Petersburg, the Vilna revelations were seized upon as evidence of Jewish segregation, which justified the "caution" in dealing with the Jewish question.

Soon afterwards the matter came before the Reichsrat. This body, which was under the impression of Brafmann's revelations, expressed the opinion that "by merely banning the deviant dress, the fight against the Jews and their congregations, which form a separate religious-political caste or almost a state within the state, could not be achieved for a long time". Therefore, the Imperial Council requested a separate commission with the "identification of means to loosen the social cohesion among the Jews" (December 1870). Such a commission was set up in 1871 under the title: "Commission for the Transformation of Jewish Life" with the participation of representatives of all ministries.

While the government was trying to solve the problem of Jewish segregation for the hundredth time, something unheard of happened: the Easter pogrom of 1871 in Odessa. The pogrom began on Easter Sunday, 28 March, the Jews were attacked and their homes and shops looted. The gangs, consisting of Russians and Greeks, raged for three days. It was not until the fourth day of Easter, when thousands of homes and shops had been devastated and the pogrom heroes, intoxicated by "victory, wanted to begin a slaughter, that the authorities set about "calming down": wagons with rods were set up in the market square and the captured looters were publicly whipped by soldiers. In Petersburg, however, they were only interested in the question of whether the pogrom was not connected to a secret revolutionary movement. When the investigation could not find any political motives at all, people in Petersburg calmed down and believed the reports of the governors that the anti-Jewish movement that had begun was only "a raw protest against the non-solution of the Jewish question in a repressive spirit" and "a result of the irritation of the population against the Jews exploiting them".

Now, alongside the one "crime" of Judaism - segregation - stood another: the economic "exploitation" of the Christian population. A scrupulous investigation of these two crimes was entrusted to the aforementioned "Commission for the Transformation of Jewish Life". In practice, its activities amounted to dealing with the two questions: that of the Kahal or "establishment of the spiritual life of the Jews" and that of the permissibility of expanding the area of settlement in order to weaken economic competition. Among the materials on these problems was Brafmann's work, in addition to a memorandum by the Kiev Governor General D u d o k o w - K o r s s a k o w . The officials who had received this work from Petersburg for instruction drew all their state wisdom from it.... The Commission remained at this deadlock for a long time. Only shortly before its dissolution did the voice of long-buried liberalism resound in it from N e k l j u d o w s and K a r p o w s "Denkschrift" (1880), which professed to take the heretical stand of equal rights for the Jews.

S o w e v e r D u b n o w ' s D a r s t e l l u n g . What about Dubnow's assertion that Brafmann had drawn a false picture of the situation because he presented the Kahal and the Chasaka as still existing, whereas at that time, around 1870, all these institutions had been banned and had long since disappeared? Is Brafmann alone in his assertions, or are there other witnesses?\*)

As a matter of principle, only Jewish key witnesses, who undoubtedly know the conditions exactly should be mentioned here. One such absolutely reliable expert on the Eastern European ghetto period, who is also recognised as such by the Jewish side, is the famous author of the cultural-historically extremely valuable character portraits from "Half-Asia". Having grown up in Eastern Galicia and being intimately familiar with the customs, habits and institutions of the ghetto Jews as well as with the languages of Eastern Galicia, K a r l

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\* The fact that the Jewish Kahal still exists today (even in the Soviet Republic) is evident from the fact that even the latest editions of the encyclopaedias treat it as still existing under the keyword "Kagal" (Russian form)!

Emil Franzos

describestrue events in the form of cultural pictures. Some of

his depictions are correct, some are generally characteristic of the country and its people, and some are merely real events with different names and relocated to other places.

At that time, Eastern Galicia was already "official", i.e. according to the constitution, entered European culture. The Jews were no longer enslaved as in Russia. To the extent that they were ghetto Jews, they were still often badly treated, even maltreated, but the change was in full swing.

K. E. Franzos remained a Jew, and an educated, free-thinking Reform Jew at that. He had a warm heart for his Ghetto lands people. His goal was to help them, to free them from the claws of medieval superstition and to introduce them to German culture. Thus he ruthlessly exposed superstition and the hardships, cruelties and heartbreaking conflicts that arose from it in his cultural pictures, but anxiously avoided revealing any circumstances that compromised Judaism per se. After all, he can't help it, he has to refer here and there to the secret organisation - and that is what matters here. That such secret organisations, and those of s e c t i v e importance, still existed at that time, i.e. in Brafmann's time, even in Galicia, can be seen with certainty from his descriptions. At that time the ghetto Jews, although their members were full imperial and royal Austrian citizens, still had their own district - the "alley" - their own administration, not only in religious but also in social terms - care for the poor - and even a B e t D i n , i.e. their own Jewish jurisdiction. The ghettos were a world apart, soviet republics in the imperial state.

In his book "Aus Halb-Asien" (From Half-Asia), he gives in the cultural picture "Ein

Jewish People's Court" the following account.

After describing the dirty towns and the chestnut-clad dirt-starved inhabitants, "in whose sharply marked faces ascetic rapture or cunning greed is pronounced" - they are the same throughout "half-Asia" because of the same influence of the environment, the landscape - he says: "Here the Jews are and remain what race, faith, pressure from outside made them, and what they,

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The Jews are no longer, thank God, in the West: a n a t i o n a l i t y, peculiar in faith and language, customs and habits, costume and outlook on life. Here, as elsewhere, the Jew's speciality is not limited to his God and his own festivals; here he is separated from his Christian neighbours by everything.

And that is why the Jew in the East still has his own judges and courts. Admittedly, they work in secret. There is also a public district court in the town. After describing this district court and its shortcomings, Franzos continues: (The following is incredibly important!!)

But even if every district judge in Galicia were an excellent person, the Jews would not always knock on the door under the rattling tin sign (i.e. at the district court, D. H.) when they need a legal ruling. At present (written in 1873!!) the Jew only goes there when he has to do so as a defendant or witness, and also as a plaintiff only when there is no other way out. Most cases concern money matters. If the civil service in Galicia were a different one, there would be at most one other kind of complaint in addition to these cases of exchange\*) - namely, those about bad treatment by overconfident brutal Poles.

But then it's onwards:

"So this could be different, but certain things will always bring the Orthodox Jews, as long as they remain what they are, only before their own judges and courts. Thus conflicts, in family and community life, especially for religious reasons, but often also serious crimes that happen within the ghetto. This is not done for the sake of the criminal, because the punishment he receives here is often harsher than the punishment he would receive before the state court, but it is done so that "the Jewish name, the name of God, will not be desecrated", so that "the world", the hostile Christian world, will not learn that once again a "Jewish child" has sinned against God and man.

\* This shows that F. is thinking of the money transactions of the Jews with Christians, of the often usurious exchange transactions. Money disputes between the Jews brought them before their own court. D. H.

"Three types of such courts can be distinguished. Often enough, a single personality, a so-called "good Jew", a miracle rabbi, is powerful enough to pronounce a judgement. More often, several Talmudists, under the chairmanship of a rabbi, form the court as a so-called "Bet Din". Very rare, however, is the third type: the heads of the community's families come together in a kind of people's court in a particularly important case. A case of this kind is described here.

The following account follows: A shochet - kosher shepherd - in anger slays a clumsy assistant.

And soon the whole town knew that Wolf Nelkendust had killed his servant in a fit of rage, the whole town, as far as Jews were concerned. Every child knew about it. But the Christians did not find out, neither immediately, nor ever afterwards. That sounds unbelievable, but it is so. And anyone who knows those Jews would surely only find the opposite unbelievable.

The People's Court takes place.

"At dawn the next day, the school knocker went from house to house and summoned the men to court in the old prayer school. Only the heads of families over thirty years of age were allowed to come. All of them came. In the anteroom, on the threshold of the prayer school, Wolf lay stretched out in his white dying robe, and his judges had to step over him." After the consultation, the rabbi suggested the following punishment: "As God Himself is a merciful judge, we hold this to be our punishment.

for the right: Wolf has lost all his possessions, and is to leave the community tomorrow and make a penitential pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He shall go on foot, via Constantinople, he shall not use any companion. He shall live on pious offerings, but never take money, only bread. He shall live on bread and water throughout the week; only on the Sabbath may he eat meat. In every church he shall prostrate himself before the threshold of the house of prayer, and the worshippers shall pass over him, and he shall beseech them to pray for Sender (that is, the slain, D. H.) and for him. He shall live in Jerusalem as a penitent for seven years, then he may return home. But his possessions shall be divided; the

Half goes to Sender's father, one quarter to our foundations, one quarter is to be kept by Wolf's sons. Are you satisfied?" The sentence was accepted. Wolf reached Jerusalem, but died there after about three years.

Certainly, the speech of the rabbi was not delivered in this way verbatim, but it may be taken as certain that Franzos is describing an actual event in all essential points.

The great power of the Jewish communal organisation also appears clearly in other cultural images that Franzos creates from half Asia, for example in the story: "Without inscription" (from "The Jews of Barnow"), in which he speaks about the graves whose funeral stones, as punishment for misdemeanours, bear no inscription. When the Messiah comes, all whose names the angel calls will rise. He passes by the nameless; they must remain permanently in the earth.

It's similar to what they used to say:

"The dark deed was committed, the darkness of the ghetto protected them. These people are afraid of the world; there is a Christian in the imperial and royal office. That is why they do not like to hand over the sinful brother. They punish him as best they can: he has to sacrifice money for pious purposes or go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem or fast every other day for years. Then he remains unmolested all his life, and only after death does it become clear what he has counted for." I.e. his tombstone receives no inscription; even beyond the grave he is haunted by the terrible hatred of these fanatics.

Like the wolf Nelkendust, Franzos also has the old sick Chaim Lippiner punished for kneeling before an image of Christ in such a way that he is to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, never to return.

The following sentence from the same story ("Without inscription") is downright terrifying. An old man, because he did not eat kosher as a soldier and often swears, leads a dog's life in the ghetto with mouldy bread and 7 kreuzers a week in support. On the Day of Atonement he is caught eating a piece of sausage, tortured by hunger. They did not mistreat him, nor did his benefits suffer any restriction. And yet, had fate been kind, it would have let him die at the same hour. For I would have

report what then came over the old man, I think the hardest man's eye would moisten.

From these words it is clear that Franzos has a very specific event in mind.

The importance of their own court and the unity that transcends national borders, and above all the uncanny secrecy of the ghetto Jews, is also shown in the story: "Der wilde Starost und die schöne Jutta" (in: "Die Juden von Barnow"). - It would be quite unscientific to reproach the Orthodox Jews for their desire to have their own court and for secretly keeping the Kahal and Bet Din. According to their religious rules, which - not influence, no! - they must have those. Research into the geography of the landscape and culture even provides more general interesting points of view and parallels. All peoples who are under pressure from foreigners and yet have developed a strong nationhood of their own strive to settle their own legal disputes in secret, far away from the state. Thus, as Franzos has shown, the Little Russians, who have been enslaved for centuries, still have their own courts, the Egyptian fellah, the eternally pressed, likewise, and the German peasants, when they were serfs? Well, in the "Oberhof" such an old, sacred peasant court is described by Immermann, no doubt on the basis of certain incidents, and even the "Cherem" - the feasting of an individual - was not alien to the Westphalian peasant communities.

From such a point of view, Kahal and Bet Din in the Ghetto must be considered.

A word about the ghetto Jews' taciturnity in their own affairs and their ability to keep secrets. Franzos gives an even more magnificent example in the cultural picture: "Die Gezwungenen" ("Between the Danube and the Danube"). At the beginning of the 1950s, the Jews were vigorously conscripted into military service, and since the adults knew how to avoid it, the adolescent boys were caught and taken to an educational institution. This achieved two things: firstly, they were withdrawn from Judaism and secondly, they became physically fit. As a result, a

The Russian army created a grand organisation covering Russian Podolia and Volhynia in order to secretly transport the boys to Romania. Thousands were thus deprived of military service. The Russian government soon realised that such a secret organisation existed, but did not find out about it. "A high price was set on revealing the secret" - says Franzos - "but although perhaps a hundred thousand people knew about it, one must nevertheless give the truth the honour and state that no traitor was to be found among them".

The fact should be hammered into one's consciousness again and again with all one's might that among the Jews secrets relating to purely Jewish matters remain secret and are denied by everyone with indignation - even if hundreds of thousands know about it.

The reader is strongly recommended to read Franzos' Kulturbilder as a supplement to Bratmann's publications. He will learn from it that despite Dubnow's denial, the rabbis and the rich - even after the official abolition of the Kahale - wielded the slave whip over the masses of the poor. Dubnow would even have the reader believe that the ban curse - cherem - which Bratmann portrays as so damning, is nothing to be concerned about. What does Franzos say about this institution?

In the above-mentioned story, "Without Inscription", it is described how a ghetto Jew, Reuben, commits the crime worthy of death of not allowing his wife Lea to cut off her wonderful, long, blond hair. - Every Jewish woman must do this on her wedding day and henceforth wear the bonnet - the "parting". Reuben is put in the cherem.

This punishment is the "great cherem", the severe ban, the most severe punishment that the community can impose on one of its members. Whom one has put in the cherem, is outlawed; it is not a sin but a merit to harm him in property and life. Only with hostile intent may one touch his body or a thing that belongs to him; only he who wants to corrupt him may breathe the same air as the damned. The "Cherem" loosens the most sacred bonds, and what is otherwise the worst sin becomes here a pious commandment: the

The wife may leave the husband, the son may raise his hand against the father. It is a war of all against one, a mercilessly waged war in which all means are valid. It is an unbearable fate that is capable of breaking the most stubborn will. Those who are in the Cherem usually hurry to make their peace with the Rabbi as quickly as possible - at any price, even that of self-respect. (11)

Reuben does not bow, he turns to the district court. The rabbi is locked up, every insult and harm to Reuben by Kahal members is punished. It doesn't help. The secret community court, i.e. the Bet Din, intervenes. One night, hooded men enter Reuben's house, snatch Leah from her postpartum bed and cut off her hair. Lea dies as a result of the terror, as does the child.

Reuben stayed in the town until the investigation (by the district court, D. H.) was finished. It had to be stopped. If these people want to remain silent, no power will make them talk. Reuben left the town.

Franzos introduces the account of this event with the following sentences: "It makes me feel strange to have to tell it (the story) again. Above all, it sounds so incredible. And only a few people in the West have built a bridge of understanding into this strange, dark world. The others will all shake their heads. But I can only say: it's true, it's not made up, it really happened that way!" (12)

Truly, when one reads these descriptions of the Cherem by a Jewish writer who is also recognised by the Jewish side as reliable, Braimann's descriptions of the "secret persecutors", of the maltreatment of disobedient people by false witnesses in court, seem almost harmless. Even more so, his depictions of the Chasaka (right to land of Christians) and Maaruphia (right to movable property of Christians), i.e. the depiction of the closed Kahal front against every single Christian, appear to be a downright *versta'tion*.

\* Many minutes of meetings testify to this! (D. H.)

\*\* The essay "Der Bannfluch im Ghetto" (The Ban Curse in the Ghetto) in No. 577 of the "Hammer" of 1 July 1926 provides recent evidence of the continued existence of the Cherem.

Consequence of being in the ghetto. In the eyes of the ghetto Jew, every Christian is in chereh, he is a piece of cattle, not a human being.

After all, what difference is there between Brafmann and Franzos, these two ghetto Jewish contemporaries? Franzos once says ("Without Inscription" in "From Half-Asia").

Alas! How peculiar has been the fate of the Jews! Their devout, rock-solid faith was once their protective hat, shielding their poor heads from the blows of the enemy's clubs and axes. They would have been

shattered without this protection, for these were terrible blows, terrible blows. But that is why this protective hat was driven deeper and deeper into their faces and finally down over their eyes, so that they could no longer see. This was once not so much to be lamented, for there was night all around and nothing, nothing at all could be seen, even without the hat over their eyes. But now it has become day in the west and day in the east, and yet they do not raise their hats. It would not be necessary for them to lift it, and now it would be utterly pernicious if they were to throw it away altogether, but it is equally pernicious if it covers their eyes. It must be raised higher, and these unhappy people must get used to looking into the beautiful morning-red face of the young day.

So what is the difference between these twowriters? Franzos wants to turn the ghetto Jews into Reform Jews, Brafmann not only wants to raise his hat higher, but throw it away. The modern Jewish press has rightly recognised Karl Emil Franzos as a writer and celebrated him as a Jew (cf. Die große Jüdische Enzyklopädie), although he confirms Brafmann's

portrayals becomes Brafmann, on the other hand, who has turned his back on Judaism,

pelted with dirt.

Have things got better since Franzos and Brafmann? Have the ghetto Jews in half-Asia raised their hats higher? In part, the dissolution of the ghetto existence is in full swing, but in part they are trying to pull the hat down even lower.

It is the C h a s s i d i s m u s that has caused the conditions among the ghetto Jews to remain the same as they were at the time of Franzos and Brafmann. They are the same people, the same conditions. From this it follows with necessity that the - according to

The Brafmann is a good example of how the institutions closely associated with ghetto Jewry - Kahal and Bet Din - must still exist today in Eastern Europe. Since the name of the Hasids occurs repeatedly in Brafmann, we will briefly discuss them.

There has always been an ascetic, mystical undercurrent in Judaism, which gained the upper hand when the wealthy educated Jews joined the culture of the host peoples and created a Reform Judaism. From such an undercurrent arose Kabbalism in the Middle Ages, when a freer direction developed on Spanish soil. The mystically oriented sect of the "pious" the Hasids, in Eastern Europe can ultimately be traced back to this. It is strongly attacked by the pure Talmud Jews, but comprises three quarters of all Jews in Eastern Europe. Jews belonging to different religious groups hate each other with the same passion as they hate the non-Jews. The miracle rabbi of Sadagora, whom Franzos also treats, has exerted a particularly great influence among the Hasids.

In a recent article: "The Rabbi Jacob Friedmann by Michael Wurmbrand" (Berliner Tageblatt of 11 September 1927) is given the following account.

Sadagora, a small spot in the south-eastern foothills of the Carpathians, is the cradle of the "modern" Chassidism, i.e. one that has shed the character of a sect and grown into a "movement". There, about 120 years ago, the "Rishiner Rebbe", a grandson of the "Great Maggid", the spiritual heir of the "Baal Shem", fleeing from severe persecution in Russia, found a permanent asylum behind the Austrian border posts. He took the surname F r i e d m a n n and is the ancestor of the Friedmann rabbinic dynasty, which represents rabbinic legitimism in the Hasidic world.

Sadagora is also the cradle of Hasidic legend; it revolves around every dilapidated half-timbered house, every pile of rubble. The heroes of the legend are the "Rishiner" and his first descendants. The later generations - read the Sadagora episode in H e r m a n n B a h r 's autobiographical work "Self-Portrait" - did not like to be called "miracle rabbis".



allowed in the chambers of the rabbi's castle, which had also become legendary for its splendour, a life of wealthy patricians and "led the movement". The women went dressed according to the latest fashion, and the youth flirted with newfangled ideas. Rabbi Jacob Friedmann, the present head of the dynasty, excelled greatly as the "organiser" of the world federation, "Agudas Yisroel" - this bulwark of Jewish conservatism also firmly established in Germany, Western Europe and America. Today, the cobweb of legend no longer clings to his physically and spiritually cultivated, 42-year-old personality.

This note is substantially supplemented by Franzos' account. "Reb Srulze" was a sinister fanatic who lived in Belk, Russian Poland, burnt a Jew who wanted to convert to Christianity in a lime kiln, saved himself to Austria and there became the miracle rabbi of Sadagora. In the most biting manner, Franzos describes the further development of the "Friedmann dynasty", which the reader may read about in "Halbasien" ("The Ancestor of the Messiah").

It is important to note above that Hasidism has now become an aggressive movement that has created a world federation - called Agudas Yisroel. Of course, this world federation must have retained the Kahal and Bet Din organisations, since Hasidism is simply unthinkable without them.

Let us now turn to another problem, namely the lunar nature of ghetto Jewry.)

What does that mean?

The lunar nature is in contrast to the solar nature. The Sun rotates on an axis, as do Earth, Mars, Jupiter and most other planets. The sun has a visible axis for us earthlings.

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\* Rabbinic literature openly identifies the Jews as the moon people; cf. Talmud tractate Sukka 29 b: "An eclipse of the sun is of evil significance to the gentiles, a moon eclipse to the Jews." - Jerusalem Talmud, tractate Rosh hashshana 57 b: "God gave the moon to the Israelites as a king gives a ring to his son." - In the Midrash Exodus, ch. 15 end, Jewish history from Abraham to Zedekiah is compared to the phases of the moon. In the Midrash Genesis, ch. 65, the full-haired Esau is compared to the sun, the bald Jacob to the moon. (Jacob is the cunning, secretive one in the Bible).

Outside; during the rotation this r e s t l o s to the surface, only the inside remains hidden.

By far the majority of people and nations now possess "sun nature". Inside they conceal many things that ultimately concern them alone, but everything that is connected with their life and activities is openly revealed. In any case, they do not try to conceal it.

Some people, of course, are not allowed to expose this or that to the public, e.g. business people who undertake new, unexpected things, diplomats, statesmen and so on. But they do not lose their "sun nature". Even the sun - one could say - is not visible at night, but it goes out again! After all, the secret of this class of men only lasts for a certain time. Once the financial or other business operations or the diplomatic and governmental measures are over, it is compatible with security, the publicity does no more harm, and no one will seriously refuse to publish it. The past can be processed historically, e.g. in an economic or national history.

These are the sunnies!

The m o n d n a t u r e s are quite different! Just as the moon, only ever turns one side towards the earth - towards human beings - and hides the other from their gaze, some people and human organisations have a front that faces the outside world and a back that is not visible. The front side is, as it were, the stage on which one appears as the actor, the back side, on the other hand, corresponds to the existence behind the scenes, i.e. to the living nature of those involved. Such "moon natures" take the greatest pains to hide the back side. They are extremely sensitive on this point and feel their existence threatened by its revelation. This is easy to understand, because "moon natures" are possessed by criminals, or at least those who are considered criminals by the official world, and secret allies. )

\* In view of the indignant newspaper polemics recently opened by the Lodge of Lower Saxony against Excellency Ludendorff, the following observation is perhaps not without interest. That the German Lodges have nothing to do with the revolutio-

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The secret society can refer to the most diverse things, to religious, to state-political, to economic secret society. As long as the crime pursued, as long as the secret society exists, any revelation must be pernicious. With the death of the person or with the dissolution of the organisation, the secret usually also perishes; it remains unrevealed.

Judaism - Orthodox ghettoism - has a lunar nature. It has a backside - the ghetto and religious nature, with many secrets that only the ghetto and religious member may know. Originally, the religious writings were secrets at all and exclusively for the Jews, probably also only for the priests. Part of the Talmud, e.g. the Mishnah, was not allowed to be recorded at all, could only be handed down orally.

nary World Freemasonry is very probable. But it is in the nature of things that members of organisations, which have the character of secret societies, i.e. moon nature, must do without being judged and treated like people with sun nature. Members of secret societies may gain a lot - a great deal - through their membership, but they are Schlemihl figures: they no longer have an honest shadow, they have lost the unwavering trust in their word, just as Peter Schlemihl lost his shadow. Their assurances about their secret covenant may be correct, but they may also be dictated by duty to the covenant. No one can know. On top of that, it seems to be a characteristic of secret societies with high degrees - at least many of them - that the inner development takes place in the following direction: the upper degrees have quite different points of view than the lower ones, e.g. at the bottom there is a religious fanaticism which expresses itself in ruthless political murders, at the top the most evil cynical atheism which simply abuses the lower degrees. Accordingly, the lodge brethren cannot know what is going on above, and whether they are not themselves the abused, deceived. That is the curse of renouncing honest openness, that the renouncer can be misjudged. The indignation of the gentlemen of the Lodge of Lower Saxony is therefore not justified. Gentlemen, first reveal your secrets, first regain your shadow, before you are allowed to speak such proud tones as you did towards Excellency Ludendorff. Incidentally, this is in no way intended as a comment on Ludendorff's writing, which I have not read. It is significant that the members of the lodges were called "artificial Jews". The coiner of the word obviously had an inkling of the "lunar nature" of the Jews and lodge brothers, and thus got to the heart of the matter.

Anyone who revealed any of the religious secrets was punished with eight and banishment and death. The translation of the Bible (the Targum) by Onkelos was considered such a betrayal of Judaism that God was made to say, "Who will reveal my secrets to men?" (Megillah 3a). The day-to-day intercourse with the host peoples, however, meant that the state authorities interfered in the affairs of the community, and that certain community officials were even, to a certain extent, state - not Jewish - officials. Therefore, the lunar nature was extended to perfection. There were no "absolute" secrets that floated around completely invisible and intangible - as it were, as ghosts - but many an organisation had a front side that was there for the non-Jewish world, and a "back side" that was the main thing for the ghetto people, that only they knew, and that served exclusively Jewish interests. Such an institution had the advantage that one could speak openly of the organisation in question; the non-Jew understood by it the "front side" known to him and recognised by the state, whereas the ghetto Jew thought primarily of the "back side" of this organisation.

Here is an example: The factor as described by Brafmann was once a "house Jew" with nobles, a commission agent with private individuals and partly also an official of the Kahal with the police and other authorities - Front side. At the same time he was a spy, an informer, a bribe-taker in the interest of Jewry - back side. Such a factor played his role to the authorities and to all non-Jews on the front side of the Jewish moon like an actor on stage - often enough the role of a stupid and beaten-up August; on the back side of the moon - in the ghetto, within his popular community - his hatred of the goyim flared up, he laughed at the same time at the stupidity and blindness of the exploited, deceived tormentors. The crime of the "informer" Brafmann consists in the fact that he dared to illuminate the back side of the Jewish moon; his persecutors, on the other hand, declare everything a lie - they have to do so, too, because they must not admit the lunar nature under any circumstances.

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However, justice demands that we note the following: The Russian officials of the Tsarist Empire were so accustomed to bribes that they expected them, demanded them and, if necessary, even took them. The cultural picture that Franzos presents the story: "My Uncle Bernard" ("From the Danube to the Danube") reveals in a shocking way the abuse that a habitual system of bribery creates. Here only the fact is stated, Franzos did not refrain from ethical impulses and judgements because he was unable to confront Judaism - his own people - as a pure researcher. Nor could he - without exposing the lunar nature of Judaism - so he was not allowed to do so. One could argue that history of the Jews has been written from the Jewish side; therefore there can be no question of a lunar nature of Judaism, i.e. of a secret society character, since the latter cannot be historically processed as long as the secret exists. Certainly, there are a number of such descriptions of history, they only describe the moon's perspective. Each carefully avoids even hinting at the existence of a back side. But just as a criminal usually does something stupid in some way that gives him away, so Jewish historians have sometimes been unable to refrain from throwing a ray of light on the back side of the Jewish moon. Read, for example, Graetz's exultation that after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the Romans allowed the establishment of a harmless "teaching establishment" (front side) at Lydda, situated in the coastal flatlands of Palestine near Jassa. Scornfully he exclaims: If they would have guessed what they were doing! - Backside!

Even when he describes how Rabbi Akiba makes a religious study trip (front side) from Palestine to Babylonia, which at that time belonged to the Parthians, Graetz cannot refrain from remarking that this trip actually had a political reason, namely to incite the Parthians against Rome (back side). And then the intemperate sensitivity of the Jews - even of the present day - against anyone who dares to deal with Judaism. Immediately

they get nervous, and the central office orders a hullabaloo of indignation, as now because of the publication of Brafmann's writings. Why all this, if one has nothing to hide? A guilty conscience is the only explanation for this strange behaviour.

In the comparison between Jewish historians and criminals, the tertium comparationis is the s i c h v e r r a t e n , not the illicit, criminal. Every political or religious organisation that holds together a group of people whose views are based on certain ethical ideas and teachings, has, in my opinion, the right to fight for its existence and to assert and enforce itself with all the means at its disposal. Accordingly, I am of the opinion that Judaism, if it does not want to kill itself, has the right and even the duty to deny its lunar nature by all means. What the naive, partisan Gentile perceives as lies and deceit is for the Orthodox Jew, who sees in his religious organisation the highest and holiest good, the most moral, holiest duty. Nothing would be more wrong than to reproach him for this. A condemnation would only be justified in the case of a party-political attitude, but not under any circumstances scientifically. The scientific researcher should be above any party. This also establishes the position of the editor.

First of all, let us take the following basic position.

to Judaism take place here: Just as hate and love prevail uncritically between political parties within states or between the latter, relations between Jews and non-Jews are often, if not predominantly, determined by emotional judgements. That many Jewish scholars lose all composure as soon as they speak of Jewish opponents has already been emphasised. One should avoid falling into the same mistake. One must endeavour to understand Judaism as a n a t u r e w i s s e n s c h a f t l i c h e t h n o l o g i s c h e s p r o b l e m . Moral sentiments, moral indignation, emotional sentimentality are out of place in the scientific treatment of the Jewish question. A zoologist who is morally indignant about the cuckoo that lays its egg in a foreign nest, about the ichneumon wasp that lays its eggs in caterpillars so that they die in agony, who is morally indignant about the fox and polecat in the chicken yard, is not a zoologist.

indignant, will arouse smiles. Even the ethnologist must not get into moral turmoil when dealing with customs and traditions such as blood feuds, headhunting, the official prostitution of young girls, and so on. Explaining and understanding - that must be the goal. Those who see Judaism as a scientific-ethnological problem will find it easy to keep a cool head. Jewish ethnicity and the relationship between Jews and non-Jews can be described just as objectively as the relationship between Bushmen and Kaffirs, Haussas and Fulbe or between other peoples who show strong contrasts. If one approaches the problem of the Jews from the point of view of landscape and cultural geography, if one succeeds in revealing the "wandering secret" to some extent from the cultural-geographical conditions of the Orient, then one feels no inclination to deviate even a hair's breadth from the path of scientific research. The reader is also asked to refrain from all political feelings and to make an effort to understand Judaism.

Is a purely scientific, cool statement of this kind worthy of the Odists' pleasant?

One would think so, but it does not seem to be the case. It is obviously extremely unpleasant for these gentlemen if any non-Jew deals with them scientifically at all. This is also the case in my case. The Odist press is particularly upset that a *Geograph*, of all people, dares to do it. Obviously, the indignant believe that the study of geography is limited to the memorisation of cities, rivers, mountains, states, peoples, and so on. That cultural geography deals with man's dependence on the nature of the land seems to be unknown to them. Now it has turned out that the study of the cultural geography of the Orient leads in an almost astonishing way to an understanding not only of the cultural and historical conditions of the Orient itself, but also of Judaism, which originated in the Orient. The study of the verification of the landscape and thus the study of the dependence of man on the various landscapes and the

Factors should be able to lift the veil on the most essential points, which until now has still covered Judaism - this wandering mystery. The Judean problem is to a large extent a cultural-geographical problem.

Cultural geography is therefore the science that is particularly called upon to promote the study of Judaism.

If Judaism were an organisation without a lunar nature, scientific research into it would only be pleasant for the Odists. But exactly the opposite is the case. No greater harm can be done to them, than if an objective scholar should really succeed in illuminating the moon's nature, i.e. to reveal its secret. Of course, a cool-headed scientist is most likely to succeed in solving the problem. One who approaches the problem passionately, as a party politician, is most likely to get on a wrong track and thus gladden the hearts of the clever rabbis and other leading Odist minds. Also, a passionate person often - indeed, usually - bites down on a single idea and therefore cannot avoid exaggeration. But every exaggeration judges itself. In such a case, the Odists, whose strength lies precisely in their ice-cold dispassion, have an easy game in refuting their opponents.

Accordingly, the Odists have the most to fear from a cool, purely scientific investigation. Judaism can endure everything, summer and winter, frost and heat, day and night, persecutions and expulsions, murder and manslaughter. Suffering even has an effect on Judaism, like the clippers on hair that has grown too long and is therefore falling out. After cutting, the hair loss stops; the hair becomes thicker, stronger, more resistant. Now, the loss of hair is apostasy from Judaism, the cutting off is persecution. The rabbis and other chiefs - Rashim - know this very well. Let anti-Semitism disappear, and the Odists would take the greatest pains to artificially recreate it, albeit in a form that is as harmless as possible, but still strong enough to limit the hair loss as much as possible.



Can Judaism really bear anything? No - the truth about its lunar nature - it cannot bear it; this knowledge is dangerous to the Odists. As long as one did not know the way of life and the relations to rats and plague fleas, the plague germs could mock all medical measures. As long as the essence of Judaism has not been recognised, all proposals to counteract its damage will have to be in vain.

In accordance with his double position as a doctor and geographer, the editor has for years endeavoured to come closer to an understanding of Judaism, starting from landscape studies and cultural geography. His travels in the Orient have contributed significantly to the realisation that Judaism is by no means something so peculiar, and that it simply had to develop on the soil of Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, and then in the host colonies during the dispersion. The results of this research are to be set down in a special publication. This is merely a matter of making Brafmann's two publications, which make an essential contribution to the understanding of Judaism, accessible to wider circles. Perhaps readers to whom Kahal and Ghetto Judaism were previously unknown concepts will now be able to understand Brafmann's descriptions and the minutes of the meetings. Further remarks should draw his attention to some points of view.

Hamburg, end of October 1927S

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# **Jacob Brafmann: The Book of the Kahal**

Volume 1:

**Materials for the study of Jewish customs**



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## Preface

In 1858, during the Tsar's stay in Minsk, I submitted a memorandum on the situation and life of the Jews by the Highest Order. To explain this memorandum I was summoned to Petersburg by order of the Most Holy Synod on 29 October 1859 and by ukase of 13 May 1860 to Minsk, where I was appointed teacher of the Jewish language at the spiritual seminary. There I was given the task of making proposals for the elimination of the difficulties with which Jews who wished to convert to Christianity had to contend.

Due to my exact knowledge of Jewish customs, which is based both on my Jewish descent and on my life, which moved in Judaism until I was 34 years old, the sources from which I could draw material for my task were known to me. The way to these sources was paved for me on the one hand by the support of the Reverend Machail, former Archbishop of Minsk, and on the other hand by the sympathy that many Jews had for my work.<sup>1)</sup> Thanks to these favourable circumstances, I gradually collected abundant material which could serve not only the aforementioned goal, but also the clarification of the position occupied by the Jews in general.

The material consists of a large number of private letters, notes, documents, files and similar writings, which, according to their content, are more suitable for throwing light on the intricate, inner life customs of the Jews than other means which had hitherto been achieved by scientific research.

\* For technical reasons, Brafmann's notes, indicated by numbers, are referred to the end of the volume, where the reader will find them combined on pages 222 ff. D. H.

can. First and foremost in my collection is material hitherto unknown to scholars, consisting of about a thousand regulations,\*) resolutions, and files of Jewish K a h a l e (municipal administrations) and B e t D i n e (Talmudic courts), with which this book will acquaint the reader.

The importance and significance of these documents lies in the fact that they represent the practical side of the life of today's Jews, which, seemingly entirely under the influence of the prevailing Talmudic theories, in reality still goes considerably beyond them.\*\*)

In the Talmud, for example, there are no clear indications of the limits to which the Kahal and the Bet Din (the Jewish court) may extend their power into the private life of the Jew. In the documents we cover, on the other hand, these limits are clearly drawn. From these four acts we see that the despotism of the Kahal interferences so deeply in the life of the Jew that he is not at liberty to invite whom he wishes to celebrate a domestic feast, a banquet, or to prepare a meal according to his taste and need, without first having obtained the permission of the Kahal. (\*\*)

From the other side we ask the question: what does the state law mean to the Jew?

The Shulchan Aruch gives us a clear answer to this important question. "Dina demalchuta dina", i.e. the law of the state is law (binding on the Jews). 2) Elsewhere we find the opinion,

\* Exactly 1072. D. H.

\*\* Brafmann wants to say the following: The regulations governing the Orthodox Jews are generally traced back to the Talmud. In reality, as far as the Kahal and Bet Din and their instructions are concerned, they were partly created later. Therefore, they are basically not binding on the Talmudic Jew and were imposed on him unlawfully. D. H.

\*\*\* The study of the "Brafmann" takes the reader into the deepest Middle Ages. Even in the medieval cities everything was very precisely regulated, the freedom of the individual in private life was restricted. The ghetto is still a piece of the Middle Ages, but in this case there is a clear mismanagement of the Kahal in that he used the regulations to extort money from the people. Compare Introduction, pp. XXV ff. D. H.

"that these regulations refer exclusively to questions of personal advantage of the kings, and that decisions of legal institutions (i.e. the state) are in no way to be regarded as binding on the Jew."<sup>3)</sup> The third passage, however, completely overturns the teaching of the first two: "Rabban Simeon, son of Gamaliel, Rabbi Simeon (Ben Jochai), Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiba are all of the opinion that all Israelites are of royal lineage. (So is their "advantage" meant in the penultimate passage?)<sup>4)</sup>"

It is understandable that despite detailed answers, the question always remains nebulous and unsettled. If, however, these views of the Talmud and the Shulchan aruch are revised by the regulations of the Kahal (see nos. 165 and 166), the answer will be as clear as it is conclusive. For from these precepts we see that Jews who have been elected to a non-Jewish legal institution<sup>5)</sup> are obliged to decide cases tried in their presence not according to their own conscience or the laws of the realm, but under the influence of the Kahal and the Bet Din.

Another example: How does the Jew, from his national-religious standpoint, relate to the movable or non-movable property of the gentile? In this respect, the Shulchan Aruch<sup>6)</sup> has given so much room to every conceivable view that almost every Jew is in a position to question every non-Jewish researcher, no matter how learned he may be.

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\* The Talmud came about partly in such a way that in disputations one and the same subject was treated from completely opposite points of view by different scholars. Each tried to prove the correctness of his own point of view. Thus, the most diverse views on the same subject are presented as correct. Rabbi X says this, Rabbi Y says that, Rabbi Z says a third. In addition to this, temperament and disposition are just as different among the Jews as among any other people. There are rational and emotional people, irascible and gentle, hateful and conciliatory. In this respect, too, the views, feelings and decisions are sharply opposed to each other. In short, the Talmud says everything, e.g. that only the Jews are human beings and all non-Jews are only cattle, but at the same time it preaches a general love of humanity. Or: Yahweh is here the vengeful, hating tribal god, there the loving All-Father who graciously embraces all people. Understanding, not moralising, is in order here. Always try to understand the historical development. D. H.

to lead them up the garden path. Through the 37 acts of our fifth explanation, the reader will be convinced that the Kahal, in his sphere of activity, sells to Jewish private individuals "C h a s a k a " and "M a a r u p h i a" (Choshen ha Mishpat 156, 5), i.e. the right to possess the immovable property of non-Jewish inhabitants and to exploit any non-Jew. 7) In a word, we see from the documents of this book that the Kahal and Bet Din, which have hitherto independently governed private and social Jewish life (as the reader will see from our book), are not always obliged to adhere to the Talmud, and that personal regulations of these institutions, confirmed by the C h e r e m (i.e. ban curse), can even be considerably more correct for the Jew than the Talmud. (It is already said in the Talmud: "A custom [Minhag] annuls the Talmudic rule [Halacha]"; Tractate Jebamoth 12, 1, Baba mezia 7, 1). This is the circumstance that gives special significance to the documents in this book.

By thus identifying the inner drivers of the Jewish

These documents explain in the best possible way the ways and means by which the Jews, in spite of their most limited rights, were able to force foreign elements out of the cities and towns in which they resided, and places in which they were resident, to seize both the capital and the immovable treasures in these regions and to free themselves from all non-Jewish competition in trade and handicrafts, as has already happened in the western governorates of Russia, Poland, Galicia, etc, etc. In such a wonderful way it is explained, that (in France!) whole departments, as Napoleon I. in a decree from the Champagne region of 29 November 1806, were suddenly pledged to Jews at a time when they constituted the extreme minority of the total population of the Empire (60,000<sup>8</sup>). Why, for example, do we hear the same words in the protest against the Jews on the part of the non-Jewish population of Romania as in the complaint of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Vilna to Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in 16809): "Why did all the empires, when they granted citizenship to the Jews, not give the Jews the right to live there?"



have taken it away from them again?" And finally, the most important thing: in these documents lies the clear answer to the question

the service of our government to assimilate the Jews have been why labour and capital in unsuccessful over the centuries. ) -

Because of the undoubted importance of the documents in question, I considered it my sacred duty to draw the attention of the Governor-General to them, and in 1866 I submitted them, together with my other notes on the improvement of the manners of the Russian Jews (part of which was printed in Nos. 149, 151, 173 of the "Wilnaschen Anzeiger" of 1866), to the former District Chief Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufmann, who appointed a Jewish Commission to examine them, under the chairmanship of V. A. Tarasov. A. Tarassow, which is still trying to clarify the questions raised by my material and which prompted the former district chief of the north-western district, Count Eduard Irosimowitsch Baranow, to draft the well-known circular of 24 August 1867 "concerning the destruction of Jewish Kahale". We have printed the circular at the end of this book. \*\*)

After personally reviewing many of these documents in Russian translation and because of the impression it made on the Chairman of the Commission, the Privy Councillor Ivan Petrovich Kornilov provided me with funds to publish a number of these documents in Russian translation, about 20 printed pages.

\* These details reveal at a stroke the secret of the successes of the Jews. Every single non-Jew is confronted by the whole Jewish community as a unit with infinitely superior means. One by one they are stifled, and no one suspects where this comes from. It is a magnificent, an almost ingenious system. And then there is the factor system. But please, dear reader, no sentimental, moralistic impulses! The ghetto is simply a powerful force. D. H.

\*\* Note that it was the Jewish Commission that initiated the writing of the circular (at the end of this volume). According to this, the Kahal enemies seem to have been in the majority in this commission. D. H.

The accuracy of the documents proves: a) their yellowed appearance, b) the uniform handwriting of the notary who wrote it, c) the signatures of other persons, the accuracy of which can also be established by other sources, d) the watermarks in the paper "B. O. F. E. B.", the first sheet being dated 1790, the others 1764.

All the Kahal documents I have collected relate to the years 1794-1833; the 290 documents included in this book date from 1794-1803. At Mr Kornilov's request, the documents are arranged chronologically.

In order to facilitate their study, the documents are preceded by 17 explanatory notes. Each of these explanatory notes relates to a certain number of interrelated documents, and those who study in detail the questions of Jewish life which they illuminate will find that the content relates to: Laws and customs on which these documents are based, their present purpose, and their influence on the customs of Jews and non-Jews. In this way, the 17 sections deal with the following questions of the moral and religious life of the Jews:

**I n t e r n a t i o n 1 :** On the agents of the Kahal, the factors and their work in the police, in the administration and among officials; on the influence of the factors on the life of the Jewish and non-Jewish population in general; on the system of the Kahal in distributing gifts to officials and in bribery; on the Jewish commission to Tsar Alexander I and on the report of Dzerzhayin.

**I n t e r n a t i o n 2 :** On slaughter cattle, kosher and trefa; on the influence of kosher on the life of the population; on the giving of kosher meat; on the purpose of kosher and on the support of kosher by Russian laws.

**E r l e a t i o n 3 :** On the Jewish brotherhoods, on their relationship to the Kahal and on their influence on the mores of Jews and non-Jews.

**E n v i r o n m e n t 4 :** On the "Aliyah" (reading the 5 books of Moses while praying together), where the Jews divide into patricians and plebeians.

Explanation 5: On the power of the Kahal in his domain; his rules in granting settlement permits to Jews in his domain; on the sale to Jewish private citizens of "Chasaka" and "Maaruphia" (i.e. the right to own immovable property of non-Jewish residents and to exploit this property and their owners); on the "Cherem" and the oath of the Jews.

Erleation 6: On the holiday of "Rosh Hashana" (New Year) and on the use of horn blowing.

Erleation 7: On the facilities of synagogues and schools; on charitable buildings and facilities.

Internation 8: On the "Bet Din" (Jewish court); on its composition and its relation to the Kahal; on the power and importance of its decisions for the Jew; on the duties imposed by the Kahal and Bet Din on Jewish members of (Russian) juridical bodies; on the means of combating apostates against the regulations of the Kahal and Bet Din; on secret persecutors.

Erleation 9: On "Kabbalat Kinjan" or "Seder", i.e. on the customs of buying and selling.

Note 10: About the marriage of the Jews.

Internation 11: On the custom of circumcision; on feasts and the instructions given by the Kahal to the Jews for preparation for feasts on the occasion of family holidays and for inviting their guests.

Internation 12: On "Morenu", i.e. a title with service rights attached to it; on the grades in the Kahal and Bet Din hierarchy.

Note 13: On "Melammedim", i.e. of the Jewish teachers and of the education of the Jews.

Environment 14: On "Yom kippur" (the Day of Atonement) and on "Ha-Torat Nedarim" (decision on promises, oaths etc.)

Erleation 15: On "Kapporet" (the cock sacrifice).

Note 16: About "Mikva" (custom of purification for women after menstrual periods and births).

Environment 17: On "Kiddush" and "Habdala" (prayer over the cup in the synagogue and at home).

J. Brafmann

Explanation I. On the agents of the Kahal and the factors and their work in (Russian) police, legal and administrative institutions and in the authorities; on the influence of the factors on the life of the Jewish and non-Jewish population in general; on the system of the Kahal in the case of investigations; on the Jewish commission under Tsar Alexander I. and on the example of Dersha wins.

The agent of the Kahal, who is in charge of supervising the relations of the Jews with the Reich Police and distributing gifts to the police officers, is called the Jewish "factor".

The "art of factors" is not called upon in commercial transactions alone. Rather, in the hands of the "factors" this "art" is made useful for all situations in life. That is why the "factor" is everywhere on the lookout in Jewish cities, not only at the doors of the business shops, in inns and other places that serve trade and barter, but also in the offices of the police, administration and judiciary, and often even in the private flats of officials who belong to one of these state institutions.

The "legion" of these "factors" - who, so to speak, know how to catch every stirring of public life and exploit it for their own benefit,\*) by making it at the same time serviceable to the Greater Jewish aims - is divided into different classes, and each class has special specialists. Thus there are "factors" for trade, for supplies, factors dealing with matchmaking, and factors for justice, administration, etc. We speak

\*The name is pronounced factor and in East Prussia means a shop servant who does rough work, errands, handyman services. In Jewish ghetto life he is a spy, an informer, a "bribery agent". That is his "backside function". Part of these factors plays the role of brokers and commission agents in business life, another part plays the role of official agents with the Russian officials and in their offices to manage relations between the state and the ghetto (both "front functions").  
\*\* These can simply be quite legal commission fees; a reproach would then not be justified. D. H.

here not of administrators, the so-called free Jewish advocates; these are a chapter in themselves, and it seems that in this respect the Jews are not behind the other peoples.

The factors spoken of here are rather an outstanding characteristic of Judaism. The work of a factor consists in the following:

The factor has to control the person or institution he has to deal with; he has to receive petitioners and agree with them on the sums (bribes!) that each of them has to sacrifice in the factor's opinion for the benefit of his pan<sup>10</sup>) if he wants success for his own cause. It goes without saying that in any agreement the factor does not forget himself. After the matter has been completed, the factor himself determines who is to receive something and how much he will receive, whereby the matter is, after all, not infrequently transacted by illicit means. In such transactions, the factor must first and foremost follow the rules that have been handed down to him, which are imprinted on his memory and factor conscience, and he must also draw up guidelines for the following: how transactions between Jews and the goy (non-Jew) are to be conducted, how transactions between two Jews, between the kahal and the private Jew, between the kahal and the official, etc., etc., are to be settled. Above all, however, the factor must make notes about the measures with the help of which he can most easily mislead his Poritz<sup>10</sup>). The collection of such notes is handed over to the Kahal and serves him as the surest weapon for undermining the morale of the superior or his sense of duty, if such exists at all and proves detrimental to Jewish interests. )

The wealth of such products of the Jewish spirit in the Russia's governorates with Jewish populations, the (Russian) fatherland owes its existence to the execution of Russian laws by officials

\* It would be quite wrong to be morally indignant. Once and for all: the ghetto is a self-evidently free political and a lasting power. The factor reports are, as it were, secret files of the Jewish Kahal general staff. The tradition may be around 1800 years old, and since the records are based on a systematically cultivated study of the human body, the

Polish origin. It should be noted here that the "Pans" found it difficult to get along in their lives without "factors", but the "factors" found the strongest support in the sympathy shown to them by the Polish officialdom.)

To this officialdom, the presence of these "factors" was so indispensably necessary that even two "pans", bound together by the most indissoluble ties, e.g. kinship, equality of aristocratic origin, as well as religious and political convictions, etc., were unable to order their affairs without the aid of a "factor" when one of them, as an official\*\*), had to receive the other as a petitioner.

The factors of the latter category, who use their art mainly for the benefit of Jewish private interests, not infrequently at the same time carry out orders of the Kahal and in similar cases act according to its regulations. Even in questions concerning the Jewish total population of a country, which may arise in the highest government circles, "factors" appear with

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If the reports are based on the human character and above all on human weaknesses that can be exploited by bribes through money, etc., the publication of such a collection of general staff reports would be extremely interesting. It is a pity that Brafmann did not get his hands on one. If he had been a forger, he would not have missed the opportunity for a sensation. But he was an honest man! D. H.

\* The conclusions to be drawn from B's account are far more comprehensive than most readers might imagine. Since the Poles were far more educated than the actual Russians, they held civil service positions in Russia to an extent that did not correspond at all to the numerical ratio between Russians and Poles. Throughout Russia, even in the colonial outskirts, Poles were to be found as influential officials. The Pole can conceal himself and his feelings magnificently; he flatters, hypocrites, serves and - is an ally of the ghetto Jew. The secret activity of the Poles who were civil servants in Russia was essentially to blame for the mismanagement of the civil service, for the system of bribery which has ruined Russia, for the moral rot which has made this unhappy country a prey to Bolshevism. But Brafmann's account is also important for us, for the former eastern provinces and the effect of the Poles who were once active there as officials and officers. Brafmann is really worth reading: he makes one aware of so many things. D. H.

\*\* In private life too, everyone had their "house Jew". D. H.

Powers which, of course, appear to be granted by the whole people or country. In this way, the "factors" control all public and private relations between Jews and non-Jews, important and unimportant, those subject to the (Russian) laws, as well as the "Jewish question" itself, which has never and nowhere ceased to be a problem. In this they have always had the reliable support of the Kahal as well as the other "factors" behind them. The weapon with which these loyal servants are equipped is the same everywhere and in all cases; it is known to almost all people: it is gifts and bribes.

The distribution of gifts and the bribery of the guardians of order and law in countries where Jews live has long since grown into a general custom and is, if not exactly founded in Talmudic dogmatics<sup>11)</sup>; at least mainly in the practice of life which sails under the flag of the Talmud. Great miracles are conjured up by the power of the above-mentioned talisman in the hands of skilful "factors". By means of this power the Jews remove all obstacles by which the local laws and powers seek to save the population from final collapse under the tyranny of the Jewish proletariat. To this power and to the tense attention of the "factor guard" in administrative, police and similar institutions the Jews owe their victories in the struggle with non-Jewish opponents, in every public and private matter. By the power of the "factor art" and the talisman possessed by the factors, the Jews, in their present-day organisation, with which this book acquaints us, liberated the cities and places inhabited by them from all non-Jewish competition in handicrafts, trade and industry. In a word, the said talisman money has replaced for the Jews the old magic wand under whose blows the sea became dry and rocks, giving springs, burst. The only difference is that in those days the magic wand was wielded by the folk hero alone, whereas, the present magic talisman is wielded in every city of Jewish population by the Kahal and a legion of Jewish "factors".

Here may this brief overview of Jewish factorialism

which, by the way, in its great lines, has long since been

is known; for "factor and bribes" have often been reported in newspapers and magazines. Even in the theatre, the ways and means by which the Jews try to buy a kind of intercession or the gracious silence of influential people have been depicted. 12)

Now we turn to a new side of the aforementioned influences, known only to the Jews. No matter how often one may read in the newspapers about Jewish factors and bribes, no one has yet explained how this sin thrives on Jewish soil, not as a psychological disposition of individual private persons, which can be found more or less among all cultural peoples, but precisely as a standard of social dignity. No one has yet explained that this sin\*) is common among the Jews everywhere and has even been brought into a certain system, and finally no one has yet explained the relationship of the "factors" to the Kahal, in which cases and to what extent gifts are distributed, from which sources the means for gifts and bribes in matters of the Kahal originate, who determines their extent, who measures the expenditure. Finally, the main issue: in what way are the funds raised for bribery in matters of overall Judaism, and who waves the flag of the Talmud, Rabbinism or Kahal in such cases? This interesting side of the coin is illuminated in great detail in 26 regulations of the Kahal, which are published in this book under numbers 2, 4, 5, 17, 21, 33, 37, 48, 73, 84, 114, 117, 119, 156, 159, 228, 244, 260, 261, 280-86 are listed.

Special attention should be paid to numbers 280 to 286, documents in which the General Jewish Assembly discussed the commission for the Jewish question in Petersburg under Alexander I and the means of combating it. \*\*)

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\* The fact that this moral and ethical change of sentiment is out of place does not need to be emphasised further. Bratmann overlooks the fact that ghetto Jewry must be regarded as a warring power. D. H.

\*\* Volume II also contains protocols relating to this: It is mainly about the Jews' monopoly on the sale of spirits. The fact that they ruined the peasantry everywhere is confirmed. Even in Franzos' time, even the



Coinciding in time with Derschawin's report on the outcome of the work of the Jewish Commission of which he was a member, the documents complement and explain each other.

In the following, Dershavin says<sup>13</sup>: "It is evident from the above that Dershavin's views on the Jews, which he formed during the time of his stay in Poland and submitted to the ruling senate under Tsar Paul, were studied by a committee meeting during the whole period of his ministership, which consisted of Counts Chartoriski, Potocki, Zubov and Dershavin himself. But through various intrigues, the investigations did not lead to any final result. The matter deserves the greatest attention.

First of all, it was decided to call some Kahal leaders and famous rabbis from some governorates to discuss with them all the facts from which Dershavin's views were based. These views are worth reading carefully in order to penetrate all the details and to learn about the good intentions of the author for the good of the empire and of the Jews themselves. The meetings, sessions and deliberations continued for almost the whole winter; then various machinations were used on their (the Jews') part to stop the negotiations that had begun. Among other things, the landowner Gurko from White Russia sent to Dershavin a letter which he had intercepted somewhere in White Russia and which had been written by a Jew to his confidant in Petersburg. This letter said that they (the Jews) had put the cherm (or ban) on Dershavin as the persecutor of all the Kahals of the world, and that they had collected and sent to Petersburg 100,000 roubles for gifts in this matter, and now asked that every effort be made to get rid of General Procureur Dershavin; but if this should not succeed, a plot should be made for which a time limit of three years should be set, during which nothing should be done.

in Austro-Poland the innkeepers were only Jews. It would have been a real boon for the Russians and the state if the monopoly had been abolished. With the help of bribery and Polish officials, all attempts to stop the cancer failed. D. H.

that anything that might shorten Dzerzhavin's administration should be omitted, since nothing could be decided in their favour during his administration. Above all, they wanted to ensure that they were not forbidden to sell spirits in the inns and villages. From this sale comes all evil, since by it they bring the peasants to complete ruin and utter depravity. But in order to be able to carry out the matter with success, they promised him that suggestions would be made from foreign countries and from various cities as to how the situation of the Jews could be improved. Shortly afterwards, publications did indeed begin, soon in French, soon in German, and finally, by order of the Emperor, Jews were summoned to the Committee in order to become acquainted with Dzerzhavin's views through Counts Chartoriski, Kochubei, Novossiltsev. Meanwhile, the Jew Hotko, who was employed by Dzerzhavin as a secretary, as it were, to safeguard Jewish interests, and who declared himself in agreement with Dzerzhavin's views, as well as making various submissions about the establishment of factories, etc., came to Dzerzhavin one day. Under the guise of benevolence, he pointed out to Dershavin that he would not be able to defeat all his friends, who were all on the side of the Jews, but that he should draw the consequence and at least 100-

200.00 Rubles to then accept with the other members of the

Committee to be of the same opinion. Dzerzhavin took this proposal seriously and considered that accepting the money would be tantamount to a breach of faith and a violation of the Tsar's will; he also considered that if the Jews were allowed to live in the present, unregulated state and were allowed to sell spirits in the inns as before this would be tantamount to exploiting the peasantry and depriving them of their most important living conditions. If, however, they refused the bribe and remained alone in the struggle without any support from the Tsar, success could not be expected in all their efforts and labours. He therefore decided to inform the Tsar of this bribe, to confirm the truth of it in the letter, and to add that the Counts Chartoriski and Novossiltsev, who had been admitted to the Commission by the Emperor's will, had already drawn up projects for the settlement of the Jewish question, one in French, the other in German.

and one in German - were available. So he hoped, by presenting all this to the emperor, to convince him of his loyal service and to convert him to his view. In fact, the Tsar was shocked at first, and when Dzerzhavin asked him whether he should accept the money, he replied in embarrassment, "I will tell you later what to do," but in the meantime he took Gurko's letter to have everything said in it confirmed by other means.

Derschawin believed that he would make a great impression on the Emperor with his material, and that as a result he would in future beware of the people surrounding him who favoured the Jews. In the meantime, he discussed everything openly with Count W. A. Suboff, unaware that the latter was in close relations with Mr. S., who was then Director in the Ministry of the Interior and had the Minister entirely in his hands. S. was completely devoted to the Jews, which had come about through the mediation of a certain Perez, whom he openly called his friend and with whom he lived together.

And so it came about that instead of obtaining a ukase against the Jews from the Emperor, at the first meeting of the Jewish committee all its members declared that the sale of spirits in the country should remain in the hands of the Jews as before; but since Derschawin did not agree to this, the matter remained unresolved for the time being. The Emperor turned more and more away from Derschawin, and nothing was done in response to the aforementioned letter from Gurko.

Although, after several similar incidents, the evil intentions of the Polish noblemen surrounding the Emperor were known to all honest sons of the fatherland, the following throws a particularly glaring light on the low-mindedness of the noblemen to the detriment of Russia. Mr. Baronev told Derschawin, after he had left the civil service, that Count Sch. when Derschawin's report was presented to the committee, had read it and thrown it into the oven, so that B. was only able to save it with difficulty. A project submitted on the situation of the Jews, which corresponded to D.'s views, was handed over to Mr. S., who completely reworked it and did not consider or mention D.'s views in the slightest. When D. heard this, he said jokingly:

"Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver; and for how much did you sell Russia?" He answered laughingly, "My brother for 30,000 kúpterlings, since my project was reworked by S." I do not believe that Russian noblemen would have committed such a meanness, with the exception perhaps of S., who was generally believed to have many bad qualities, especially thanks to his connections with Perez.

Explanation II. On the slaughterhouses, on kosher and trefa in general; on the influence of the kosher on the life of the population; on the levies on kosher meat as well as on the aims of the kosher and the support of the kosher by the Russian laws.

In all towns and places with a Jewish population, the Jews build slaughterhouses on their own account and try to take over the meat trade. In a large part of the towns of the western governorate there are no but Jewish butchers, and only meat unfit for kosher is sold to the Christians.

It should be noted that they are driven to do this both by the desire to exploit the local population and by other reasons. Having its own slaughterhouse is essential for the Kahal to carry out the levies on kosher meat in order to achieve national Jewish administrative and economic goals, with which we will become familiar later. Before that, however, we consider it necessary to say a few words about the kosher itself.

It is well known that Jews do not eat meat that has not been prepared by a shochet (i.e. a special Jewish shepherd who knows the Talmud's regulations on the slaughter of livestock and birds), nor do they consume meat that comes from animals that are forbidden as food by the Talmud's regulations on kosher and trefa.

Of the 86 paragraphs on shechita and trefa, contained in "Jore dea", the second part of the ritual work Shulchan aruch,

we consider it necessary to mention some of them here.

According to No. 10 and 11 of the 18th paragraph concerning the regulations on slaughtering, the knife used for the slaughtering of permitted livestock must be free of the slightest nick; if this is not the case, the livestock killed with such a knife is regarded as trefa, i.e. as food unsuitable for the Jews. Therefore, the shochet is only allowed to slaughter when the knife is ground completely smooth and also does not have the slightest, barely perceptible nicks. However, in order for livestock slaughtered in this way to be declared kosher, it is still necessary for the knife to be in exactly the same condition after slaughter, i.e. completely unharmed.

No. 2 of the 6th paragraph reads as follows: "Livestock may be slaughtered with a tooth still in the chin from an animal, as well as with the nail of a hand that has been severed from the trunk, as long as both do not show any kind of cleft."

However strange these two provisions may seem, the following No. 7 of the 18th paragraph, which we reproduce in literal translation, is even more interesting because of its almost unbelievable provisions:

"If the tip of a knife is smooth, but not sharp, it may be used for shechitaing, and shechitaing done in this way is considered to be in accordance with the regulations, it may last as long as it likes, even a whole day" (due to bluntness of the knife!)

We cannot refrain from remarking that, in spite of these strange provisions of the law, the slaughter is always performed with sharp knives and carried out with extreme rapidity. As for the preparation for the slaughter, however, it presents a sad picture indeed. The cattle are turned over until they lie so immobile that the shochet, after removing the hair from the place on the neck where the knife is to enter, can perform the slaughter in such a way that the cattle cannot harm the knife by moving, which would turn the meat into trefa. This is one side of the kosher, which only burdens the conscience of the Jews, and in no way the one trefa.

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\* Brafmann is completely honest! D. H.

Christians, for they do not care whether the cattle were slaughtered with a razor, dagger or similar instrument, if only the meat is healthy. Now, however, let us turn to the side of the kosher which is exclusively harmful to Christians. When the cattle have been killed according to all the regulations concerning the tools and the slaughter, the shochet proceeds to inspect the inner parts of the animal. \*) This process is carried out by the shochet from the standpoint of Talmudic veterinary science, and if the livestock is found not to be healthy, the meat is declared trefa and comes to be sold to the Christians. The diseases that make animal flesh impossible as food for Jews are the following<sup>14)</sup>:

1. Derasa, 2. Nekuba, 3. Chasera, 4. Netula, 5. Kerua, 6. Nesula, 7.

Pesuka, 8. Schebura.

Derasa, i.e. cattle killed by neck cut.

Necuba, i.e. the opening that the shochet finds in the braincase or the throat or the lungs or the urinary bladder or the heart, etc.

Chasera, i.e. livestock with a congenital defect in the lungs.

Netula, i.e. livestock lacking either a jaw or kidneys.

Kerua, i.e. stomach injury.

Nefula, i.e. cattle that have suffered an injury from a fall. Pesuka is cattle with a broken back.

Shebura is the name given to cattle in which the greater part of the vertebrae is broken.

These eight points are the basis for the science of trefa. It is clear that the cause of trefa in similar cases is nothing other than a diseased condition of the slaughtered cattle. Here we cannot refrain from remarking that the Jews do not without reason feel an aversion to the food of the Christians; for the trefa which the latter buy from the Jews is often nothing but meat

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\* As a slaughterer, the slaughterer is called Shochet, and the act of slaughtering is called Shechitah. As a supervisor he is called Bedok, the act of supervising Bedikan. The whole institution goes back to the belief in magic: divination from entrails. Kosher means suitable, Trefa unsuitable for Jewish use. D. H.

of fallen animals. \*)

It seems ridiculous, of course, to count the Kosher, seen from this side, among the religious Jewish views; thanks to the great ignorance that prevails everywhere in Europe among Christians about Judaism, the Kosher has hitherto been able everywhere to hide behind the religious views of the Jews and to enjoy the right of freedom of belief. That is why the sale of meat of unhealthy cattle to the Christians is permitted to the Jews, since according to the Law of Moses it is said: "To eat the flesh of fallen cattle is forbidden to you, but to give the same for food to a stranger who dwells among you, or to sell the same to an unbeliever, is permitted to you." (2nd Book of Moses, chapter 14, verse 21.)\*\*)

In addition to the regulations on slaughtering and inspection of the intestines, which we have mentioned so far, the kosher ordinance also includes a number of rules, such as the removal of blood, tendons, etc. The removal of tendons requires special knowledge and the person entrusted with this task is called a "menakker". The removal of tendons requires special knowledge, and the person entrusted with this is called a "Menakker"\*\*\*)

To this brief survey of the pernicious influences of the Kosher on the lives of Jews and Christians, it should be noted, however, that the existence of the Kosher on such a vast scale among the Jews of Russia is not due to fanaticism, but rather to close control on the part of the agents of the Kahal and to other subtleties. By them the Kahal subjects every pound of meat used by the local Jewish inhabitants to his control and subjects them to the strict measures which the Kahal always uses against the opponents of Kosher.

In this way, the kosher is forced upon the masses more by fear of punishment than by fanaticism.

\* Most of the prohibitions are apparently rooted in the deepest magical beliefs. A large part of the Trefa meat is therefore impeccable. But some of it is undoubtedly trefa because the cattle are diseased - tuberculosis, anthrax, and so on.  
D. H.

\*\* It may well be assumed that the Talmud also contains completely opposite views.  
D. H.

\*\*\* If there is no certified menakker in the place, the hindquarters are not eaten! D. H.

The Kahal's zeal for the Kosher is easily explained. \*) Since the Kahal is an institution or power founded in the Talmud, it goes without saying that the observance of the Kosher, which more than any other peculiarity of Jewish life seals the Jews off from the world and forms the best bulwark for the ideas of the Talmud, must be for him one of the most essential regulations. This also explains the sharpness of the measures which the Kahal uses to implement the Kosher. The Kahal knows from experience that not all Jews who observe the Kosher rules at home remain faithful to them even when they are not under the Kahal's control. Familiar with this trait of the Jews, the Kahal is convinced that if he left the observance of Kosher to the conscience of the individual, in not too long time there would be found in every society such Jews who, when purchasing meat, would forget all the regulations and purchase that meat which is healthiest, tastiest and cheapest. \*\*) But since it is precisely these qualities that distinguish trefa from kosher, it would soon gain the upper hand, and the existence of kosher would no longer be of long duration. In accordance with this conviction, and the great importance of the Kosher for Judaism, the Kahal in Russia, in the country where the headquarters of the Talmud is located, cannot leave the observance of the Kosher to the conscience of the individual Jew. To rely on conscience and to support the observance of the Kosher by preaching would be a very hopeless affair. The Kosher would then resemble a large building made of feet of clay. Now it is explicable why the Kahal builds everywhere, at his own expense, sheepfolds, why he supervises the meat trade by a multitude of his officials. Hence the strange rites of the meat trade, which are described in 46 regulations of the Kahal and listed in this book under the following numbers: 5, 8, 9,

\*This beam of light on the back side of the moon is extremely important. Front side is the religious explanation, back side the financing of the Kahal. D. H.

\*\* This seems to contradict what was said above (p. 20 f): Only a part of the trefa meat is bad, a large part is in itself blameless. Nevertheless, it is sold cheaper than the kosher meat, which is subject to levies to the Kahal. D. H.



10, 11, 13, 14, 32, 36, 60, 61, 80, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 114, 122, 142, 152, 157, 160, 161, 164, 173, 176, 178, 184, 217, 226, 249, 251, 257-59, 265, 269-72, 275, 278.

The main aim of the Kosher regulations, then, as we have seen, is to maintain the mainstay of the Kahal. If, however, we add here that the levies from the Kosher also constitute capital in the hands of the Kahal, which is used not only to maintain the officials working for the Kosher, but also for other purposes of the Kahal, it is not difficult to appreciate how much the Kosher is harmful not only to the Jews, but also to the Christians living among the Jews.

After what has been said, the question naturally arises as to what the Russian government thinks about the kosher and what the civil laws say about it. The answer to this question, however, is: the Kosher is permitted by virtue of Russian laws and is managed through close observation on the part of the Kahal and observance by the Jewish population. The Kahal does not trust his own powers to carry out the great work and to maintain the Kosher in the main Talmudist camp. He must also beware of cases in which those punished by the Kahal might seek protection from the civil laws. But these are things from which one can by no means expect favourable consequences for the synagogue. Therefore, the Kahal endeavoured to bring the ordinance on the Kosher under the protection of the (Russian) laws and to place it under their direction. The achievement of this goal, as one can imagine, did not cost too much effort. It was only a question of making it clear to the government that the levies on kosher meat could serve quite well as a means of collecting taxes from the Jewish population. This "little quibble" on the part of Talmudic politics earned the kosher a place in the law books of Russia.

The Kahal caused the Russian laws to become as follows.

about him:

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\* Little quibble?! No, it is a brilliant move by ghetto Jewry, which can only fight with weapons of reasoning power. It would be quite unscientific, indeed unjust, to be indignant about it. D. H.

"The monetary levy which has always been handled in Jewish society under the name of the district levy is intended to be used for Jewish interests, such as: to facilitate the payment of taxes and duties on the part of the Jews to the government, etc.; these sums are also to be used for the maintenance and foundation of Jewish schools.

Subject to the "circle levy" are: slaughter of livestock for kosher (of each animal); killing of poultry (of each bird); sale of kosher meat (of each pound); fines and other penalties imposed for non-compliance with the circle levy regulations.

Only those utensils may be used for shechita which are designated by the shepherd as suitable for kosher with a confirmation from the rabbi. The municipal and the provincial police are obliged to give every shepherd the legal assistance he desires and to support him in every way for the smooth collection of the district taxes on the part of the Jews.

And so it comes about that in Russia the kosher became obligatory for the Jew not only according to the Talmud but also according to the civil laws, and that not only the Kahal but also the local police are concerned with its implementation. Consequently, the Kosher - the bulwark of the Talmud - has no need to fear either an external or an internal enemy. However, to the question of how far the support of the Kosher has been useful to the government in financial terms, we recommend seeking the answer in the following figures, which represent the amounts owed by the Jews to the tax in Vilna's governorate. The debts here amounted to 293,868.36 rbl. and in the Minsk governorate 341,097.15 rbl.<sup>15)</sup>

Let us now ask ourselves what view the above

The Russian laws make it the duty of the local police to see that the Talmudic regulations are strictly observed, to carry out the kosher, which separates the Jews from the rest of the world more than any other special feature, and to supervise the collection of taxes for the benefit of the coffers of the Kahal. And yet the coffers are only used to combat the Russian laws.

and government are related, which is documentarily proven by our first section and the precepts of the Kahal.

Explanation III: The Jewish brotherhoods, their relationship to the Kahal and the influence of the Jewish brotherhoods on the Jewish and Christian communities.

There is no Jewish association, either within the borders of our empire or beyond the border, in which there are not some brotherhood people, and there is also almost no Jew who would not be considered a member of a brotherhood.

The influence of these brotherhoods on the social and individual mores of the Jews in moral and material respects, and consequently on the social life of the countries in which the Jewish population is numerous, is very great. The brotherhoods of the Jews are, so to speak, the arteries, while the heart would be the Kahal. The briefest overview of this led us to compile a rather extensive book, which could not find a place among these sections and had to be published separately by us.<sup>16)</sup>

Here we will only note in passing that the local brotherhoods are divided as follows: 1. the Talmudically learned, 2. the charitable, 3. the artisanal and 4. the religious. The individual aims of the brotherhoods are always closely related to and in fullest harmony with the ideas of the Talmud, which they all serve, and are subordinate to the views of the Kahal, on which their existence depends.

Each brotherhood has its representatives, its teachers, and often its houses of prayer. In a word, each brotherhood is its own little Kahal, and the representatives of all brotherhoods, who mostly come from the educated circles, form the legion of faithful fighters under the national Talmudic flag, which is always ready to help the Kahal. \*)

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\* It is very regrettable that Brafmann is so brief here. His book is nowhere to be found. One must conclude from his remarks that the Chebra or Chevra (brotherhood) serves, among other things, to promote international cooperation.

The relationships among the fraternities are clarified in the following acts: nos. 5, 7, 14, 38, 48, 59, 79, 80, 82, 85, 161, 178, 194, 211, 242, 243, 254, 274, 275 and 277.

Explanation IV: The ceremony of "Aliyah" (reading the five books of Moses during communal prayer), in which the youths divide themselves into patriarchs and planners.

This ceremony, introduced by Ezra<sup>17)</sup>, indeed, according to others, by Moses himself,<sup>18)</sup> consists in reading the five books of Moses and the prophets at the time of common prayer.<sup>19)</sup>

The reading aloud does not take place daily, but on Thursdays and Saturdays. A violation of the times of reading aloud is threatened by Ezra with the following words: "Whoever does not occupy himself with reading the laws within five days will be attacked by the enemies."<sup>20)</sup> Furthermore, the reading of the books of Moses and the prophets also became customary on holidays, at the time of the new moon and during Lent. The observance of this custom is imposed by the synagogue on all Jews without exception. It is obligatory for both the Cohen (priest) and the Levi (his assistant), as well as for the Israel (layman).<sup>21)</sup> The reading is done from a Torah (Five Books of Moses) scroll, which, written on parchment according to certain regulations of the Talmud, is a sanctuary of the synagogue.

The procedure of this ceremony is as follows: After finishing the prayer "Shemone Esre" someone takes the parchment scroll from the cupboard and hands it to the cantor.

of the Jewish communities (back page). The Jewish Encyclopaedia's statement that today's Jewish societies (B'ne Brith etc.) emerged from the Chebras is correct. So they were extremely important for the backside existence. They are also important economically, as the guilds can destroy competitors and secure a monopoly through close cohesion - sometimes by undercutting. They give practical meaning to the Chasaka. D. H.

After receiving the "Torah" with a reverent bow, he says a short prayer and goes to the platform, where the people surround him and press against the Torah scroll. The "Segan" or "Habbai" (i.e. the elder, and the "Shammash" (servant) meet him on the platform. After placing the Torah scroll on the table, the cantor, at the command of the Habbai, calls aloud the name of the person deemed worthy to read first.

At this call, the summoned person rises and goes to the platform. Bending over the Torah, the invited person says the following prayer aloud: "Bless the blessed Yahweh! Blessed be Yahweh from everlasting to everlasting! Blessed are You, Yahweh, Ruler of the Worlds, Who chose us from all peoples and gave us our laws. Blessed are You, Yahweh, the Lawgiver." The people respond "Amen" and the reading begins. When the reading is finished, the one invited again speaks aloud: "Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, Ruler of the worlds, Who gave us true laws. Praise be to You, Yahweh, who gave us laws."

This is the ceremony of the "Aliyah". The person invited to read aloud received the "Aliyah", i.e. he was worthy to climb the mountain of Sinai, which is symbolised by the platform in the house of prayer, and was allowed to read the law, the gift of God.

### On the rights of the granting of "Aliyah".

The first aliyah belongs to the Cohen (descendant of Aaron), the second to the Levite and the rest to the people. In the absence of the Cohen, the Levite takes the first aliyah, but in the absence of the Levite, the Cohen takes the first two aliyahs. This right expresses the supremacy of the priesthood. In the absence of the Cohen and the Levite, however, their aliyahs are taken by non-clerical persons who are present at the prayer.

\*Habbai=theElder-also called the Starost-in a house of prayer

\*\*The text is usually read by a learned reader - Baal-Kore - and the prayer is said by the one designated to make aliyah. D. H.

When distributing aliyahs to the people, the order is: 1. Nasi (prince), 2. talmid chacham (scholar), 3. parnes (representative of the congregation); these take the highest aliyahs, which include the "shelichh and "shishshim" (the third and sixth), the rest remain for distribution. 22) In this way, aliyah, by dividing the praying into higher and lower, not infrequently leads to clashes. One considers it a personal insult that he is not invited to the Torah, the other, on the other hand, wants to have him invited not as the third but as the fourth, and at the holiest ceremony the synagogue gives the impression of a public street square. It is indispensable to note here that the synagogue has divided the ceremony we have described into pieces for the higher and the lower: "mipne darke shalom", i.e. to appease all classes; but the practical result is the opposite.

Explanation V. The power of the Kaha l in its area; its regulations on the granting of settlement permits in the same; the sale of "Chasaka" and "Maar uphia" to Jewish privileged people, i.e. the sale of the right to occupy movable property of the nit Jews and the exploitation of the property of the nit Jews. I.e. the sale of the right to occupy the movable property of the Jews and the exploitation of this property and its owners; of the Ch erem and the Egg in the Ju d e s .

Schiller's saying "The Jews form a state within a state", with which he wanted to give a picture of Jewish life in Egypt 3,600 years ago, is also applied by many to the present; but since a state without a country is unthinkable, the saying has hitherto been considered more a poetic expression than a historical truth. \*) With this book, however, which for the first time reveals the territory of the Jewish Kaha l, which it subjugated and continues to subjugate, the saying takes on greater significance and turns from a problem into an axiom. With the territory of the Jewish

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\* Mistake! Fichte already recognised the situation quite precisely and warned urgently.

D. H.

The rights of the Kahal over the "Cheskat Jischub", i.e. the "Cheskat Jischub", make us aware of the existence of the Second Empire.

h. the power of the Kahal over his territory and its population in his domain, known

According to the rules of the "Cheskat Yishub"\*) the power of the Kahal extends far beyond the boundaries of any private society. The land and property of the non-Jewish inhabitants of the area appear here as a kind of free territory,<sup>24)</sup> which form, as it were, a fiscal possession of the Kahal, which he partially sells to his Jewish inhabitants, or, more correctly, they are, as it were, a free lake in which only the Jew who has acquired a special right to do so may set his nets. On the basis of the Cheskat Yishub, every Jew, whether he wants to open a trade or practise a craft, will invoke civil rights in vain. Under the rule of the Kahal, these are useless or of importance only as a matter of form, but they never have the force to make it possible to circumvent a prior enquiry to the Kahal in cases such as those mentioned above.

An Explanation of the Shulchan Aruch, Choshen ha-Mishpat, comments on this, after considering the pros and cons, as follows: "Especially at the present time, when we live under the domination of foreign peoples, and when, with the increase of the Jewish population, interference by them is possible, every Jew who wants to settle makes himself a persecutor of the resident tribesmen." On the basis of this fact, the Kahal is allowed to close the doors to new settlers. To carry out such measures, he is entitled to any means, even the support of the local authorities. In some places, it has become customary to legalise this right of the Kahal through the Cherem, and in these places the refusal to settle is based on the Cherem (ban, see below) and not on laws.

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\* Officially (front side!), Cheskat Yishub is the entirety of the Jewish community's real estate. The "back side", of the moon is illuminated by Brafmann in the following. The correctness of Brafmann's statements is of course disputed by rabbis etc., but the power of the facts, i.e. the economic effect of this ingenious organisation on the non-Jews, speaks for Brafmann. The importance of the brotherhoods for the realisation of the theoretical right of ownership of the Chasaka has already been pointed out. D. H.

Travelling merchants cannot be forbidden by the local inhabitants to trade in their town, but no one may choose a permanent place to trade without the permission of the Kahal, with the exception of the Talmid Chacham (scholar), who may settle and trade wherever he pleases.

Regarding the non-Jewish population of his area as fish of the lake, as it were, the Kahal sells parts of this strange property to the Jews on very astonishing terms.

To those who are not familiar with the secrets of the Kahal, the sale mentioned here may seem incomprehensible. Here is the following example: On the basis of his rights, the Kahal sells the house to the Jew N., which according to civil law is the undisputed property of the non-Jew M., without the knowledge and consent of the latter. What advantage does N. have here? What did he buy for the money paid to the Kahal?

By legalising the purchase contract with the Kahal, the Jew N. received the "Chasaka" (right of possession) over the property of the Christian M., by virtue of which he was the only one to acquire the right to try to seize this house without competition, as explicitly mentioned in the purchase contract: "by whatever means".<sup>25</sup> Until the final seizure of ownership, only N. has the right to rent the house, to open a shop there or to lend money to the landlord and other residents of this house, etc.

However, it also happens that the Kahal sells a person without immovable property to a Jew for exploitation. Here are the words of the law on the strange right of "Maaruphia" (Shulchan aruch, Choshen ha-Mishpat, § 156, 5): "If a person (i.e. Jew) owns a non-Jew for exploitation, in some places the other Jews are forbidden to associate with that person and disturb the exploiter. In other places, everyone is allowed to have relations with the person in question."

\* See also p. 48: Of the Duties of the Members of the Kahal and the Bet Din. Section d.

\*\* The Jews alone are really human beings, the non-Jews only apparently so. It is precisely on this point that the Talmud gives the most diverse views imaginable. D. H.



to lend him money, to trade with him, to make him favourable to himself, and to entice him away from that one (the first Jew); for the property of the gentile is like ownerless property, and he who first seizes it has a right to it."

These are the views of the Talmudic legislation on the law of the "Cheskat Yishub" on the basis of which the documents set out in this book under the following numbers are compiled: 22, 23, 26, (27), (40), 50, 51, 77, 78, 87, 98 to 103, 105, 109, 110, 115, 177, 186, 189, 195, 196, 202, 205, 216, 261, 266, 267.

We recommend the attentive reader to study these interesting documents. Undoubtedly, the power of the Kahal will now appear to the reader of these documents as formidable as it is in fact. The Kahal has more than eighteen centuries of experience behind him; consequently, his successes are not surprising. The Kahal only ever directs its attacks against a Christian person. The success of this system is shown, among other things, by figures according to which, for example, in the cities of the north-western district, 73% of all immovable property already belongs to Jews. In the case of attacks on individuals, the prospect of success is great and the risk very small. Even if a Jew were to be careless in the exercise of Maaruphia or Chasaka and had to defend himself in court, there would still be no danger for him, since the Kahal, apart from the much-discussed talisman of money, can also provide Jewish witnesses or judges, which will be discussed in the second part of our book.

Thus it will be understandable to the reader that the Kahal has no other thing he has to do is to follow the rules of Cheskat Jischub exactly.

However, it would be wrong to assume that the Kahal, when imposing levies and collections, limits itself only to the rights guaranteed to it by the civil laws. At the end of File No. 57, which speaks of the introduction of a levy on the part of commerce in Minsk, "on the basis on which a similar levy was introduced in Shklov," the Kahal concludes as follows: "Accordingly, we resolve to approve the discussed

levy even against the will of the governor." The power of the Kahal thus knows no bounds. <sup>26)</sup>

We think it advisable at this point to acquaint the reader with the form of the "Cherem" (ban) and to speak of the Jewish oath, both of which always go hand in hand among the Jews. \*)

Apart from the cherem, there is also the "nidui" or "shammata", i.e. a smaller cherem. About the difference between these two we read the following in the Jewish laws:

Question: Are the cherem and the shammata one and the same? - Answer: Shammata is the expulsion from a society by vote. If the expelled person does not submit within thirty days, a cherem is written to him and he is considered exiled from Judaism altogether. A cherem declaration is written as follows:

From N. N. (members of the Kahal), the Sages, the representatives of the Yeshivot (higher schools of Talmud) and the Elders, greetings! We inform you that N. N. is in possession of money belonging to M.; but N. does not fulfil our order to return this money, or N. does not submit to the punishment fixed by us for this offence, and the banishment of thirty days imposed on him for this has not converted him. Therefore we have cast the cherem upon him, and we ask you: charge him also with the cherem daily, and declare publicly that his bread is the bread of a gentile, that his wine is impure, that his vegetables are corrupt, that his books are magic books; cut off his cit<sup>\*\*</sup>). Rip off his mezuzah; <sup>\*\*\*</sup>) You may neither

\* The reader should first read Franzos' account of the cherem again! D. H.

\*\* The zizit are fringes made of white cotton threads that are attached to both the coat - Arba Canphot - as found on the prayer shawl - Tallit - that covers the head and falls over both shoulders. The number of zizis on each garment is four. D. H.

\*\*\* Mezuzah is a strip of parchment stuck in a box or tube and fastened to the right post of the house at the entrance or kept in a hole in the wall. On the parchment is written the saying Mos. 6, 4-9 and 11, 13-20 ("And write them on the posts of your house!"). Yahweh protects the house - that is the power of this magic amulet. It is quite primitive fetish service. D. H.

You must not eat or drink with him; you must not circumcise his son, you must not teach his children the laws, you must not bury his dead, you must not admit him to brotherhoods, charitable or otherwise. You must cleanse the vessel from which he drinks, and in general relate to him as to a "nochri" (a gentile).

#### Form of the cherem.

By the power of God and His holy Word, we destroy, curse, execrate and mark out in the name of God, the Kahal and the holy covenant, in the name of the 613 laws of God, interpreted in the holy doctrine, with the cherem with which Joshua ben Nun cursed the city of Jericho; with the curse with which Elisha banished the boys who mocked him and confronted his servant Gehazi, with the shammata applied by the great assembly of the rabbis of Judah the son of Ezekiel, with all the cherem, imprecations, curses, expulsions and destructions ever used from the time of Moses to this day, in the name of God Akatriel, God of hosts, in the name of Michael the archangel, the great leader, in the name of Metatron, who bears the name of his god, in the name of Sandalphon, who weaves the wreaths for his god, in the name of God, which consists of 42 letters, and so on.: Cursed be he by the God of Israel. Cursed be he by the holy and mighty name of God spoken by the priest on the Day of Atonement. Cursed be he by higher power. Cursed be he by the great Michael, by Metatron, by the God of hosts. If he is born in the month of Nisan, let him be cursed by the archangel Uriel, the ruler of that month, and so on. Let him be accursed through all the seven heavens. Let him be cursed by the mouth of the great and mighty God. The Creator destroy and banish him, God the Redeemer. Let the wrath of God be poured out upon him. Let the devils welcome him. Let his way be full of dangers. Misfortune and sorrow shall terrify him. God will not forgive him. On the contrary, the wrath of God shall be upon him, and all the curses of the law shall be fulfilled upon him. - But you who honour your God, live, all of you!

## Prayer after declaration of the Cherem.

"He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, and the prophets, may He send His blessing upon all of us, with the exception of those who disregard this Cherem. May God, by His grace, protect and preserve them from harm, may He bless the work of their hands, and may He redeem them one day with all their Israelite brethren; His will be done, Amen."<sup>27)</sup>

## Of the Oath of the Jews.

The Talmud divides the oaths as follows: 1. shebua-deoraita, i.e. the oath based on Mosaic laws; 2. shebua-heset, i.e. oath based on Talmudic regulations; 3. sham-cherem, i.e. interrogation of the accused under the cherem (threat of banishment in the case of an untrue statement).

It should be noted that the Jews hold an oath imposed on them by a Jewish judge in very high esteem; especially, before oaths of the first two categories their respect and fear is almost unlimited.

The Jews' general fear of the oath is such, that a person who has once been sworn in falls low in the eyes of society; after such an act he usually loses confidence and is regarded as a lost man. In this way it is explicable that the Jew would rather suffer loss than take an oath imposed by the Bet Din. The high esteem in which the oath is held by the Jews, however, is limited only to oaths imposed by Jewish judges. The Talmud does not consider non-Jewish laws and customs to be binding on the Jew; therefore, Jews are extremely lax at civil court hearings, and an oath to be taken there is considered an empty formality.

The following unabridged excerpt from Maimonides describes the external circumstances of an oath\*\*).

"We have heard that there are persons in your city who have given

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\* This can only apply to judicial oaths; for as a civil servant, voter, in short in community life - as the protocols show - the Jew must often enough take oaths. D. H.  
\*\* This is an Eid taking place within the Jewish community, hence the gravity of the event. D. H.

take an oath, and that you also have people among you who take an oath and claim to have done it honestly. These people do not do well, for they are preparing their own downfall. The punishment for a lying oath is very severe. If you want to swear someone in, point out to him the curses of the Torah and bring a stretcher that is used for corpses, cover it with a blanket, bring horns as they are used and blown at the New Year, bring the little children from the schools, bring blown bubbles and throw them in front of the stretcher; and the Bet Din must tell him that tomorrow he will be thrown away in the same way as these bubbles; bring cocks, light candles, lay earth on the ground and put him on it, blow the horns and share with him: 'Hear, N., if you take a lying oath, all the curses of the law will fall on you'. Then read to him the formula of the Cherem, and when one blows the horns, all those present and the children say, Amen."

Explanation VI. Of the holiday Rosh Hashanah (New Year) \*) and the sittle of blowing the horn.

"Rosh Hashanah" or New Year's Day is celebrated by the Jews to this day on the first day of the month of Tishri (in the autumn in the days of September) as set out in the fourth book of Moses. 28)

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\*The Jewish months are:

Start between					
Tischri	6 IX.	-5.X.	Nisan	13 III.	-11.IV.
Marcheswan	6. X.	-4.XI.	Ijjar	12. IV.	-11.V.
Kislew	5. XI.	-2.XII.	Siwan	12. V.	-9.VI.
Tebet	4. XII.	-2I.	Tammuz	10. VI.	-9.VI.
We-Ador	3. III.	-13.III.	Elul	8. VIII.	-5.IX.
(leap month)					

The determination of the months and festivals, in short the annual calendar, was the secret of the priests in Jerusalem. The religious year began with the 1st of Nisan, the civil year with the 1st of Tishri. Rosh Hashanah is therefore the civil Jewish New Year's Day. D. H. 1. II. -2.III. Etil 8. VIII. -5.IX.

Although this holiday has completely changed its original external and internal character since the destruction of Jerusalem, its influence on the life of the people and its importance for the Jews has remained the same, even increasing in scope. At the time of the existence of the Temple in Jerusalem, the day of Rosh Hashanah was a day of great joy for all Israel.

At the beginning of a new year, the Jews always hoped for the word of Yahweh, who was invisible but apparently still among them, and in this expectation the High Priest and the people said goodbye to the old year with its troubles and disappointments during the sacrifice and welcomed the new one. With this significance, it is understandable that the New Year was a day of inward rejoicing and spiritual upliftment for the Jews. Now, however, Rosh Hashanah is a day of mourning and weeping. The reasons for this are obvious. A people that has lost its independence is comparable to a sick person.

In such a situation, it is natural for a person or a people to give themselves completely over to the hope that inspires them. Hope tells him that all is not yet lost; even if the whole world seems to have conspired against him, help can be expected from wherever his desperate eyes are directed. In this exalted state, the religious feeling of a people is mixed with its patriotism. At this moment, the idea of rebuilding the decayed empire and regaining freedom takes first place within the religious worldview of the people. At such times, a vast literature of patriotic content often emerges, and a host of folk songs and tales seek to support the idea. However, only the Jews succeeded in canonising the prayers and introducing a popular service. According to the Law of Moses, a Yahweh service may not take place outside the walls of the Temple and Jerusalem. This explains why, after the destruction of the Temple, the people's service fell into disrepair and a great gap appeared in Israel's religious life. This circumstance was cleverly exploited by the leaders of the Jewish people at that time. In place of the holiday sacrifices, without which a holiday loses its meaning, they temporarily instituted the so-called Musaf, which consisted of singing patriotic songs that depicted in heart-rending images the

destruction of the empire. Through this skilful tactic, the Prophet's word came true: "And your holidays I will turn into days of mourning". Now, however, the musaf of Rosh Hashanah, i.e. the prayer that gives the day its meaning and itself also has a patriotic, encouraging character, is further supported by the Talmudic use of the tekiat shofar - the blowing of the horn.)

Contrary to the opinions of Kabbalists and Talmudists who want to derive this custom, whether from the words of Moses or based on the Talmud, the custom is nothing more than the ending of a patriotic song with which the Jews, according to their system, want to announce the New Year's Day and the beginning of the ten-day general penance and purification.

Hereafter it will be understandable to the reader why the Talmud endeavoured to make this custom obligatory for all Jews, and why the Kahal, with his regulation No. 30, endeavoured to tighten his control over the houses of prayer from New Year's Day during the ten days of atonement.

Explanation VII: Of the synagogue or "school" courtyard and the public facilities and buildings of which it is composed.

Every Jewish community has a public institution which is built and maintained by the Kahal from the community's funds. Such a building is always large and is located near the synagogue or, more correctly, in its courtyard. A "synagogue courtyard" or "school" is a not very large place in a village or town with a Jewish population, situated in the so-called Jewish quarter, on which the following buildings stand.

\* Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon (Tractate on the Jewish Fast) explains the blowing of the horn as an outward sign of repentance, according to IV. Of course, in this passage the blowing of the horn means the sign of battle (according to Kirchner). Perhaps Brahmans is right! D. H.

1. Bet Hakneset (main synagogue), 2. Bet Hammidrash (prayer house and school), 3. Bet Hamikva (common bathhouse with dome), 4. Cheder Hakahal (house of the Kahal), 5. Bet Din (Talmud courtroom), 6. Hekdesh (house for beggars), etc.

Although the synagogue seems to occupy the first place, it only serves the Jews as a house of prayer on the major holidays. At other times, however, the Bet Hammidrash is mainly used, but it also has other meanings. It is the centre for the elaboration and study of Talmudic sciences. In the mornings and evenings, various brotherhoods gather there to hear the wisdom of the Talmud from the mouth of their teacher. In addition, the most important questions of public life are discussed in this building, which also houses the libraries.\*)

Around this centre of buildings are often grouped a lot of smaller buildings, which contain a number of different schools, where Jews of all ages and at all times study the wisdom of the Talmud, and where every beggar or vagrant finds a home for an unlimited time. Moreover, in the schoolyard there is always a house of the Kahal, with whose spirit and work this book will acquaint us. The whole complex of buildings constitutes the J u d i s c h e R e p u b l i c with all its institutions, administrative, judicial, educational, etc.

\* Franzos ("Die Gezwungenen" in "Vom Don zur Donau") sketches the following account of a Hasidic Bet Hammidrash, which thus stands t i e f compared to the prayer houses of the non-Hasidic Jews:

"A large, neglected room in which dirty folios lie on the tables and boys, men and old people sit on the benches, who could not do with greater cleanliness. The venerable company either sway back and forth, half reading aloud in the folios, with the regularity of a perpendicular, or they discuss things of that world in a raucous debate, or they devote themselves, for which the opportunity often enough presents itself, to a thing of this world, to brandy. These are breeding grounds of idleness, in which a truly learned man is as often to be found as a white raven, just as Jewish scholars are not to be found among the Hasidim in general. But three quarters of all Eastern Jews are Hasidim, and for the time around 1800, when the minutes of the sessions were written, Franzos' description should fit (as it still does today!). D. H.



## Explanation VIII. From the "Bet Din" (Jewish Court) .

A Bet Din exists in every Jewish community without exception, and by meeting all the requirements of Jewish life and activity, it supersedes them all other civil courts and takes the place of the old Jewish synhedrion (civil and criminal court).

It should be noted, however, that the Bet Din did not come into being to satisfy Jewish ambition in the communities; having its own justice is a necessity based on the teachings of the Talmud.)

To reinforce this, let us cite a few paragraphs from the Choshen ha Mishpat of the Shulchan aruch.

"It is forbidden for the Jew to be judged by non-Jewish courts. This prohibition does not lose its validity even if it is a matter of questions in which Talmudic jurisdiction coincides with civil jurisdiction, and if, for example, both parties should wish to present their case to a non-Jewish judge. A villain who transgresses this prohibition! The Bet Din is entitled to impose a minor or major ban on such a person, and to release him from it only after he has freed his opponent from a non-Jewish court.<sup>29)</sup> He who takes the side of the apostate is also liable to this punishment, as is he who should use a gentile power to bring a Jew under the power of the Bet Din, unless this is done in agreement with the Bet Din."

The scope of the Bet Din for the present is as follows determined:

"In the present day, the Bet Din is responsible for questions of loans and debts, brotherhoods, wills and donations,

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\* Does not this objective just view touch exceedingly sympathetically? A vindictive forger would have used the opportunity to incite. But B. explains the circumstances quite objectively. Orthodox Judaism without Bet Din is unthinkable - and is just as unthinkable without Kahal, without community organisation, i.e. without an independently administered soviet republic. B.'s critics should have taken such facts into account. But do they strive for clarification at all? D. H.

the complaints about the harm or loss suffered, etc. The Bet Din is also responsible for violations of other people's livestock, theft and robbery, whereby the Bet Din only has to ascertain the value of the stolen objects from the thieves (i.e. without imposing a penalty). For this, however, the Bet Din may impose the nidui as long as the accused is not submissive.

30) How is a defendant to be summoned to court? The Bet Din informs the accused by messenger that he must appear in court at a certain hour. If the summoned person does not appear, the summons is repeated three times, and if he still does not appear, he is put under a minor ban. However, this only happens if the defendant does not live in the same town. If this is the case, he is summoned only once. If the messenger is insulted, he shall, at his request, be charged with putting the insulter under the simple or even the great ban.

Hereafter, we hope, the provisions of the Bet Din will be perfectly comprehensible to the reader, and he will have no difficulty in understanding what is stated in the following numbers: Nos. 23, 24, 26, 51, 78, 102, 118, 120, 123, 132, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 155, etc.

However, it would not be correct to assume that all matters among the Jews are arbitrated by the Bet Din. In legal cases, where the rules of the Bet Din run counter to all practical reason, the decision is reached by way of compromise, in which, however, servants of the Bet Din sometimes take part. This is rarely the case, however; for it is usually people with experience in public life who are taken in such cases, and not the members of a Bet Din who are immersed in the Talmud.

The disputes between the Jews, but especially the search for bills of exchange, promissory notes or hidden documents, are for the most part nothing more than means of eliminating the opponents of the Bet Din or the Kahal. Because the Talmud allows the use of civil courts for its own purposes, they often become the Talmudists' unwilling tools. In the event that the person sentenced by the Bet Din is not satisfied with the decision, the Bet Din or Kahal requires a blank signature from each of the parties before the trial. After the decision (by the Russian court), the Bet Din is to be given

The participants are free to fill in whatever they like on the blank forms.

In order to prove that the power of the Bet Din still exists today, we bring below a translation from the Hebrew which, dating from 1869, was translated by the Rabbi of Vilna.

"It is hereby certified that Urash Diment has notified Jossel Paz that he is to appear for the purpose of a reconnaissance, and that the expenses which Diment has paid for it are also to be collected from him; likewise D. has notified him that he will receive an invoice for this, and that he is not to present himself with Diment to a secular court. This was shown to us by two messengers.

Vilnius, Wednesday, 29 Jan.

1869. (Signed four times.)"  
This small document proves that the Bet Din still exercises its power in the inexorable manner to which it must adhere according to the precepts of the Talmud.

Explanation IX. Of the Kabbalat Kinyan or Se der bei den Juden, i.e. über die Art des Kaufes und Verkaufes nach den Regeln des Talmud.

In ancient times, the Jews had the custom that in transactions, the buyer would untie his shoe and give it to the seller. The Talmud has introduced something very similar. At every sale, the kabbalat kinyan must take place, i.e. the buyer hands over his handkerchief to the seller and says: "Take this object in exchange for the land or house that you are selling or have given me, and the like". If the seller accepts the handkerchief or shakes hands with the buyer, the purchase is considered complete and the object has passed into that possession, even though he has not yet paid. Therefore, according to the Talmud, the Kabbalat Kinyan has legal significance.

Thus, the Kabbalat Kinyan comes into play in every transaction between private individuals, but not in transactions between the Kahal and private individuals. Accordingly, we assume that documents No. 51, 58, 59, 87, 92, 95, 102 and 262 will be perfectly comprehensible to the reader.

## Explanation X. From the hoch times of the Juden .

The wedding feast for the Jews usually begins before the day of the marriage. It begins with the Saturday preceding the marriage itself. When the sixth day of work and worries comes to an end and the houses are quiet, the town musicians go to the groom's house and then to the bride's house to the sound of the national melodies of the Sabbath reception. (In every Jewish community there is a town musicians' choir organised by the Kahal). On Saturday morning, the synagogues await the groom and his father. During the reading of the prescribed portion of the Books of Moses, the groom is chosen to read an important aliyah, and the cantor raises his voice in prayers for him. At this moment, the bridegroom is pelted from the female auditorium with nuts, almonds, etc., gifts of which the inferior people seek to secure their share.

The groom is then solemnly escorted home, where he is given a light meal. In the evening, the musicians play again in his and the bride's house. At the latter, they are accompanied by dancing from those present. Although only women dance here, the party usually continues until midnight. This is the beginning of the wedding week. In both houses, the preparations for the celebration itself are made. Only the fathers are occupied with more serious matters. Their heads are spinning with the difficulties of how best to accommodate the dowry. Then there is the difficult question of Shadchen, whose demands must be satisfied, otherwise he will call on the Bet Din or even forbid the wedding. Then there is Kachash to be paid, i.e. the tax for the benefit of the rabbi. Finally, the groom's and bride's rooms are filled with guests. From here the bride brings the bridegroom a talit, or cloak, which married Jews put on during prayer exercises, and in which they are also buried. This is given to him by the batchan (jester), emphasising the great importance of the garments. After the groom has cried himself out to the sounds of the Batchan verses, the Batchan goes to the bride, where the same thing takes place. Suddenly, however, the doors open, the Shamesh appears and calls out:

"Kabbalat panim lehachatan (Greet the bridegroom)!" The groom, with the men accompanying him, approaches the weeping bride and covers her face with the cloth intended for this purpose, while being pelted with oats by the other women. ) At the head of the music, the shofars (horns) open the procession to the chuppa (canopy). The parents and relatives are asked to bless the children under the canopy, which everyone does, laying their hands on the heads of the engaged couple. From this the wedding ceremony begins, which is introduced by a prayer of the first of the Talmudists present. He is called upon to do this aloud. The fiances then drink from the chalice over which they have prayed, after which the Shammesh reads out a marriage document (ketubah) written in Aramaic. The groom then gives the bride a ring or a coin of silver and says: "By this ring you are betrothed to me according to the law of Moses and Israel". At this moment he has to break a glass to be reminded of the fall of Jerusalem. A second prayer is then said over the chalice, whereupon the bride and groom drink again and are then escorted home by their relatives. The young people have fasted all day and now feast on a chicken soup called "golden ear". Then the feast begins. As soon as the meal is served, the guests each go to the table with a bowl of water to perform the custom of washing their hands before eating. After the guests have been seated according to their dignity, the "servers" bring to each person the food and drink that is due to him according to his dignity. This is the task of the servers. The food is spiced up by the witty improvisations of the batchan. Afterwards, he transforms himself into a comedian and entertains the guests throughout the evening. At the end of the meal, the batchan receives the gifts, calling out the names of the givers. Then follows the kosher dance; each person grasps the bride's hand with his handkerchief and moves with her once to the sound of the music. Her husband is the last to approach her and disappears with her.

The slavish dependence of the Jew on the Kahal even at

The records 53, 64, 130 and 158 are evidence of the existence of domestic festivities.

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\* Undoubtedly a fertility spell. D. H.

## Explanation XI. Of the custom of circumcision.

Immediately after birth, the father's most noble task is to protect the child and the mother from the intrusion of the satanic spirit, which then circles around them and seeks to nestle with them in every way. The best means for this is the Shir Hamaalot. This powerful talisman consists of the 121st Psalm, which, written on paper, must be surrounded by names of heaven and God, which the Talmud teaches the Jews. This talisman is pasted on all openings through which the unclean spirit could penetrate to its victim. Immediately after the birth of a child of the male sex, the teachers appear from the synagogue with their children and read prayers for him. After the prayers, the children are all fed with goodies. The reading of a prayer by the teacher with his children is now done daily until the day of circumcision. On the first Friday after the birth, the adult Jews also gather in the evening and read the same prayer before the newborn. On Saturday morning, the father goes to the synagogue, where the cantor reads and sings the "Mi-schebberech" in his honour. From there, the invited relatives (Gevattern) return with the father to the child. Here the guests are entertained. On the eve of the circumcision is the "night of vigil". For this, the Gevattern gather to spend the night with prayers and reading of the Talmud at the child's cradle. For this, in addition to food, the gevatterns also receive money. On the eighth day after birth, circumcision takes place. At about ten o'clock, after the synagogue has ended, the relatives gather at the house of the newborn. Ten people must always be present at a circumcision.

After all the preparations have been made, the godmother raises the child. She gives the child to her husband, who accepts the child and says aloud: "And according to the words of God to our father Abraham, walk before me. He brings the child to the mohel (circumciser), who accepts it and says aloud: "And according to the words of God to our father Abraham, walk before me and be faithful". He then goes to the chair of the invisible Elijah, who attends every circumcision. \*) Then the circumcisers surround the child,

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\* At circumcision, two chairs are placed near the sacred shrine of the synagogue. One is the godfather's chair, on which the godfather who holds the child to be circumcised sits. The other chair is placed for Elijah. One

one with a sharp knife, the other with particularly long fingernails, and the third makes his mouth available. The first of them says a prayer, and with a jerk, cutting the foreskin, he leaves his place to the next; the latter tears off the foreskin, whereupon the third sucks the blood from the wound. During this time the father reads a long prayer. If the newborn child survives the operation well, a prayer is read over the chalice and three drops of the wine are poured onto the child's lips. The whole drama is concluded by a song sung by the cantor. (The circumciser is called a mohel. - Often only one mohel performs the circumcision).  
If the operation has been successful, i.e. if the first has not cut too deeply, the second has not torn off too much and the third has not infected it with a disease, then the child has been given the name of a Jew for life. \*)

Explanation XII. Of the Morenu \*\*) i.e. the terms associated with the Ka ha l and Bet Din, and of the levels of these hierarchies in general.

In order to acquaint the reader with this, we will put here for the first time a document, hitherto known only in Hebrew, which belongs to the Kahal of the city of Vilna and came in a strange way into the collection of historical writings of KuriJ Nesman.

hopes that he will sit on it invisibly. Kisse Elijahu is the name of the chair. Elijah is explicitly invited to sit on it during the ceremony. The chair remains for three days after the circumcision so that the prophet can rest properly from his long journey. - Original magic faith in its purest form! D. H.  
\* In this depiction of circumcision, as in the description of the mikva (Explanation XVI), lies the protest of the modern educated against the highly unhygienic, disease-transmitting "religious" regulation originating from the realm of magical belief. Here, too, the form and tone are perfectly objective. That rabbis and other orthodox Jews, especially Hasidim, are nevertheless foaming at the mouth is clear. D. H.

\*\* According to the Jewish Encyclopaedia, the correct name is M o r e n u . Das

d t. On the duties of rabbis and representatives of the Sta

At the head of the town are: the Rabbi, the Chairman of the Bet Din, the members of the Bet Din, 12 in number, and the representatives of the town. The Rabbi is elected by the General Assembly for three years. The duty of the Rabbi is as follows:

a) At the invitation of the members of the Kahal or the General Assembly, the rabbi must appear without delay. Likewise, he does not have the right to refuse to cooperate in judicial proceedings. He must see to it that the people do not revolt against the Kahal. He must consult all important questions with the Kahal in wise deliberation.

b) The Rabbi has no right to interfere in the affairs of the Kahal.  
c) If the Kahal wishes to introduce something new and a member of the General Assembly votes against it, the Rabbi must take the Kahal's side and mediate the matter wisely.

d) The rabbi is exempt from involvement in the settlement of monetary matters by the Bet Din. However, if one of the parties requests his involvement, he may not refuse.

e) The Rabbi's vote shall not in itself be preponderant; however, in the event of a tie, it shall be decisive. The abrogation of a rule shall be decided by a majority vote. The rabbi may not oppose this, unless the decision disturbs the rules of the whole circle.

f) The rabbi may not give resolutions or statements on special issues. In such cases, he is joined by two of the legislators, two representatives of the General Assembly and two Dajjanim (judges).

word means "Our Teacher". The title has been known since the 14th century and is given to rabbis and Talmudists. It first appeared in Germany. Only those who hold the title are considered to be a proper rabbi, and are allowed to preach, contract marriages, divorce marriages and pronounce judgement. The title preceded the form of address, e.g. Morenu ha-Rabbi R. Meier. D. H.



g) The rabbi must not interfere in the affairs of the banishment or in the rabbinical election, nor utter a bad word about voters or those elected.

h) At the General Assembly, the rabbi is not allowed to sign any document that might be directed against the Kahal.

i) The title "Morenu" is conferred by the rabbi together with the elder of the Kahal and the chairman of the Bet Din. The title is awarded according to the rules of the circle, according to which the title can only be awarded if the person concerned not only knows the Talmud and the laws, but is also thoroughly familiar with the Choshen ha-Mishpat.

k) Representatives of the city are elected as members of the Asifa (General Assembly). Only those who have already attained morenu participate in this assembly.

l) The levels of municipal offices are as follows: a) deputy to represent the city; b) Dajan = judge of a brotherhood; e) Habbar = elder of a charity or member of the Bet Din;

d) Ikkurim = old members of the community; e) Rosh Medina = representatives of the whole circle or Kahal.

After these stages, the members of the General Assembly are gradually elevated to servants of the Kahal.

Of the organization of elections.

The leaders of the Kahal and the judges of the Bet Din are elected annually according to the rules of the election law of 1747. Before the month of Kislev\* (October), 5 Borerim (electors) are appointed, who appoint the members of the legislative assembly designated for the new elections. For their part, the voters appoint: 4 representatives of the Kahal, 2 representatives of the district, 4 representatives of the community, 3 delegates, 4 controllers, 2 representatives of the General Assembly. They also appoint 4 charity elders and 12 judges of the Bet Din.

\*The Kislev begins in the period v. 4. XI. - 3. XII., the election therefore takes place in October or November. D. H.

Of the duties of the members of the Kahal and the Bet Din .

- a) The main work consists in setting and collecting the levies and in monitoring the population regarding their correctness. All types of trade are subject to the levies. The city's ombudsmen appoint officials to assess the levies, who are ordered to exercise the strictest justice. \*) Immediately after the election they must go to a room and may not leave it, except on Saturdays and holidays. On weekdays they may only leave it to eat. Every Jew must declare his total income to the commission.
- b) Every quarter, the members of the General Assembly must meet to discuss current issues affecting the congregation.
- c) Every three years the assembly of the whole district takes place, to which the following cities send their representatives: Brest-Litovsk, Grodno, Vilna, Pinsk and Sluzk.
- d) The Dajanim, (members of the Bet Din) together with their chairman are responsible for the distribution of the Maaruphia. \*\* They also have to approve all contracts that are concluded among Jews. In addition, they, together with the Kahal, are responsible for checking that the Jews (against Jews) always use correct weights and measures. -

This document again proves that the Kahal draws everywhere from the same sources of income, that his power is everywhere the same, and that he everywhere sells the Jews the strange rights of the Chasaka and Maaruphia.

\* I.e. within the community, not towards the gentiles, although the Talmud also contains rulings on this. D. H.

\*\* This observation is important. The Maaruphia hardly plays a role in the minutes of the sessions, apparently because they are Kahal minutes, whereas the Maaruphia was dealt with by the Bet Din. If Brahmman were a forger, he would certainly not have missed the opportunity to present the weapon of Maaruphia, which is so decisive in the struggle for existence, to the Russian government in the most effective way in some Bet Din protocols - honesty on Brahmman's part, wherever one tackles! D. H.

The decision taken by the delegates at the famous Rabbinical Congress in Breslau in 1869 was in favour of this. We stand on the ground of an active Judaism, and our aim is to extend its power by all means. We want the freedom of all Jewish communities. All communities in Germany are called upon to petition the government to employ teachers of Jewish law in all higher educational institutions. All members enrol as members of the 'International Jewish Federation' and place all their forces at its service." -

Finally, we would like to say a few words about the successes of this new organisation in Russia. Before it appeared in Russia, a large number of Jewish schools had been established in most towns. The government, striving to improve the situation of the Jews, levied a new tax on them which brought in about 327,000 rbl. The capital earmarked for educational purposes amounted to about 30 million after 30 years. The rabbis, however, described the fruits of this as very poor, blaming not themselves but the state institutions. Christian supervisors had been appointed for the schools, the rabbis themselves were dependent on elections, and finally, the unfamiliarity of the institution was also cited as a reason for the

failure.

It should be mentioned the rabbinical schools gradually lost their religious character and became national Jewish grammar schools. Immediately after graduation, the pupils went to the universities. In this way, a new generation of nationally Jewish educated people was created. The Jews have always understood how to benefit from all situations in life!

Explanation XIII. Of the Melammedim, i.e. the Jewish teachers, and Jewish education in general.

The first wish with which the Jews greet a newborn is to see it as "talmid chacham", i.e. full of Talmudic wisdom. In accordance with this wish, every father, impatiently awaiting the child's five-year age, brings the child and possibly also the last child into the house.

of his savings to the cheder (school). Since this is quite common, it is not surprising that there are a lot of such chedarim (elementary schools) and a lot of money is spent on their maintenance.

The learned Jews claim that the strong attraction of the school is based on religion. In our opinion, however, there is no question of fanatical religiosity. The situation is rather as follows:

The Talmud has from time immemorial divided the Jews into patricians and plebeians, and fixed the relation of these to each other as follows:

1. No one can serve as a witness for the plebeian.
2. He too cannot serve as a witness for anyone.
3. The plebeian is not let into any secrets. \*)
4. He cannot be appointed guardian.
5. He cannot be involved in charity matters.
6. You can't go one way with him.

"Some add" says the Talmud, "that an object lost by a plebeian should belong to the finder." These rules have survived to the present day. Our whole book shows that the plebeian (Am haarez) is a lowly, lawless being in every respect\*\*).

Therefore, the plebeians seek a release for those languishing under the yoke of the patricians in the education of their children in school, for only the cheder can stamp a plebeian as a morenu. The education of the Jews is not subject to any coercion or rules and is not subject to the Kahal or other institutions. It is

, so to speak, a matter for the whole people. Every Jew, equipped with the knowledge of an elementary teacher, can act as an educator. Likewise, every Jew is free to teach his children himself, as long as he pays an appropriate sum to the cheder. \*\*\* The Melammedim have no connection with each other and do not have the same programmes or methods. Hence the great competition among

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\*The secret society character of Judaism is thus clearly expressed. D. H.

\*\* Knowledge of this fact, as we shall see, is of decisive importance for the assessment of the Jewish problem of the present day. D. H.

\*\*\* Wherever you look, coercive measures. D. H.

them and the low standing of this profession in general. The Jew only takes it up when he feels absolutely compelled to do so. There is a saying "there is still time to die or to become a Melammed (elementary teacher)". The school year is divided into two semesters, with the months of April and September in between. During this time, each melammed tries to make propaganda for himself and recruit new pupils. The melammed works from 9 in the morning to 9 in the evening. It is extremely difficult to divide his pupils into classes; one could divide them as follows: 1. learning to read; 2. beginning lessons in the 5 books of Moses; 3. teachings of the Mishna together with commentaries; 4. the Talmud itself with many commentaries and the law books (codices: Shulchan aruch etc.).

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\* The conditions in the cheder were, as the Jewish Encyclopaedia also admits, quite unsatisfactory. The cheder consisted of a single room in which all the courses were taught simultaneously. Everyone had to shout loudly and shrilly. The room was cramped, unhealthy, the treatment of the children bad, corporal punishment was meted out profusely. At that time, (around 1800), school conditions in general were quite backward, not only in the cheder. Even among the Jews, progress came later with the founding of the Haskala: the advanced school, which was set in the direction of freer Reform Judaism. The Gymnasium mentioned by Bratmann represents still further progress. The actual religious studies took place in the Betschul - Bet ha-Midrash - after graduation from the Cheder. The conditions that still existed in the cheder schools during Dr Fromer's youth, which was in the 1970s, are shown by the description of his admission to such a school in Lodz.

"At the age of five I went to the Cheder (Jewish school). When my mother took me there for the first time, I had the feeling of a cow being led to slaughter. Even in the distance I could hear the howling and whining of the children being mistreated in the Cheder. We entered a half-dark room. The stale air and the screaming and noise deafened my senses for the first few moments. On the bare floor, the children squatted close together, chattering or crying. A row of children stood in front of a long table. In front of each was a Hebrew alphabet, from which they read in turn. The Melammed (teacher) walked around the table and continuously worked on the children's exposed bottoms with a thick strap. He accompanied this execution with a torrent of swear words so loud that they almost drowned out the children's cries of distress. His dirty face was framed by a wild, shaggy, red beard. From the eyes

The orphans and children of the very poor are educated at the community's expense, and the melammedim employed for this purpose receive their salary from the Kahal. However, these children are not taught writing and arithmetic like the other children. )

Explanation XIV. Vo n de m "J om. Ki, ppu r" (Day of Atonement) a n d t h e "K ol nidre" a n d t h e r e a d m e n t o f G e l u b d e n, w h i c h t h e J u d e t a t o d e r w i l l d o .

The last day of Rosh Hashanah, of which we have already spoken, is "Yom Kippur", the Day of Atonement. In the ancient Temple, on this highly significant day, the curtain of the Holy of Holies was opened to the High Priest. There he went with the atonement device and obtained forgiveness for the people. Now, however, this day has become a day of mourning and tears for the Jews. Everyone has to fast on this day, and Yom Kippur ends the period of purification or justification during the ten days of penance. According to this belief, sad thoughts afflict every Jew on this day.

When the synagogue is filled with worshippers and everyone prays in their ceremonial dress, holding a wax candle in their hands, the most distinguished take the Torah in their hands and the cantor solemnly begins the famous "Kol nidre"<sup>31)</sup> immediately accompanied by the congregation. The meaning of the Kol nidre is that everyone thereby frees themselves from the guilt of the vows, discussions and curses given in the past year and to be given in the coming year. Through

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an eerie, feverish fire flickered. Melammed's wife was standing at the hearth, brewing a foul-smelling dish. She kept blowing into the fire, which was kept going by badly burning wood, and coughed as often as the smoke hit her. Her gaunt, consumptive face was full of soot. Close beside her lay an infant, wriggling hands and feet, crying out at the top of her lungs. D. H.

the orphans and children of the poor were treated even worse than the girls, who at least learned not only reading but also arithmetic, as far as it was needed in the economy. Nowadays, the schools for the poor - Talmud Torah - are much better than they were then. These are conditions of the past. D. H.

this public renunciation in fact collapses the whole moral edifice of the Jews. This fact is so shocking that even Talmudists have objected to it. The Kol nidre, however, has survived to the present day. The influence of this custom will be discussed in detail in the second part of this book.

Explanation XV VonderKappor  
(Vhnung durch das Hahn-Opfer).

This custom is purely pagan and consists of the following: On the morning of Yom Kippur, the Jew seizes a cock by the feet,

\* Hardly any other phenomenon shows so clearly into what insoluble conflicts the lunar nature of an organisation entangles its adherents as the Kol nidre formula. Within the Jews, just as in any other somehow united group of people, there are excellent, ethically high men of character. So it is almost natural that this "prayer" has become the subject of extensive discussion. Above all, decent thinkers have given it a restrictive meaning. The release from the responsibility of all vows, promises, agreements should refer only to those things that have to do with one's own conscience and do no harm to others. The Kolnidre prayer was supposed to protect the Jew from God's punishment because of forgotten promises and vows. In practice, cunning and unscrupulous Jews have interpreted the prayer quite differently. Accordingly, important rabbis such as Judah ben Barzillai (Spaniard from the 12th century) and Jeroham ben Hagin (from Provence) railed against such fools and declared them incapable of bearing witness. There was also much discussion about this at meetings in the 19th century. In reality, Kol nidre prayer is a necessity. A religious organisation whose members are frightened and kept in constant turmoil by such a bewildering plethora of prohibitions and commandments - under threat of the worst curses and punishments in this world, and Beyond - must create a lifeline, a way of saving oneself from offences committed through no fault of one's own, because unintentionally. The guilt of not having kept promises, vows and agreements is particularly highly valued - that is why - but not because of the beautiful, enchanting melody, as some think - the Kol nidre has survived and is, at least for the orthodox Jews, especially for the most conscientious and decent elements among them, downright a salvation. D. H.

swings it over his head and says the following prayer: "This cock is going to death - but I am going to eternal life. Then he takes the cock by the head and throws it away. The female gender does the same with a chicken. Meaning: The one who wields the animal gives his sins to the animal; the animals are slaughtered afterwards. The Kahal receives a special tribute from this. See No. 89.

Explanation XVI. Of the Mikwa (Ei n r i c h t u n g d e r purification for women after births and periods).

Mikva is a bath in which Jewish women perform ablutions after births or periods. The water must be flowing, "living", but since it tends to be very cold, there is a device for heating it, or only a little living water is added to what has already been heated. First, the Jewess brushes her hair and trims the nails on her hands and feet, whereby blood often flows as a result of the zeal of the helping nail-cutter. She then goes into the mikva, says a prayer and submerges herself so deeply that the ends of her hair\*) are not visible on the surface. She remains under water until the voice from above calls out "Kosher". Two, or three times, she is immersed. Then the mouth is rinsed with the mikva water and the next person takes her place.

On one evening, several hundred women often get into the same mikva. It is not surprising that the mikva therefore often acts as a pathogen. Moreover, the whole thing always takes place in cellars, so that the gloomy, damp place makes the victims shiver. - Poor, poor Jewish women!

\* Married women have to cut off their hair because the devil likes to get stuck in their hair. In East Prussia the legend is very much alive that the bats, which scurry around silently, get into the women's hair. I wonder if there is an inner thought process - devil-bat? Open hair is exposed to demons. D. H.



Explanation XVII. Of Kiddush and Habdala (prayer over the cup at home and in the synagogue).

This is the old Jewish custom, whereby the prayer is said in the evening in the synagogue or in the house of prayer after the evening service before the Saturday or a holiday and after the Saturday or a holiday. The children are given to drink from a chalice of wine over which the cantor has said a prayer. \*) Every Jew does the same at home after returning from the synagogue. If there is no wine, the Kiddush is performed over festive bread and the Habdala over wine or liquor. Donating wine to the synagogue is considered a high honour. \*\*) The Kiddush praises Yahweh for choosing the Jews - the Habdala praises Him for separating the holidays from the working days, separating the light from the darkness and separating Israel from the other nations.

### After note

**D** he causes of the persecutions of the Jews, which affected them in indifferent countries and at different times, as well as the strange fact that the civil rights which they once acquired somewhere remained with them only temporarily and, as Napoleon I says, were obtained by fraud, are to be sought in Judaism itself, in its institutions and in the existence of the Kahal. It will have become equally clear to the reader of these 17 explanations that as long as the official power of the Jew over his co-religionist

\*This offering is given to poor children. In wealthy families, the ceremony is held in the home. It is obvious that the whole arrangement is not exactly conducive to good health. D. H.

\*\* It is an interesting sign of the great discipline and religious spirit within the ghetto communities that the honour of supplying wine, candles and other items used for certain ceremonies was sold by public auction. So one paid not only for the goods but also for the privilege of delivery. Why? Because such a pious act - certainly in the hereafter, but perhaps already in this world - was rewarded with abundant interest. D. H.

as long as the Kahal, the Bet Din and all Talmudic law have not been abolished, the present existing orders and institutions of the Jews will be preserved, whatever form the external administrative legal power may take. Likewise, we can confidently say that as long as the institutions of the Jews for the education of their children are not destroyed, the desire of the government to make of the Jews useful citizens of the state must remain unsuccessful.

The administration of the north-western district also paid homage to this conviction, and the first step towards liberating the country from the ingrained evil was taken by the Governor-General Count E. T. Baranow with the circular which we reproduce at the end of this book.

# The Files of the Kahal



No. 1. on the introduction of a new order for the expenses of the Kahal.

Sabbath, reading Vereshit of the Five Books of Moses (i.e. in the first week of the new Jewish year)<sup>52</sup>) in the year 5555 (1794).

The representatives of the Kahal decree in the presence of the former Raschim (chiefs) and the Luwim "representatives of the city". The previous weekly levy of the individual to cover the expenses of the Kahal is to be replaced by the collection of the levy in the amount of half a kopeck for the pound of beef. The administration of the Kahal is instructed to draw up a detailed regulation for this purpose, and also to appoint someone to supervise the affairs of the town, with the proviso that he is to be remunerated as he sees fit.

No 2. Von der Vergütung für die Polizeirevier-Aufseher (Faktoren).

Sabbath, Reading Noah, 5555 (1794).

a) It is decreed by the representatives of the Kahal: Three police station wardens are to be paid 8 Sloty (Rbl. 1.30) each for the past period. The money is to be handed over to them by the Kahal's confidants at the expense of the slaughter money.

b) At this meeting Reb\*) Eli son of U and Reb Morduchai son of U were appointed as controllers for the purpose of auditing the Kahal's treasury, which is kept by the Kahal's representative. Eli, son of U, and Reb Morduchai, son of U, were appointed as controllers.

But for the control of the sum, which is with David Schatz (cantor), the trusted man, and with Jacob the soldier, are chosen overseers: Reb Moses son of J, Reb Moses son of A, the above-mentioned Reb Morduchai and Reb Pesach son of J.

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\* Reb does not mean rabbi, but a respected man. The Jewish Encyclopaedia says: "a good Jew". D. H.

control of the cash  
can also take place if the supervisors are  
not fully present.

No. 3 (= Volume II. 40). From the appointment of a

The police's supervisor for Jewish affairs.  
Monday, reading Wa-jare of the Pentateuch 5555 (23 Oct. 1794).

The representatives of the Kahal decree:

The representative of the city, Rabbi Inda Leib, son of Rabbi  
Jacob, is ordered to stay in the police station for six weeks from today  
and to take care of both private and municipal affairs, with the condition  
that he may not promise gifts to anyone in the affairs of the Kahal, (the  
municipality) without prior permission from the Parnes Hodem, the  
monthly chairman of the Kahal, and another representative of the town.  
For his work he is granted a salary of two roubles for the week.

No. 4 (= II. 41). On the greeting of the authorities on  
holidays.\*)

Tuesday, 2 Ijjar 5555 (10 April 1795).

It is decreed by the representatives of the Kahal:

a) A loan is to be taken out from the rich Isaak from Lyakhovka  
(suburb of Minsk) in the amount of the sum necessary for the  
Voloshebna.\*\*) The rich Reb Zevi, son of Sh., and the above-mentioned  
rich Isaak are chosen for this greeting - they are joined by four general  
Kashim (chiefs) - and all together they go to the authorities with the  
Voloshebna.

b) (= II. 42) At this meeting, the administration of the Kahal took on  
the duty of listing everything that had been decided at the previous  
meeting concerning the municipal slaughterhouse and to settle all  
matters of this kind definitively.

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\*It is worth recalling the references in the Introduction (p. LI). D. H.

\*\* Woloshebna are the sums of money to greet the - non-Jewish - authorities on  
holidays.

No. 5 (= II. 43). The matter of the sheepfolds.

Friday, reading Tasria of the Pentateuch 5555 (13 April 1795).

a) In the house of the Kahal, in the presence of the representatives of the Kahal and the Mishayah Kashim, i.e. the chiefs, the question was raised of an instruction in the matter of the Shechita Houses, to be drawn up by six elected citizens by order of the Kahal. The General Assembly decided to confirm the instructions issued by those six and to give them the force of law in all their parts.

On the same day, the following was decreed:

Should the Brotherhoods not follow all the instructions of the aforementioned elected, the General Assembly shall turn the matter of slaughter over to the Board of the Kahal, and any regulation of this Board shall have the force of a resolution of the General Assembly.

b) (=II. 44). At this meeting the burden of the plebians (Roman Catholic clergy) oppressing the Kahal was also discussed. Elected as petitioners in this matter were Judel, son of Jacob, Elia, son of Zevi, R. Zevi-Hirsch (son of R) and Isaak Eisig, nephew of A. Kahal.\*  
It is hereby stipulated: The two matters mentioned are to be settled by judicial means, and no one is allowed to enter into any "peace negotiations" with the other side.

No. 6 (= II. 45). On the appointment of an advocate in the matter of the Kahal.

Sabbath, reading Tasria of the Pentateuch, 6 Ijar 5555 (14 April 1795).

a) The Board of Directors of the Kahal decrees: To accept Mr. Lopatna\*\* as the authorised advocate of the Kahal. Four heads of the

\* The case is no longer understandable. D. H.

\*\* Lopatna is apparently a Christian, presumably Polish lawyer - not a Jew - who represented the community in the Russian court. D. H.

City is given authority to enter into a written contract with him for the payment of his labour; and all that is ordered by him in this matter is to be treated as an ordinance of the Kahal.

b) At this meeting were also elected overseers of the recruit system\*): Reb Yashar Beer, son of I. and Reb Mordecai, son of M.

c) It was also decreed that Reb Wolf, son of Shelomo, be granted lifelong voting rights in all matters concerning the community. For such a right, Reb Wolf must pay five chervonetz into the kahal's coffers, and give a feast to all members of the kahal. This decree only comes into force if Reb Isaak from Lyakhovka agrees to it.

Note: The aforementioned rich Isaac does not agree with the last decree.

No 7 (= II .46) .On the compilation of accurate lists of the inhabitants of the city by status.

Wednesday, reading Acharé Moth of the Pentateuch, 10. Ijjar 5555 (18.

April 1795) at Minsk.

The Board of the Kahal decrees: The Gabaim (representatives) of all brotherhoods<sup>33</sup>) are ordered to submit to the Kahal accurate lists of their members, including the sub-masters and apprentices who work for the masters, without distinction as to whether they are locals or strangers. Likewise, all householders were ordered by soldiers or messengers to submit lists of the inhabitants of their house, whether locals or strangers, to the Kahal.

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\* The Jews had to provide recruits. The significance of this for the ghetto Jews has already been pointed out in the introduction. Military service and Orthodox Judaism with kosher food and all the hundreds of regulations are simply incompatible. Franzos has poignantly described the tragedy: Whoever could find the money bought his way out. It is clear that the whole affair must have given rise to the worst bribes on the one hand and blackmail on the other. D. H.



No. 8 (= II. 47). The appointment of confidants to deal with matters of shechita with some brotherhoods.

Sabbath, reading Kedoshim, 13th Iyjar (21 April).

a) According to a decree of the Board of the Kahal, four heads and Rabbi Samuel were elected to a final settlement of the shechita matters with Chewra Kadisha (Brotherhood of the Undertakers of the Dead) and Chewra Shibea Keruim.

b) At the same meeting it was decided: to give the Samuel, son of the R. G. to issue a certificate that he has already translated some decrees<sup>34</sup>) of the Bet Din into Russian. If the Rabbi and the Bet Din agree to this, the shammashim (notaries) of the Kahal must sign this certificate.

Note: The agreement of the Rabbi and the Bet Din was given for this.

No. 9. (= II. 48). Of the levy on the slaughter of livestock .

Wednesday, 24 Ijjar 5555 (2 May 1795) - Minsk.

It is decided by the Extraordinary General Assembly and the Board of the Kahal to establish a levy for the slaughter of cattle, which is to be used to cover certain generally known debts, which the Kahal owes to the monasteries. Here are the provisions of this levy:

For the slaughtering of an ox 4 Polish Sloty (60 kopecks) are to be paid - which has to be done before the slaughtering. For the slaughter of a cow 3 Polish Sloty (45 Kopecks) - and for that of a sheep, a goat or a calf 6 Groschen (3 Kopecks) each - for a calf of 1-2 years 1 Sloty (15 Kopecks). The tax is to be paid in silver money.

It is decreed: It is to be proclaimed loudly tomorrow in all houses of prayer under the most violent ban that everyone who wants to slaughter cattle is obliged to pay the tax fixed according to the above, irrespective of the tax for the shepherd and for the slaughterhouse. Under threat of ban, the slaughterers are forbidden to pull the knife out of the sheath before the tax has been paid in full to the slaughterhouse.

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\*The other meeting minutes do not provide an explanation. D. H.

the trusted man is paid. It is also decreed that under the ban and the "Shantos gedolot" (curses to eternal damnation), no person in the world may take the above-mentioned levy on lease - never and under no conditions. But also those who want to lease this tax - to whom and when it may be - to a Jew or a Gentile - will fall under the ban. \*) This levy must always be at the disposal of the Kahal, for the purpose of paying off the debts mentioned above. If, however, any one does not observe this provision, and, under any pretext whatsoever, takes the levy on lease, the ban which has existed from time immemorial on the meat imported from abroad shall be lifted, and any one shall be permitted to import his meat, to the detriment of the lessee. On 25 Ijjar 5555 (3 May 1795) all the above was literally proclaimed in all the prayer houses.

No. 10 (= II. 49). On the election of a shop steward for new taxes.

Sabbath, reading Be-Har Sinai of the Pentateuch, 27 Ijjar 5555 (5 May 1795).

By decree of the Kahal, Leima, son of Judah, Levite, is appointed as of this day as the Kahal's confidant in the matter of a new tax. The aforementioned Leima is sworn to take over the execution of all decrees that will be connected with the aforementioned tax by order of the Kahal.

No. 11 (= II. 50). On the election of a shop steward for the levies on livestock and poultry.

Slaughter.

Sabbath, reading Be-Har Sinai of the Pentateuch, 27 Ijjar 5555 (5 May 1795).

Hosea, son of Abraham, is appointed by the board of the Kahal as a confidant in matters concerning the levies of livestock and poultry.

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\*The kosher levies were supposed to be used to pay the state taxes, but they were used for other purposes. D. H.

Shechita appointed. He assumes this office immediately after the first 50 days of this (5555) year, having previously sworn to the duty of carrying out every provision of the Kahal in this matter.

No. 12 (= II. 51). About the loan of 50 rbl. to Jüdel (son of Jacob).

Sabbath, Be-Har Sinai of the Pentateuch, 27 Ijar 5555 (5 May 1795).

It is determined: From the treasury of the Kahal, Rbl. 50 in silver is to be given to Rabbi Jüdel (son of Jacob) as a loan. This loan is to be paid out gradually within a year at 1 rbl. per week. To secure this loan, the aforementioned Rabbi Jüdel is to issue a promissory note to the Kahal with the obligation to repay the 50 Rbl. accumulated with him on the 1st of Ijar 5556 (1796). The promissory note is to be taken into custody by the notary of the Kahal.

No. 13 (= II. 52). Of the order of a place for the slaughtering of poultry and of the appointment special Schächter on this.

Sabbath, reading Behaalotcha, 5555 (26 May 1795).

The Board of the Kahal determines: Poultry\*) shall be slaughtered in the courtyard of the synagogue. Mordecai and his son Jacob shall be appointed as shepherds for this purpose; one of them shall be responsible for shechitaing, and the other for observing all the requirements of the law, i.e. the law of the land, i.e. the Talmud, to deal with the prescribed rules. Apart from these two, no shepherd is allowed to slaughter poultry in the city, either during the day or at night. The salary for both shepherds is the same as that generally received by a shepherd. The aforementioned Mordecai has to take the oath prescribed for the trusted men of the shechita levy and has to hand over every Friday to the authorised representative of the Kahal the money accumulated with him in the course of the week. If the Board of the Kahal deems it

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\* The poultry shepherds were a different, far less prestigious class than the cattle shepherds. D. H.

Should the authorities deem it necessary to lease the levy for the slaughter of poultry, Mordecai shall have the right of first refusal. However, if the levy is leased by another person, Mordecai remains the shepherd, and no one has the right to remove him from his post.

No. 14 (= II. 53). Of the building of a house of shechita. Sabbath, piece Behaalotcha of the Pentateuch, 5555 (26 May 1795).

It is decreed that the Chewra Kadischa\* (brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead) and the Shibea Keruim (brotherhood of the seven chosen ones) to build a shechita at their expense; but as the brotherhood of the Shibea Keruim refused this - which would stop the building - the assembly of the Kahal appointed Rabbi Zevi, son of R. Rabbi Nota, son of J., and Rabbi Samuel, son of D., were appointed by the assembly of the Kahal to deal with the said brotherhood and to obtain from them a formal receipt, i.e. in accordance with Jewish law, for all the expenses incurred by them for the building. If, after this matter has been settled, and after receipt of such a formal receipt, the Chewra Kadischa itself should wish to acquire from the Kahal the right to build the Shechita House, the Kahal will have no objection to this. The above-mentioned three elected persons shall be given the same power in matters of the brotherhood of the Shibea Keruim and to determine the conditions for the brotherhood of the Chewra Kadischa as is due to the representatives of the city according to Jewish law. The brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead must undertake to fulfil all the conditions which are agreed with the Shibea Keruim in this matter. However, if it does not wish to receive the part of the right given to the Shibea Keruim, this part remains with the Kahal.

\* The Chewra (or Chabura) Kadischa, i.e. the brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead, is probably the oldest of the brotherhoods and can be traced back to Talmudic times. It seems that it goes back to the sect of the Essenes. The Ch. K. had permission to work when everyone else had to rest. As soon as a corpse was in the hands of the Ch. K., the relatives were released from all duties. The women had their own chewras. The members of the Ch. K. had important privileges and were under the guidance of elected officials. D. H.

No. 15 (= II. 54). Of the commission of the school and the pleban (kath. Pfarrer) and of the introduction of a new levy on goods imported by foreign merchants.

Sabbath, Schelach lecha section, 5555 (2 June 1795).

a) Since the income from the newly introduced levies is not sufficient to cover the debt to the pleban, it is determined by the board of the Kahal: From the brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead, 90 Rbl. are to be taken up as an account of the sum owed for recruitment, in order to pay with it the monthly amount to be paid to the pleban.

b) On the same day it was decreed: A levy is to be introduced on all goods brought into Minsk by foreign merchants, and as long as this levy is not leased, every merchant bringing goods into Minsk is to report to the Parnes Chodesch, i.e. head of the village, in order to obtain a slip of paper with the signature of the head and a representative of the Kahal. The slip must show that the person presenting it has paid the tax in full for the goods he is bringing in.

c) On the same day it was decided: A room is to be rented from the school as an office for the taxes, and 7½ kopecks a week are to be paid for the same, at the expense of the Kahal's treasury. <sup>35)</sup>

d) The same day was also fixed: A wedding gift of 2½ Rbl. is to be made to the tax collector Reb Isaak from the treasury of the Kahal. The money is to be handed over to Reb Herschen against a receipt.

No. 16. Rules for the residents of the city regarding the admission of members to festivals, given by the Kahal.

The following may be invited to the feast of circumcision:

I. All members of the collateral line of the parents up to the second degree. If the feast is not given by the father of the newborn, but by another person, it is subject to the same provisions regarding invitations.

2. Persons by marriage, i.e. the parents of the new daughter-in-law, before and until the marriage of the same, may be invited to the feast.

3. The Gevatter (who holds the child during circumcision) or Sandeke and the three circumcisers, as well as the speaker of the prayers over the cup after circumcision.

4. Five good friends and the Melammed of the landlord.

5. Two neighbours from each side and three from the opposite side. This rule also applies to shopkeepers.

6. The tenant of a shop may be invited by the owner of the same and vice versa; the same applies to homeowners and their tenants.

7. The business friends and suppliers: butchers and tailors.

8. The Jewish representatives of the city and officials.

9. The member of a fraternity may invite its executive committee.

10. Servants of the synagogue who have a pass from the Kahal for this purpose.

All relatives of the second degree (including brothers-in-law), neighbours and in general all those who are admitted to the feast of circumcision according to the above may be invited to a wedding feast. In addition, ten good friends and girlfriends may be asked. Feasts of the poor, which take place at the joint expense of those invited, are not subject to these regulations.

Under threat of legal banishment, it is forbidden to hold dances on the Saturdays following a wedding, for both men and women. However, it is permitted to entertain youth of both sexes on the Saturday on which the groom is called to the Torah. However, whoever gives the wedding of his son or daughter outside the city is forbidden to invite to the feast, and all inhabitants of the city are forbidden in such cases to send gifts to those getting married. Under threat of legal banishment, the shammashim (servants of the synagogue) are forbidden to invite people to the feast of circumcision or marriage according to the register before it has been reviewed by the notary and legalised by his signature, i.e. confirmed as issued, according to the above rules. Under the ban, it is also forbidden for the giver of the feast to invite anyone who is not recorded in the register, and no one may appear at the feast unless he has been invited by the Shammash, to whom the register has been handed over,

has been invited. Violation of these regulations is tantamount to violation of the ban. Severe punishments will be imposed on such a person, sparing neither the personal nor the family honour of the disobedient, and no excuses or evasions will be accepted. ) But good shall come to the obedient, blessings shall flow down upon them, and they shall enjoy new life at the feasts of their children. The world belongs to Israel. Amen. Your will, Lord, be done. -

No. 17 (= II. 55). From the election of el f  
The members of the Executive Committee are the members of the Board of Directors.

On the occasion of a new revision and obligation to be introduced in favour of the Kahal, it is determined, with the consent of the General Assembly: The following eleven persons are to be elected,\*) namely: 1. Rabbi Leib, 2. Rabbi Hirsch, 3. R. Salomo, 4. R. Isaac, 5th R. Abel, 6th Chaima, 7th R. Jehiel, 8th R. Ilia, 9th R. Aisig, 10th R. Samuel, 11th R. Jacob. These eleven elected members must supervise the aforementioned matters, and their activity must be considered equal to that of the executive of the General Assembly. They must apply all diligence to their work and make all necessary expenditures.

It is up to them to find a suitable source for this expenditure, but no new levy may be imposed on the city because of it.

No. 18 (= II. 56). Determination of the General Assembly on the election of officials for all offices of the administration for the year 5556 (1796).

Wednesday, 16 Siwan (11 June 1796).

It is determined by the Board of the General Assembly: On the basis of the Jewish laws, an election of the leaders of our city is to be held. The electors shall elect nine leaders of the Kahal as follows

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\* Compare the presentation by K. E. Franzos, which has been reproduced in the introduction. D. H.

\*\* This sounds quite like an arrangement of who to vote for. D. H.

The following shall be elected: four Rashim, three Tubim, two Ikurim. Only those may be elected to the office of Raschim who have already held this office. The electors shall swear under oath that they will hold the election in the name of God and for the good of the city. The electors, however, shall swear that they will exercise their office conscientiously and for the benefit of the city. This election shall appoint the rulers only until the end of the coming Passover days (10 months). It is also decreed that the overseers may not hold any office in the brotherhood of the undertakers during the time of their function as such.<sup>36)</sup>  
(= II. 57.) At the happy hour! List for voters in 5556, drawn up on 16 Siwan 5556:

1. Reb Uri, son of David.
2. Reb Shalom, son of Meera.
3. Reb Jechiel son of David.
4. Reb Aaron, son of Baruch.
5. Reb Isaac son of Zevi Hirsch.

These were confirmed by the General Assembly as electors of the principals on 16 Siwan 5555 in Minsk. They have taken the following oath:

(= II. 58). Form of the egg for the election r:  
I undertake by oath and affirmation, without any fraud or subtlety, that the election of the rulers by me shall be exclusively for the good of the city. The Lord help me in all things even as I speak the truth now.<sup>37)</sup>

No. 19 (= II. 59). Of some changes to the Provisions of the General Assembly. (Cf. File Nr. 18.)

Sabbath, reading Behaalotcha of the Pentateuch. (14 June 1796.)

Since the five voters listed above report to the General Assembly on the impossibility of holding the elections as determined under No. 18, they are granted the right to elect eleven, instead of nine, town leaders. At the same time it is determined that the election must be completed by 12 noon tomorrow, otherwise it would be declared invalid. It is also stipulated that only members of the town council with the right to vote may be elected



General Assembly are to be elected.

No. 20 (= II. 60). At the happy hour! Election list for the  
leaders of our city for the year 5556,  
compiled on Monday, 21 Si wan. (16 June 1796.)

I. Raschim. -

1. Rabbi Leib, son of Moses.
2. Rabbi Jechiel, son of David.
3. Rabbi Eleazar, son of Meir.
4. Rabbi Moses, son of Joseph.
5. Rabbi Herschsohn, son of Uri.
6. Rabbi Aaron, son of Baruch.

II. Tubim. -

1. Rabbi Hosea, son of Eljiakum.
2. Rabbi Peßach, son of Israel.
3. Rabbi Isaac, son of Zevi Hirsch.

III. Ikurim. -

1. Rabbi David, son of Eleazar.
2. Rabbi David, son of Jeruchim.
3. Rabbi Moses, son of Herschsohn.
4. Rabbi Samuel, son of Eljiakum.

IV. Habaim zedoka Gedola (Elders of the Great Circle of Charity).

1. Rabbi Herz, son of David.
2. Rabbi Uri, son of David.
3. Rabbi Israel, son of David.
4. Rabbi Ilia, son of Zevi Hirsch.
5. Rabbi Hashem, son of Moses.
6. Rabbi Isaac, son of Zevi Hirsch.

V. Dajjanim Keruim (Judge of the Bet Din).

1. Rabbi Samuel, son of Jechiel Michael.
2. Rabbi Eleazar, son of Efraim.
3. Son of Hersch, son of Elijah.
4. Rabbi Joseph, son of Jechiel Michael.

VI. Dajjanim Scheenam Keruim (temporary judges).

1. Rabbi Sef Wolf, son of Z.
2. Rabbi Jacob, son of Saul.

3. Rabbi Judah, son of Aaron.
  4. Rabbi Chajjim, son of Sef Wolf.
  5. Rabbi Simon, son of Judah Leib.
  6. Rabbi Joel Feitel, son of Aaron.
- VII. Roe cheschbonot (controllers).

1. Reb Eleazar, son of Joseph.
2. Reb Herz, son of Isaac.
3. Reb Israel son of Issachar.

VIII. Elder of the Brotherhood of Precentors.

1. Reb Uri, son of David.
2. Reb Elijah son of Zevi Hirsch.

(= II. 61). Form of the oath for the rulers of our city, confirmed by the General Assembly.  
 Under oath and affirmation, without fraud or sophistry, I pledge myself in the name of God to perform my duties during my term of office for the benefit of the city; may God help me in all things as much as I honestly take upon myself all things said by me. -

No. 21 (= II. 62). About gifts to superiors.

Tuesday, Schelach lecha section of the Pentateuch, 5556 (17 June 1796).

It is determined by the representatives of the municipal administration: The sums due from the shepherds for the last period are to be collected, and the sum obtained is to be used for the distribution of gifts to municipal officials and heads. The sum collected from the kosher shepherds is to be handed over to the shammash (notary), who is to decide on the expenditure. <sup>39)</sup> -

No. 22 (= II. 63). Dispute between the Kahal and a private person over a square.

a). In the matter of the possession of the place of the uncircumcised (Christian) milliner Swanski.  
 As a result of a protest lodged with the Kahal against Reb Eleazar, son of Ephraim, in the matter of his right to the possession of the place of the above-mentioned Swanski, it was determined by the heads of the Kahal: Two tobim (advocates) are to be appointed who will

have to defend this matter before the Bet Din of our city. Appointed for this purpose were: David son of Eleazar, and Rabbi Isaac son of Zevi Hirsch. - This was appointed by general consent on Wednesday, section Korach of the Pentateuch.

Note: This provision has not been implemented.

b) Hereafter, on Friday of the same week, two new advocates were appointed by the heads of the Kahal in the same matter: Rabbi Isaschar Beer and Rabbi Pesach. These two appeared with the opposing party before the Bet Din, and the latter, after hearing both parties, issued the following decree in the matter:

No. 23 (= II. 64). Copie of the Dec r et of the Bet Din in Sa chen of the St r e it between the Kahal and the Rebbe Eleasa r .

In the matter of the right to possession of a house and all outbuildings as well as the courtyard thereto, occupied on Troitzki Street, formerly belonging to the brothers Reb Shalom, Reb Segal and Reb Chajim:

The advocates of the Kahal stated the following in this regard:

In the court of the Kahal there was a hearing in the matter of the right on the basis of which Isaschar Beer at present owns a part of the above-mentioned place, to which the yard of 12 Saschen belongs, while Eleasar owns the remaining (adjoining) buildings, about which he has a document from the rulers of the Kahal Tuesday, 28th Siwan 5518 (1758) with the following content:

Since among the signatures of the seven village chiefs on the purchase contract is also that of the Meier, the Kahal protests against this contract, on the basis of which Eleasar now owns part of the buildings and the farm. First of all, the lawyers of the Kahal's board demand that Eleasar prove the correctness of all signatures on the document. - Moreover, since the document is signed by Meier, who was related to some of the signatories - namely Abraham Abel and Nathan Nota - the purchase contract, according to the lawyers, is already illegal due to this last circumstance, since it is signed by an incomplete number of signatures, i.e. not seven,

but only of six legally valid ones, was confirmed. The counterparty, i.e. Eleazar, declared against this that the signature of the meier need not be that of the meier who was related to the above-mentioned Abraham Abel and Nathan Nota, who had also signed his father's contract of sale, and that at that time kinship did not require anything special in such cases; that even if the contract was confirmed by invalid signatures, the record of the sale of the house to his father was nevertheless confirmed by seven legal members of the administration, and that his rights to the possession of the property were completely valid.

The Bet Din decided after interrogating both parties:

If Eleazar can fully prove all that he has stated in support of his right, the possession shall remain with him; otherwise it shall pass to the Kahal. If Eleazar can prove that the protocol was drawn up by seven legal representatives, then in this case even the invalidity of the contract of sale cannot deprive him of the right of possession; the house likewise remains in Eleazar's possession if he proves that the signature of the meier on the contract was by a meier who was not related to the other signatories - or if he proves that at that time a contract could be confirmed by relatives. For the time being, however, the house of Eleazar passes into the possession of the Kahal, and he has the right to sell it on. (!) The buyer will enjoy all the rights of the Kahal to this house.

Tuesday, 6 Tammus 5556 (2 July 1796).

signed. Signatures of the members of the Bet Din.

No. 24 (= II. 65). About the charge before Geri cht .  
Wednesday, section Chukkat d. Pentateuch 5556 (2 July 1796).

The rulers of the Kahal decree:

The Reb Body from Wituki is to be asked to come to our town before the Bet Din to appear because of the dispute with his brother-in-law.

No. 25 (= II. 66). On the Process of the Kahal with  
the Christian priesthood at the Magistrat.  
Sabbath, section Chukkat d. Pentateuch, 5556 (5 July 1796).

The rulers of the Kahal decree:

Rabbi David, son of Eleazar, is appointed assistant to the  
The Chairman of the Kahal shall be appointed Chairman of the Kahal for  
the month and shall be instructed to diligently follow up, with the  
Magistrate the progress of the matter which has been brought before the  
Magistrate following the request of the Christian priesthood to the Kahal  
to draw on the liability of a bill of exchange in their possession. The  
chairman and his assistant are allowed to pay the necessary expenses  
from the Kahal's treasury. <sup>4b)</sup>

No. 26 (= II. 67). On the conclusion of the

Eigentumsrechte des Eleazar (s. Akte Nr. 23).

Since by decree of the Bet Din in the dispute between the Kahal and  
Eleazar the place of the uncircumcised hatter Swanski passed into the  
possession of the Kahal, Isaschar Beer entered into negotiations with the  
local chiefs for the purpose of ceding the place to him and paid the  
demanded sum into the Kahal's treasury in full. Consequently, as of  
today, the ownership of this place passes to the aforementioned Isaschar  
Beer, and no Kahal can raise the slightest objection to this. On the  
contrary, every Kahal is obliged to confirm the rights of Isaschar Beer or  
his legal successor to this place. The claims of the former owner Eleazar  
shall be satisfied by the Kahal.

The above was enacted by general consent in the court of the Kahal  
on Monday, section Balak of the Pentateuch 5556 (7 July 1796).

No. 27 (= II. 68). Declaration of the Kahal concerning  
the house of a private person.

The board of the Kahal announces that the square situated between  
the house of the glazier Eleazar and that of Melammed (teacher) Reb  
Beer belongs to it.

No. 28 (= II. 69). About the General Assembly of the Circle.

Wednesday, of the week of Pinchas section, 5556 (July 16, 1796). As petitions have been received from some parts of the district at the Board of our City have been received, with the request to assist some communities in the Kahal is, to represent the whole district at the next meeting, it has been decided by the heads of the Kahal that the five representatives of our town are to be joined by Rabbi Joshua; they will then jointly be considered as authorised representatives both on the part of our town and on the part of the said congregations.

No. 29 (= II. 70). Abschrift der Kahalbestimmung für das Wohnrecht des Musikers und des Rabbi Isaak in der Stadt Minsk.

The general assembly of the Kahal of the governorate city of Minsk decided with the consent of all members present: The musician Isaak has been granted the right of residence in the city of Minsk - to him and his descendants as well as the full right to conduct all business, equal to all other inhabitants of the city, without the slightest difference and without exception. However, since the aforementioned Isaak claims that he already acquired this right once, which is indeed proven by the fact that he has already been living in our city for a long time without hindrance, this document is issued to him free of charge - only to confirm his previous rights.

Thursday, 27 Shebat 5557 (12 February 1797).

No. 30 (= II. 71). On the temporary prohibition of collective prayers in private prayer rooms houses of prayer in the city.

Sabbath, section Ki tabo d. Pentateuch, 5557 (26 Aug. 1797) Minsk.

It is decreed by the Board of the Kahal: On Monday, it is to be proclaimed in all houses of prayer: From the first day of Selichot until Yom Kippur, all residents of the city are forbidden to assemble in private houses for communal prayer; rather, prayers are to be un-

ding in one of the synagogue's prayer houses.

The Chasanim (cantors) and Baale Tekiot (wind blowers) are subject to legal ban if they perform services in a private house; any prayer or other worship outside the synagogue is considered hostile to God. If, however, this provision should be violated by any householder, he will be subjected to the punishment to which an apostate to the Jewish laws is usually subjected.

No. 31 (=II. 72). Reward of the Buchbinders Hillel.

On the same day we decide that the bookbinder Hillel is to be rewarded for returning to the Kahal, without any demand, a debt note of the Kahal for 50 chervonetz which he had found. As a reward for this deed, it is resolved, by general consent, to exempt the aforesaid Hillel from all dues, both those to the state and municipal burdens, for the period of the existence of the present Kahal constitution\*). (II. 72 adds: "In addition, he is given the right to be the first candidate for the vacant post of Reader.")

No. 32 (= II. 73). Eighting of fees for poultry slaughtering.  
Monday, Nizzabim section of the Pentateuch, 5557 (28 August 1797) Minsk.

With the general consent of the representatives of the town, the levy from the slaughter of poultry is leased to Jacob, son of Mordecai, for one year<sup>41</sup>). The levy is leased to him at the agreed price of Rbl. 55 per year, which he is to pay to the Kahal in silver. The other provisions remain the same as those agreed with his father in the previous year. The aforementioned Jacob undertakes, as is customary, to employ an inspector at his own expense, who is to ensure compliance with all the laws concerning shechitaing, and who has a certificate from the Chief Rabbi of our town to this effect.

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\* It is unclear whether for the time of the currently ruling Kahal, i.e. for one year, or until the existing Kahal constitution is changed. D. H.

All this was decided in the court of the Kahal with general agreement, without the slightest objection.

No. 33 (= II. 74). Purchase of rye for certain purposes and remuneration of the secretary of the Gouverneurs.

Thursday, Noah section of Pentateuch 5558 (8 Oct. 1797).

The heads of the Kahal determine that Rbl. 100 of the levies are to be used for the purchase of rye and other grain for the specified purpose, and Rbl. 50 are to be paid to the secretary of the governor for services rendered. \*)

No. 34 (=II. 75). Of the redemption of the debt to Rabbi Mordecai, son of Rabbi Moses, presiding of the Bet Din .

Monday, reading Lech lecha of the Pentateuch, 5558 (12 Oct. 1797),  
Minsk.

Regarding the debt to Rabbi Mordecai, son of the late Rabbi Moses, which is attested by the debt certificate issued by the Kahal to his father, from whom it passed to him, it is decreed: From the treasury of the Kahal the whole amount is to be paid in instalments within two years, i.e. weekly 2 Rbl. of silver. Rabbi Mordecai is obliged to hand over the bill of debt in his possession, together with all documents proving his right to this debt, to a trustee, with whom they will remain until the debt is finally paid. After the expiry of two years, however, after the debt has been fully repaid, the ombudsman shall hand over all the documents to the Kahal. Before that, the Kahal will send a report to the magistrate\*\*), and as soon as the magistrate has issued a decree, the debt will be paid off according to the above standard.

No. 35 (=II. 76). Percentage levy.

Sabbath, Chajje Sara section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (31 Oct. 1797).

\* Apparent case of bribery. D. H.

\*\* Rabbi M. had apparently turned to the Russian court. D. H.



The Board of Directors of the Kahal and the General Assembly determine that a percentage tax is to be imposed on the town, namely 1% of the capital and 1/2% of the immovable property. The sum raised is to be used for this year to buy recruits from an impecunious background. For the future, however, a levy<sup>42</sup> equal to that levied in the town of Shklov will be implemented, the proceeds of which will be used to pay all state taxes and may not be used for other purposes.

No 36 (= II. 77). Bestimmung in the Abgaben nach the Muster der Stadt Schklov.

Wednesday, section Wajjeze of the Pentateuch, 5558 (11 Nov. 1797).

The rulers of the city decree: In our city it is forbidden, under penalty of

Cherem (Bannes) a levy for the redemption of the imperial taxes according to to be introduced according to the model of the city of Shklov. However, since this levy will yield more in Minsk than in Shklov, it must be introduced under easier conditions. These easier conditions will depend entirely on the Kahal. If it is customary in Shklov to conclude a settlement with the inhabitants (i.e. Jews), according to which they voluntarily exempt themselves from the levy of every single pound of meat by annual payment, then this must also be considered customary with us, on condition that the Kahal establishes a standard for all, which can exempt everyone from the levy. If, however, this is not the case in Shklov, it should not be introduced in our country either.

No. 37 (= II. 78). Of the trial of the Jewish craftsmen before the magistrate.

Wednesday, section Wajjeze of the Pentateuch 5558 (1797).

It has been determined by the heads of the city that the shop steward of the Kahal is to provide the necessary funds from the Kahal's treasury to entertain the judges in the town hall who are dealing with the deliberate court case concerning Jewish craftsmen. )

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\* This looks a lot like a bribe! D. H.

No. 38 (= II. 79). Of the feast for the die ners of t h e holy brotherhood of the dead b e s t a f f e r .

Sabbath, reading Wajjisclach of the Pentateuch, 5558 (21 Nov. 1797).

The rulers of the city decree: The trustee for the levies<sup>43</sup> from the livestock slaughter, Rabbi Moses son of Abraham, is ordered to give the oldest servants of the brotherhood 40 sloty (6 Rbl. silver) each for a feast that will take place on the 15th day of the coming month of Kislev.

No. 39 (= II. 80). Of the settlement with the archdeacon concerning a debt to him.

Sabbath, reading Wajjisclach of the Pentateuch, 5558 (21 Nov. 1797).

a) Due to the extreme necessity of ending the dispute with the local archdeacon, which arose from a debt owed to him by the Kahal, it is resolved by general consent:

Rabbi Hirsch, son of Rabbi Ruchim, is to be appointed as the Kahal's representative in this matter. As a reward for his efforts, the Kahal exempts him from the recruit tax for the current year. At this, the said Hirsch has to take an oath in which he swears to conduct the matter entrusted to him for the benefit of the Kahal, without deriving the slightest benefit for himself.

b) (= II. 81). At the same meeting it was decided: From the treasury of the Kahal, 8 Rbl. are to be given to Reb Abraham, son of Shuan, for the written work done for the Kahal.

No. 40 (= II. 82). Of the permission granted to a

The first of these is a private person on the construction of a prop o r t leading to the synagogue courtyard.

The principals decree:

The right sold by the holy brotherhood of the undertakers to Jacob, son of Shuan, to build a gate in the place serving as a passage to the courtyard of the synagogue, which lies between his house and the widow Judah's house, is to be confirmed. Hereby

One of the rulers of the city, together with the elders of the brotherhood, shall be instructed to draw up the rules for unhindered passage to the synagogue; from then on, free passage shall not be hindered. The rules will have the force of law. More important, however, is that the unalterable condition be fulfilled, according to which the holy brotherhood grants the Kahal permission to build a public lavatory on its site, for which the Kahal is already making preparations - without demanding payment for it.

If this is not done, the Kahal will refuse to confirm the sale of the aforementioned right by the brotherhood and the same will thus lose its legal force.

Sabbath, reading Wajjischlach of the Pentateuch, 5558 (21 Nov. 1797).

No. 41 (= II. 83). From the permission for the cantor to offer gifts on the day of Channuka (the Festival of Lights) to be allowed to collect.

On the morning of Monday, Mikkez section, 5558 (30 Nov. 1797).

The Mayor of the City Decree: To The Cantor of Bet Hamidrash, Rabbi Eleazar, is to be permitted, on the day of the Festival of Lights (Channuka) to go into the houses for the collection of gifts (known to the Jews as Channuka money).

No. 42 (= II. 84). Of the payment of the salary to the plenipotentiary of the Kahal for the past year.

Tuesday, Mikkez section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (Dec. 1, 1797). With the consent of all the rulers of the city, it is decreed: Solomon Shuan, Shammesh of the Bet Hamidrash, are from the treasury 10 Sloty per week (1.50 Rbl.) to the Kahal for the past year for having exercised the office of a representative of the Kahal in tax matters during that year.

No. 43 (= II. 85). Of the introduction of an ordinance in the Kom a rowka prefecture.

Tuesday, Mikkez section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (1797).

The rulers of the city decree that from today no special rulers shall officiate in the suburb of Komarovka, with the exception of one, namely the elder of the synagogue, who shall stand in the gallery during the reading of the Pentateuch. All duties and taxes are collected in the said suburb by our officials.

No. 44 (= II. 86). The payment of the taxes and the ransom for the family of Reb Hirsch, son of Simon.

On the morning of Thursday, Mikkez section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (3 Dec. 1797).

a) With the general consent of the town's leaders, it is determined: The recruit fees and the poll tax for the year 1797 for Reb Hirsch's family are to be paid from the Kahal's treasury according to Christian calculation and deducted from his salary.

b) At the same meeting it was decided: 30 Rbl. of silver are to be paid to Reb Hirsch's wife from the Kahal treasury, which will also be charged to Hirsch's salary.

No. 45 (= II. 87). From the Land Post.

Wednesday, reading Wajjechi of the Pentateuch, 5558, (16 Dec. 1797).

a) The rulers of the town decree: That a petition be presented to the Town Assembly\*, requesting them to undertake the collection of taxes for the Kahal for the Land Post Office. In order to bring this matter to a successful conclusion, it is resolved to make a few roubles available from the Kahal's coffers.

b) At the same meeting it was decided: Fish is to be bought for a certain person, and up to 10 Rbl. from the Kahal's treasury is to be used for this purpose. (!)

\* This matter remains unclear. The Kahale apparently had to contribute to the upkeep of the rural post office. D. H.

c). It was also decided: An appeal is to be lodged in the matter of the suit with the tailors<sup>44</sup>), and for this purpose up to 5 Rbl. and 20 Sloty of Polish silver money are to be used from the Kahal's treasury.

No. 46 (= II. 88). Of the tribute to the monthly head of the Kahal.

Sabbath, Wajjechi section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (19 Dec. 1797).

The following is decreed and affirmed by the heads of the city: During the reading of the Torah in the local Bet Hamidrash on the Sabbath, the greatest of the honours - the appointment in third place to read the Torah - is due to the head of the month, except on Sabbaths on which the New Year or a day of repentance falls. For this the Kahal must pay the Bet Hamidrash 22½ kopecks weekly. This honour may not be transferred to anyone except the head of the Kahal, his sons and brothers-in-law, to whom it is transferable.

No. 47 (= II. 89). The taking on of a debt for the payment of state taxes.

Tuesday, 21 Tebet 5558 (22 Dec. 1797).

Due to the lack of money to pay the taxes, which the local magistrate demands most emphatically, with his last ukase, the General Assembly decides: a debt is to be raised from the richest house owners of our city to pay the taxes. This bond will be repaid by the incoming levies and taxes. The duty of repaying the debt will be imposed on the trusted men of the Kahal. The shammashim of the Kahal shall give each creditor a certificate with their signature, which must contain the paragraph of the law<sup>45</sup>) according to which this certificate loses its value only after it has been torn up or a corresponding remark has been made on it. The representatives of the Kahal shall pay to the presenter of such a certificate the whole sum due to him out of the Kahal's revenue.

No. 48 (= II. 90). Of the congratulation of the community on holidays.

Thursday, Waera Section, 5558 (24 Dec. 1797).

The rulers of the city decree: On the day of Vasily the Great, (d. h. Christl. New Year 1798) is to go to those authorities for the purpose of a congratulation whose benevolence the Kahal considers useful, and the sum required for this purpose is to be used at the discretion of those who carry out the congratulation.

No. 49 (= II. 91). Of the surety for an arrested Jew.

Monday, Section Bo of the Pentateuch, 5558 (28 Dec. 1797).

The town leaders decide that Reb N. from Sluzk is to be bailed out so that he can be released to go home. Reb Inda Leib and another, whom he may choose, are appointed as sureties. This surety is to be considered equal to one provided by the seven rulers of the city.

No. 50 (= II. 102). Of the lawsuit between Jacob Kopele n and the Kahal on account of immovable property Own tums. \*)

Since Reb Jacob Kopelen, son of the Meier, has protested against the Kahal's right of ownership of the new stone shops built on the High Square next to the stone courtyard of Pan Trebert, and this protest is based on a document in his hands according to which the ownership of the stone shops belongs to him, the rulers of the city elected Rabbi Josef and Rabbi Eleazar as advocates for the Kahal, for the purpose of initiating a lawsuit before the Bet Din.

(= II. 103). Judgment of the Bet Din in this matter:  
Wednesday, 17 Elul 5558 (29 August 1798).

\* This whole passage shows the Talmudic subtlety and intrigue present within the Jewish communities, which were apparently so united. J. Kopelen is being framed here, or he was trying to deceive. D. H.

The document from the year 5514 (1754), presented by Jacob Kopelen, which confirms the right of ownership of the above-mentioned shops to his father, is signed by the seven heads of the town. The Kahal's advocates declared against this document:

1. The document only grants ownership rights to the wooden house of Sapeschka that used to stand on the said site; as there is now no trace of the house, the document has become meaningless; as a result, Jacob Kopelen cannot now claim any right to the new buildings constructed there.

2. Even if the document had retained its meaning, it could only be valid for the boundaries indicated in it. The document does not contain the usual formula for purchase contracts: "from the centre of the earth to the sky", consequently he cannot have any right to the cellars and the rooms above the second floor.

3. In the document presented, only a house is mentioned, the yard, on the other hand, is not mentioned; consequently, the right of ownership does not include the yard space of the house.

After hearing both parties, the Bet Din interrogated the witnesses who testified as follows:

1. The old wooden house occupied a space of about ten saschen.

2. The main façade of the house faced the High Square, and the back wall stood on the site of the former stone wall of Pan Trebert's house.

3. The house had a width of about seven ashes.

4. The shops now built occupy the five ashes of the plot formerly belonging to Sapeschka.

On the basis of these facts, the Bet Din, represented by the final signatories (chairman and judges), decides that the entire property formerly belonging to Sapeschka is now to belong to Jacob Kopelen, whereby his right of possession is to apply "from the centre of the earth to heaven". This right, confirmed by us here, is to be granted to Jacob Kopelen unbreakably from today until eternity. The owner of the aforementioned property shall have the full right to do with the property as he sees fit. -

This provision has been drawn up in accordance with the Talmudic laws and the rules of our Sages\*). To certify this, we sign it with our own hands.

Rabbi Michael, Chairman of the Bet Din.

(Follow signatures.)

For accuracy: Advocate of the Kahal and notary: Eleazar son of Rabbi Simon.

No. 51 (= II. 104). Of the agreement between Jacob Kopelen and the Kahal bezügl. der Läden, erbaut auf dem Grundstücken des ersten ren.

By decision of the Bet Din of 17 Elul 5558, the shops built on the land formerly belonging to the Sapeshka become the property of Jacob Kopelen.

The property measures 10 ashes in length and 6 ashes and 2 asses in width. Accordingly, the entire property to the east of the property of Jacob K. belongs to the Kahal. Since Jacob K. must therefore constantly come into contact with the property of Kahal, both parties voluntarily concluded the following settlement:

Both shops belonging to Hirsch and the still undeveloped property next to them pass into the unrestricted possession of Jacob K.; in return, he assigns to Kahal the right to all other parts of the property.

This settlement is based on law and custom and is based on the special law that such matters do not require a formal 'kinyan'. For full validity, however, the Jacob Kopelen paid the Kaboles Seder set by our Sages (see explanation IX).

Monday, 22 Elul 5558, Minsk.

Follow signatures.

No. 52 (= II. 92). From the Landpost.  
Tuesday, section Bo 5558 (29 Dec. 1797).

\* Note the reference to the Talmud, where the Chasaka is treated in detail, especially in the tractate Baba batra (28 ff.). This proves the great age of the institution of the Chasaka. D. H.



The heads of the Kahal decree: The deficit in tax revenue for the Land Post Office is to be covered from the treasury of the Kahal and the sum required for this purpose is to be distributed among the inhabitants of the city by levy.

No. 53 (= II. 93). From the wedding gift for the daughter of Ra bbine r.

Sabbath, Reading Mishpatim of the Pentateuch, 5558 (30 Jan. 1798).

The heads of the Kahal decide: The great sage, Rabbi Michael, is to be paid 10 Rbl. from the Kahal's treasury as a wedding gift for his daughter. In addition, it was decided at this meeting to pay 22 rbl. to the advocate of the Kahal for the purchase of grain bread.

No. 54 (= II. 94). The purchase of young arrestees.

Tuesday, section Teruma of the Pentateuch, 5558 (2 Feb. 1798).

Since the voluntary donations are not sufficient to cover the enormous expenses associated with the ransoming of Jewish arrestees, it is decreed, in order to create permanent sources of money for this purpose:

1. A tax of 18 groschen is to be levied on every father for the birth of a boy at the act of circumcision; the same amount is to be paid at every wedding. The shammashim may not give their approval for the list of guests to be invited before payment of this tax.

2. At circumcision festivals and weddings, a plate is to be set out for guests' gifts of money.

3. On the day of each new moon, go from house to house with a collection box.

No. 55 (= II. 95). From the arrestees.

Monday, Tezawwe section of the Pentateuch, 5558 (8 Feb. 1798). It is ordained by the rulers of the city that the attorney of the

Kahal used 50 Rbl. of silver from his coffer to buy Jewish lottery tickets

arrestees should pay.

No. 56 (= II. 96). Of the arrestees.

Sabbath, reading Wajjakhel of the Pentateuch, 5558 (27 Feb. 1798).

The rulers of the city decree: 22 Reichstaler are to be paid out of the Kahal's treasury for the ransoming of the aforementioned prisoners.

No. 57 (= II. 97). Von der Handelssteuer.

Thursday, 5th day of Passover week, 5558 (25 March 1798).

Since the expenses of the Kahal, which are not specified in detail (!), are very high, but there is a particular lack of funds to pay the taxes for impecunious members of our community, the General Assembly, in the absence (!) of the representatives of the town, determines: In our town, trade is to be taxed according to the model of the town of Schklow, without the slightest deviation from the customs there. This tax is to be levied as of 1 Jan. <sup>46</sup>)

However, with regard to the 1200 Rbl. which we now have to pay to the state treasury, it is decreed that immediately after approval of this tax by the governor, five members of all classes of the people are to be elected, to whom it is incumbent to distribute this sum and a further 800 Rbl. which have already been spent by the Kahal (!) among the inhabitants.

It was then decided: That a proposal be made for the distribution and that the said tax be introduced, if necessary, already without the Governor's approval. \*)

No. 58 (= II. 98). Of the permission granted to a brotherhood to take a number from the court of the Synagogue to build.

Thursday, 16 Siwan 5558 (20 May 1798).

The rulers of the city decree: The local brotherhood "Gemilnt Chasadim" (percentage-free loan fund) is to be granted permission to

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\* This passage once shows the lunar nature of Judaism. The Kahal was an officially authorised institution, but it was also used for unofficial measures in addition to official ones. Never forget: the Ghettojudentum is a Kriegformation, reproaches are therefore out of place.

D. H.

to build a room in the courtyard of the synagogue, against the wall next to the tower. The room must be built of bricks and may not exceed six ashes in width and length. The room is for the storage of objects and pledges. It is permitted to build doors and windows and to place cupboards in the room for the storage of objects.

The fraternity is not allowed to hold prayers in the room under any circumstances; likewise, it is forbidden to rent or sell the room.

Construction of the room can begin immediately. This right is granted to the brotherhood on a legal basis by the representatives of the city and is considered sacrosanct.

All this was set by us without any opposition from any side.

Follow signatures.

No. 59 (= II. 99). Concerning the above-mentioned matter.

During the construction of the room, the brotherhood violated the conditions under which it had been granted the building right by building four windows without the city's permission. Although the building permit was thereby forfeited, the representatives of the city agreed to maintain it, provided that the brotherhood bricked up two windows; otherwise the document lost its validity.

This decision was announced to the brotherhood by the Kahal. However, since they did not heed this warning, it was decreed:

The right to build the room in the courtyard of the synagogue is considered to have expired.

The above was decreed in the court of the Kahal with general consent and without any objection.

No. 60 (= II. 100). Of the shepherds and the knives used by them.

Sabbath, Section Korach 5558 (5 June 1798).

From the Extraordinary General Assembly and from the

Board of the Kahal was decided: Under the Biblical ban, the shechitards who are not in the service of our Kahal are to be forbidden to slaughter poultry and livestock in our town. Under the same Cherem, our shechitards undertake not to use a knife sharpened a second time in a slaughter. \*) If a shepherd violates this commandment, the animal he slaughters will be considered carrion (trefa).

No. 61 (= I. 101). Von dem Geschirr, in dem man Fleisch von unbekannter r Schächtung kocht.

To deliberate on the question of Rabbi Moses' dishes in which meat was cooked that had been slaughtered by a shochet who was not in the service of our town, a Bet Din is called, consisting of Rabbi Zevi Hirsch and Rabbi Eleazar, - so that he could determine, on the basis of Talmudic laws, whether the tableware was to be considered kosher, i.e. good for use by Jews, - or trefa, i.e. ritually unusable.

No. 62 (= II. 105). On the election of seven persons to order all the affairs of the Kahal.

Sabbath, section Wajjelech of the Pentateuch, 5559 (4 Sept. 1799).

Today, on the fifth day

of the month of Tishrei

under the

Presence of all former heads and representatives of the Kahal as well as the prominent residents of the city: Seven persons are to be elected to order all the affairs of the Kahal. Rabbi Zevi Hirsch and Rabbi Isaac were immediately elected unanimously. The remaining five will be appointed by the five electors, who will be determined by ballot. \*\*) Among these five must be three heads of the previous months.

The seven appointees shall order all the affairs of the Kahal, and the five elected by ballot shall also take upon themselves this office if they deem it necessary in the interest of the city.

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\* The belief in magic - which is what we are dealing with here - plays a decisive role in Orthodox Judaism. D. H.

\*\* Cf. the election to the Kahal in the Introduction. (P. XXIX.) D. H.

No. 63 (= II. 106) Translation of a document on the  
General Assembly of the Circle.

Thursday, 25 Shebat 5559 (20 Jan. 1799).

From the extraordinary General Assembly, two residents of our town have been elected as members of the Committee for the entire district, namely: Rabbi Isaac and Rabbi Set Wolf. These two members, together with the other representatives of the governorate, must attend the meeting of the entire district, which will deal with questions of the fate of our people. Every opinion that these two members will express on a question concerning the Jews of the district is to be treated equally to the opinion of the seven leaders of our city.

This was decided on the basis of our laws and rules by the General Assembly - which we, the notaries, confirm by our signature.

Minsk. Follow signatures.

No. 64 (= II. 129 and 130) From the rules for  
feasters. <sup>47</sup>)

On Monday, the eve of 1 Siwan 5559 (23 May 1799), the following was proclaimed in all the prayer houses:

Hear, holy people! The rulers of our city, together with the chairman of the Bet Din, inform you that from today on no one is allowed to give sweet cakes and liquor at weddings or circumcision festivals, but must give meat at festivals, with the exception of the poor, who in case of need must obtain permission from the Kahal to give cakes and liquor at the festival. The wealthy people are obliged, under penalty of the biblical ban, not to give cake and liquor, but to give meat dishes, whereby the following rules are to be strictly observed:

1. Under penalty of biblical ban, men and especially women are forbidden to consume liquor, cake, juice and other sweets when congratulating the birth of a son.

\* The Kahal needs money and therefore forces his community members to spend heavily by purchasing leviable meat. D. H.

2. Under the same cherem, women are forbidden to taste sweets when congratulating the birth of a daughter, not only on Saturdays but also on weekdays, except for the closest relatives. This prohibition also extends to the parents of newborns, and no one may offer sweets to their more distant relatives or send them to the house.
3. Likewise, it is forbidden to treat guests to fruits or confectionery after the feast; guests are forbidden to accept them.
4. It is forbidden to give feasts in the week before and after circumcision, except to entertain beggars on the morning of circumcision. People who do not belong to this group are not allowed to touch any food.
5. It is forbidden to give a meal on the day of circumcision, except for the godmother, the midwife, the mother and the mother's aunt.
6. It is forbidden to have a special meal on the day of the midwife's discharge. This meal must be combined with the feast of circumcision.
7. Only relatives up to and including the third generation may be invited to the circumcision feast, as well as fiancés, cousins, the three circumcisers, a head of the town, three servers, two neighbours from each side and three neighbours from the opposite side, as well as business neighbours, business friends and the children's teacher, who in turn may also invite the parents of his pupils to a similar feast at his home.
8. The above-mentioned persons can also be invited to a wedding - as well as friends, girlfriends and four servers.
9. A head of the town may invite all other heads of the same town to a feast.
10. Brothers of the community of undertakers may invite the elders of the brotherhood to a feast.
11. A bridegroom from a foreign town may invite his quartermaster, with whom also his next of kin, who are in his house

\* The Kahale were always keen to lean on the proletariat, hence the social welfare. D.  
H.

are allowed to appear. Apart from the owner of the house, no one enjoys the right to appear at the feast with his relatives.

12. Of the officials of the synagogue, the rabbi of the town, the cantor and singers, two servants of the Kahal, the precentor and the "Schulklopper" (the crier who calls the people to the synagogue on holidays with the call "in-Schul-ein"), and the head of the holy brotherhood of undertakers may be invited to weddings and festivals of circumcision. The other servants of the synagogue are to be tipped - inviting them, on the other hand, is forbidden.

13. Members of the Brotherhood of the Undertakers of the Dead and the Seven Keruim may invite their servants.

14. Under the biblical ban, residents are forbidden to celebrate a wedding outside the city, whether for a virgin, widow or divorced woman. However, those who have received special permission to do so may not leave until they have paid the tax, the same as those who celebrate weddings within the city.

15. At dinners held after the weddings, the bride's or groom's parents may invite the next of kin, neighbours, friends, the owner of the house and the cantor with the singers.

16. Each of the two families may not give more than one party before and after the wedding.

17. No more than three musicians are allowed at a wedding apart from the patchan (humourist) and his helpers.

18. Musicians are forbidden to eat more than three times at weddings.

19. Youth of both sexes, even if they are not related, may be invited to the meal during the dressing of the bride.

20. It is forbidden to give out of weddings cakes with decoration or filling of jam.

No. 65 (= II. 107). On the repayment of the debt to Bulgavovich.

Sunday, section Tasria 5559 (20 March 1799).

From the heads of the General Assembly it is commanded:

1. To notify all Pan Bulgavovich's debtors that they will pay in full all monies owed to him according to the promissory note, and
  2. in the case of debtors who prove unable to meet their obligations, to satisfy said Bulgavovich from the Kahal's treasury.
- The rulers of the Kahal shall be obliged to replenish the moneys expended for this purpose from the levies due to them from the shechers according to the threepenny tax on each pound of beef. If, however, this source should prove insufficient, all possible income of the Kahal shall be used for the final payment of the said debt. <sup>49)</sup>

No. 66 (= II. 108). Of the appointment of temporary city leaders.

Sunday, Tasria Section, 5559 (1799).

The General Assembly elected Rabbi Moses, son of Joseph Jechiel, Rabbi Zewi Hirsch, son of Reuben, and Rabbi Elijah, son of Shalom, and besides them the well-known rich Rabbi Isaac, son of Akiba, as city leaders until the new election. These four chosen ones are given the temporary leadership of the city from this day until the coming Passover, and their regulations shall have the executive power of the seven chosen ones.

No. 67 (= II. 109). Of the elevation of Samuel, son of David, to the upper class - Mor enu.

Wednesday, on the fourth day of Passover 5559 (13 April 1799).

The town leaders have given the name Morenu to Samuel, son of David. When reading the Torah (the sacred scroll of the Law), he must be addressed in the synagogue as follows: Morenu Parnes Rabbi Samuel Ben Ha chaber Reb David, i.e., he is addressed during the reading of the Torah as Most Wise Rabbi Samuel, son of Chaber Reb Davide. <sup>49)</sup>

No. 68 (= II. 110). Von der Ernennung des Kahal-Vorsteher.



Thursday, 20 Nisan 5559 (14 April 1799)

It is ordered by the General Assembly to appoint the well-known rich Rabbi Isaak, son of Rabbi Akiba, as chairman of the council of the city leaders. The aforementioned Rabbi Isaac is appointed to this office for a whole year, from today until the feast of the coming Passover in the year 5560 (1800). This election was made with the consent of all present without the slightest objection from any quarter. To confirm this, we, the Notaries and Trustees of the City, sign here.

No. 69 (= II. 111) . Of the election of the electors of the new members of the Ka hal.

On the fourth feast day of Passover 5559 (1799).

The general assembly is ordered: to proceed with the immediate election of the new members of the Kahal according to the following rules:\*)

1. Five electors shall be eliminated from the number of members by ballotage.
2. The five electors chosen by ballotage shall appoint six councillors for one year, reckoned from this Passover to the coming of the year 5560 (1800).
3. The delegates must not be related to each other.
4. The head of the councillors shall be the aforementioned rich Rabbi Isaac for one year (cf. No. 68). For the execution of the ballotage, all and sundry shall be forbidden to speak to the electors until they have appointed the councillors, and until the list of their appointees has been signed.
5. Similarly, the shammashim are forbidden to come into contact with the electorate until they have appointed the deputies.
6. A voter who has never been a councillor at any time may not be appointed to that office.
7. If any of the voters speak to anyone until the list is signed, the ballotage is declared invalid. All this

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\* Cf. the introduction! D. H.

agreement of all members of the General Assembly.

was noted  
with the

No. 70 (= II. 112). Of the admission of individuals to the elections.

On the fourth festival of Passover, the General Assembly is commanded to admit to the elections this time Rabbi Zechariah Mendel, son of Rabbi Arjeh Leib, who is not among the number of members of the Assembly\*, Rabbi Wolf, son of Rabbi Abraham, and Rabbi Avigdar, son of Menachem Nachum.

No 71 (= II. 113). List of balloted voters, compiled on Thursday, the 6th day of the election. Day of the Passover 5559 (14 April 1799).

1. Rabbi Eliakim Genz, son of Rabbi David.
2. Rabbi Elia, son of Rabbi Zewi Hirsch.
3. Rabbi Jechiel Michael, son of Rabbi Aaron.
4. Rabbi Shalom, son of Rabbi Moses, Segall (Levite).
5. Rabbi Elijah, son of Rabbi Avigdar.

These are the five persons who are appointed electors by ballot, on the basis of and in pursuance of the rules of Act No. 69 relating to this subject.

No. 72 (=II. 114). To the good hour !

This is the list of the rulers of the city, appointed on Thursday, the 6th feast day of Passover.

1. President (Chairman) Rabbi Isaac, son of Rabbi Akiba.
2. Rabbi Joshua, son of Rabbi Eliakum Genz.
3. Rabbi Zewi Hirsch, son of Rabbi Wolf.
4. Rabbi Jechiel Michael, son of Rabbi Aaron.
5. Rabbi Chajjim, son of Rabbi Isaac, Levite.
6. Rabbi Sew Wolf, son of Rabbi Zewi Hirsch.
7. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi David.

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\* So sometimes you defy all the rules. Unstable above, stable below.

List of elders of the charity collection box. \*)

1. Rabbi Eliakim Genz, son of Rabbi David, 1st elder.
2. Rabbi Uriah, son of Rabbi David, 2nd elder.
3. Rabbi Elijah, son of Rabbi Zewi Hirsch, 3rd elder.
4. Rabbi Joshua Herschel, son of Rabbi Moses, 4th elder.
5. Rabbi Isaac, son of Rabbi Zewi Hirsch, 5th elder.

All the hereby appointed rulers of the city and five elders of the charity collection box are elected by the above-mentioned electors on the basis of our laws and customs on the 6th feast day of Passover for a whole year, i.e. until the Passover of the coming year 5560 (1800).

No. 73 (= II. 115). From congratulating superiors\*\*) on feast days (expenses for Best ec hung).

Wednesday, the 26th of Nisan, Bible passage Acharé Moth, 5559 (20 April 1799).

The chiefs of the city are ordered to go to all superiors and officials with gifts (bribery!) and to take from the treasury of the Kahal the expenses necessary for this purpose.

No. 74 (= II. 116). Von the approval of a Support for the Rabbi of Birsha. Wednesday, 26th Nifan, Section Acharé Moth 5559 (20 April 1799).

The rulers of the city are ordered to hand over five rubles in paper money from the treasury of the Kahal to the famous rabbi of the birsha as a one-time support, in addition to the support granted to him by the elders. \*\*\*)

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\* Proletariat, social welfare and kahal despotism! The Kahal also relies on the proletariat. D. H.

\*\* Russian authorities. D. H.

\*\*\* This passage points us to the inner structure of the ghetto. Under the rule of the enterprising and rich, thin upper class, a lower class works in bitter poverty, in which there is no lack of noble, ideal-thinking and philanthropic scholars. Hillel and Fromer come from such circles. They form the most important stratum, the ethical backbone of the non-humans.

No. 75 (= II. 117) . Provision on the foreign melamedim

Sabbath, Acharé Moth section, 5559 (23 April 1799).

It is ordered by the rulers of the city: to forbid the Melammedim who come here to Minsk from other cities to take into their chedarim (public schools) more than five pupils. As for the foreign Melammedim who have been practising their profession here for a long time, and where the number of pupils exceeds five, the total sum collected by the Melammedim from their pupils must be divided into as many parts as they have pupils<sup>50</sup>; five parts of this are to belong to the Melammedim, but the rest must be handed over to the Kahal for the payment of the Melammedim of Minsk who have no means of subsistence. This provision does not remotely exempt the foreign Melammedim from the tax long imposed on them for the benefit of the Talmud Torah<sup>51</sup>).

No. 76 (= II. 118). Von das Loskauf jüdischer Arrestanten.

Sabbath, Acharé Moth Division, 5559 (1799).

The rulers of the city are ordered to elect four elders as overseers of the collections for the ransom of Jewish prisoners, known as Pidjon-Schebuim, namely the well-known Rabbi Sew Wolf, son of Rabbi Joshua Herschel, son of Moses; the well-known Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi David, and the well-known Rabbi Abraham, son of Rabbi Arje Leib.

Two of them, Rabbi Joshua Herschel and Rabbi Abraham, shall at the same time be appointed controllers of the commanded collection. To them shall be brought all the funds of this collection, and under their supervision shall be made all expenditures for the ransom of Jewish arrestees.

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Judaism, which appears so immoral to the Jews. Only knowledge of this poor, ethically high, exceedingly resilient underclass leads to a proper understanding of Judaism. The business-savvy factors, the rich house Jews, the slave-wielding rabbis are not the backbone of Judaism. D. H.

\*Taxation in every possible direction. D. H.

No. 77 (= II. 119). From the sale of the Inheritance right on the stone shop building of Baikow an Jechiel Michael.

Sabbath, section Emor 5559 (7 May 1799).

In agreement with the town's rulers, the title to two stone shop buildings of the Baikow, built on the High Square, has been sold to the well-known rich Rabbi Jechiel Michael. \*) In addition to the two shops, this right extends to the adjacent gates, to the cellars below them and to the upper floors above the said shops, in a word, to everything from the centre of the earth to the height of the sky.

A document must be issued to the Jechiel Michael concerning these rights, with all the certifications of the holy Bet Din. All this shall be done without preliminary notice. For these rights, Rabbi Jechiel Michael is to pay 200 rubles in paper money to the Kahal's treasury.

No. 78 (= II. 120). From the legal dispute of a private person with the Kahal.

Sabbath, Bible passage Emor, 5559 (May 7, 1799).

As a result of the petition of Zewi Hirsch, son of Lipman, concerning his claims to the right of administration of the house of Zewi Hirsch, son of Jacob, located on Yurievskaya Street, and his desire to bring this dispute with the Kahal before the Bet Din, it is ordered by the rulers of the city to choose two advocates, namely the chief Rabbi Hosea, son of Eliakim Genz, and the well-known rich Jechiel Michael, son of Aaron. These two persons are ordered to conduct the trial at the Bet Din with the aforementioned Zewi Hirsch, son of Lipman.

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\* In his book "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben" (The Jews and Economic Life), Sombart points out the excessive appreciation of wealth that is found among the Jews. The minutes of the meetings also show this, in that wealth is referred to with particular esteem. D. H.

No. 79 (= II. 121). Of the Rec h t s s t r e i t d e s K a h a l with the guilds.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section, 5559 (14 May 1799).

It is ordered by the rulers of the city to peacefully end the dispute with the guilds\*) and to pay them 200 silver rubles for all their claims from the treasury of the Kahal.

No. 80 (= II. 122) . From the agreement of the Kahal with Chevra Kadisha and Sheba Keruim, concerning the Income from livestock shepherding.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section, 5559 (14 May 1799).

In accordance with their rules, the rulers of the city have bought to the brotherhoods of Chevra Kadisha (undertakers) and Sheba Keruim (seven called ones) the share of the income from the slaughtering of cattle belonging to the Kahal. Previously, one half of the income belonged to the Kahal and the other to the two brotherhoods mentioned. As of today, the first half will become the perpetual property of the brotherhoods as a result of the complete purchase, and the Kahal may never lay the slightest claim to it. This right is transferred to the said brotherhoods for 200 roubles, which are to be paid to the Kahal as payment of the guild fee, for which a written document with the signatures of the heads of the city and the members of the General Assembly is to be handed over to the said brotherhoods.

No. 81 (= II. 123). Of the monies received from the village school assistants.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section 5559 (14 May 1799).

The town leaders are ordered to use the 80 roubles of paper money received from the village school assistants<sup>52</sup>) for municipal expenses.

\*The case is unclear. Apparently it is a state business tax which the Kahal cannot pay. How the 200 Rbl. are raised is shown in Protocol No. 80. D. H.

No. 82 (= II. 124). From the rights of the elders of the holy brethren the dead are created.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section, 5559 (14 May 1799).

The present Elders of the Holy Brotherhood of the Undertakers of the Dead shall be given in advance; until the new elections of Elders, the rights of the seven Wardens of the City, in all things pertaining to this Brotherhood, and all their regulations shall be equal to the regulations of the seven Wardens of the City.

No. 83 (= II. 125). On the honour to be paid to the monthly elder.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section, 5559 (14 May 1799).

Based on the ordinances of the Kahal, of the Sabbath, Bible section Behar Sinai, 5559 (May 14, 1798), (interpreted in File No. 46), it is commanded that the monthly elder be honoured with the third honorifics at the reading of the Torah every Sabbath in our Bet Hammidrash (House of Prayer).<sup>53</sup>

No. 84 (= II. 126). Of the gifts to the members of the Magistrates.

Sabbath, Behar Sinai Section, 5559 (14 May 1799).

The Board of the Kahal orders to disburse from the treasury of the Kahal for gifts to the members of the Magistrate the following monies: 20 roubles in paper as a reward for Arzimovich to reimburse his expenses during the conduct of the affair of David son of J., and to disburse 5 roubles in paper to Yankushka, but to reward the other members of the Magistrate at the discretion of the rich Rabbi Isaac son of Akiba.

No. 85 (= II. 127). From the order of the Kahal to all the bruderschaften.

Sabbath, Division of the Pentateuch Bechukkotai, 5559 (11 June 1799).

It is resolved by the rulers of the city to issue an order to all brotherhoods, from today until the eighteenth of the month of Ijjar of the following year 5560 (1800), i.e. for

for the duration of a whole year, not to admit new members, with the exception of children and young people not yet of marriageable age. The monthly elder of each brotherhood is forbidden to vote on admission to the brotherhood. The same shall be forbidden to the shammashim of each brotherhood.

It was determined and announced that the aforementioned prohibition should not be extended to the brotherhood of the Gemilot Chasadim (interest-free loan fund) and the craftsmen.

No. 86 (= II. 128). From the provision on midwives.

Sabbath, Bechukkotai Section, 5559 (1799).

To supplement the number of midwives serving in the city, it is ordered that two more be appointed, namely: Mariasha, wife of the late Asriel, and the wife of Rabbi Leiser from Chashnik.

No. 87 (= II. 131). From the sale of the right to a shop of his own to Rabbi Chajjim, son of Isaac, the Levite.<sup>54)</sup>

In the General Assembly, which was attended by all the heads of the town as well as the chairmen of the Kahal, the following was decided with the consent of all:

To sell to the leader, Rabbi Chajjim, son of Isaac, the Levite, the right to the possession of the stone shop built by him, namely: the right to run one of the two shops with cellars and an upper floor, which he, Rabbi Chajjim, built together with his brother, the rich Jacob, in the High Place. These shops are bordered on the one hand by the staircase leading to the second floor, which belongs to the two brothers and the head Rabbi Samuel, son of Dan together, and on the other hand by the shops belonging to the Russian Baikoy. The front of these shops faces the High Square, but the back faces the Square of Pan Kister. Of these two shops, the one on the side of the aforementioned stairs belongs to Rabbi Chajjim. In addition to the right to the shop, the Rabbi Chajjim has the right to the upper floors and cellars within the above-mentioned limits from the centre of the earth.



sold up to the height of heaven. All this property has been definitively and securely transferred to the Chajim, his successors and agents, for perpetual possession. Likewise, the right to possession of the staircase leading to the cellar has been transferred to him, as well as that of the outside staircase in front of the shops. The right to possession of all this immovable property is transferred and sold by the Kahal to Rabbi Chajim in full, without any reservation, and Rabbi Chajim has long since paid the money owed to the Kahal for this.

In this way, the aforementioned property becomes his indisputable possession as of this day, and he can do as he pleases with it, i.e.: build, rebuild, demolish, sell, bequeath, lend, exchange, in short, do as with his property\*), and no one in the world may prevent him from doing so from today until eternity. But if protest should be made against this sale, or any part of it, by any person or association, the Kahal and Bet Din undertake in any case to stand up to the Chajim and his successors for the rights conferred upon them, unless the rights of the person protesting are recognised by the Kahal.\*\*\*) Thus he shall be able to shift in peace without the least danger. All expenses and losses which the Rabbi Chajim should incur from the protest of a person or persons against the sale of the whole or part of the property, may be levied on him by the Kahal on the basis of our Talmudic regulations\*\*\*) from his income, as far as it is possible.

Our current document on the compensation of damages has the legal force of a promissory note from the Bet Din, issued on the basis of Talmudic laws, even the legal force of a bill of exchange, issued according to the standard of the ruling imperial courts. In future, the Kahale are not only to undertake the collection of the expenses arising from these cases, but they are also enjoined to render assistance in the strongest possible form, and to pay in the smallest possible way the expenses incurred in

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\* It is just not property. D. H.

\*\* This reservation calls into question the value of the whole assurance. D. H.

\*\*\* Important for the a l t e r of the institution! D. H.

to fulfil the conditions laid down in this document. All this is irrevocably decided in the presence of the members of the General Assembly in the Council Chamber of the Kahal on the basis of the sacred laws and regulations of the Kahal, and confirmed on the basis of those rules and principles according to which the activity of the Kahal does not require formal confirmation by the Kinyan. <sup>55)</sup> In confirmation of this, this document with our signatures is delivered to the Chajjim on 21 Siwan 5559 (3 June 1799) at Minsk.

Although this document is authenticated by the rulers of the city in this their city, and it does not require control and repeated authentication according to our laws, we, the Bet Din, authenticated this document with all our rights to grant even greater legal force. And so, as of this day, the shop, as well as all the other buildings listed in this document, passes into the perpetual possession of Rabbi Chajjim, son of Isaac, and his successors. To this certification we give our signatures.

The same document has also been issued to his brother, the rich Jacob, Levite, on his shop, which is by the Baikov's shops, as well as on half of all the buildings and cellars belonging to himself. The document issued to Rabbi Jacob does not differ in any way from the document of Rabbi Chajjim mentioned above and is also protected by the power of the Bet Din.

#### No. 88 (= II. 181). Von den Abgaben aus der Viehschächtung.

The following items have been issued by the undersigned members elected by the Kahal and the General Assembly as rules for the true use and control of the income from the above levies and for the avoidance of misuse thereof.

1. the shechets are forbidden under the strictest cherem to perform the bedikat hareia (legal inspection) of any slaughtered livestock, <sup>56)</sup> without the presence of the authorised person (of the levies) or his permission; this will be

therefore ordered, so that the authorised person can carry out his duty immediately after the slaughter, i.e. to determine how much may be called kosher (i.e. edible for the Jews), and even to determine the owner and shepherd to whom the kosher slaughtered livestock belongs.

2. The father of the household who owns the kosher slaughtered animal, whether for his own use or for sale, may take it home for the purpose of skinning if he gives the authorised representative a deposit for the tax due; the authorised representative shall make a mark on the front part of the animal before it is taken away from the slaughterhouse so that it cannot be exchanged later. The front part, the inner parts, the head and the legs of the slaughtered animal must be provided by the owner for weighing by the authorised representative, and immediately after weighing the owner must pay to the weighers three groschen per pound in sound coin, the meat counted up to 120 pounds for 100. For the head, the inner parts and the legs, the levy is paid according to point 9 of this schedule. Before the issuing of a receipt by the authorised representatives, the sale of the meat is forbidden; after obtaining this receipt, he may only sell the meat at his home, not in the shop. \*)

3. Wedding and circumcision festivals given in the city are exempt from the poundage tax, and the feast-giver may receive the meat without tax according to the rules established about invitations to feasts. It is the duty of the Kahal and the General Assembly to compile the rules for invitations to festivals. In publishing such new rules for ritual feasts, the time-honoured laws must be taken into account, without the slightest transgression of them. The agents must not release the meat tax-free until the list of invitees has been compiled in accordance with the law and the rules.

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\* If the meat weighs 120 pounds, only 100 should be counted.

\*\* Compare with all these intricate provisions Brafmann's account of the psychological attitude of the Jews towards the kosher and its straitjacket; transgressions seem to have been quite frequent. D. H.

and signed by the municipal treasurer.

4. The kosher meat for the feast of the holy brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead on the 15th day of the month Kislev<sup>57)</sup> and for the feast of the brotherhood of Meshunna, which is given on the occasion of the reading of their entire budget, is exempt from the tax. In the case of such a feast, the gabbai of the brotherhood of butchers must submit a list of those invited for the fraternal feast to the authorized representative of the levies for the purpose of exemption from the tax over the said two pounds per person. Such a list must be signed by the monthly Gabbai of the Brotherhood.

5. These levies are intended to cover the imperial taxes for all the inhabitants of our city. The representatives of these levies are strictly forbidden to use even the smallest sum, be it only half a kopeck, for other purposes, even if it should concern the interests of the entire Jewish community of the district. The entire levy is to be used only for imperial taxes, neither the monthly Gabbai nor the General Assembly can exempt anyone from these levies, nor spend these funds.

In order that these rules, which have been established by the Kahal or the General Assembly, may be obeyed on the part of the plenipotentiary, they shall be commanded under the strictest cherm: The plenipotentiaries shall swear that these rules are sacred to them. The shamashim (servants and notaries) also have no right to assist anyone in transgressing these rules.

6. The Jews from the countryside who gather for festivals in the city (New Year: Rosh Hashanah; Day of Atonement: Yom Kippur<sup>58)</sup>) must pay the aforementioned levies for the meat they bring.

Note: The landlords with whom the Jews from the countryside stay must immediately hand over the meat they have brought with them to the authorized representative of the levies to determine the tax. The authorized representatives, in turn, are to see to it that the landlords take this meat.

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\* A forger would not have recorded this sentence! D. H.

comply with the regulations. If, however, anyone refuses to pay the tax, the meat brought with him shall, by virtue of our regulations, be declared unfit for the food of the Jews, like pork. The plenipotentiary shall inform all the fathers of the house of this provision.

7. However, meat that the Kahal wishes to distribute among the poor on any holiday is exempt from this levy, but the Kahal may not buy this meat with the levy money received.

8. In the event of a disagreement on any point of the said Rules, the same shall be submitted to us and the Agent shall not have the right to decide at his own discretion.

9. For the head, tongue, lungs, liver and intestines of an ox, 6 pjatoki (9 kopecks), but for cows 4 pjatoki (6 kopecks) are to be paid, as this is determined by Magistratsukas\*).

10. All men, women, servants, big and small, are forbidden by the strictest cherem to carry the meat they have bought out of the butcher's shops before they have paid the tax of 1½ kopecks for the pound to the agent of the levies.

The payment of the tax must be made in the room of the authorised representative. For the control of the buyers concerning the correct payment of the taxes, there must be supervisors in the butcher's shops, whose office it is to see to it that the buyer carries the meat immediately after the purchase into the room of the authorised person in order to have it weighed. \*\*)

11. The butcher is strictly forbidden to sell meat to anyone - local or foreign - without the presence of the authorised representative and the two supervisors. Likewise, the butchers and their family members are strictly forbidden to use meat for their own use before they have paid the levies. The sale of kosher meat, even if it comes from the city, is prohibited.

\* Order of the Russian authority. D. H.

\*\* A beautiful sign of trust in the honesty of the parishioners! Of course, Sarten know no word of honour. D. H.

The export of meat is only allowed in the butcher's shop if it is not exempt from the tax. The butchers are forbidden to pay the tax for the whole front end at once in order to collect the tax of 1½ Kop. per pound later in the retail sale. They are obliged to carry out the sale in the butchers' shops daily, 12 hours on working days from morning to evening and on the days before holidays and Sundays for the duration of the whole day.

12. The butchers are only allowed to sell kosher meat two pennies more expensive than the (Russian) magistrate prescribes the prices for trefes meat.

The plenipotentiaries and supervisors shall control the exact execution of this provision. In case of violation of these rules, the plenipotentiaries must sue the butchers before the magistrate. \*)

13. As far as the court is concerned, the agent may not assess at his discretion, but must weigh each piece in order to collect the exact tax of 1½ Kop. per pound. Weighing is not charged for the sale of meat.

14. In the office of each authorised representative there shall be a locked box with an opening in the lid. The authorised representative shall put the money paid into this box and, in order to avoid misuse, he shall be prohibited from putting this money into his own pocket in the event of a risk of the most severe penalty.

Every evening, the plenipotentiary has to count the money and enter it in a book, whereupon he has to deposit it in the general safe, which is located at the rich Rabbi Chajim Segall's house. Until the moment the money is handed over to the Chajim, the authorised representative is responsible for it. The money must be transferred to the general safe at least twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays.

For the safekeeping of these funds until their transfer, a box with two keys must be kept with the authorised representative,

\* A most interesting case. The Kahal has no difficulty in appealing to the Russian court to compel disobedience. If, however, the Russian court is called upon by a private person against the Kahal, punishment is by banishment curse. D. H.

the keys of which shall be kept one by the authorised person and one by a supervisor.

15. The safe, which is located at the Chajjim Segall, must also be provided with two locks, the keys of which are kept respectively with the representatives of the levies and with a member of the hundred, who is elected every month from the hundred for this purpose.

Every month, the Schammasch shall appoint one of the former town managers and one merchant for the purpose of monthly control of the treasury, which shall be held by the authorised representatives.

16. The Shammash shall announce in all synagogues and Bet Hamidrashim (prayer houses): a) that the Kahal, the General Assembly and the Bet Din order all men, women, servants as well as underage children, in short, all local and foreign Jews, to buy the meat they need, in or out of town, in the butcher's shops only when the plenipotentiary and the overseers are present, and b) that it is forbidden to carry purchased meat out of the shop before it has been weighed on the plenipotentiary's scales and the tax of 3 groschen per pound has been paid. This order is given to all Jews under penalty of all the cherems possible in the world. In the case of a purchase of meat from a private person, the seller must show the receipt that the tax has been paid.

17. The salaries of the shepherd as well as the authorised representative and the other expenses are usually to be met from the levies for the young cattle.<sup>59)</sup> The rest of this sum is to be used to cover expenses of the Kahal.

The handing over of the money from the levies to the Kahal has to be done every time by both plenipotentiaries, who are not allowed to hand over half a kopeck\*) without the signature of five Kahal members. The salaries of the other plenipotentiaries and the overseers shall be paid every Friday from the internal revenue.

18. In a word, any kosher meat for which the levies have not been paid is to be considered trefa - like pork.

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\* Not half a kopeck, i.e. nothing at all. D. H.

19. Two weeks before the date on which the imperial taxes are to be paid to the Rentamt, the Kahal distributes the entire sum owed among the inhabitants of the city on a percentage basis - one part for every 100 inhabitants\*). If, however, the sum collected by the Kahal is not sufficient for the taxes, the Kahal shall levy a new tax on each hundred, and the money shall be collected from the collectors of the hundred. In the collection of such deficiency money, a member elected from the hundredship shall assist the collector. Similarly, the authorised agents of the levies shall not hand over any money to the Hundreds in the absence of such elected members. When handing out the money to the hundred units, the latter shall hand over the lists of members to the authorised representatives.

20. The agents and supervisors must swear that they have the will scrupulously fulfil the provisions made by us for this purpose. They must not take this oath later than the day of the coming month of Tebat. This oath must be entered in the books of the Kahal and the plenipotentiaries.

21. The supervisors must a) check that every buyer of meat goes to the agents' room to ascertain the weight and pay the levy; b) enquire of the agents whether the buyer has paid the levy or not; and c) make it clear to the buyer that meat for which no levy has been paid is equal to pork (i.e. trefa).

22. According to the Shepherd's Order, both authorised representatives must be present at all times: one in the shechita, the other at the scales and the cash register.

The following are appointed as plenipotentiaries: Rabbi Gershom, son of Elijah, and Rabbi Naphtali Herz, son of Isaac. The latter is to be at the scales during the first month. The salary for both is set at 2 rubles of silver per week.

Guarantors for named plenipotentiaries are: Rabbi Isaac son of Akiba for Herz, and Rabbi Aisik son of Rabbi Judah for Rabbi Gershom.

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\* The Jewish communities were divided into communities of ten and communities of one hundred, headed by an umpire. D. H.



23. Appointed as overseers are: Gershom son of J., Isaac son of J., and Selig son of M. The salary for these supervisors is calculated at one rouble a week each. They must perform their duties in order.

24. The rabbi of the town has to pay tax for himself and his whole family only up to 28 pounds of meat a week; what is used by him above that is tax-free. The amount of meat consumed by the rabbi's family must be recorded in the weekly statements of the authorised representative.

25. The publication of these regulations is to be read at the Cherem (ban) in all synagogues and Bet Hamidrachim four times a year.

26. Persons who are assigned to our municipality, but who previously lived in other towns, are obliged to submit a statement of the imperial taxes to the authorised representative of the hundred to which they are assigned. In the other case, the authorised representative shall sue the defaulters before the authorities. \*)

27. The agents and supervisors must ensure that the butchers do not sell the meat for more than 2 groschen more than the prices set by the magistrate. <sup>60)</sup> Offenders shall be sued.

28. If someone buys kosher meat from whomever (before these provisions come into force), the buyer must pay the agent half of the duties that have not yet been paid, i.e. 1½ groschen; in the other case, his meat is equal to pork (i.e. trefa).

29. We, the undersigned, have taken control of the exact payment of the levies according to the above rules until the new election. At the new election, however, the assembly will elect six new members - controllers, who undertake not to be overseers and will be overseers for the time being. All the above 29 rules have been considered and established by us for the purpose of fixing the above-mentioned levies. To authenticate all this, we who make these rules, and who have been appointed by the

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\* Preference for the mostly rich and influential rabbis. D. H.

\*\* The Kahal immediately runs to the Christian court! D. H.

General Assembly on 14 Kislev 5562 from the creation of the world (17 Nov. 1801) are elected.

- R. Isaac, son of Akiba,
- R. Wolf, son of Zewi Hirsch,
- R. Chajjim, son of Isaak Segal,
- R. Jehuda Leib, son of Jacob,
  
- R. Isaac Aisik, son of Yehuda.

(= II. 182.) Rules for the plenipotentiaries and shepherds.

The plenipotentiaries and supervisors must assemble daily in the former's office, no later than 12 noon, with the exception of holidays, when no kosher meat may be sold.

The expenses for trolleys and bags in which the money is carried are to be met from tax money.

The shepherds and authorised representatives must go there, also on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., in summer until 8 o'clock in the evening. To confirm and authenticate all this, we sign:

- R. Isaac, son of Akiba,
- R. Wolf, son of Zewi Hirsch,
- R. Jehuda Leib, son of Jacob,
- R. Isaac Aisik, son of Yehuda,
  
- R. Chajjim, son of Isaak Segal.

No. 89. Bestim entsoftheactivitiesof  
Poultry enacted by the General Assembly on the eve of  
Hanukkah (the holiday of the Maccabees)  
in the year 5553 (1792).

1. No one may slaughter his poultry in any other place except the one designated for that purpose.

2. The shochet may not slaughter poultry before the authorised representative has received the levy for it.

3. The authorised representative, who shall be chosen from six persons appointed by the General Assembly, shall undertake on oath to always collect the levy before the slaughter.

4. For each turkey, the sum of 10 groschen is to be paid before the slaughter, in addition to the sum owed<sup>61</sup> to the shochet for the slaughter; for a goose also 10 groschen, for a turkey hen 6 groschen, for ducks and chicks 1 groschen, for young billy goats 10 groschen, in addition to the payment to the shochet.

5. If someone wants to slaughter poultry for a ritual feast or for a feast of the holy brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead, he has to submit a list of all the participants in the feast, certified by the Shammash (notary), to the authorised representative of the large levies, so that he can obtain written permission from the authorised representatives to slaughter the poultry on the basis of the three points\*) of the above list. On this occasion, the taxable number of pounds of meat is reduced in proportion to the increase in the number of poultry to be slaughtered.

6. If anyone brings fat into the city for sale, he shall pay<sup>61</sup> the agent 3 groschen per pound and shall not sell it until he has received the receipt for payment.

All owners of chucks are ordered by the strictest cherem to inform the authorised representative immediately of the amount of fat imported.

7. Under the strictest cherem, the shochet is forbidden to slaughter any poultry in the absence of the authorised representative, except for the sick and relatives; in the latter case, the shochet himself collects the tax and hands it over to the authorised representative.

8. The authorised representative shall immediately enter the levies received for slaughtered poultry in his book and hand over the money no later than the following day to the authorised representative for the levies for livestock slaughtering, who shall in turn enter the money received in his books.

9. If slaughtered poultry proves to be trefa, the slaughterer shall reimburse the owner for the levies collected.

10. The tax money for the kapporet is to be collected by the shochet.<sup>61</sup> In this case, they are allowed to carry out the slaughtering without the presence of the authorised representatives and to hand over the collected money to him later.

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\* Apparently section 4 is meant. D. H.

11. Poultry for sick persons staying in a hospital is exempt from taxation on the basis of an ordinance issued by the hospital director.

12. The monies thus collected shall be used to cover the imperial taxes; only the sixth part shall be used by the plenipotentiaries for the salaries of the shechets and for expenses as mentioned in the preceding Act in item 17; therefore the plenipotentiary shall divide the sixth part into the large collection box when taking over daily and keep it in the small collection box for expenses.

Note: These 12 points are not signed by anyone. They are only written down by the rich wolf, son of Hirsch, in his own hand.

No. 90. On the new provisions of the collection of levies from poultry.

Monday, 15 Ijar 5569 (1809).

It is ordered by the leaders of the Kahal that the poultry shepherds repeat their oath that they will fulfil all the rules established in the previous act and completed in the following. <sup>62)</sup>

1. One of the three slaughterers shall keep an accurate register of the number of poultry slaughtered and their owners.

Both slaughterers may not carry out any slaughtering without the presence of the third, who is responsible for counting named levies when slaughtering poultry.

2. The shepherds must not be the least tardy in the fulfilment of their duties.

3. If poultry is brought to the shepherd by a sick person or his mother, he must fulfil his duty immediately without excuses. If the shepherd is prevented from doing so for any reason, he must immediately go to his colleague to ask him to fulfil the request immediately.

No 91 . Übe r den Ei d de r Gefl ügel -Sc äc hter .

By taking the oath set out on the next page in Act 93, we take upon ourselves the obligation to observe all measures and new rules on the slaughter of poultry with the exception of

of point 1\*) of that oath, which directly contradicts the rights we have long exercised, namely, to slaughter various kinds of poultry for the purpose of ritual feasts in any place and at any time.  
Nor do we take upon ourselves the duties of supervision referred to in that oath, because we have been free of these obligations for some years.

To certify all this we sign, Tuesday, 22nd Sivan 5569 (1809) in the city of Minsk. Jacob, son of Mordecai, Simon son of Solomon, Samuel son of Judah Body.  
Note: The oath taken on us shall be valid for three years from the date mentioned above.

No. 178. \*\*) On the second presentation of the Rabbi Schalom before the Bet Din .

Today, on the eve of the Sabbath, the 18th of Sebat 5565 (19 January 1805), a call has gone out to the rich Rabbi Shalom, son of Samuel, the Levite, to appear before the Bet Din on penalty of cherem in his matter with Rabbi Zewi Hirsch, son of Rabbi Reuben and son of the latter Rabbi Salman, and beforehand to settle the account of the Bet Din in his matter with Rabbi Shalom, the Levite, who remained in his disobedience despite the cherem imposed.

No. 179. Of the disobedience of Rabbi Gerschom .

On Tuesday, the 13th of the first Adar 5565 (3 February 1805), the Cherem was imposed on Rabbi Gerschom, son of Rabbi A. W. for not putting in order the account of the Bet Din with Rabbi Chajim, son of Zewi Hirsch, Rabbi Gerschom remained in stubborn disobedience. To the Bet Din's knowledge: Rabbi Gerschom, son of R. J. A. has put his affairs in order and has been reinstated in all his former rights.

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\* Cf. no. 89. D H.

\*\* This and the following section are also incorrectly numbered in the original. D. H.

No. 92: On the debt of the Kahal to the deceased Arje Leib, son of Chajjim, according to the documents. <sup>63</sup>) We, the undersigned, do hereby attest with our own-  
We hereby declare with our handwritten signature that we have received the funds concerning the debt of the Kahal to Arje Leib, son of Chajjim, according to the deeds of debt signed by the Kahal members as recorded in their document, namely the debt to the Schulklopper (synagogue servant), and thus release the Minsk Kahal from this debt to our father, the Schulklopper, by this receipt. Furthermore, we declare that all other claims are null and void, hollow phrases, and not to be taken seriously by any court; we have received the funds in question in full and sign.  
Minsk, Monday, the 14th of Tammus 5566 (1806).

Gissa, daughter of Rabbi Elia, widow of the above-mentioned deceased Arje Leib, and Abraham, son of Arje Leib.  
We hereby certify that Gissa, daughter of Elijah, and her son, Elijah signed all of the above. The former, being illiterate, gave the pen for the signature of the latter. Abraham signed himself - and that they settled the whole above-mentioned matter according to the holy law under the Kabbalat Sedar<sup>64</sup>) - and sign.

Minsk, Monday, the 14th of Tammus 5567 (1807).  
Eleazar, son of Ch.; Shammash Benjamin (notary and plenipotentiary of the Kahal).

No. 93 .Egg drum for the shearing of livestock.

In the name of God, the Kahal, Bet Din and the Nasi of the Israelite land, i.e. the prince or patriarch, I swear without any cunning or deceitfulness, not thinking of exaggeration or weakening, without falseness of lips and heart, that I will perform Shechita and Bedika (slaughter and inspection) according to the rules established by the Kahal and the elect of the General Assembly, as it is written in Book No. 88, in no way deviating from them. Likewise, I undertake never to neglect my duties to the detriment of any householder or meat seller. Likewise, I shall not fail to perform my duties to the detriment of any householder or butcher.

but must carry out the slaughtering and inspection to the smallest detail. Likewise, for three years from today, I may not ask for any benefits or salary increase from any Kahal or the General Assembly, but must perform the slaughtering and inspection for the salary granted to me today by the head of the Kahal. Even after the expiry of these three years, if I still engage in slaughtering, I will not transgress these rules, but will keep them sacred. Nor will I, during this time, embezzle the smallest sum, even half a kopek, from the Kahal's taxes or use it for myself, whether for large or small livestock, inside or outside the city, but hand everything over to the authorised representative.

Neither will I ever work with companions, shepherds, against the Kahal secretly, whether by oath or handshake, which I honestly swear, so help me God, He be praised, in all my affairs.

In this form I have sworn this Sunday, the 27th of Tammus 5566 (1806), which I sign to authenticate.

I, the undersigned, swear the same on the same day and sign to authenticate it.

Likewise, I too have sworn and sign for authentication." After six years, after the compilation of these documents, in the year 5572 (1812), the following was added:

"Likewise, I bow before God, etc., and swear that I will always obey the Kahal; if he imposes any charitable measure (obligation) on me, I shall perform it with the utmost fidelity to duty for the benefit of the Kahal, without having any private gain in mind. Likewise, I also undertake to submit to the future measures of the rulers of the Kahal with regard to the slaughter of livestock and poultry. And so I honestly swear, so help me God, in all my affairs.

According to this formula, I swore on Monday, the 11th of Awa 5572 (1812) and undertake to keep this oath without the slightest transgression, which I sign to affirm.

Bezaleel, son of Isaac.

Likewise, on the same day, I swore according to this formula and undertake to keep the oath.

Aaron, son of Isaac Aisik.

Likewise, I swore the same day and keep the oath.

Jankel, son of Leib.

Likewise, I swore the same day and keep the oath.

Scholem, Shakhna.

Note: The salary for the four shochets is granted from the income of the Kahal, 5 rubles and 20 groschen each per week for three years, beginning today, the 15th of Ab 5572 (1812).

No. 94 . Ei des formel f o r t h e G e Flügel -Schä c h t e r .

So I swear in the name of God, the Bet Din and Kahal, without any falsehood or deceitfulness on my lips and in my heart, without thinking of any mitigation or exaggeration, to fulfil fully the duties of the shepherd and inspector imposed on me by the law. From the proceeds of the slaughter of poultry and small livestock I must not set aside half a kopeck. Likewise, I undertake to fulfil all the rules that have been laid down for the shochet until now. And as long as I am a shechita, I must not have the least income, neither from fathers of the house nor from sellers of meat, nor from the kahal- income of the levies. Likewise, I will never give the least help to the fathers of the house or the flesh sellers to the detriment of the levies - in a word, I will never allow myself even the smallest transgression. )

Nor will I, in the course of these three years, have a

I will also never enter into a relationship with any of the shepherds against the Kahal, neither by handshake, nor by kinyan<sup>65</sup>) or signature, not even with those who serve the Kahal after the expiry of these three years, and as truly as I swear, may God (praise be to Him), assist me in all my affairs.

\* In view of such vows and promises with which the ghetto Jews are tormented, remember the necessity of the Kol Nidre, the exemption from vows. D. H.



According to this formula I swore on Sunday, the 27th of Tammuz 5566 (1806) in Minsk and sign for authentication.

No. 95: Form of oath of the inspectors and supervisors.

So I swear, in the name of God, the Bet Din and Kahal, without any cunning or guile on my lips and in my heart, without extenuation or exaggeration, to fulfil my duties honestly and, as far as possible, to protect the Kahal taxes from abuse, so that even the smallest evasion of these taxes will be impossible. Of these taxes I will not evade half a kopeck, or use it for myself, or remit it to house fathers and butchers. All the duties I have assumed are sacred to me, and as long as I administer this office I am subject to my oath. This I honestly swear, so help me God (praise be to him) in all my affairs.  
According to this formula I swore on the 27th of Tammuz 5566 (1806) and sign for authentication.

No 96 . Ei des formel der Schriftführer der Korbsteuer. \*)

a) So I swear by God and the Kahal, without any cunning or guile on my lips and in my heart, without attenuation or exaggeration, not to steal or keep for myself half a kopeck from the taxes of the Kahal, the three-crop tax, the levy for slaughter or the tax of the inner regime. With the same fidelity to duty, I must also always perform my duties as secretary of the collection office. In a word, I will not steal half a kopeck from all the money that belongs to the municipal tax and passes through my hands, nor will I grant the house fathers and butchers relief in tax matters because of slaughtering. This I swear, so help me God (praise be to Him) in all my affairs.  
According to this formula I swore on Sunday, the 27th of Tammuz 5566 (1806) and sign for authentication.

\*The Korobka (Russian = basket) was a specifically Jewish tax imposed by the Russian government on Jewish communities. D. H.

b) Eide sfor mel of Chassi di m sha t e r .

In the name of God, the Bet Din, the Kahal and the Nasi (the prince) of Palestine, I swear without any cunning or ulterior motives, on my lips and in my heart that I will honestly perform the slaughter and inspection of livestock and fulfil everything that is required of me. Neither will I make pacts with fathers of households or butchers in regard to the said duties, neither will I grant any concessions to fathers of households or butchers, but will perform my duties to the best of my knowledge and conscience, as is prescribed; Nor will I, while in office, embezzle even half a kopeck from the taxes paid for the slaughter of large and small cattle and poultry, as well as from the other taxes of the Kahal, whether inside or outside the city, but will honestly hand over everything to the Kahal ruler. Likewise, I will never grant reductions on these taxes to the house fathers or butchers, or allow myself the slightest alteration of the aforementioned taxes. Likewise, I will only slaughter poultry in the room where the authorised representative is located; I will only slaughter livestock in that room if I have the authorised representative's certified permission to do so, or if the taxes will be levied on them, or in exceptional cases for the sick and mothers, and finally on the eves of Sabbaths and feast days; in all these cases I may also carry out the slaughtering in places not prescribed by the plenipotentiaries, but I will hand over the levies (for cattle and poultry slaughtered by me) to the plenipotentiaries. This I swear, so help me God (praise be to Him) in all my affairs.

According to this formula, I swore on Tuesday, 9 Marcheschwon, to Minsk and sign:

Zewi Hirsch, son of Jechiel Michael, Segal.

No. 97 (= II. 132). The election of the members of the municipal administration.

At the good hour! List of the members of the town council (Gemeinde-Kahal) from the 3rd day of Passover 5560 (2 April 1800) to the same day of the coming Passover 5561 (1801).

a) Raschim (heads):

1. R. Isaac, son of R. Akiba,
2. R. Moses, son of R. Jacob,
3. R. Isaschar Beer, son of R. Isai,
4. R. Schmul, son of R. Dan.

b) Ikkarim (real members):

c) Kewum (permanent judges with the authority to sign resolutions):

Dajjanim-

1. R. Eleazar, son of R. A., Segal,
2. R. Schmul, son of Jechiel Michael,
3. R. Salman, son of R. Shalom Susman,
4. R. Gershom, son of R. Elijah,
5. R. Joseph, son of R. Jechiel Michael,
6. R. Schmul, son of R. Aaron,
7. R. Süßel, son of R. Shalom Salman,
8. R. Abraham, son of R. Sch.

d) Dajjanim Belipsak (temporary judges without the right to judge):

1. R. Joshua, son of R. A.,
2. R. Jakob, son of R. L.,
3. R. Israel, son of R. Gershom,
4. R. Baruch, son of R. Samuel,
5. R. Isaac, son of R. Herz,
6. R. Herz, son of R. Faiwusch,
7. R. Eisik, son of R. Simon.

All this has been done by us, the undersigned electors, after due consideration, with the general consent, in accordance with the laws and regulations, which we hereby sign for authentication.  
City of Minsk.

- R. Mordecai, son of R. Gedaliah,  
R. Shalom Salman, son of R. Simcha Susman,  
R. Joseph, son of R. Joseph Segal,  
R. Meshullam Faiwush, son of Isaac Segal.

e) Chiefs and Administrators of the Main Welfare Committee:

1. R. Elia, son of R. Zewi Hirsch,
2. R. Jehoshna Gischel, son of R. Moses,
3. R. Isaak, son of R. Zewi Hirsch,
4. R. Chajjim, son of R. Isaak Aisik,
5. R. Isaac, son of R. Gershom.

These five administrators have been appointed by us, the undersigned voters, on the basis of general agreement, laws and regulations in the city of Minsk.

1. R. Mordecai, son of R. Gedaliah,
2. R. Shalom Salman, son of R. Simcha Susman,
3. R. Shachna Gershom, son of R. Shalom,
4. R. Joseph, son of R. Joseph Segal,
5. R. Meshullam Faiwush, son of R. Isaac Segal.

No. 98 (= II. 133). Of the sale of Pan Kister's shop to Abraham Abel, son of R. Meyer.

Today, on the eve of Monday, the 6th of Nisan 5560 (9th of April 1800) it has been decreed and determined, with the agreement of all the gentlemen representatives and plenipotentiaries of our town: To sell the right of possession of the stone shop of Pan Kister to the master already using it, the overseer, the rich Rabbi Abraham Abel, son of Rabbi Meyer; also the right to the balcony and stairs opposite the said shop; also the right to the passage to the shop in the house of Pan Kister. All this, from the centre of the earth to the height of heaven has been sold for the perpetual disposal of Abel, his descendants and representatives, for which he is to pay to the Kahal treasury 75 roubles of silver\*, for which immediately after payment of the money, he is to be given a deed of sale signed by the heads of the Kahal and authenticated by the Bet Din of the local town.

No. 99 (= II. 134). Of the sale of a shop by the same Kister to Rabbi Jechiel Michael, son of Rabbi Aaron, by the Kahal.

At the same meeting, the chiefs and lords, the rulers of the Kahal, decided: to transfer the right of possession of a stone shop of Pan Kister to the lord already using it, the ruler of the Kahal.

\*This tiny purchase sum clearly shows that it is not the legitimate purchase of the shop but a Chasaka levy to the Kahal. D. H.

The right to the balcony and the stairs opposite the shop, and the right to the passage to the shop, in the house of Pan Kister. All this from the centre of the earth to the height of heaven has been sold for the perpetual disposal of Jechiel Michael, his descendants and representatives. For this sale the said Jechiel Michael is to pay 15 roubles of silver to the treasury of the Kahal, for which he is to be given, immediately after payment of this sum, a deed of sale signed by the rulers of the Kahal and authenticated by the Bet Din of this city.

No. 100 (= II. 135). The ka ufurkunden issued to the above-mentioned rich Abel and Michael.

With the agreement of all the rulers and representatives of our town, the General Assembly has decreed that the right of ownership of the stone shop belonging to Pan Kister be sold to the lord and ruler, the wealthy Rabbi Abraham Abel, son of Rabbi Meyer, to one of the new shops he has built in the High Market. The shop adjoins on one side the stone shop of the same Pan Kister, which is currently used by the rich Zewi Hirsch, son of Rabbi Sew Wolf, and on the other side a shop of the same Pan, which is currently run by Rabbi Michael, son of Aaron. The front of the shop is in the direction of the above-mentioned market, the back towards the courtyard of Pan Kister. The right to the shop thus bounded, as well as to the cellar under it, the rooms built over it, the balcony, the staircase

- the right to all this from the centre of the earth to the height of the Heaven, we sold in full to Rabbi Abel, his descendants, and legal successors for ever and ever. Likewise, we sold to Rabbi Abel, his descendants and legal successors, the passage through the courtyard of the Kister leading to this shop, the cellar and the rooms above it, within the above-mentioned limits, without reserving to ourselves the slightest right to this property.

The above-mentioned Rabbi Abel has long since paid all monies owed into the general fund. For this reason, all rights to this property belong to him, his descendants and legal successors from this time on, in which he can therefore do as he pleases, i.e. sell, rent, lend, generally deal with it, as every man may deal with his property without disturbance. Even if the Pan Kister tears down the building and builds a new one in its place,\* Rabbi Abel retains the above-mentioned rights to the above-mentioned land and buildings, as do his descendants and legal successors. But if Rabbi Abel or his descendants and legal successors should buy the above-mentioned building from Pan Kister, they shall have the full right to pull it down and rebuild it, without anyone being allowed to interfere. However, should anyone, a person (i.e. Jew, Ed.) or more, object to these rights, the Kahal and Bet Din are fully obligated to stand in for the rights of R. Abel, his descendants and legal successors. Likewise, the Kahal is obligated to leave no stone unturned to pacify the protesting party, preferably by peaceful means, this right sold by us to R. Abel untouched. All expenses and losses incurred by R. Abel and his descendants etc. from such protest, the Kahal shall cover them from all possible sources on the basis of the rights conferred upon R. Abel, etc., and the same shall have the right, relying on this document as a promissory note based on Talmudic laws, to demand from all the municipal revenues of the Kahal the satisfaction of his lawful claims as if he had an imperial bill of exchange; and every Kahal shall be bound to assist him, and shall not hinder him from enforcing to the utmost the fulfilment of these aforesaid rights. All this was decided by the consent of all the members in the room of the Kahal and formulated according to the rights which the Kahal has under the formal Kinjan66).

To certify all this, we sign: the principals,

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\* According to this, Pan Kister is the actual owner. It is therefore only a question of the Chasaka. D. H.

Heads and representatives of our city. On the eve of Monday, 26 Nisan 5560 (9 April 1800) in the city of Minsk.

P. S. This document was signed by six city leaders. The rich R. Isaac, son of R. Akiba; and R. Beer, son of R. M., stood in for the former heads; the rich R. Zewi Balsler and the rich R. Chajjim, son of R. J. Segal and R. Zewi Hirsch.

No. 101 (= II. 135). Beglaubigung der obigen Akte durch die Schammasschim Weneemnim (städtische Notare und Bevollmächtigte).

We, the undersigned notaries and plenipotentiaries, certify with our own handwritten signature that the contract of sale issued by the Kahal to the lord and representative, the wealthy Rabbi Abraham Abel, son of Meyer, his descendants and legal successors, rightly exists in all its details, is actually signed by the six members of the rulers in agreement with the Shibea Tobim ha-Ir (seven rulers of the town) in general assembly in the room of the Kahal in observance of the customs and according to the sacred laws, notwithstanding that the Kahal does not require a formal Kinyan in the transfer of property rights.

Monday, 26 Nisan 5560 (9 April 1800) at Minsk.

No. 102 (= II. 135). Certification of the same act by the Bet Din.

It is evident from the foregoing file that all the items and rules listed in file no. 100, issued to the representative, the wealthy Rabbi Abraham Leib, (his descendants as well as legal successors), bear the signatures of six members of the rulers and two notaries of the town in agreement with the seven town rulers in the council of the Kahal room, in accordance with the holy laws of the Torah and the customs of the town. Although a provision of the Kahal does not generally require confirmation<sup>67</sup>), even less so if it is certified by notaries, we have with all our

We hereby certify and confirm the aforesaid rights transferred from the said Rabbi Abraham Abel, his descendants and legal successors, for the greater confirmation, that they may not be diminished one iota for eternity, for which reason we sign with our own hands.

Monday, 26 Nisan 5560 (9 April 1800) at Minsk.

It was signed by the Rabbi Gaon and the four legal judges.

No. 103 (= II. 136). Of the granting of the same right to Rabbi Michael, son of Aaron.

Exactly the same document as that of R. Abraham Abel was issued to the representative, the rich Rabbi Michael, son of Aaron, on the right of possession of another shop of the same Pan Kister, already used by Michel and adjoining the shop of Abel. The document, as in the other deed, is signed and notarised by six rulers and notaries; it is also notarised by Rabbi Gaon and the Bet Din, just as Rabbi Abel's document was without the slightest alteration.

No. 104 (= II. 137). Rules on the Convocation of the Members of the Council.

Wednesday, 28 Nisan 5560 (11 April 1800).

The heads of the Kahal shall command as follows: If at any meeting of the Kahal, on the invitation of its servants, not all the rulers of the city appear, three of them, whether chiefs or deputies, shall also have the right of decision as the seven rulers, in important as well as unimportant matters, except in cases where it is necessary to sentence any person (Jew) to corporal punishment or fine or to loss of honour. In these cases at least five members must be present, who then have the right of execution of the seven rulers.



No. 105 (= II. 138) Of the sale of the right of possession to a monastery to Rabbi Eleasar, son of R. Joseph, Segal. Sabbath, Bemidbar division, on the eve of 1 Siwan 5560 (12 May 1800).

It is ordered by the superiors of the Kahal to sell the right to the possession of a monastery (!) on Yurievskaya Street, which formerly belonged to the Carmelites and is now in the possession of the Franciscans. Its boundaries are as follows: on one side Yurievskaya Street, beginning with the wooden house of Rabbi Moses, son of R. Israel, to Tatarskaya Street, from the other side the latter street: from the corner of Krevski Cross Street to the house of the uncircumcised (Christian) Matvi Ehrenovich included.

This right to the above-mentioned monastery with all its houses and buildings as listed in the area of the above-mentioned boundaries, to all stone and wooden buildings, cellars, rooms, as to the house built in this area by the Christian blacksmith Selesi, with all buildings and rooms belonging to him, as also the distillery of the monastery, which is in his property, the yard and open space in the same area - as well as the vegetable gardens and haylofts of the monastery, which extend to the vegetable gardens - as well as the haylofts belonging to the houses of Jatkovaja Street) - the right to everything listed from the centre of the earth to the height of heaven has been granted by the rulers of the Kahal to the ruler Rabbi Eleazar, son of R. Joseph Segal, his descendants as well as legal successors, for perpetual possession. The money owed for this sale has long since been paid by the said Rabbi Eleazar up to half a kopeck, for which a deed of sale is issued to him by the heads of the Kahal, word for word like document No. 100, which was issued to Rabbi Abel, son of R. Meyer. This deed is signed by six rulers except the rich Rabbi Isaac, the notaries and plenipotentiaries on Wednesday, the 4th of Siwan 5560 (16 May 1800).

No. 106 (= II. 139). Of the granting of the right of residence in the city of Minsk to Rabbi Samuel, son of the Rabbi Benjamin, Segal, and his family.

In the assembly of the heads, rulers and representatives of our city, the happy news was spread that Rabbi Gaon, the famous scholar of Torah and fear of God, the ornament of Torah and holy wisdom, the ruler and rich Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi Benjamin Segal (Levite) and his sons, distinguished scholars, celebrities, renowned for their fear of God, the rich and powerful, uniting in themselves Torah and power, have chosen our city as their permanent home. Their hearts have determined them to make all thirsting souls happy with their wisdom. Their doors are always open, and they are always ready to spread wisdom in Israel. So we called out, blessing them in their godly work: "Let these people be at peace with us, granting the Levites residence and discipleship among us." This was unanimously agreed by all and they were granted permanent right of residence in our city, namely the famous Rabbi Gaon Samuel, Levin and his three sons, the famous Rabbis Ezekiel, Inda and Meyer. By virtue of our granting them the right of residence, they may live freely in our city, each with his family, engage in any kind of commerce, according to their wishes, just as all the inhabitants of the city, and in all things, important and unimportant, they are equal to the inhabitants of our city, without the slightest distinction or exception. Likewise, he, the Rabbi Gaon (Grand Rabbi), is granted the right to open a minyan (special house of prayer) at his place, as in the morning and on Sabbaths and feast days, without reservation or hindrance, except for the holidays: the New Year and the Day of Judgment, on which he must pray with one of the worshippers of the synagogue court. Rabbi Gaon and his sons contributed the money for these rights up to half a kopeck to the general treasury.<sup>69</sup> The Kahal and Bet Dift are commanded to transfer all these rights, without any reservation. All this was decided with the consent and in the presence of all the chiefs, heads and representatives, the full number of members in the Council Chamber according to all the laws and rights and with all the power of the Kahal according to the holy laws.

In order to authenticate these rights granted to Rabbi Gaon and his sons, we, the principals and representatives, sign with our own hands.

Thursday, 12 Sivan 5560 (24 May 1800) at Minsk.

No. 107 (= II. 140). Of the offering of wine for the chalice on the occasion of the circumcision by the Rabbi Samuel, son of R. Dan.

The head, the rich Rabbi Samuel, son of R. Dan, offered a godly sacrifice by promising that he would donate the wine for the chalice<sup>a</sup> at all circumcisions, whether they were performed in the great synagogue, the great Bet- Hamidrash, in the synagogue of the holy brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead, or in any special institution of our city, even if the ceremony were to take place in the house of the father of the newborn. This offering of wine for the above-mentioned purpose Rabbi Samuel took upon himself for his whole life; likewise he promised to offer real grape wine every time, not sultana wine, so that no one, be it the father of the newborn, would have to take anything else for this holy purpose, whatever beverage it might be. On the basis of this proposal and promise of his, it has been decided by us, the chiefs, rulers and representatives of the town, to honour Rabbi Samuel for his godly discussion, to help him, to support him and to inform all people of this. We impose the strictest cherem on ourselves and all cantors if we give or touch any other drink, be it offered by the father of the newborn, in all places where Rabbi Samuel offers his wine for this godly rite. The wine given by Rabbi Samuel must be grape wine and not sultana wine, and everywhere in our city where a circumcision takes place he must donate it. All those who perform circumcision over the cup<sup>b</sup>) are strictly forbidden to release the R. Samuel from this order. For this privilege, the R. Samuel has to pay a pudding every year.

\* According to an earlier rite, circumcision was performed over a chalice filled with wine, into which the circumciser also spat the blood sucked up with his mouth. D. H.

to donate wax for the charity fund for candles, in the large synagogue here. Likewise, he is to use every opportunity that presents itself to the authorities for the Jews of our city as well as for the entire Jewish community. This use should always be made by him in good faith. Rabbi Samuel took all this upon himself in the fear of God and with a pure heart, only because the rulers of the Kahal gave him permission to offer the wine for the chalice at circumcisions. All this was established without objection by the consent of all the heads, rulers and representatives in the council room of the Kahal on the basis of our holy laws and regulations, and it is the duty of every Kahal to support Rabbi Samuel in the fulfilment of his wish and not to disturb him.

In confirmation of this, we, the Heads, Principals, sign and representative of the Kahal, single-handedly.

Friday, the eve of the holy Sabbath, the 20th of Sivan 5560 (1. June 1800).

Note. This document was issued to Rabbi Samuel in the presence of the required number of members on the basis of the holy laws in the house of the Kahal.

No. 108 (= II. 141). On the sending of a  
The delegates went to Vitebsk to get to know the tax  
authorities there.

Wednesday, 24 Marcheschwan 5560 (31 October 1800).

The heads of the Kahal, together with the chiefs, have decided to send an emissary to Vitebsk to study customs duties and customs facilities, and have granted 60 rubles in paper from the Kahal's percentage income. For this purpose it was decided to send the shammas (notary) Rabbi Chajim, for which he is authorised 2 chervonetz (6 roubles silver) per week.

No. 109 (= II. 142). On the sale of a house to Rabbi Isaak,  
son of Akiba .

At the meeting of the heads and representatives of our town, it was unanimously decided to retain the right to own the

wooden house of Rabbi Aaron, son of Aaron Kauz, (located at the corner of the New Market), to the famous head, the rich Rabbi Isaac, son of Akiba, with all the buildings belonging to this house, courtyard, and cellars, in a word: to everything listed in the purchase contract of Rabbi Samuel Kauz. We sold the rights of the Kahal to the aforementioned Isaac, on everything from the centre of the earth to the height of heaven, for ever and ever, and transferred them to Isaac, his legal successors and descendants, without reserving the least to ourselves. The money due for this has long since been paid by the famous rich Isaac into the treasury of the Kahal, and the rights to this property have from today onwards been fully and completely held by the aforementioned Rabbi Isaac, his descendants and representatives - and they can do with it as they please, sell it, destroy it, pledge it, etc., and no one has to interfere with them.

However, should one or more object to this right of possession the Kahal and Bet Din are obliged to defend and uphold it for the above Rabbi Isaac, his descendants and legal successors without restriction. In such cases the rulers of the Kahal are obliged to fight these protest claims by all means, as to try to secure the rights of Isaac by peaceful means. All expenses and losses which should accrue to the holders of this right of possession from the protest of one or more, whether from a protest on the whole right of possession or on a part, shall be collected by the rulers of the Kahal from all possible revenues and receipts, and no Kahal shall dare to contest this right in any way.

All this was decided unanimously, without any objection, by the full number of members in the council chamber of the Kahal, according to the law according to which a Kahal decision does not require a Kinyan. To certify these rights of Rabbi Isaac, his descendants and successors, we sign.

Sabbath, on the eve of Passover 5561 (1801).

Note. This right was given to the famous Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi Aaron Kauz, and not to Isaac mentioned above. 70)

No. 110 (= II. 143). Of the granting of the same right to two other Jews.

The rich Rabbi Meshullam Faiwush was given the above-mentioned purchase contract, as issued to R. J. was given the right of possession of a wooden house opposite the prison, bought by the wives of Mordecai, son of Joseph, and his son Fischel, as can be seen from their documents. Our rights to the property listed in the above-mentioned contract of sale, with all the buildings, also granted by the local authorities (1). - All these rights have been sold by the heads of the Kahal to the said R. J. and to his son, whereupon a deed of sale has been issued to him, the J, this day. Likewise the rights to the house of the bank with place and all buildings are transferred to the J. up to the building of the architect Kramer and on the other hand up to the archbishop's garden in the width and in the length up to the distillery of the Basilians up to the half street on 30 fathoms.

No. 111 (= II. 144). Of the guilt of Kahal to Isaac son of Gershom.

Sunday, on the first feast day of Passover 5561 (17 March 1801).

Concerning the sum of 50 rubles of silver paid out of his own pocket by Rabbi Isaac son of Gershom for the interests of the city, it has been decided by the heads and principals of the Kahal to pay to Rabbi Isaac, the sum owed by the head and wealthy Rabbi Michael son of R. A. for a contract of purchase of to transfer 50 rubles. If Rabbi Michael does not agree to pay the sum owed to the Kahal, Rabbi Isaac shall reimburse him the 75 rubles already paid by the former and have the right acquired by Rabbi Michael transferred to him for ever and ever for the debt owed to him personally by the Kahal. All this was unanimously decided by the heads of the Kahal without reservation.

No. 112 (= II. 145). Vo n the transfer of the suffrage to Rabbi Meshullam Faiwush, son of the

R. Isaak.

This day, the eve of Thursday, 19 Nisan 5561 (21 March 1801), it is resolved by the chiefs, rulers and representatives of the city to confer the permanent right of suffrage on the wealthy Rabbi Meshullam Fairwush, son of Rabbi Isaac. From this day forward, he has the right to vote in all matters, small and great, and fully enjoys the right of the other members. Moreover, all the rights of the ex-wardens are conferred on him, valid for two years. The money due for this purpose has already been paid by Fairwusch to the half kopeck. To authenticate this, the notaries have signed by order of the Kahal.

No. 113 (= II. 146). Of the granting of the same right to other Jews.

At the same meeting it was decided by the chiefs, headmen and representatives to give the same rights to R. David, son of R. Beer. From today onwards he belongs to the electoral assembly in all matters, large and small, and enjoys the rights of its members. The money due for this purpose he has paid into the general treasury up to half a kopeck. )

The same right of election was conferred on the same day on Rabbi Jacob, son of Rabbi Samuel.

On the same day, Rabbi Moses, son of R. Model, was appointed ex-principal.

On the same day, Rabbi Joseph, son of Isaac Segal, was appointed ex-principal.

On the same day, Rabbi Isaak, son of R. Isaak, was appointed ex-head.

No. 114 (= II. 147). Of the payment of 100 Sloty (15 Rubles) from the Wohlthätigke its-Kasse to the Kahal.

Today on the eve of Thursday, 19 Nisan 5561 (21 March 1801), it is decreed to order the Peretz, Plenipotentiary of the Cattle Slaughter, to pay out of the funds of the charity collection 100 sloty (15

\* The Kahal's eternal need for money is clearly demonstrated by these sales of the right to vote. D. H. \_\_\_\_\_

Rubles) to the Kahal to be spent on coffee and sugar as a gift to the head of the authorities at Easter find. \*)

No. 115. (= II. 148). Of the granting of a deed of sale to Rabbi Michael.

On the same day it is ordered that Rabbi Michael, son of R. Isaak, sells the right of possession to the place and the buildings of the German Christian, the carpenter Johann, which he built on the new street opposite the house of the architect Kramer.

No. 116 (= II. 149). At the good hour!

List of Kahal members elected on Thursday, the third Passover day 5561 (1801), until the same day of the coming year 5562 (1802).

Heads:

1. Rabbi Moses, son of Rabbi Jacob,
2. Rabbi Leiser, son of Rabbi Jacob Segal,
3. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi David,
4. Rabbi Isaac, son of Rabbi J.

Vorsteher (Uwim):

1. Rabbi Model, son of Rabbi L. P.,
2. Rabbi Beitel, son of Rabbi J.,
3. Rabbi Joseph, son of Rabbi J. Segal,
4. Rabbi Shalom, son of Rabbi Sh. Segal.

Ikkarim:

1. Rabbi Sef, son of Rabbi J.,
2. Rabbi Moses, son of Rabbi Z. H.,
3. Rabbi Chajjim, son of Rabbi J. A.

Candidates:

1. Isaac, son of Rabbi A. J.,
2. Rabbi Shachna, shepherd,
3. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi D.,
4. Rabbi Elijah, son of Rabbi Avigdor.

\* With all such gifts, one must not forget that one cannot speak of a unilateral guilt of the Jews. It is not at all expedient to make moral observations. D. H.



Permanent judges:

1. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi J. M.,
2. Ritin Mendel,
3. Rabbi Joseph, son of Rabbi J. M.,
4. Rabbi Salman, son of Rabbi Sh. M.,
5. Rabbi Süssel, son of Rabbi Sh. G.,
6. Rabbi Samuel Abbot,
7. Rabbi Gershom, son of Rabbi Elijah,
8. Rabbi Abraham, son-in-law of J. Sch.,
9. Rabbi David, son of R. G.,
10. Rabbi Jacob, son-in-law of D., son of R. L. P.,
11. Rabbi Jacob, son of Rabbi J.,
12. Rabbi Moses Leschkes,
13. The preacher of the Brotherhood of the Undertakers of the Dead,
14. Rabbi Moses, son of Rabbi Shalom.

Judge without the right to judge:

Rabbi Meher, son of Rabbi Eleazar.

Gabain :

1. Rabbi Isaac, son of Rabbi A. J.,
2. Rabbi Salman, son-in-law of M.,
3. Rabbi Isaac, son of G.,
4. Rabbi Eleazar, son of J.

All of the above have been listed, considered and written down by us, the voters, based on the laws and regulations of our city, for certification whereof we sign:

Thursday, the 3rd Passover Day 5561 (21 March 1801), at Minsk.

1. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi Dan,
2. Rabbi Isaac, son of Rabbi Uri,
3. Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi David,
4. Rabbi Shalom Shochna, son of Rabbi Yehuda Leib,
5. Rabbi Elijah, son of Rabbi Avigdor.

No. 117 (= II. 150). About the Kahal's loan for gifts to the authorities at Easter.

Sunday, on the last day of Passover 5561 (27 March 1801).

Regarding the bribe gifts, the leaders of the Kahal have decided: All leaders have to give to the Kahal 10 rubles of silver each to

pay. As security for this debt, all income of the Kahal, which is to be expected now and in the future, shall serve. All such income shall be distributed between said leaders until the debt is repaid.

No. 118 (= II. 151). From the election of the members to the determination of the possibilities of strengthening the Rights of the Bet Din .

Wednesday, 25 Nisan.

The rulers of the Kahal are commanded: to elect three rulers, namely: one from the chiefs, one from the representatives and the third from the Ikkarim, so that they, together with the Rabbi Gaon and the jurists of the Bet Din, may determine the points and rules according to which the Jewish law can be affirmed for the restraint of those persons who oppose the Bet Din. Everything they determine has the force of the decisions of the seven rulers of the city. \*)

No. 119 (= II. 152) . On the designation of a sum for gifts for the head of the district.

Sabbath, Shemini Department, the 20th of Nisan (30 March 1801).

It has been decided by the representatives of the Kahal to elect three chiefs from their ranks and to send them to the head of the district in order to persuade him to show the Jews his goodwill and to promise him a sum in return, which is to be handed over to him for his use. The sum that proves necessary on the basis of the appointment is to be taken from the general treasury from the income of the slaughter of small and large cattle. \*\*)

No. 120 (= II. 153). Of the Election of Two Heads to Launch the Ra bbi lsr ael v or the Be t Din .

Sabbath, Shemini division, the 28th of Nisan 5561 (30 March 1801).

\* This and many other decisions indicate the strong discontent that must have prevailed in the Jewish community against Kahal and Bet Din at that time. D. H.

\*\* Brafmann's assertion that the Kahal uses the kosher regulations for its own financing is thus confirmed. D. H.

It is resolved and commanded by the rulers of the Kahal to choose two chiefs, Rabbi Samuel, son of R. D., and Rabbi Isaac, son of R. J., to summon Rabbi Israel, son of R. J., before the Bet Din in matters with Rabbi Leiser, son of R. M.. Endowed with the power of the seven principals, these three may not terminate the matter until the said R. Leiser hands over to the Kahal the certificate that he wishes to abandon the protest which he has lodged with the (Russian) Magistrate together with the R. Salman in the matter of the latter's brother, R. Hirsch, against the Kahal; - until, therefore, he has abandoned this protest according to all legal rules.

No. 121 (= II. 154). Of the granting of the perpetual suffrage to Rabbi Aaron, son of Zewi Hirsch.

On the same day it is ordered that Rabbi Aaron, son of Zewi Hirsch, be granted the right to vote, for which he is to pay 2 chervonetz (6 rubles of silver) to the Kahal and return the promissory note signed by R. Moses, son of A., to 15 rubles.

No. 122 (= II. 157). On the new taxation of meat.

On the eve of Friday, the 4th Ijar (5th April 1801), it has been decided by the Lords Principals of the Kahal and by the Great General Assembly to impose a new tax of 3 groschen per pound on kosher meat. The income from this tax will be used to cover the imperial taxes, while the previous tax on shechita will be used for the expenses of the Kahal administration. The rulers of the Kahal will work for the implementation of this tax themselves. If, however, they should not succeed in doing so, the Plenipotentiary of Levies shall authorise the known levy of 3 roubles a week for one year and hand it over to whoever is eligible for it through someone who will be elected by the rulers. \*)

The General Assembly unanimously declared itself in favour of these 3 rouble levy and decided to take it from the Kahal treasury.

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\*This somewhat mysterious representation is likely to indicate a bribe. D. H.

No. 123 (= II. 158). From the compilation of the rules for the approval of the Bet Din .

On the eve of Friday, the 4th of Iyar, the General Assembly finally decided to support and consolidate the Jewish court and to determine the necessary measures for this; also to establish the rights of the judges, how they are to conduct themselves and how they are to act. There shall not be more than six judges. To all the rules and regulations which the Kahal shall establish for the consolidation of the holy Bet Din, the Great Assembly gives its full consent, and all the regulations of the Kahal in this respect shall be considered equal to those of the Great Assembly.

No. 124 (= II. 159). Of the collection of the percentage tax determined for a long time.

On the eve of Friday, the 4th of Ijar 5561 (1801).

For the collection of the percentage tax, which has been determined for a long time, it has been decided by the heads of the Kahal that anyone who has not yet paid the monies he is required to pay under this tax shall bring them in immediately, and the heads of the Kahal are given the full right to compel anyone to pay these monies.

No. 125 (= II. 160). Of the provisions of the collections for poor brides.

Sabbath, Tasria-Mezora division, the 5th of Ijar 5561 (6 April 1801).

It is resolved by the representatives of the city to impose a percentage tax on all gifts and dowries for the support of poor brides. Three chiefs have been elected to carry out this resolution: R. Moses, son of R. J. R., R. Samuel, son of R. D., and R. Isaac, son of R. J., and R. Fajwisch, son of R. J., to draw up a plan and rules for this matter. The decisions of these gentlemen have the executive power of the seven town representatives. According to all possible directions they can ascertain the sources for this collection. \*)

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\* Support of the proletariat! D. H.

No. 126 (= II. 161). Of the election of two superintendents  
for the collection of arrears of the percentage  
Collections.

Sabbath, section Tasria-Mezora, the 5th of Ijjar 5561 (1801).

With regard to the collection of arrears of the percentage collection,  
it is decided to elect two representatives daily by ballottage, even if they  
are among the tax collectors, and to keep them constantly occupied with  
the collection of arrears.

No. 127 (= II. 162). On the granting of the right to vote to  
Rabbi Ze wi Hirsch .

Monday, section Acharé, the 7th Ijjar 5561 (8th April 1801).

The heads of the Kahal have decided to grant the perpetual suffrage  
to R. Zewi Hirsch, son of B. Z. Zewi Hirsch, son of B. Z., for which he has  
to pay 3 chervonets (9 roubles silver).

No. 128 (= II. 163). Of regulations for  
circumcision festivals.

Sabbath, section Acharé Kedoshim, the 12th of Ijjar (13 April 1801).

The rulers of the Kahal have ordered that from now on no one may  
dare to serve liquor and cakes at the Feast of the Circumcision, but only  
meat dishes, about which there is a resolution of the seven city rulers  
which is to be published. \*)

No. 129 (= II. 164). From the appointment of three  
Rabbi Jechie ls inheritance to be determined.

On the eve of Tuesday, the 14th of Siwan (14 May 1801).

On the occasion of the election of three judges, namely the rabbi  
from the place Rakow, the famous Rabbi Samuel, son of M. J. G.,

\* Compare herewith nos. 64 and 131. The Jewish members of the community are  
~~forced to spend luxuries~~ under the heaviest banishment curse because the Kahal  
needs money. D. H.

and Rabbi Joseph, son of R. J. M., for the final settlement of the inheritance of the deceased R. Jechiel, son of D. and his descendants, as well as for the settlement of the debts of the said R. Jechiel and his descendants, it is recommended to the heads of the Kahal to grant these three judges (Dajanim) authority for the final settlement of the inheritance and debt question of the said Rabbi Jechiel and his descendants. During the settlement period of this matter, the Rakov Rabbi is granted the right of a judge of our city. All decisions of the three Dajanim in this process shall have the legal validity, whether in matters great or small, as those of the permanent judges of our city, although they sit in the place of our Bet Din.

No. 130 (= II. 165). On the removal of R. Isaac from his position as Batchan. <sup>72</sup>)

Sabbath, the 18th of Siwan.

The leaders of the Kahal have decided that the musician R. Isaak, son of R. Shalom, will not be allowed at any wedding, and never again as a musician. Should he transgress this rule, he will also lose the right to be a musician.

No. 131 (= II. 166). On the provisions concerning the feast of circumcision.

Sabbath, the 18th of Siwan.

It is decreed that from today no one may give cakes and liquor at the feast of circumcision, but meat dishes. If the person giving the feast is impecunious, he must give meat to at least ten people, including the cantor and a synagogue servant. Should anyone transgress this rule, the cantor must not recite the ordinary prayer, "Harachman" on the day of circumcision. Likewise, the feast giver of cakes may not be called upon at the Torah, as is otherwise customary for all male relatives.

No. 132 (= II. 167). From the deprivation of the rights of the R. Joseph for disobeying the Bet Din. Thursday, 23 Siwan (23 May 1801).

Because Rabbi Joseph, son of R. Arie, has violated and transgressed the provisions of the Bet Din, it is decided by the representatives of the city to exclude him forever from the number of members of the brotherhood "Ner-Tamid" and to strip him of any electoral rights in this brotherhood, as well as of the title Morenu from today onwards forever!

No. 133 (= II. 168). Of the conviction of R. Joseph for his denunciations of the Kahal.

Sabbath, the 25th of Siwan (25 May 1801).

Because Rabbi Joseph, son of R. Arie, has caused great harm and loss to the Kahal by his terrible denunciations of the Kahal to Christian courts, almost undermining the foundation of our holy laws in his dealings with the Rabbi Gaon and the Shammashim (notaries), it has been decided by the rulers of the Kahal to take from him half of his place in the great synagogue, which belongs to him and his brother, and to hand it over to the Kahal to pay these expenses. But because this place does not cover a tenth of the expenses, the Kahal has the right, from case to case, where it is possible, to cover them out of Joseph's property. All this has been decreed in the presence of all the leaders, in the presence of the usual number of members, on the basis of all the rules and laws in the room of the Kahal.

No. 134 (= II. 169). Of the deprivation of the title of Morenu of R. Joseph.

Sabbath, the 25th of Siwan (25 May 1801).

It is forbidden by the leaders of the Kahal to call R. Joseph, son of R. Arie, to the Torah as a transgressor when he comes to the synagogue and to call him "Chaber" (roughly equivalent to the term "comrade"). Likewise, it was decided not to call the Kahal assembly for Joseph and not to call him at the Bet Din.

except with the consent of both the Kahal and the Bet Din, with the right of liberum veto. The Bet Din may never let him go without the consent of the Kahal.

No. 135 (= II. 170). Of the prohibition for Joseph to live with his wife.

One of the Shammashim of the Kahal is obliged to inform the wife of R. Joseph that she is forbidden to perform the ritual ablutions (without which she cannot live with her husband) until such time as her husband Joseph has submitted to the decisions of the Bet Din. Should she not submit to this provision, the ablution she performs will be stripped of its legal force and she will remain unclean, thus forbidden to her husband.

No. 136 (= II. 171). From the condemnation of the Kerzenanzer s R. Hirsch wegen Übertretung de Sabbath regeln.

Sabbath, the 25th of Siwan.

It was decided that R. Zewi Hirsch, light maker, would be appointed for two 24 hours to read Psalms in the Bet Hamidrash because he transgressed the Sabbath rules by having Christians do work on that day for the construction of his new house. He must employ two psalmists to perform the reading of the Psalms. The eldest of the shepherds is allowed to make an agreement with him to change this punishment into a fine. )

No 137 (=II.172). Von der Wahl dreier Bevollmächtigter für alle Dinge der Municipal administration .

Monday, 27 Siwan (27 May), there are elected by the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly three plenipotentiaries of the Municipality for all things, great and small, for which they are issued with legal authority. Their names are: Head R. Jehuda Leib, son of R. J.; Head R. Natan-Samuel, son of

\* Note: the most severe punishment is the fine and also the most appropriate for the Kahal. D. H.



R. Dan; Rabbi R. Isai. These three plenipotentiaries have the right to file petitions in all courts, even in the capital St. Petersburg.

No. 138 (= II. 173). Of the election of members for the purpose of negotiating with the peacemakers.

On Monday the 27th of Siwan, by resolution of the assembly, the following chiefs were elected: R. Jehuda Leib, son of R. J.; R. Nota, son of R. Herz; R. Isai, son of R. Isaak, to make arrangements with the tenants\* whether to take the rent from them on account of the community, or to make an agreement with them on account of the excise money. These chosen ones have the right to act as they see fit for the community, only they must consult with the heads of the Kahal on their own initiative.

No. 139 (= II. 174). From the appointment of Rabbi Zewi as Batlan.<sup>24</sup>)

Monday, 27th Siwan, the R. Zewi, son-in-law of R. Samuel, was admitted to the number of batlans by decision of the heads of the Kahal.

No. 140 (= II. 175). Of the transfer of the power of the seven chosen ones and the whole Kahal leadership to the five town representatives.

Tuesday, 28 Siwan (28 May).

On the basis of the present elections, it has been decided by the heads of the Kahal to give to five of them the full power, legal force and exercise of authority of all seven heads of the city; it is now incumbent on the Shammashim to notify the seven representatives of the Kahal of every meeting. All this was unanimously decided in the presence of the proper number of members in the room of the Kahal according to all rules and laws.

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\* This matter is unclear. D. H.

No. 141 (=II. 176). From the marriage consensus for R. Israel.

On Sabbath, the 9th of Tammus (8th June), it was decided by the heads of the Kahal to grant the Morenu R. Israel-Issar, son of R. Gershom, the right to free. The money due for this has already been transferred by the Morenu Israel to the half kopeck of the Kahal treasury.

No. 142. (= II. 177). Of provisions on the confirmation of the threepenny tax.

On Sabbath, the 16th of Tammus (15 June), the leaders of the Kahal and the General Assembly have decided to negotiate the confirmation of the three-grand tax on each pound of kosher meat. The money for the livestock slaughter will go to the Kahal expenses. At the same meeting it was decided to elect a municipal shtadlen (non-Jewish advocate).

No. 143: On the conviction of R. Abraham for not complying with the orders of the Bet Din.

Sabbath, Wajjeze Division 5562 (1802).

Because the goldsmith R. Abraham, son of Menachem Mendel, has disobeyed the instructions of the Bet Din and Kahal, it has been decided by the Kahal leaders to exclude him forever from the brotherhood of the master goldsmiths and to order the oldest of this brotherhood to delete his name from the list. All this was decided on the basis of the laws and regulations. However, as the said R. Abraham has submitted to the decisions of the Bet Din, the condemnation is lifted and he remains in the brotherhood as before. This is determined by general agreement and with the force of law.

No 144 .Notice of the mischief of Shalom. Today, on the eve of the Sabbath, 18th Shebat 5565 (1805), the rich R. Shalom, son of R. Samuel, the Levite, was buried under the

\*The dependence of the ghetto Jew on the Kahal clearly appears in this provision. D. H.

Cherem ordered to appear before the court of the Bet Din in matters of R. Zewi Hirsch, son of R. Reuben, and his son R. Salman with him, and to fulfil the already old decisions of the Bet Din. The said R. Shalom, Levite, has so far disobeyed the Cherem and remains in his stubbornness.

No 145 . Be mer k ung ü b e r den Ungeh o r s a m des R .  
Gersch om.

Tuesday, 13 Adar 5565. (1805), the rich R. Gershom, son of R. A. W. is ordered to fulfil the decisions of the court in his matter with the rich R. Chajim, son of R. J. A. under the Cherem of the Bet Din. The said R. Gershom, however, did not respect the Cherem and remained in his disobedience until now.

Note: From the connection of the Bet Din and Kahal in this matter, it appears that the said R. Gershom, son of R. A. W. has fulfilled the resolutions of the Bet Din and is therefore reinstated in all his former rights and offices.

No. 146 (= II. 178). Of the conviction of R. Meier for  
denunc iati on of the Bet Din .

Sabbath, the 2nd holiday of the Feast of Tabernacles 5562 (13 Sept. 1801). Because Rabbi Meier, son of Jacob, possessed the meanness, denouncing the Bet Din, has been denied by the heads of the Kahal It was decided to punish R. Meier by removing the dignity of Morenu and not only to remove the title Morenu from his name, but to call him "Chaber" (i.e. comrade) in all decisions, according to Israelite custom. All this is determined on the basis of the laws and rules.

No. 147 (= II. 179). Of some provisions for the  
protection of the Ge ri chte s of the Bet Din .

Monday, Noach 5562 Division (22 Sept. 1801).

For the punishment of those who violate the decisions of the Bet Din, it has been decided by the heads of the Kahal: weekly from the number of representatives, a strict persecutor for all such apostates.

to choose those who do not obey the decisions of the Bet Din. Any determination by him, the persecutor, concerning the apostate must be relentlessly enforced by the Shammash. All this is decreed unanimously and based on the laws and regulations.

No. 148. Points which are established for the protection and strengthening of the Talmudic court, which is coming into action as a result of our sins, namely, on the basis of our law that God forbid, no one from our enemies shall be admitted to judge over us (that is, that Jews do not bring their matters to a non-Jewish court for arbitration), that none of the enemies shall be admitted to judge over us (that is, that Jews shall not bring their affairs to a Gentile court for arbitration), that the insolent apostate and transgressor shall be severely punished. (bent into a crooked log), and that every Jew shall be enjoined to be subject to the Talmudic court and law. All these protections and provisions are unanimously compiled by the heads, chiefs, representatives and deputies of the city, the Bet Din (Talmudic Court) together with the Rabbi, all of whom have sworn their signatures and pledged to uphold all the following points and to protect, support and strengthen the Bet Din by all means and measures at their disposal. \*)

These are the points that the wise men have established:

a) If any Jew has been summoned three times before the Bet Din by the Shammash (emissary) in a matter in which he was required to report after the first time, or if he does not comply with the Bet Din's decisions after the first warning - in such a case the Bet Din is obliged to send the Cherem to that person through the Notarbevollmächtigter. In such cases, the heads and representatives of the Kahal agree to any cherem sent by the Bet Din. The Shammash shall inform the person charged with the Cherem that the Cherem is imposed on him by the whole Bet Din. If such a cherem is imposed, the Bet Din shall make a record of it, and it shall be certified by the sub-

\*The dreadful institution of secret persecution and rape by the Kahal could hardly be brought home to the reader more clearly and forcefully. D. H.

The members of the Cherem are obliged to enter their writings in their pinkes (record books). The file must clearly state that the and the person (Jew) was at fault for the cherem. The Shammash shall also enter this matter in the Pinkes of the Kahal. After that the Shammash has to consult with the secret persecutor on how to deal with the disobedient person, and everything that the secret persecutor decrees, according to his prescribed programme\*) has to be carried out by the Shammash.

If the disobedient person is a dangerous person who can cause harm and evil to the Kahal, the Bet Din must ask a local elder to help.

Should it prove necessary in such a case to call in more members of the community administration to help, two more appointed by the Bet Din and the Monthly Elder shall be called in. No one may exclude himself from participating in such assistance, and its unanimous decisions must be carried out.

b) If the disobedient person persists in his obstinacy for three days, all his movable and immovable property, as well as the places belonging to him in the synagogue and in the Bet Hamidrash, shall be declared "hesker" (birdless) by decision of the Bet Din, and all claims authorised by the Bet Din shall be covered from that moment, whether verbal or written, by the Bet Din out of that person's property, which shall be sold in his absence by valuation, not by auction. If anything remains after the claims have been satisfied, it is forfeited to the Kahal. If the claims are only oral, they must have the approval and censure of the Bet Din and the Municipality. In such cases, the Shammashim are obliged to give the purchasers bills of sale, authenticated with their signatures. The Bet Din is obliged to authenticate these bills of sale and affirm that they are issued in voluntary agreement with the disobedient. \*\*)

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\* Remember: this is a programme that has been worked out for many centuries and tested by many thousands of years of experience. D. H.  
\*\*) The maintenance of ghetto discipline even allows fraud and false testimony to be used by the governing authority. A truly impressive consistency! D. H.

c) If the plaintiff finds three judges in the Bet Din, they must proceed to review his case and may not postpone it because of the absence of the other judges, except in very important cases when the judges themselves consider it essential to await the arrival of the other judges. The main thing is that the matter must not suffer any delay by postponement. As for the dispositions of the disobedient to the Cherem, it depends on the judges whether they summon a rabbi to do so, who is then obliged to cooperate with them. The heads of the Kahal and all other Dajanim are obliged to affirm and certify everything that these three judges decree without reservation. If the condemned person turns to another judge and he inquires of the Bet Din, he receives no answer, since he has no part in the disposition of the matter. He is only to be informed that the Bet Din has acted in accordance with the law.

The Shammash, who is handling the matter, has also not the right to refer the petitioner to another shammash.

d) If the plaintiff summons the defendant to a non-Jewish court, the former is obliged to go to the Bet Din under the Cherem. In doing so, a preliminary warning is sent to him that the Kahal and Bet Din will unconditionally collect from him all losses and expenses incurred by the other party. In addition to the expenses and losses, he will be subject to debt collection under penalty of the Cherem according to the protective rule of the Bet Din court.

e) The Jew is forbidden to appear as a witness in favour of the defendant in a non-Jewish court - on the contrary, every Jew is obliged to testify for the opposing party if he knows anything.

f) If the plaintiff has a bill of exchange, he may submit it to a non-Jewish court; but if the opposing party expresses the wish to submit the matter to the Bet Din, the former must submit to it.

g) If the disobedient submits to the Bet Din before the matter is in the hands of the secret persecutor, and agrees to the repentance demanded by the Bet Din, the Bet Din shall release him.

from the Cherem, but not until he has given the Bet Din a security bill (bail\*) by which he can be forced at any time (for whatever purpose) to submit to the decision of the Bet Din. But if the matter is already in the hands of the secret persecutor, it can only be stopped with the consent of the heads of the Kahal and Bet Din.

h) The Shammashim shall elect a secret persecutor monthly from among the persons on their list. The secret persecutor must swear under the heaviest oaths that he will not spare anyone, but will, according to his instructions, support the Talmudic court with all possible means and measures. Furthermore, the secret persecutor swears under the heaviest oath that he will never reveal to anyone in the world that he is a secret persecutor. (!)

#### No. 149: Measures taken by the secret persecutor

The court shall use all means to compel the disobedient of the Bet Din court.\*\*)

1. The disobedient forfeits the rights he has with the Kahal and the Chewras (the brotherhoods).
2. He is completely excluded from the community and the brotherhoods.
3. He is excluded from the community and fraternity meetings.
4. The disobedient will no longer be admitted to the Torah and the other sacred rites in the synagogue and Bet Hamidrash and other places; a fortiori, he cannot be admitted to the reading desk, to the fulfilment of the communal prayers (as cantor). No tribute may be paid to him, and no prayer may be held for him - not a quarter of an hour.<sup>175)</sup>
5. The disobedient may not be invited to any community or private feast. Whoever invites him is subject to the cherem.

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\* Only money! The term "word of honour" is missing from the Sarten. D. H.

\*\* Perhaps the reader will reread the account of the Cherem quoted from K. E. Franzos in the introduction. The ghetto forms a world of its own, whose imaginary sphere is completely alien to us. D. H.

6. With the disobedient one, no one may rent a shop or quarters or let him anything; but what has been agreed with him until the cherm is occupied remains in force. His wife is not admitted to the ritual ablutions in the mikva<sup>76)</sup> and it goes without saying that in the hour of destiny his misfortune takes place.<sup>77)</sup>

7. If the disobedient is a carpenter - it is forbidden by the most severe cherm to order work from him.

8. If anyone has made an engagement agreement with the disobedient, he shall be released from his obligations, without the other penalty and restitution.

9. It is permitted (to provoke the outbreak of fanaticism) to proclaim in the synagogue that the disobedient one has eaten trefa or transgressed the fasts, etc., to prove it by false witnesses (!) and to condemn him for it.

All this has been decided in agreement with the community leaders of the Bet Din and the venerable Rabbi (Garow-Gagdoal), and all of us, the undersigned, have sworn to these lists with difficulty and correctly and have taken upon ourselves the obligation to ensure that they are carried out accurately - to which we subscribe.

1. Moses, son of Jacob,
2. Eleazar, son of Joseph Segal,
3. Samuel, son of Dan,
4. Isaac, son of Isaac,
5. David, son of Eleazar,
6. Meshullam Faiwush, son of Isaac,
7. Joseph, son of Isaac Segal,
8. Shalom, son of Samuel Segal,
9. Chajjim, son of Isaak Aisik,
10. Moses, son of Zewi Hirsch,
11. Harassers (!) Zechariah Mendel, son of R. Arjeh Leib,
12. Samuel, son of Aaron,
13. Joseph, son of Jechiel Michael,
14. Moses Sicha Susman, son of Shalom Salman.

I fully endorse all the above points in the two documents, which is why I am signing:

The Hatcher of the Minsk Jewry. <sup>78)</sup>



No. 150 (=II.183). From the compilation of a commission to conduct a petition to the governor.

Tuesday, 10 Tebet 5562 (3 Dec. 1801) at Minsk.

Due to the necessity of submitting petitions to the governor for various matters concerning the general situation of the Jewry of our governorate, it has been unanimously decided by the community administration and the members of the general assembly to elect the following persons for this matter: the rich Rabbi Isaak, son of Akiba; the rich Rabbi Wolf, son of Hirsch and the community leader Rabbi Leib, son of Jacob. These are joined by two members of the current Kahal leadership, and all of them are currently to spend their time presenting petitions to the governor that concern the entire Jewish community of the governorate.

No. 151. On the number of delegates required for each meeting.

Since at the present time many matters concerning the welfare of the Jews require all the powers of the Kahal as well as of the Assembly of all members, whereby no one may exclude himself because of personal matters, whereby our interests have already suffered much\*), the following has been decided by the leaders of the Kahal and the members of the Great Assembly for the protection of these very interests: The leaders of the Kahal here, together with ten members of the Assembly, are given the authority and rights of the Extraordinary Great Assembly in all matters concerning the Jews, of which only the mouth can speak and the heart think. In all these matters they are to be considered equal to the Great Assembly. The following ten members are elected:

1. The head and the rich R. Isaac, son of R. E.,
2. The head and rich R. Chajjim, son of R. J. Sew, son of R. Z. H.,

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\*A clear reference to the opposition of the ghetto to

Kahal despotism. D. H.

3. The head and rich R. Chajjim, son of R. J., Segal,
4. The head and the rich R. Isaak Aisik, son of R. J.,
5. The head and the rich R. Abel, son of R. Meier,
6. The Chairman of the Bet Din,
7. The head and rich R. Jehuda Leib, son of R. Jacob,
8. The head and the rich Moses, son of R. Jechiel Michael,
9. The head R. Oscher, son of R. Isai,
10. The rich R. Natan, son of Eliakum Genz.

Every time a question requires the judgement of the great assembly, these ten must assemble, together with the heads of the Kahal. Whoever of these ten does not appear at the meeting loses his vote. At each meeting, at least five of these ten must be present, together with the Kahal leaders, and the decisions of them, whether they are complete or not, have the same legal force as the Great Assembly, without any distinction.

This provision has legal validity from today until the end of Passover 5562 (1802). - It is unanimously decided on the basis of the rules and laws of Minsk.

For authentication, we, the notaries and agents of the local Kahal, sign.

No. 152 (= II. 185). Of the use of the funds of the welfare collections for municipal expenses by the Kahal.

On the eve of Wednesday, the 11th of Tebet 5562 (1802), the following was decided by the heads of the Kahal and the ten-elected: The authorised representatives of the collections are to disburse 50 roubles of silver from the proceeds of the slaughter for the expenses and needs of the community. All this was unanimously decided by the heads of the Kahal and the elected members of the General Assembly in accordance with the law.

Wednesday to Minsk.

No. 153 (= II. 186) The redemption of debts owed by the  
Kahal to its members.

On the eve of Wednesday, the 11th of Tebet 5562 (1802).

In order to pay off the debt to the members of the Kahal Board, it has been decided by its leaders and the ten elected members of the General Assembly to appoint as controllers: R. Moses, son of R. Joseph-Jechiel, R. Aisik, son of R. J., and R. Beer, son of R. Isai, to deal with the members of the Kahal and, after drawing up an account, to present it to the other members of the Great Assembly. The sum which they recognise as owing to the rulers of the Kahal shall be paid to them out of all possible income of the Kahal, with the exception of the three-grand levy for the pound of kosher meat and the sum of the small welfare fund, which may not be used for this debt. Likewise, the 50 rubles granted to the Kahal for communal needs is to be covered from the general revenues. In a word: except for the three-grand levy, all income is subject to the repayment of this debt. If the Kahal wishes to sell any of the community's income to someone to cover this debt, the Great Assembly must be informed of this and the members must be asked whether anyone wishes to increase the price of what is to be sold. If no one is willing to do so, the leaders of the Kahal have the full right to sell this income at any price they think fit to cover the debt - and this sale has the legal approval of the whole Great Assembly. All this is agreed unanimously, without objection; to certify this, we, those chosen to collect the votes, sign.

No.154(= II.187). From the granting of the right to vote to  
R. Abel .

Thursday, 12 Tebet 5562 (1802).

By decision of the Kahal, Rabbi Abel, son of Isaac Aisik, has been granted the right of perpetual suffrage with the title of Ikkar of the Kahal for one year, for which he has to pay 6 rubles of silver into the community treasury. These funds are from

already paid him up to half a kopeck. \*)

No. 155: On the appointment of two advocates to conduct a legal dispute of the defendants with the Federal Court of Justice.

the Kahal leaders.

Sabbath, the 14th of Tebet 5562 (1802) at Minsk.

Since the notary R. Eleazar demands the appointment of two advocates from the Kahal chiefs because of the demands he has on them, the following have been appointed by the Kahal chiefs to conduct the trial with the said R. Eleazar: the head R. Eleazar, son of the notary R. Eleazar. Eleazar: the head R. Eleazar, son of R. Eleazar.

R. Joseph, Levite, and the head R. Joseph son of R. Isaac, Levite.

No. 156 (= II. 189). Of the withdrawal of funds for the congratulation of the authorities on feast days.

Sabbath, the 21st of Tebet 5562 (1802) at Minsk.

As a result of the utmost necessity to cover the enormous expenses for the congratulation of the authorities at Christmas, it has been decided, according to our customs, by the members of the Kahal Board and the Grand Assembly to use all possible means through the secret chaser to collect the arrears of the percentage tax. \*\*) The monies received are to be used to cover the cost of Christmas expenses for the current year.

No. 157 (= II. 190). On the increase of the salary of the teachers of great merit.

Sabbath, the 21st of Tebet 5562 (1802).

The shechers of large livestock have tearfully submitted a request to the heads of the Kahal for an increase in their salaries,

\* It is interesting that the sum needed to buy a title is mentioned here. It is low enough by today's standards, but perhaps relatively high for those times. D. H.  
\*\* Who does not think of a penitentiary state or Bolshevnik Russia when reading this account?! D. H.

whereupon the latter unanimously decided to increase the salary of each of them by 2 roubles a week from now on. The Kahal agrees to this increase on condition that the shepherds undertake in writing to work for this salary for three years from now, and that during these three years they dare not trouble the Kahal, or the Great Assembly with new demands. Further, they are obliged to submit to the rules laid down for them by three chosen members: the Rabbi from Dworitz, Rabbi Juda Leib, son of Jacob, and R. Moses, son of Joseph, Jechiel. All the items in this list of the three chosen members are to be held sacred and high by the shepherds.

After the keepers have signed these conditions, they each receive 2 roubles a week.

All this is unanimously decided by the heads of the Kahal and the Grand Assembly according to the laws.

No. 158 (II. 191). From the election of persons to establish the rules for circumcision and wedding feasts, the Dajjanim and other Kahal facilities.

Sabbath, the 21st of Tebet 5562 (1802).

It has been decided by the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly to elect some persons in the Kahal whose duty it is to establish rules for circumcision and wedding feasts, - as well as to establish the rights of the Dajjanim (members of the Bet Din court) and other Kahal institutions, thus restoring our law in its force.

Elected for this purpose were: the Rabbi of Dworitz; R. Moses, son of Jechiel Michael; R. Moses, son of Jacob; R. Eleazar, son of Joseph, Segal; R. David, son of Eleazar. The rules established by these persons must be submitted for certification to the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly, after which they will have the force of law, all of which was unanimously agreed upon.

No. 159 (= II. 192) . Of the provisions to be made in the event of any revision.

Monday, 24 Tebet 5562 (1802).

As our community is currently in need of a very large sum as a result of the audit being carried out by the magistrate, it has been decided by the Kahal leaders and the General Assembly to take the necessary funds for this from the three-gross levies on meat, namely from the sum that has been accumulating with the plenipotentiary for a long time. From these funds, as much is to be taken to cover the aforementioned deficit as is necessary, which was decided with the agreement of all local Kahal and Bet Din members. The leaders of the Kahal, the Bet Din and the General Assembly are strictly forbidden to use these funds for anything other than the above-mentioned deficit. All this was decided in the room of the Kahal with the consent of all on the basis of the laws and rules.

No. 160 (= II. 193). From the new levy to cover expenses at Christmas.

Thursday, 4 Shebat 5562 (1802).

As the necessity of increasing the sum for felicitation of the authorities has been proved, so that the sum may still exceed the 80 roubles of this year, the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly have decided to give the slaughter of poultry on lease from today on the following conditions: The lessee shall pay the full year's rent immediately on taking up the lease. The beginning of the contract shall be counted from the month of Elul 5562 (1802). It shall be announced in all the synagogues that all who wish to participate in the auction of this lease shall report to the room of the Kahal Assembly by the following Sunday, and that the lessee shall comply with the above provisions.

\* Remember that the meat tax is supposed to be used to pay the state taxes. Here, however, it is used to correct irregularities that have occurred. D. H.

has. \*) Likewise, he must employ two shepherds: one for shechitaing and one to supervise that everything is done properly. The butchers must have a certificate from the Gaon (head) of the Bet Din of our city. All this was decided unanimously in the room of the Kahal on the basis of the laws.

No. 161 (= II. 195). Von der Fleischsteuer zu zugunsten der Br ü d e r s c h a f t d e r S c h ä c h t e r .

Sabbath, Department Bo 5562 (1802).

The local shepherds have taxed themselves to maintain their synagogue, and each shepherd has to pay 3 groschen for the meat sold. If, however, a private person, not a shepherd, has cattle slaughtered for sale, then 6 groschen are to be paid for each piece of large cattle, and 1 groschen for small cattle, as set out and signed in the document by members of the above-mentioned brotherhood. The Kahal leaders have certified this decision and allow the brotherhood to lease this taxation to whom they wish, but with the condition that the money collected is used solely for the maintenance of the brotherhood synagogue and for the salaries of its preacher and synagogue servant; these funds may not be used for any other purpose under any pretext. The following rules must be observed in respect of this provision: 1. the lease monies must be kept with the brotherhood preacher or with the town shepherds, not with anyone else. 2. the preacher or the shepherds may only use these funds for synagogue purposes, not for anything else. 3. in the event of a breach of the first two points, this tax shall be forfeited completely. This provision is valid for one year only, from the date mentioned below. To confirm that this was unanimously decided in the room of the Kahal, we, the notaries, sign according to the regulations of the Kahal.

Sabbath, the 6th of Shebat 5562 (1802) at Minsk.

\* Here, the fact that auctions take place in the synagogues becomes more apparent than is usually the case in the minutes. I would like to emphasise that this reference is merely a statement of a fact of folkloric interest. D. H.

This document has been handed to the preacher of the Brotherhood of the Shepherds.

No. 162 (= II. 196). On the granting of the  
It is the son of Jechiel Michael 1, Rabbi Chajjim.  
Sabbath, Beschallach Section 5562 (1802).

It has been decided by the heads of the Kahal to offer the rich R. Chajjim, son of Jechiel Michael, the permanent right to participate in the elections of the Kahal, with the title Tub (Head of the Kahal), in all matters concerning the city. As of today, R. Chajjim is also one of the members of the General Assembly with all the rights that go with that title. This has been decided unanimously by all members according to the Torah.

No. 163 (= II. 197). From the taxation of the minyanim (private houses) to the liberation of Jewish arrestees.

Sunday, section Ijjar 5562 (4 Jan. 1802).

Since the heads of the Kahal have seen that the Brotherhood's charity fund for the Nidion Shevuim, i.e. the ransoming of Jewish prisoners, is far from sufficient to cover these expenses, they have unanimously decided that not a single householder has the right to open a minyan in his house, unless he first pays into the charity fund one sloty and 20 groschen - weekly 25 Kop.

- 25. The members of such a house of prayer must elect one of their number who undertakes to pay this 25 Kop. weekly. In the other case, the said sum is demanded by the elected leader of the minyan and collected as a debt. If a minyan does not appoint a leader, it is closed.

All this is decided by provision of the Bet Din under the chairmanship of Rabbi Gaon, and the individual points are under the strictest Cherem, the Cherem of Josna ben Nun.

If a minyan does not comply with these rules, its head and members will be punished according to the regulations for apostates of the Jewish religion. 79)



decided on the basis of the Torah laws and rabbinical provisions. All this was unanimously decided on the basis of the Torah laws and rabbinical provisions. This decision was announced in all the synagogues under the most severe and the most severe cherem. punishments and the most

Monday, 15 Schebat 5562 (1802).

No. 164 (= II. 198). From the lease of the tax from the slaughter of poultry for one year.

Monday, Division Ijjar 5562 (1802).

By general decision of the Kahal Heads and the General Assembly, the taxation of the slaughter of poultry is leased to Rabbi Sew Wolf, son of Z. H. for one year, from the month of Elul 5562 until the same date of the following year 5563, on the basis of the provisions of the General Assembly of the 4th Shebat 5562. For this lease R. Sew Wolf shall pay the Kahal treasury 75 rubles; but for the other lease of the poultry slaughter, which is for the benefit of the people who sanctify themselves by learning the Torah (Law), he shall pay its overseer 211 sloty (31 rubles, 65 kop.). Wolf has to pay the 75 rubles immediately to the last penny to the Kahal. The other sum (211 sloty) he can pay gradually at the beginning of each quarter, starting from the month of Elul this year. For these leases Wolf was issued a formal document with the signatures of the Kahal heads. All this was called three times in the synagogues according to the law and the summons to the Torah. The aforementioned 75 rubles were used by the community leaders to make gifts to the local governments on feast days, as evidenced by the account on page 51 in the Pinkes (account book).

Tuesday, 16 Shebat 5562 (1802).

No. 165 (= II. 199). On the election of the Jewish members of the jury court.

Tuesday, 16 Shebat 5562 (1802).

For the purpose of electing the two Jewish members for the Schöffengericht, 30 voters have been appointed by the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly. According to the

Before the two candidates for the court are named, the shammashim collect the votes from the 30 voters in closed envelopes and hand them over to the Bet Din. After this unofficial election, voting is by ballot - i.e. the voters who unofficially opposed the candidates must submit to the majority in the official election, as always happens in similar cases. Even before the official election, after the Bet Din has reviewed the votes, the nominated candidates must swear an oath that they will follow the instructions of the Bet Din and Kahal in the performance of their duties in the court of lay assessors, i.e. that they will only follow the orders of the Kahal and Bet Din (!) in everything that is dealt with in the court of lay assessors.

All this is unanimously agreed by the members of the Kahal and Bet Din decided on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 166 (= II. 200). On the appointment of a committee for the provisional assessment of matters under the jurisdiction of the Schöffen-Gericht.

Thursday, 19 Schebat 5562 (1802).

Since the candidates appointed and elected to the Court of Aldermen have undertaken to follow the instructions of the Kahal and the Bet Din in everything during the one year of their service, as stated in the previous act, the heads of the Kahal have decided to compose a committee from the following persons: From two Kahal members; R. Joseph, son of Isaac, Segal, and Rabbi Chajim, son of Aisik; and of two members of the Bet Din, R. Samuel, son of J., and R. Samuel, son of Aaron. This committee is commanded to draw up the rules for the two judges, by which they are to judge in the court of lay assessors. (!) All the rules prescribed for them by this committee are to be strictly observed by them for one year. All this is decided unanimously on the basis of the laws. At each meeting of this committee, one of the judges of the Court of Aldermen must be present to discuss and consider the cases currently before the court.

No. 167 (= II. 201). Of the insult to the head of the community, R. Joseph, by R. Chajjim.

Thursday, 18 Shebat 5562 (1802).

Since R. Chajjim, son of Abraham, has insulted the head of the congregation, R. Joseph, son of Isaac, it has been decided by the rulers of the Kahal: firstly, to strip Chajjim of the title Morenu (well-born) and from now on to call him Chaber (comrade) in all things and customs of Jewry; furthermore, Chajjim has to pay five chervonetz to the Kahal as a penalty, until payment of which the Kahal will occupy the place put up for sale by Chajjim. All this was determined on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 168 (= II. 202). From the appointment of three Authorised representative in matters of the Kahal and the city.

Sabbath, the 20th of Shebat 5562 (11 Jan. 1802).

On the urgent demand of the heads of the Kahal and the General Assembly, Rabbi Judah Leib, son of Jacob, the rich, R. Samuel, son of David, and Rabbi Joseph, son of Isaac, Segal, are elected as plenipotentiaries of all municipal matters, that all of them, or at least two of them, take charge of all matters of the Kahal in accordance with the authority signed by the General Assembly.

But since the authority has not yet been granted to them, because they must first swear to perform their duties, exactly as required by the General Assembly, and since R. Judah Leib refused to take this oath, the rulers of the Kahal have determined that these three are evading the performance of their duties, thereby seriously damaging municipal affairs, and have decided: These three chosen shall promise under the heaviest oath never again to do anything contrary to Jewish law. R. Judah Leib and R. Joseph took this obligation under oath on the above-mentioned Sabbath, whereupon they received authority from the Kahal leaders so that from now on they could deal with all communal matters for the benefit of the Kahal and the city according to the above-mentioned rules.

No. 169 (= II. 203). About the permission given to the rich Zewi Hirsch to open a prayer house in his house.

Sabbath, the 20th of Shebat 5562 (1802).

Since the Kahal has decided to allow anyone who wishes to do so to open a minyan in his house if he pays the stipulated sum for the ransom of Jewish prisoners, permission has been granted to the rich Zewi Hirsch, son of Sewa, to open a prayer house in his house and to pay weekly 25 kop, Hirsch. The date of payment begins on Monday, the 15th of Shebat 5562 (1802). All this has been decided by agreement of the Kahal members on the one hand and the Zewi Hirsch on the other, based on the laws and customs.

No. 170 (= II. 204). The punishment of R. Chajjim, son of Abraham, for his insolence against the Kahal members.

Monday, 22 Schebat 5562 (1802).

Since the misfortune happened again with Reb Chajjim, son of Abraham, who was already mentioned in file 164, that he approached the court table during the meeting of the leaders of the Kahal and insulted some leaders in the presence of all the members, the latter have decided, because of this insolence, to punish R. Chajjim with eternal exclusion from the brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead, of which he is a member. He is also sentenced to a fine of 30 chervonetz plus the 5 chervonetz mentioned in File 167, which he must pay to the Kahal's treasury. As for the deprivation of the title of Morenu, as mentioned in file 167, the notaries are even obliged to withhold this title from him in all documents.

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\* From the minutes, one can often see that the Kahal leadership ruthlessly took action against private prayer houses (minyans). With money, of course, many things could be achieved. Cf. no. 163, D. H.

No. 171 (= II. 205). From the election of two members of the Kahal to settle disputes between the Private persons.

Monday, 22 Schebat 5562 (1802).

In order to conduct the dispute between Isaac the glazier and his mother, the heads of the Kahal have decided to hand the matter over to Eleazar Segal, the monthly elder, and Joseph, son of Isaac. R. Eleazar remains in the office of monthly elder until the matter is concluded, and both have in their resolutions the rights of the seven rulers of the city. All this was decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 172 (= II. 206). From the conferment of the title Morenu on R. Arjeh.

Monday, 22 Schebat 5562 (1802).

By decision of the Kahal leaders, Rabbi Arjeh, son of Isaak Aisik, is appointed Morenu, which title is used in the invitation to the Torah as in all other Israelite customs. Unanimously decided by the Kahal members on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 173 (= II. 207). The increase in the salaries of the supervisors of the fees.

The heads and representatives of the Kahal, after observing that the supervisors of the three penny tax, despite their low salaries, faithfully fulfil their duties, have decided to add the following small income to their salary increase: Every householder who buys meat or has cattle slaughtered at his place for circumcision and marriage feasts, where he is exempt from the three penny tax, shall nevertheless pay the same for the benefit of these overseers - as stated below. This payment shall be rubricated as follows: Up to 60 pounds the buyer pays no tax at these feasts, from 60 up to 100 pounds he pays 20 groschen. From 100 to 160 pounds, the buyer pays 20 groschen in favour of the overseers, and so on.

The overseers enjoy this income as long as they hold office.  
This was unanimously decided in the room of the Kahal according to laws and customs in the presence of the usual number of members and signed in affirmation.

Monday, 22 Shebat 5562 (1802) at Minsk.

This document has been drawn up, signed with the addition of the Kahal seal and handed over to the overseers Rabbi Gershom son of Jehuda Leib, Isaac son of Jehuda Leib and Aaron Selig son of Simeon.

No. 174 (= II. 208). Of the conferment of the title "Morenu" on Reb Abraham, son of the Mendel.

Monday, 22 Shebat 5562 (1802).

With general consent, the heads of the Kahal have decided: to confer on Abraham, son of Menachem Mendel, the title "Morenu", by which he is to be addressed both in the invitation to the Torah and in all other Israelite customs.

No. 175 (= II. 209). Addition to the Kahal decision concerning "Morenu" for Leib, son of Gershom.

By resolution of the Kahal leaders, it is decreed that R. Juda Leib, son of Gershom, the title "Morenu" and to call him by this name when summoned to the Torah, as in all other Israelite customs.

No. 176 (= II. 210). Supplement to the Kahal Resolution

No.

173.

In yesterday's order of the Kahal chiefs, it was directed to increase the income of the wardens by a small amount through the three-grand levy. The order has also prompted the commissioners of this tax to request for salary increase. As a result of this request the following is decreed: For the meat of wedding and circumcision feasts, the feast giver shall, in addition to the money for the overseers, also pay half a kopeck per pound for the commissioners - excluding the aforementioned 60 pounds, which shall remain tax-free.

Of these two incomes together, 2/3 are given to the overseers, 1/3 to the authorised representatives.

This decree was passed unanimously in the room of the Kahale which is why we sign for authentication.

Wednesday, 24 Shebat 5562 (15 Jan. 1802) at Minsk.

This document, bearing the signatures and the Kahal seal, was given to the plenipotentiary Rabbi Gershom son of Isaac.

No. 177 (= II. 211). Dispute between the Kahal and Private persons over the possession of the Lands of the Orthodox . (!)

Wednesday, 24 Shebat 5562 (22 Jan. 1802).

Due to the dispute between the heads of the Kahal and the sons of the late R. Arjeh concerning the right of possession to the stone shutters of the archbishop, the heads of the Kahal have decided to confer the power of the seven representatives on the monthly elder R. Moses son of Jacob and Eleazar son of the Levite Joseph in relation to this dispute, with the instruction to settle the matter with the sons of Arjeh as they see fit - by peaceful or judicial means.

No. 178 (= II. 213). Of the demand of 10 roubles from the Fraternity of Schächter for Kahal-Necessities.

Sabbath, Teruma Division of the Pentateuch, 5562 (25 Jan. 1802). By resolution it is decreed by the heads of the Kahal that the Chairman of the Brotherhood of Shepherds for the Special Emergencies of the Kahal 10 rubles from their income from cattle slaughtering. Decides, unanimously, on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 179 (= II. 214). Of the distribution of footwear to the Shammashim (servants of the Kahal).

Wednesday, Tezawwe section of the Pentateuch, 5562 (29 Jan. 1802).

The leaders of the Kahal have decided that the representatives of the Welfare Fund will pay a sum of money for boots for all public mothers.

schim (servants of the Kahal for urban affairs) from their funds.

No. 180 (= II. 215). The punishment of R. Abraham for his crimes against the Kahal.

Sabbath, Tezawwe section of the Pentateuch, 5562 (1 Feb. 1802).

Since Abraham, son of Eleazar Lippmann, has done something unlawful and has defied the rulers of the Kahal, the latter have unanimously decided to punish said Abraham with six chervonetz, which he must pay to the Kahal treasury. It was decided that if Abraham did not pay immediately after the first demand, he would be fined eight chervonets.

This decree of the Kahal was communicated to the said Abraham by the Shammashim, whereupon he replied that he wished to litigate this matter with the Kahal at the Bet Din and would send him the summons to the court by the Shammashim.

No. 181 (= II. 212). Of the Determination of a Means for Decking the Shuld of the Kahal to Rabbi Isaac, Son of Gershom.

Wednesday, the 2nd Adar of the year 5562 (22 Jan. 1802).

In order to repay the debt of 50 rubles of silver which Rabbi Isaac, son of Gershom, has spent out of his pocket on Kahal matters, and which has not yet been reimbursed to him, the Kahal has decided the following: Since the right of possession to two stone shops of the merchant Baikov, built on the High Square, with its cellars and rooms, has been sold by the Kahal for 70 rubles to R. Jechiel Michael, son of Aaron - the Kahal authorises the said R. Isaak to collect this sum. In doing so, the Kahal even grants Isaac the right to proceed by judicial means and to make the necessary expenditures for this purpose at the Kahal's expense - equipped with the Kahal's power of attorney for this case. At the end of the process, when the sum is paid in, R. Isaak receives back his 50 rubles and all the expenses laid out up to half a kopeck. In the case that Jechiel Michael does not want to pay, the Isaak has to pay him through the



Shammash to send a summons in the following form: "Rabbi Michael! You are informed by the entire Kahal that you must pay the 70 rubles owed to him. In the event that you do not pay, the Kahal will transfer the rights you have acquired to the houses of the Baikov into other hands. Should this measure be unsuccessful, the aforementioned rights shall pass forever to Isaac, for which the Kahal shall issue him a deed. It should be noted here that if Isaac is really forced to take over these houses, he must still pay the Kahal the missing amount before he receives the deed, or he must deposit his signature on it with a Shammash as security.

No. 182 (= II. 219). From the appointment of two Advocates to conduct the trial between the Kahal and Abel son of Isaac Aisik.

Sabbath, Ki tissa Division, 5562 (1802).

For the conduct of the case between the chiefs of the Kahal and R. Abel, son of Isaak Aisik, son-in-law of Zewi Hirsch, over the right to a new house built by the non-circumcised (Christian), the blacksmith Selesi, two advocates are chosen by the heads of the Kahal: Eleazar, son of R. Joseph, Segal, and Chajim, son of R. Isaak Aisik to conduct the case with Abel.

This is unanimously decided on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 183 (= II. 220). Of the punishment of R. Abraham for disobedience to the Kahal.

Sabbath, Ki tissa Division, 5562 (1802).

Since Abraham, son of Eleazar Lippman, has persisted to this day in disobedience to the holy laws and the Kahal, and has also offended the Kahal, the rulers of the city have decided to punish him, the Abraham: 1. With perpetual deprivation of the right to vote; 2. with perpetual deprivation of the right to participate in the general assemblies; 3. with expulsion from all brotherhoods. In addition, he is sentenced to a fine of 8 chervonets, as mentioned in the decision of last week's Kahal (No. 180).

No. 184 (= II. 216). On the appointment of a  
The viewer is informed about the exact cleaning of the flesh  
from tendons.

Monday, Ki tissa Division 5562 (3 Feb. 1802).

By decision of the Kahal leaders, Jacob, son of R. Israel, is appointed overseer at the butchers' shops to check that the meat sold is always free of sinews, as it should be - which the shechers cannot watch out for because they are overloaded with work. For this work, the butchers have to pay Jacob 3 groschen per pound of meat. From this income, Jacob gives one third to the preacher of the brotherhood of the shepherds.

No. 185 (= II. 217). Of the control of the sum taken by the heads of the Kahal for the Rent Office.

Tuesday, Ki tissa Division, 5562 (1802).

When checking the amount taken out of the community funds by the Kahal leaders for the pension office to pay off the debt of the Kahal, the inspectors appointed by the General Assembly found that out of the 300 roubles taken out, only 280 roubles had remained, but the remaining 20 roubles had been used by the pension office for the quickest preservation of the amount. \*)

No. 186 (= II. 218). Of the evidence of the right of possession to the house of the farmer Sele isi se itens of R. Zewi.

Wednesday, Ki tissa Division, 5562 (1802).

On general demand, the Kahal leaders published that anyone who had an option on the right of possession of the Seleisi farmer's house should communicate it, the sooner the better. As a result, R. Zewi, son of R. Ruwima, informed that his

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\* This passage is reproduced in a literal translation, but the original, presumably intentionally, is obscure. The situation was probably that the Kahal could only prove the payment of 280 (instead of 300) roubles to the rent office and made the excuse that he had had to slip the officials 20 roubles by hand so that they would issue the receipt as quickly as possible. D. H.

Abel, son of A., who was just absent, had the documents on the right of ownership of this house, as well as formal confirmation and some resolutions of the Bet Din. Apart from this option, no other was brought forward.

No. 187 (= II. 221). Of the conferment of the title "Morenu" on R. Herschel, son of Isaac.

Monday, Pekude 5562 (11 Feb. 1802).

The leaders of the Kahal have decided to confer the rank of "Morenu" on R. Herschel, son of R. Isaac. Herschel, son of R. Isaak, the rank of "Morenu" and to name him so in the call to the Torah and in other Israelite customs. This title will be confirmed to R. Herschel when he has sought the consent of Rabbi Gaon, Chairman of the Brotherhood of Shepherds.

No. 188 (= II. 222). On the appointment of R. Abraham as "Morenu".

Monday, Pekude 5562 (11 Feb. 1802).

Following a general decision, the Kahal leaders decreed that Abraham, son of Simeon, be raised to the title of "Morenu" by which he must be addressed when calling on the Torah, as in all other Israelite customs. This was decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 189 (= II. 223). From the sale of the right of possession to the lands of the priests of the Boni fatski Order by the Khal.

Monday, Pekude 5562 (11 Feb. 1802).

By a general decision of the rulers of the Kahal, Isaac, son of R. Sey Wolf, was sold the right of ownership of the stone shops of the priests of the Bonifatski Order in the Small Bazaar, namely: the right to those six shops located at the corner of the said Bazaar and one shop in Sibitzkoi Street. The right to all these was sold by the rulers of the Kahal to the said Isaac and to Joseph son of Samuel. They also sold them the right to the vacant lot between the courtyard of Avigdar son of Samuel.

of M. Shirin, and extends from Sibitzkoi Street to the church, of these priests. The money for this purchase has long been paid into the Kahal treasury.

All this is decreed on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 190 (= II. 224). On the granting of the right to vote to R. Abraham.

Tuesday, Pekude 5562 (12 Feb. 1802).

The heads of the Kahal have decided to grant R. Abraham, son of R. Simeon, eternal suffrage. Abraham, son of R. Simeon, the perpetual suffrage, for which R. Abraham has already paid the usual sum of up to half a kopeck to the Kahal treasury. In addition, R. Abraham all the rights of a perpetual member of the Great Assembly. All this is decided with the consent of all on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 191 (= II. 225). Of the sale of the right of possession to an empty square to R. Abraham.

Tuesday, Pekude section of the Pentateuch, 5562 (1802).

By general resolution, the Kahal leaders sold to R. Abraham, son of Simeon, the right to a free space belonging to them, which is located between the house of Abraham and his nearest neighbour. Thus, from now on, the right to the square belongs to Abraham alone, who can do as he pleases with it. The Kahal assumes no responsibility whatsoever if Abraham's neighbours lay claim to this place; but the rights of the present sale are in no way diminished by such claims. If, however, persons living further away from the place, who are not neighbours of Abraham, make claims, the Kahal undertakes to pay for them in favour of Abraham.

No. 192 (= II. 226). Of the punishment of R. Moses and Sara from Kle zka du rch den Ka hal.

Sabbath, Sab Division of the Pentateuch, 5562 (8 March 1802).

Based on the ukase received by the Kahal from the local criminal court on the decision of appropriate punishment of the

Sara and Moses from Kletzka (Minsk governorate, Sluzk district), the Kahal leaders decided to impose a three-week arrest on the said Moses in the Bet Hamidrash (prayer-house), during which he must read Psalms daily. However, Moses had been subject to this punishment for a long time. As for Sara, the usual penance is imposed on her, apart from banishment (!) from Kletzka for four years. A letter was sent to the rabbi of Kletzka to forbid all Jewish inhabitants of Kletzka and the surrounding area to let Sara into any Jewish house during these four years. This letter was delivered to the rabbi on Sunday, section Shemini in the Pentateuch, 5562 (9 March 1802).

No. 193 (= II. 229). From the admission of R. Jehuda to the overseers.

Monday, 3 Nisan 5562 (24 March 1802).

Since Aaron Selig, son of Simeon, has resigned from his position as overseer of the three-grand levy on kosher meat, the rulers of the Kahal have appointed in his place R. Jehuda, son of Natan, with the salary of the remaining overseers. This was decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 194 (= II. 230). From the wedding gift to the son of the preacher of the brotherhood of the Undertaker.

Monday, 3 Nisan 5562 (24 March 1802).

For the wedding of the son of the preacher of the Brotherhood of the Undertakers of the Dead, the Kahal leaders have decided to give the above-mentioned preacher 3½ roubles as a gift from the Kahal treasury.

No. 195 (= II. 231). Of the sale of the house by the chris tian, the smith Selei si, to R. Eleasar, son des Jo sep h Katz.

Monday, 3 Nisan 5562 (1802).

The principals of the Kahal have unanimously decided the following: The former rulers of the Kahal have granted the R. Eleazar, son of Joseph

Katz, sold the right of possession to the house of the uncircumcised (Christian) blacksmith Seleisi in Yurievskaya Street, for which he was issued a deed by the Kahal leaders at the time. In it it was mentioned that the Kahal would have to pay against all claims. Such claims had long been made by the R. Abel, brother-in-law of Zewi Hirsch, so R. Eleazar requested the Kahal to represent his right on the basis of the document. Thereupon the Kahal leaders decided to pay Eleazar 4 chervonetz, for which he should release the Kahal from any responsibility, even if the lawsuit Eleazar has to conduct with Abel at the Bet Din, would be decided in favour of the latter. Should Eleazar not agree to this, then 10 chervonetz shall be paid to him for releasing him from obligations. )

To secure this sum, the Kahal prescribes to the Eleazar all the immovable property to which he has a right in the city, and Eleazar may extend his claims to what he likes best of it. If R. Abel wishes to acquire from the Kahal the right of possession to the above-mentioned house with all its accessories as issued to Eleazar, he shall pay the Kahal 8 chervonetz, whereupon all rights shall pass to R. Abel, to these 8 chervonetz taken from Abel, the Kahal adds two more and thus rewards R. Eleazar. All this was decided with the full agreement of all members on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 196 (= II. 232). Of the termination of the dispute between the Kahal and Eleazar.

On Tuesday, 4 Nisan (25 March 1802), R. Eleazar voluntarily agreed that the Kahal pay him 4 chervonets for the final settlement of the protest matter of R. Abel.

No. 197 (= II. 227). Of the granting of a three-month leave of absence to Shammash R. Leib.

As the Shammash of our town, Rabbi Jehuda Leib, has to go away for 2-3 months for various reasons, the

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\*The trade makes an embarrassing impression! D. H.

The Kahal has decided to grant him a leave of absence for three months, from the date below until the first in the month of Tammus 5562 (19 June 1802). For the transfer of his office to R. Leib for the said period, the Kahal has no claim to make. All this was decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

Sabbath, Tasria section, on 1 Nisan 5562 (22 March 1802).

No. 198 (= II. 228). On the Reward of the Cantor from Vilnius.

On Sabbath, section Tasria, 1st Nisan 5562 (22nd March 1802), it is decided by the heads of the Kahal to give from the Kahal treasury to R. Arieh from Vilna for prayers in the local synagogue on two Sabbaths in succession.

No. 199 (= II. 233). Of the punishment of Abraham, son of A., for Nichterssch one before the court of Bet Din .

Tuesday, 4 Nisan 5562 (1802).

Since R. Abraham, son of A., has already twice failed to respond to the call to appear before the court of the Bet Din and thus brought the Cherem upon himself, while at the same time opposing the Kahal leaders in various matters, it has been decided today by the leaders of the Kahal without opposition to exclude R. Abraham, son of A., for three years from today from participating in the elections as well as in the general assemblies of all brotherhoods. The right of liberum veto (i.e. the objection of a single Kahal head can prevent the annulment of the sentence) applies to the annulment of this sentence. All notaries shall be forbidden to write a promissory note or any document for R. Abraham, and the rulers shall not accept any action from him against anyone during the whole of the above period. This judgement will be fully valid when it is certified by the Bet Din.

Thursday, 6 Nisan is decided by the Kahal leaders, that the above-mentioned judgement shall have legal validity even if the rulers of the Bet Din do not certify it, and all the servants shall inform the residents thereof. Should anyone from the brethren-

If the communities want to take legal action against the Kahal because of this judgement, the Kahal appoints R. Moses and R. Joseph as advocates in advance. Since R. Abraham has already demanded that the Kahal leaders appear before the Bet Din, two advocates are also active in this matter against Abraham.

No. 200 (= II. 234). Of the elevation of R. Faitel, son of Isaac, to the ex-headship of Kahal.

Sunday, section Acharé 5562 (20 March 1802), it was decided by the heads of the Kahal to elevate R. Faitel, son of Isaac, as ex-head of the Kahal and to title him so in all communal matters. This was decided unanimously on the basis of the customs and laws.

No. 201 (= II. 235). Of the granting of the right to vote to R. Isaak, son of Gerschom, and his appointment as ex-head of the Kahal.

Sunday, section Acharé 5562 (20 March 1802), it was decided by the Heads of the Kahal to grant the R. Isaac, son of Gershom, the right to vote and equal rights with the other members of the General Assembly; furthermore, he is to be elevated to the position of Ex-Head of the Kahal. All this has been done with the consent of all, according to the laws and customs, except that Isaak still has to receive confirmation from Rabbi Gaon, the chairman of the local Bet Din.

No. 202 (= II. 236). Of the right of possession of the balcony in the stone house of Pan Trankewitsch.

Sunday, section Acharé 5562 (1802).

The right to the balcony of the house\*) by Pan Trankevich, the

\* It is not clear why the Chasakah was used to acquire the right to a balcony on a Christian-owned house. Perhaps it is a custom practised in Palestine, but also present in Eastern Europe, that during the Feast of Tabernacles the father of the family sleeps on the balcony adorned with green branches, since the regulation to live in tabernacles is not practicable. D. II.



had long since been handed over by the Kahal chiefs to R. Saul, son of Wolf, has been sold by the latter to R. Jehuda Leib, son of Jacob. After the present bankruptcy of R. Saul, his creditors have protested against this sale. However, since we, the Kahal leaders, know that from the beginning this right was not sold to R. Saul, but was only given to him for his use because of his great poverty, the Kahal leaders confirm this. Saul, but was only given to him for his use because of his great poverty, the heads of the Kahal confirm to the R. Saul that this right was not sold. R. Yehuda Leib the right to the balcony, without regard to any protests, transferring to him all rights over this purchase with all the protection of the Bet Din against any protests. As a result of the laws and regulations of our Sages, this right can never be taken away from Yehuda Leib and his successors in title. This was decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 203 (= II. 237). Of the brawl of R. Faiwush, son of Abraham, with the wife of Isaac the shoemaker.

Sunday, Acharé Division 5562 (1802).

Since Faiwush, son of Abraham, beat up the wife of the shoemaker R. Isaak and justified himself by saying that she had struck first, moreover, Faiwush's son, Abraham, slandered this woman before the Kahal, the rulers of the Kahal decided: If the woman affirms on oath that it was not she who struck first, but Faiwush, the latter will be punished with three days of continuous psalm reading in the local Bet Hamidrash, but R. Abraham will lose the title "Morenu" forever. He can only regain the title by unanimous decision of all Kahal leaders with the application of the "liberum veto" right; this provision also applies to all further Kahal compositions. On the coming Tuesday, the Shammashim are to announce in all the synagogues that the Abraham has insulted the honour of said woman with his lying allegations. All this has been determined by agreement of all members of the General Assembly according to law and custom.

No. 204 (= II. 238). From the pardon of the (in no. 203) punished R. Faiwush ch and his son R. Abraham.

Since R. Faiwush and his son R. Abraham humbly submitted to the decision of the Kahal and considered it to be very just, the heads of the Kahal decided to pardon R. Faiwush completely, but to remit part of the punishment to his son by not announcing his misdeed, but to deny him the title of Morenu until it is restored to him by decision of all Kahal heads. Everything was decided according to law and custom.

Note: On the 2nd day of Passover, R. Abraham was given back the title of "Morenu" by the Kahal leaders.

No. 205 (= II. 239). Of the granting of the right of possession of half the house of Pan Baikov to R. Isaak, son of Gers chom, for the 50 ru bel which the ka hal paid him.

owes.

Monday, 11 Nisan 5562 (1 April 1802).

Since the rich R. Jechiel Michael, son of Aaron, has not yet paid the full amount for the right of ownership granted to him over the two stone shops of Pan Baikov, but the Kahal chiefs absolutely must pay R. Isaac, son of Gershom, the 50 roubles they owe him, the town council has decided that he is to be paid the full amount. Isaac, son of Gershom, the 50 roubles they owe him, the town leaders have decided to grant R. Isaac the right to one half of the stone shop. Isaac the right to one half of the stone house of Pan Baikov with upper and lower floors as payment. For the money already paid in by Jechiel Michael he receives the right to the other half of the house.

To the R. Isaac shall be issued a deed with the following conditions: If Jechiel Michael pays the amount still owed to the Kahal within a quarter of a year and the latter then pays his debt to R. Isaac, the latter shall relinquish his rights to the former. Isaac, the latter shall relinquish his rights to half of the stone house to the former. In the other case the document remains in force. All this was decided unanimously by the Kahal board on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 206 (= II. 240). From the restitution of the Disbursements to the elder of the "Großen Wohltätigkeits-Sammelbechers" (Zedaka Gedola) R. Isaak, son of the Gerschom<sup>80</sup>).

Tuesday, 11 Nisan 5562 (1 April 1802).

The R. Isaak, son of Gershom, elder of the "Great Charity Collection Cup", has presented the following to the heads of the Kahal: Due to a lack of cash in the collection cup entrusted to Isaak, Isaak was forced to pay 50 rubles out of his pocket for unavoidable demands of the Kahal - expenses that happened at the expense of the collection cup. At the new elections for the offices of the Kahal board, with Isaak possibly losing his office, he demands that the Kahal settle his debt. After considering this demand, the Kahal has decided: If new elders are appointed for the great collection cup through the new elections, the first of them can only take office after paying the R. Isaac the said debt sum.

No 207 (= II. 241). The removal of the local permanent dajjanim from the judgement of Bankruptcy cases.

Wednesday, 12 Nisan 5562 (2 April 1802).

On the occasion of the resolution of the dispute between Chajjim, son of Isaac, and some other persons, concerning the debt collection of R. Saul, son of Wolf, and his daughter Chajja, R. Chajjim has conveyed to the Kahal that the local Dajjanim cannot act as judges in these matters, since they themselves are among the creditors. Therefore, the Kahal has decided to remove the local Dajjanim from judging this matter and to appoint Dajjanim from other towns for this purpose. All this has been decided unanimously on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 208 (= II. 242). On the punishment of R. Arjeh Leib, son of Shalom.

Wednesday, 12 Nisan 5562 (2 April 1802).

Since the Arjeh Leib, son of Shalom, has not carried out the decisions of the Bet Din, it has been decided by the Kahal leaders to exclude him forever from all the brotherhoods of which he is a member, which has been decided unanimously according to laws and customs.

No. 209 (= II. 243). Of the claims of R. Moses, son of Jacob, to the Kahal rulers.

Wednesday, 12 Nisan 5562 (2 April 1802).

Rabbi Moses, son of Jacob, who last year acquired the right of ownership to the stone shutters of Pan Gilewitsch on the High Market, for which he received a sealed and signed document, has not yet paid in full; a debt of 40 rubles still remains. Now today Moses informed the Kahal that the holy brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead objected to this right of ownership and that he could only persuade them to surrender his rights by obliging them to pay him one rouble a year. In addition, R. Isaac, son of Elijah, also raised well-founded claims on the basis of another old document.

On the basis of this, the Kahal Board decided to release R. Moses from his debt in exchange for releasing the Kahal from representing his rights in upcoming lawsuits, which he will have to conduct himself. All this was unanimously decided by the Board on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 210 (= II. 244). Of the election of the Dajjanim. On the eve of Thursday, 13 Nisan 5562 (3 April 1802).

It has been decided by the Kahal Board, in agreement with the General Assembly, that the electors (members of the municipal administration) who are going to this year's ballotage will not elect the judges, but that the latter are to be elected by an extraordinary assembly before the general elections. Exceptions are: the Gaon, chairman of the local Bet Din, and his son Michael. All this was decided unanimously according to law and custom.

No. 211 (= II. 245). From the exclusion from all fraternities of the one who has not complied with the decisions above of the judges mentioned above.

On the eve of Thursday, 13 Nisan (3 April 1802), it was resolved by the Kahal Heads and the General Assembly: Whoever in our city does not respect the decisions of the Bet Din concerning the new judges, in case they are made known among the Cherem, shall be excluded forever from all the brotherhoods of which he is a member. The following law shall apply: the Shammashim shall inform the disobedient person of this decision for the time being. If the disobedient person does not comply, the Shammashim must inform the monthly elders of all the brotherhoods that he will never again be invited to their meetings and that his name must be removed from the lists in all the books of the brotherhoods. All this was decided unanimously according to law and custom.

No. 212 (= II. 246). Of the appointment of three controllers.

Since only two of the three auditors elected by the Extraordinary Assembly to audit the Kahal accounts, namely R. Moses son of J. and R. Isaschar Beer son of Isai, have come forward, the Kahal leaders, together with the General Assembly, have decided to appoint another auditor from among the ex-chiefs to audit all the Kahal Board's accounts of income and expenditure for the past year. R. Wolf, son of Abraham, is appointed for this purpose, with the consent of all according to law and custom.

No. 213 (= II. 248). Of the conferment of the right to vote and the title of Ex- Haupt on various persons.

At the meeting of the Kahal Board on the 2nd day of Passover, it was decided to grant permanent suffrage and the title of ex-head to: Arjeh Leib, son of Eleazar, Segal; permanent suffrage to R. Mordecai, son of R. Moses; R. Asher, son of Simeon; his brother-in-law R. Nehemiah, son of Joseph; R. Jacob, son of Moses, and

N. Israel Issar, son of Gershom; but the title "ex-head" to: R.

David son of Eleazar; R. Solomon son of Samuel; R. Chajjim son of Isaac Aisik, and R. Moses son of Zewi Hirsch.  
At the same meeting, the right of ownership to his own house on Franziskanerstrasse was sold to Israel Issar. Likewise, the perpetual suffrage was given to: R. Arjeh, son of Isaac Aisik, and R. Beer, son of Eleazar Segal.

No. 214 (= II. 250). From the confirmation of the Provision of the Kahal of 28 Siwan 5562 (28 May 1802).

By general resolution of 28 Siwan 5562 (1802) it was decreed (see file 140) that in all municipal matters five heads of the town enjoy the executive power of all seven representatives of the whole Kahal. In order to prevent misunderstandings with regard to file no. 140, it has been decreed today, with the agreement of the usual members and the seven heads of the city, to certify the resolutions of the five or six heads until this day of 28th Siwan 5562 (1802) and to grant them the legal validity of the decisions of the whole Kahal. All this was unanimously decided without any contradiction on the third Passover day 5562 (1802) at Minsk on the basis of the laws and customs.

No. 215 (= II. 251). Of the punishment of R. Abraham Abel, son of Isaac Aisik, for disobedience to the Kahal.

On the third Passover day (7 April 1802): Because of non-compliance with the resolutions of the Kahal by R. Abraham Abel, son of Isaac Aisik, it is resolved by the Board of the Kahal to exclude R. Abraham Abel from the elections for one year. This is unanimously decided by the usual number of members of the Kahal in its room according to law and custom. Note: On the same day Abraham Abel was forgiven and restored to his former rights.

No. 216 (= II. 252). Of the settlement of the dispute between Joel, son of Meyer, and R. Jehuda Leib, son of Moses.

On the third Passover day, R. Joel, son of R. Meyer, presented the Kahal Board with a document stating that the right of possession to the house of

with all the buildings in Kaidanski Street does not belong to R. Yehuda Leib, son of Moses, who bought it with all rights, but to him. In addition, Joel, presented another certification of the right, from which it was evident that some members of the Kahal did not recognise the document as legal. Thereupon the Kahal Board appointed as advocates the honoured R. Jacob, son of Joseph, Jechiel, and the aforementioned R. Yehuda Leib, and entrusted them with conducting the case on behalf of the Kahal before the Bet Din. The R. Yehuda Leib was ordered by the Kahal to immediately deposit four chervonetz with some private person on the following conditions: If this lawsuit is won for the Kahal, R. Yehuda Leib is to add 2 chervonetz, for which he will receive perpetual right of possession. If the case is decided in the opposite way, R. Yehuda Leib receives his 4 chervonetz back. R. Yehuda Leib deposited these 4 chervonetz with R. Moses, son of Jacob.

No. 217 (= II. 253). On the election of six overseers of the Threepenny Tax.

On the eve of Tuesday, the 18th of Nisan 5562 (1802), it was decided by the Kahal Board and the General Assembly to appoint six supervisors for the three-gross levies on the basis of the regulations and documents that have long been with the authorized representative of these levies and have long been confirmed by the committee. The following supervisors have been appointed: 1. R. Leib, son of J.; 2. R. Isaak, son of E.; 3. R. Aisik, son of Zewi Hirsch M.; 4. R. Chajim, son of J. Segal; 5. R. Wolf, son of Zewi Hirsch; 6. R. Nota, son of Eliakim Herz. These overseers are appointed for one year, from today until the new elections at Passover 5563, based on law and custom.

No. 218 (= II. 254). The decision on the question of which of the Kahal heads should be chosen for the election of the

The Board of Directors is entitled to vote on the matter.

On the eve of Tuesday, the 18th of Nisan 5562 (1802).

At the request of the Monthly Elder to appoint judges apart from the general election, and based on the provisions of the General Assembly of 13 Nisan (No. 210), some members of the General Assembly did not cast their votes,

by demanding a preliminary dispute with the Kahal before three judges about the competence of the members of the General Assembly, since in their opinion, on the basis of the provisions of the 13th of Nisan, the election of judges is only legal if the composition of the members is done according to the holy Jewish law. Since the Kahal and the General Assembly recognise this just demand, they appoint three Dajjanim (judges) to judge the case: the rabbi and preacher of the brotherhood of the undertakers of the dead Rabbi Gaon Michael, and the rabbi and preacher

R. Moses, son of Solomon. The following were appointed as trustees on the part of the Kahal: R. Moses, son of R. Jacob, and R. Samuel, son of Dan; from the other party: R. Jehuda Leib, son of Jacob, and R. Chajjim, son of Isaac.

All this has been decided unanimously by all members according to law and usage. After this procedure has been completed, the election of the Dajjanim (judges) will take place in accordance with the provisions of the 13th of Nisan.

No. 219 (= II, 255). On the election of the permanent judges. On Tuesday, the 4th day of Passover 5562 (8 April 1802), it is resolved by the Kahal Board and the Extraordinary Assembly: Secret ballots shall be collected from all members for the election of five permanent judges. The ballotage shall take place immediately after the general elections, as follows: Immediately after the close of the general elections, the notaries of the Kahal shall go to all members' houses to collect the votes for the judges. The list of candidates for the office of Permanent Justices shall be presented to each member of the General Assembly by the Kahal Notaries. The five candidates who then have the majority of votes in the final election shall remain permanent judges until Passover 5563 (1803).

No. 220 (= II. 256). Of the election of the five permanent judges.

After the general elections, the members of the General Assembly elected by secret ballot five permanent judges to hold office for one year, from today until the end of the



Laubhüttenfestes 5563 (1803). This decision is confirmed in the Kahal House following are elected:

1. R. Samuel, son of R. Jechiel Michael, Segall,
2. R. Joseph, son of R. Michael, Segall,
3. R. Samuel, son of R. Aaron,
4. R. Abel, son of R. Isaak Aisik,
5. R. Jacob, son of R. Saul.

No. 221 (= II. 257). From the election of the new Kahal members.

At the good hour! List of persons appointed as overseers and representatives from the end of Passover 5562 (1802) to the same time 5563 (1803):

Raschim (Oberchiefs):

- R. Samuel, son of R. Dan,
- R. Moses, son of R. J.,
- R. Isaac, son of R. J.,
- R. Feitel, son of R. J.

Note. By the terms of the Bet Din, R. Moses is the first head and R. Samuel, son of Dan, the second.

Tubim (Chairperson):

- R. Saul, son of S.,
- R. Hirsch, son of R.,
- R. Chajjim, son of Jossel,
- R. Joseph, son of J., Segal.

Ikkarim (real members) :

- R. Abraham, son of A.,
- R. Shelomo, son of Sh., Segal,
- R. Isaac, son of Gershon.

Amendment. Should R. Shelomo Segal not be allowed to hold office due to the regulations on the relationship of the individual members, R. Moses, son of J., shall be appointed.

Gabbaim (Alteste).

- R. Isaak, son of Zewi Hirsch,
- R. Salman, son of Pesach,
- R. Leib, son of Eleazar, Segal,
- R. Samson, son of J.

Candidates for these offices in case of default.

R. Hillel, son of A.,  
R. Isaac, son of Elijah,  
R. Faiwush, son of Segal,  
R. Kalman, son of G.,  
R. Eleazar, son of Elijah,  
R. Abraham, son of Simon.

All this is determined by us, the electors, on the basis of the sacred laws to the best of our knowledge and belief. In witness whereof we sign:

Wednesday, the 3rd day of Passover 5562 (9  
April 1802). Saul, son of R. Sew Wolf Ginsburg,  
Solomon son of R. Samuel Segal,  
Jehuda Arjeh Leib son of R.,  
Solomon, Segal,  
Isaac son of R. Gershom,  
Eleazar son of R. Elijah.

No. 222 (= II. 258). From the protest of some members of  
the General Assembly against the nomination  
the Da j jani m ( R i c h t e r ).

Wednesday, the 3rd Passover Day 5562 (9 April 1802).

A protest was lodged by some members of the General Assembly with the Kahal Board and the Gaon, the chairman of the local Bet Din, about the election of the permanent judges in secret ballotage, which, according to very old rules of the General Assembly, has to be done as follows. Immediately after the general election, the notaries must collect the votes of all the members of the General Assembly for the election of five permanent judges by going to each one in the house. The list of candidates for the judges must be presented to each member. The candidates who have the majority of votes must be confirmed in office. These are the rules which must be observed after a unanimous decision. In the meantime, however, the election of the five judges in the Kahal House has deviated from these rules by means of secret ballotage. This breach of the old rules deprived some members of the opportunity to vote for the judges, as many went home, voting in accordance with the old rules.

expected the judges to vote by list majority (as above). No doubt, if they had known about this change earlier, many would have gone to the house of the Kahal to cast their vote there.

No. 223 (= II. 259). On the appointment of R. Mendel, son of Leib, as a permanent judge.

Wednesday, on the 3rd day of Passover 5562 (9 April 1802).

By unanimous decision of the heads of the Kahal, it is decreed that the R. Mendel, son of Leib, to be included in the number of permanent judges until Passover 5563 (1803).

No. 224 (= II. 260). From the obligation of the monthly elder to work on the Sabbaths which are in his

The first day of the month of office to pray in the Great Synagogue.

On Saturday, the last Passover day 5562 (12 April 1802), it was decided by the Kahal leaders: Each monthly elder is to pray in the large synagogue on the Sabbath days that fall in his month. This provision is made by the Kahal leaders unanimously according to law and custom.

Note: Monthly Elder, R. Moses, son of J., protested against this provision and expressed the wish to bring this issue before the Bet Din for resolution.

No. 225 (= II. 261). Von der Verleihung des Wahlrechtes.

Sabbath, on the last day of Passover 5562 (1802), it has been decided by the Kahal Board that no one shall have the right to vote during this year without the consent of all the members of the Kahal, which has been unanimously determined according to law and custom.

No. 226 (= II. 262). Prohibition on the slaughter of livestock or poultry by a slaughterer.

The first step is to grind the ground tool.

Sabbath, on the last day of Passover 5562 (1802), it was decided by the rulers of the Kahal that in the current year the shepherds should be

under no circumstances may livestock or poultry be slaughtered with a sharpened knife. The monthly elders of this year may not deviate from this decision under any circumstances, just as the Kahal officials are forbidden to collect votes for such a deviation.

A m e n d m e n t : R. Moses, son of J., protested against this.

No. 227 (= II. 263). Of the admission of R. Moses, son of Model, among the Kahal chiefs.

Sunday, 23 Nisan 5562 (1802).

Since some of the heads of the Kahal are related to each other, and thus the seven votes required to decide on matters under the authority of the Kahal can never be obtained by law, the Kahal Board has decided to add another member to the Kahal, namely R. Moses, son of Model, and to confer on him the title of Tub for one year, with all the rights of the other members.

All this was decided unanimously according to law and custom.

No. 228 (= II. 264). From the Congratulations of the Officials and Authorities to the East.

Sunday, 23rd Nisan 5562 (1802), it has been decided by the Kahal chiefs that the plenipotentiaries are to throw out 800 Polish Sloty (120 roubles of silver) from their coffers for the purpose of congratulating the Christian officials and authorities on Easter.

No. 229 (= II. 265). Addition to file no. 224.

The rulers of the Kahal have confirmed and authenticated the regulations established on the last Passover day for the monthly elders to pray in the large synagogue on the Sabbaths falling in their month of office, and have given them legal force from today until 28 Kislev 5563 (11 Oct 1803). Today the following is added: If a monthly elder violates this provision, he shall lose his office. Furthermore, the abolition may

of the provisions can only be done with the consent of all Kahal leaders, and with the right of "liberum veto". All members must be present; if only one is absent, the repeal is impossible. All this was decided unanimously in the Kahal's office on Tuesday, 25 Nisan 5562 (1802) in Minsk.

No. 230 (= II. 266). Supplement to file no. 225.

Tuesday, 25 Nisan 5562 (1802).

In addition to certifying all that was said in No. 225, the Kahal leaders today added that the right of "liberum veto" should be applied when granting the right to vote to anyone for the current year. It was likewise enacted that the notaries, if desired, should inform the members provisionally of the answer to any question. All this was decided unanimously in the House of Kahal.

No. 231 (=II. 267). Supplement to file no. 226.

Tuesday, 25 Nisan 5562 (1802).

In addition to certifying what has been determined in No. 226, namely, the prohibition of performing slaughter with a resharpened knife, the Kahal rulers have decreed to grant the "liberum veto" in this matter as well.

All this was decided unanimously in the house of the Kahal.

No. 232 (= II. 268). The protest of the elder R. Moses, son of J., against the two provisions no. 224 and no. 226.

Elder R. Moses, son of J., has protested against the decrees that the monthly elders should pray in the large synagogue on their Sabbaths and that slaughtering may not be done with a resharpened knife. He demands that this matter be referred to the Bei Din for a decision. As a result, the Kahal chiefs have appointed as their advocates the chiefs R. Samuel, son of Dan and R. Chajim son of Isaac Aisik to decide the matter judicially.

No. 233 (= II. 269). Of the granting of three months' leave to the Kahal official R. Jehuda Leib.

Sabbath, section Tasria 5562 (1802).

Since the Kahal leaders have decreed that the local Kahal official Jehuda Leib Segal, be granted a leave of absence for three months, the new Kahal leaders today on the Sabbath, section Acharé moth, on the eve of 1 Ijar 5562 (20 April 1802), granted this leave to R. Leib and allowed him to travel.

All this is decreed with one accord on the aforementioned Sabbath. \*)

No. 234 (= II. 270). From the certification of the leave to R. Leib of the preceding document by the Bet Din .

The leave granted to Yehuda Leib in Nos. 197 and 233 is hereby fully affirmed by the Bet Din, and no one, not even a congregation (Kahal), has the right to make any claim against him, or to withhold it. To authenticate this we sign it with our own hands: Sunday, the first day of the new month of Ijar 5562 (20 April 1802):

Zechariah Mendel son of R. Arjeh Zewi,  
Samuel son of Aaron Saul,

Jossel, son of Michael.

No. 235 (= II. 272). From the appointment of three Authorised to settle the matter of the Witwe Rasche and the Nac hco mme des El iaki m Herz .

Sabbath, section Emor, 13th Iyjar 5562 (1802).

For the conduct of the dispute of the widow Rasche with the Kahal, the heads of the latter have decreed together with the chiefs,

\* No. 233 and No. 234 clearly show that the decision was made on the Sabbath and the notes scrip tion on the following Sunday - in accordance with the ancient custom of the Sanhedrin to meet on the Sabbath but not to pass its resolutions on Sunday or one of the following days. The ignorance of the author of the "Jewish Encyclopaedia" who sees in the Sabbath dating the proof of Brahmans's forgery (see page XVI f.), is deplorable. Or should he only have feigned ignorance? D. H.

to appoint by election two commissioners who, together with the monthly elder R. Moses son of J., who represents the widow, shall go to the Bet Din and settle the matter peaceably; likewise, these three shall settle peaceably or judicially the matter of the descendants of Eliakim Herz concerning the promissory note which was among the papers of the deceased Israel Shammash; lastly, they shall settle the matter with R. Michael concerning the right which the Kahal gave him to the house of the aforementioned widow. However, as the monthly elder was not competent due to kinship, his father was appointed in his place, R. Leib, appointed. Also elected are: R. Saul, son of S. W., and R. Abraham Heiner. It was further decided by the leaders of the Kahal that the administrators of the welfare collection box have the right to place this box in all synagogues and teaching houses, in the women's and men's sections. If any brotherhood protests against this, the administrators shall have authority, on the basis of this resolution, to bring an action before the Bet Din. The same above-mentioned authorised representatives, R. Saul and R. Abraham, have been appointed to settle disputes between the local musicians.

No. 236 (= II. 273). Addendum to file no. 235.

Tuesday, 16 Ijar 5562 (6 May 1802), it has been decided by the Kahal leaders to appoint R. Zewi Hirsch, son of R. Ruben, as plenipotentiary on the part of the Kahal, on an equal footing with the three aforementioned plenipotentiaries, to arbitrate the matter of the widow Rasche and all other matters.

No. 237 (= II. 274). About the awarding of the Right of residence in Minsk to the rich R. Eleazar, son of Salomon Sellman n, from Jakobowitsch.

Tuesday, 23 Ijar 5562 (13 May 1802), it was decided by the Kahal leaders to grant the perpetual right of residence in Minsk to the rich, R. Eleazar, son of R. Salomon Sellmann from Jakobowitsch, as well as to his descendants, and to recognise them in all respects as our proper community members. Likewise to the

Eleazar is granted the right of ownership to all houses and buildings which he administered last year, as well as to those of the adjoining square, which are given to him as property in the bill of sale of the authority. Likewise, Eleazar is granted the right of ownership of the square of Pan Gilewitsch (which he in turn acquired from Pan Wolotkowitsch) as well as of all earth that could be added to the property of Pan Gilewitsch on the High Market. The right to all this from the centre of the earth to the height of the sky is granted to R. Eleazar, his descendants and legal successors for all time by the Kahal. The money owed for this has been paid by him. The Kahal does not assume responsibility for all this, except for the sale of the place of Pan Gilewitsch, for which the Kahal undertakes to stand against any protest.

It should be added here that the responsibility of the Kahal towards protests does not refer to protests of the rich R. Salomon, son of Samuel Segal, on the basis of his documents in the matter of Pan Gilevich's place.

No. 238 (= II. 275). Of the granting of the suffrage to R. Is rael Js sar, son of Abraham.

Tuesday, 23 Ijjar 5562 (1802).

By general agreement, the Kahal leaders have given R. Israel Issar, son of R. Abraham, the same voting rights as the other members, but only if the rich R. Samuel, son of Dan, agrees after his return from Riga.

Note: The above-mentioned R. Samuel agreed.

No. 239 (= II. 276). On the punishment of those who disobey the decisions of the Bet Din.

Thursday, 25 Ijjar 5562 (15 May 1802), it has been decided by the heads of the Kahal that persons who defy the decisions of the Bet Din (Court of Justice) shall forfeit all rights of ownership which they acquired during this year, whether by purchase or gift, so that all documents which they received from the Kahal concerning this shall be considered invalid, illegal and unprecedented - like broken glass!



No. 240 (= II. 278). Of the peaceful settlement of Kahal with the widow Rasc he.

Sunday, 28 Ijar 5562 (18 May 1802), the Kahal's rulers came to an amicable agreement with the widow Kasche (as mentioned in No. 235) by paying her in full the monies awarded to her by the court, namely 563 Sloty and 10 Groschen (84 Rubles 50 Cop.). She then issued a receipt to the Kahal with her son and handed over all the papers to him. All these documents were handed over to the notary of the Kahal, R. Baruch, for safekeeping.

No. 241 (= II. 279). The amicable settlement of the Kahal with the heirs of Elijah kim heart, son of David.

On Sunday, the 28th of Iyar, the heads of the Kahal came to an amicable agreement with the heirs of R. Eliakim Herz, son of David, regarding the promissory note for 300 Polish Sloty (45 rubles of silver) from the deceased, which was with the Kahal board. The heirs of the said Eliakim paid the Kahal 40 roubles of silver, and the son of the deceased, R. Nota, handed over to the Kahal all the papers received relating to the claims made for payment of imperial taxes, and confirmed by signature to the heads of the Kahal that he waived all claims. This confirmation was given to the notary R. Baruch for safekeeping.

No. 242 (= II. 277). From the Ordinance for the Brethren of the Sch neide r.

Sabbath, Bechukkotai Division 5562 (17 May 1802).

Since the local brotherhood of tailors has expressed the wish to buy for itself its own prayer house in the synagogue courtyard and has sought the confirmation of the Kahal for this purpose, it has been decided by its leaders together with the assembly of former leaders to appoint five persons: two from the leaders, two from the former leaders and one from the Dajjanim (judges) to draw up regulations for the new prayer house, and to take measures to prepare these regulations for the new prayer house.

The Brotherhood, for its part, must commit itself by the signatures of its members to observe to the letter everything laid down by the above-mentioned five drafters. The Brotherhood, for its part, must commit itself by the personal signatures of its members to observe in every detail all that is determined by the above-mentioned five authors of the regulations. Only under this condition may the wish of the above-mentioned brotherhood be fulfilled by the Kahal Board.

No. 243 (= II. 280). From the appointment of the members to the elaboration of the Regulations for the Fraternity of the Schneider.

Thursday, 3 Siwan 5562 (22 May 1802).

For the drafting of the regulations for the prayer house of the brotherhood of tailors, the following have been appointed by the chiefs of the town: Two from the chiefs (R. Saul Hirsch, son of R. and R. Joseph); two members from the former chiefs: R. Moses, son of R. and R. Beer, son of Z.; finally the Dajan (judge) R. Samuel, son of J. Segal. They have decided to allow the brotherhood to purchase the property only if they agree to all points of the regulations to be drawn up. Otherwise, the board of the Kahal forbids all residents of the synagogue courtyard to sell any building to the brotherhood.

No. 244 (= II. 282). From the account of the funds available to the authorities for gratuity (christical) New Year's funds spent.

4 sugar loaves of 82 pounds, 18 lots cost 233 Polish Sloty and 18 Groschen. We, the undersigned, have been appointed by the General Assembly to control the Kahal Board's account of the expenses incurred in congratulating the (Christian) officials and authorities on the (Christian) New Year, and have added up exactly how much each of those mentioned here spent out of his pocket for this purpose in favour of the Kahal:

R. Isaac, son of Isaac,	108	Ruble		
R. Moses, son of Jacob,	12	"	5	Cop.
R. Joseph, son of Isaac, Segal,	30	"		
R. Faitel, son of Isaac,	5	"		
R. Salomon, son of Sch., Segal,	5	"		

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R. Moses, son of H.,	5	"		
R. Leiser, son of I., Segal,	10	"	76½	"
R. Gershom, son of Arjeh,	16	"	76	"
Sum: 191 Ruble 93½ Cop.				

In total, therefore, we owe 191 R. 93½ Kop. For authentication we sign with our own hands: On the eve of Friday, 5 Shebat 5562 (1802), at Minsk.)

Signatures: R. Moses, son of Joseph Jechiel, R. Isaschar Beer, son of Isai. (One signature is missing.)

After this invoice had been drawn up, the Kahal chiefs received 131 roubles 63 cents of silver. The inspectors then established that the Kahal chiefs were still to receive 60 roubles 30½ kop. from the Kahal treasury. To certify this, they signed it with their own hands on the eve of Thursday, 13 Nisan 5562 (1802).

Signatures: Plenipotentiary Moses, son of Joseph Jechiel, Plenipotentiary Isaschar Beer son of Isai, Plenipotentiary Sew Wols son of Oscher.

All this is copied, so that the Kahal chiefs can present this account to the authorised representative for the levies in order to obtain the above-mentioned sum.

No. 245 (= II. 281). Controllers to whom the

The three-groschen levies have to be presented to the authorised representatives of the three-groschen levies.

R. Isaac, son of R.,  
R. Hirsch, son of Z. W. R.,  
R. Michael, Doctor,  
R. Nota, son of J. M.,  
R. Sew Wolf, son of A.,  
R. Hillel, Rabbi  
Mendel,  
R. Moses, son of S.,  
  
R. Gershom son of Uriah,

---

\*Since the meeting was held on Thursday, it was also signed on the same day. Only the Sabbath resolutions were written down on a different day. D. H.

R. Moses, son of U. L.,  
R. Wolf, son of A. Lipinski,  
R. Michael, son of Moses,  
R. Herz, son of J.

(= 282). At the same meeting, the Kahal Board decided to confer the title "Morenu" on the groom Simeon, son of Meyer Chaet (?).

No. 246. Appointment of seven agents to regulate the affairs of public houses.  
and to the issuance of the rules for the leaders.

Monday, on the second day of the new moon Ijjar 5562 (1802).

With regard to the tenants of the taverns, the heads of the taverns and the General Assembly have decided to appoint seven representatives to regulate the affairs of the taverns and their landlords. The latter are to grant powers of attorney to the seven persons to deal with all matters concerning them and then to comply fully with their regulations. The Gaon and Bet Din shall certify all the decisions of those seven plenipotentiaries, and give them all the help they need to gain obedience from the innkeepers for their orders, which the notaries must also obey. The names of the seven plenipotentiaries are: The rich R. J. Aisik, son of Jehnda; the rich R. Nota, son of Herz; R. Moses, son of J.; R. Isaac, son of R. Isaac; R. Beer, son of Jesse; R. Samuel, son of R. David; R. Chajim, son of J. Aisik. Already four of them have the same authority as all seven.

All this was decided by agreement of the Kahal Board with the Extraordinary Assembly and the innkeepers according to law and custom. The notary signed the agreement in his own hand.

No. 247 (= II. 283). On the collection of alms for the poor in Palastina.

When Chief Rabbi R. Aaron Kahan, son of Jacob Kahan, was passing through our city of Minsk to Palestine, we had the honour and the good fortune to see for ourselves the love of that R. Aaron Kahan for the Holy Land, which may the Lord God always protect!

With this rabbi were letters of authority from many towns, bound in his record book; they all stated that they undertook to assist their suffering brothers in the Holy Land with everything in their power. Consequently, we too have decided to contribute to this godly work, and order that every soul shall sacrifice 2 kopeks a year, one at the end of the old year, the other on the eve of the great Day of Atonement. Therefore it is commanded that authorized persons be chosen to see to the payment of these sacrifices in all the synagogues and houses of prayer every year on the eve of those holidays, to send them to the Holy Land, and to take care of the sacrifices with the R. Aaron Kahan twice a year of the sums invited. For this we implore the grace of God and fulfil the words: "Zion will be liberated through alms" (88) - which the Lord may bless. All is resolved by us, who are concerned with these alms, the undersigned chiefs, overseers and representatives, on Sunday, 13 Siwan 5562 (1 June 1802), at Minsk:

1. Meshullam Faiwush, son of R. Isaac,
2. Saul, son of Rabbi Sew Wolf Ginsburg,
3. Zewi Hirsch, son of Reuben,
4. Chajjim, son of Isaak Aisik,
5. Solomon, son of Samuel, Segal,
6. Isaac, son of Uriah,
7. Kalman, son of Pesach,
8. Abraham, son of Simeon.

No. 248 (= II. 284) Of the persons elected to direct the collection (No. 247).

With regard to the sacrifice designated by the leaders and representatives of our Kahal for the Holy Land, we, the undersigned, are chosen to supervise these sacrifices and have undertaken to collect annually 2 Kop. per head (as it says in No. 247). To confirm this, we sign at Minsk on Monday, 14 Siwan 5562 (1802):

Moses son of R. Joseph Jechiel,  
Zewi Hirsch son of R. Reuben,  
Samuel Gershom son of Elijah,

Chajjim, son of Aisik.

Copying this into the files of R. Aaron Kahan, I sign to authenticate:  
Baruch, son of Zewi Hirsch, notary and agent at Minsk.

No. 249 (= II. 285). From the withdrawal of the  
Illumination on the Tsar's arrival, the sum required from  
the welfare fund.

Wednesday, the 16th of Siwan (4th of July), it is decided by the  
Kahal Board: to hold an illumination in honour of our mighty and most  
high Emperor (Tsar), as he will soon be arriving here. For this purpose,  
the plenipotentiaries of the Welfare Fund are to borrow one hundred  
roubles from anyone, which are to be returned to him with interest from  
the coming year's income from the slaughter of large and small cattle.

No. 250 (= II. 286). Von the appointment of a  
Plenipotentiary for the Drei Groschen levies. Thursday,  
Behaalotcha section, d. 17. Siwan 5562 (5 June 1802),  
is to be determined by the Kahal Chiefs together with the Grand Assembly.  
it has been decided to appoint R. Jehuda Leib, son of Isaac, in place of the  
head, who no longer wishes to be one of the six elected to control the  
Three Penny Taxes, R. Isaac, son of Isaac, who is to fulfil these duties  
until the Passover of the coming year, with all the executive power of the  
other elected.

No. 251 (= II. 287). Von the withdrawal of 100  
Chervonets (300 roubles), from the welfare fund for the  
illumination of the emperor's arrival.

Sabbath, Behaalotcha section, 19 Siwan 5562 (7 June 1802).

To cover the expenses for the illumination mentioned above (No.  
249), it is resolved by the Kahal chiefs together with the former chiefs:  
The Plenipotentiaries of the Welfare Fund have for this purpose a bond  
of 100 Chervonetz - be it also

at 24%\*) - to be paid from the coming income from the slaughter of large and small cattle. From this income, the authorised representatives may not spend half a kopek for municipal purposes until the sum has been repaid with interest. The expenditure for this illumination has to be done by order of one of these authorised representatives, for which two of them - R. Zewi Hirsch, son of R. Ruben, and R. Chajjim, son of R. Isaak Aisik - are appointed.

No. 252 (= II. 288). Of the choice of controllers of expenditure on illumination.

Sabbath, week section Shelach lecha.

By resolution of the Kahal Board, two commissioners and three of the six elected in matters of the tax on kosher meat have been appointed to control the expenditure for said illumination.

No. 253 (= II. 289). Of the granting of perpetual suffrage to R. Shalom.

Sunday, section Korach 5562 (21 June 1802).

It has been decreed by the Kahal Board that the perpetual right of election be granted to R. Shalom, son of Zewi Hirsch, with the rights of all members of our congregation.

No. 254 (= II. 290). About the expulsion of R. Zewi from the brotherhood of the Schnei der because of rudeness against its head.

Sunday, section Korach 5562 (1802).

The brotherhood of tailors has punished R. Zewi Hirsch, son of R. Natan, with expulsion for his insolence and rudeness against their leader R. Meier, son of R. Moses, whereby he was also forbidden any work - unless it was permitted by them. This punishment is confirmed by the Kahal Board.

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\* Consider: this usurious interest is flowing into the pocket of some oligarch in the municipality itself, perhaps even into that of a Kahal head! No wonder the municipalities were over-indebted! D. H.

No. 255 (= II. 291). From the affair of Zewi Hirsch with Jachne.

Sunday, section Korach 5562 (1802).

For the settlement of the dispute between the R. Zewi Hirsch, son of Reuben, with the wench Jachne, it is ordered to elect two plenipotentiaries by ballotage and to attach them to the Bet Din as judges, giving them in this case the power of the seven town representatives.

No. 256 (= II. 292). Of the condemnation of a rabbi's wife for schl genuine behaviour.

Monday, 5 Tammus 5562 (23 June 1802).

In the case of the rabbi's wife from the village of Dworza, the Kahal Board has decreed that she be deprived of any right to half of her ketubah<sup>82</sup>, together with a fine of 500 sloty (125 roubles silver) and confiscation of the money, clothes and belongings that she has owned up to now. She loses the other part of the ketubah because of a serious and ugly offence, if this is recognised as real by the Bet Din. For this purpose, two representatives are to be appointed, who are to attend the verdict, so that - God forbid! - the Kahal leaders will not be harmed.<sup>83</sup>)

No. 257 (= II. 293). Some provisions for the shepherds.

Friday, 9 Tammus 5562 (27 June 1802).

In order to regulate the duties of the local shechitakers, the Kahal Board decrees: Since the Kahal Board elected the following experts last week regarding the guidance of the shechita knife<sup>84</sup>) during the shechita: the Rabbi of Dworza; Rabbi Saul, son of R. J. Segal; R. Moses, son of R. Jechiel, and his brother Jacob; R. Samuel, son of R. A. Katz; Rabbi Moses, son of R. Chajim, and R. Gershom, son of Abraham, and since the shepherd Jacob, son of Baruch, had his knives examined by these chosen ones and they proved to be unfit for shechitaing, while at R. Joseph from Berezina, with his brother-in-law R. Bezaleel, with R. Jacob son of Mordecai, and R. Samuel son of R. A, the knives being



If the right of slaughtering has been proven to be in order, it has been decided with the agreement of all the heads of the Kahal, to withdraw the right of slaughtering from the aforementioned R. Jacob, son of R. Baruch, from today until the coming Passover, so that the Gaon and the supervisors cannot give him a new permit until that day; the others, however, whose knives were suitable, can continue their business of slaughtering in our town, on condition that they pay the Gaon the usual tax for the confirmation documents. Likewise, in future, only those who, without prejudice to the permission certificates of the Bet Din, must for the time being have a certification from the Kahal Board that they have passed the examination before the aforementioned examiners or before others whom the Kahal appoints to supplement them, will be allowed to slaughter. Likewise, the examiners may not give permission to anyone who has not first received permission from the Kahal Board. Today the examiners appointed are: R. Schachna, son of R. Jakob Katz, R. Abraham, grandson of R. Lipmann, and R. Aisik, brother-in-law of R. Birscha. Mentioned

R. Joseph and his brother-in-law Bezaleel have their knives again to be examined as soon as the examiners demand it, whereupon they may practise their trade without hindrance. All this has been decided by agreement of the members of the Kahal in its deliberation room. Friday of the above date at Minsk.

(= II. 295). The blessing of the chosen ones in the role of the shepherds.

We, the undersigned, having been chosen by the Great Assembly to be the examiners of the shechitards (as is evident from the above document), unanimously affirm and certify the decrees of the Kahal Board of Friday, 9th Tammus, from beginning to end, to be followed with the same thoroughness as all the decrees of the Great Assembly. As far as the Committee of Examiners is concerned, we have decreed that when a new shepherd is being examined, all members must always be invited. Those who do not appear will lose their vote. In any case, at least three examiners in addition to the Gaon must be present at such an examination. To confirm this, we sign\*).

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\* Do not sign on the Sabbath! D. H.

Wednesday, d. 15. Tammus 5562 (3. July 1802) at  
Minsk: Fairwusch, son of R. Isaak,  
Saul, son of R. Sew,  
Wolf Ginsburg,  
David son of R. Wolf,  
Moses son of R. Jacob,  
Isaac son of R. Isaac,

Joseph, son of R. Isaac, Segal.

No. 258 (= II. 294). Of some provisions for the  
shepherds.

Because of the local shepherds for livestock and poultry, it was  
decided by the local Kahal Board to elect the following five members of  
the General Assembly:

1. R. Moses, son of R. Jacob,
2. R. Sew, son of R. Abraham,
3. R. Jacob, son of R. Joseph Jechiel,
4. R. Isaak, son of R. Isaak,
5. R. David, son of R. Eleazar,

to attend the Kahal meetings; and all that shall be decreed by them and  
the Kahal Board shall have the executive power of the General Assembly,  
whether it be the election or exclusion of Shepherds, the determination of  
salaries, the fixing of any general regulations or rewards for that trade. In  
this connection we note that when the Monthly Elder calls a meeting, the  
messengers must notify all the town representatives and the above-  
mentioned elected persons. Should thereupon only three town  
representatives and three electors meet, their resolutions shall also have  
the same force of execution.

The Kahal Board and the General Assembly have decreed: All  
municipal shepherds of livestock and poultry must report to the  
examiners every three months. Likewise, until they are appointed as  
shepherds, they may not exercise any trade in any brotherhood and also  
have no right to vote during this period. All this is decreed by the  
consent of all the members of the Kahal and the Extraordinary Assembly  
in the deliberation room of the Kahal on the basis of the laws and  
customs on Tuesday, 13th Tammus 5562 (1st July 1802), at Minsk.

No. 259 (= II. 296). von der Ernennung der Schächter. <sup>85</sup>)

Wednesday, 14 Tammus 5562 (2 July 1802).

We, the elected of the Great Assembly, as is evident from the foregoing document, elected as shepherds of large livestock, R. Jüdel from Radoshkovich and R. Joseph from Berezina for the period fixed by us in the regulations for the shepherds. In addition to these two shepherds, a third must be elected, who will be entrusted with these duties as a substitute. All three must swear to fulfil our regulations to the letter. To this end we decree: For the period of time mentioned in the decrees, until new shechitae are elected, none are to be accepted from the former shechitae; likewise, during the said period, neither the Rabbi Gaon nor the examiners may admit such persons to the trade, nor may the Kahal give them permission to do so. If it should be absolutely necessary to choose another shepherd, he must under no circumstances be taken from the number of those persons (excluded above). All this is decreed by us, the chosen and endowed with the power of the Great Assembly. (The signatures follow.)

No. 260 (= II. 297). Of the assistance given to the Shankw irte in their quarrel with the peacemakers.

Wednesday, week section Mittot and Masee, 28th Tammus 5562 (1802), has been decreed by the Kahal Board: The innkeepers who have a dispute with the tenants are to be given the money necessary for this lawsuit from the municipal treasury, likewise, the sum left over from the 100 chervonets which were intended for the illumination (see above file 251) is to be made available to the innkeepers for this purpose.

No. 261 (= II. 299). Of the sale of the right of possession to a place of R. Isaak, Sohn des Gershom. <sup>86</sup>) In the General Assembly of all Heads, Principals and Representative, it has been unanimously decided in the Kahal's consultation room to grant R. Isaak, son of Gershom, the right of possession of the place.

and the hospital of the clergy of the Rekites<sup>87</sup>\*) at the end of Kaidanskaya Street, adjoining to the east the house of R. Shalom, son of Meier Katz, to the north the house of R. Alexander, son of Zewi Segal - as well as the right to the empty undeveloped square of the local citizens, which lies next to the above-mentioned square, starting with the excavated rampart, which is now filled in, up to the street on which the favern of R. Abraham, son of Isaak Aisik, lies. This right applies to the length of the square from the house of R. Shalom to the street on which the inn is located, and in width from Kaidanska Street to the house of R. Alexander, as well as to the hospital and the houses that stand on this square. Isaac, his descendants and legal successors from the centre of the earth to the height of the sky for ever and ever. The money due for this has already been paid in full by R. Isaak into the community treasury. As of today, these rights are confirmed to him, his descendants, etc., and he can do with the property as he pleases - sell it, destroy it, pledge it, just as if it were his property. \*\*Should he be in a position to bear the concession for new buildings, no one can prevent him from erecting wooden or stone buildings or rebuilding them as he wishes. Should the government even build on this place, we forbid anyone under the strictest penalty<sup>\*\*\*</sup>) to encroach on this right of R. Isaak, his descendants, etc., e.g. by buying or renting from the government; nor may anyone then open a shop there. Only Rabbi Isaac, his descendants, etc. have the right to dispose of these buildings.

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\* No. 299 in Vol. II contains the following remark by Brafmann: "I have succeeded in establishing that an order of St. Roch existed as the owner of the above-mentioned area in Minsk. Jargon made Rochites out of it, and later, because the letter Kaf in Hebrew (which was then replaced by Kot) means both ch. and k, the word "Rekiten" was created. Cf. also the (variant) explanation of the word in the Appendix. D. H.  
<sup>ft</sup> is just Chasaka, i.e. an illegal right of possession bought by the Kahal, but not a legal purchase. D. H.  
<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Here one gets an insight into the means used by the Kahal to make the Chasaka effective. D. H.

and to open shops there. <sup>88)</sup> Every Kahal is ordered to protect these rights, that R. Isaac may enjoy them in peace and quiet. However, should one or more of them ever attack these rights, the Kahal must do everything in his power to protect them for the benefit of R. Isaac. R. Isaac, his descendants and legal successors. Every Kahal and every Bet Din shall protect R. Isaac etc. from any encroachment on his rights and shall fight the aggressor with the strictest means, and recover from him all expenses which may accrue to R. Isaac etc. in the most ruthless manner. Isaac, etc., in the most ruthless manner. If the Kahal fails to do this, the duties incurred by the R. If the Kahal fails to do so, the expenses incurred by the R. Isaak shall be claimed from the Kahal, and they shall be paid in full out of his income. In such a case, the holders of the rights may, without taking an oath, state the sum of their expenses and collect it from the income of the Kahal. It is repeated again that every Kahal and every Bet Din must fulfil and keep sacred to the smallest degree all the decreed resolutions of these Acts, - all that is confirmed to the R. Isaac, etc. All this has been decided by the entirety of the heads, rulers and representatives of our city, in the deliberation room of the Kahal, in the presence of the usual number of members according to law and custom, for the authentication of which we sign.

Thursday, on the eve of the new moon of Ab 5562 (1802) to

Minsk.

This document has been given to R. Isaak, son of Gershom, and we, the notaries, certify that it was issued in the deliberation room of the Kahal in the meeting of all unanimously according to law and custom according to the principle according to which the Kahal does not need a formal Kinyan<sup>89)</sup>. This sale took place by public auction, which, published in all the synagogues, received no objection and no higher bid.

Sunday, 3 Ab 5562 (1802).

No. 262 (= II. 298). Of the election of three  
representatives in the matter of the  
musicians.

For the settlement of disputes and disagreements among the local musicians, three representatives are appointed by order of the Kahal Board.

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\* Cf. note to no. 160 (page 157). D. H.

the famous Rabbi Saul, son of Sev Wolf, R. Moses, son of Model, and R. Isaac, son of Gershom, with the authority to settle once and for all the disputes among the local musicians and to find means to prevent them from occurring again. Likewise, the three chosen ones are granted the right to inflict corporal punishment or fines on those for whom they see fit. They may also summon musicians from other towns and grant them the right of residence. In all their decisions they have the rights of the seven rulers of the city. All this is decided unanimously by all the representatives in the presence of the usual number of members in the deliberation room of the Kahal according to the laws and customs on the Sabbath, Bible passage Mittot and Masee, 2nd Ab 5562 (1802).

No. 263 (= II. 300). On the election of three  
Monthly elders to settle the dispute between Joel and  
Leib.

Tuesday, We'etchannan section 5562 (29 June 1802).

Due to the dispute between R. Joel, son of the Meier, and R. Leib, son of R. Moses, Segal, about the right of ownership of the farm bought from R. Joel, the Kahal heads decided to elect three monthly elders:

1. Samuel, son of D.,
2. R. Zewi, son of R.,
3. Chajjim, son of R. J.

They are given the power of the seven rulers of the city for the conduct of this matter.

No. 264 (= II. 301). On the election of two representatives  
to arbitrate disputes between private persons.

Tuesday, We'etchannan Division 5562 (1802).

To settle the dispute between R. Moses son of Asriel and David son of R. Jechiel, it has been decided by the Kahal Board to elect two representatives: R. Saul son of Sew Wolf, and R. Isaac son of A., to sit with the judges of the righteous Bet Din. The decisions of these two representatives are given the force of execution of the decisions of all the Kahal heads.

No. 265 (= II. 302). Of the election of the advocates in the matter of the Kahal against the Shechers.

Thursday, week section We'etchannan, 14th Ab 5562 (1802).

As a result of the summons of the Kahal before the Bet Din by the former shepherds, concerning the regulations of the Kahal about the shepherds from the 14th of the past Tammus, the Kahal board has decreed to appoint as its advocates R. Moses son of J. and R. Zewi Hirsch son of Reuben for the judicial settlement of the matter with those shepherds before the Bet Din.

No. 266 (= II. 303). Of the sale of the right of possession to a shop by the Kahal. <sup>90</sup>)

Thursday, We'etchannan section, 14th Ab 5562 (1802).

Since the Pan Scheibe intends to build a new stone shop in front of its gate, the front of which faces the courtyard of R. Jehuda Leib, son of R. Jakob, it has been decided by the Kahal Board to sell the right of ownership to this shop to R. Jehuda Leib, permanently, from the centre of the earth to the height of the sky. For this right, R. Jehuda Leib is to pay 9 rubles of silver\* to the community treasury, and thereafter this right will be transferred to him forever, as it will to his descendants and legal successors.

No. 267 (= II. 304). Addition to the previous file.

Sabbath, section We'etchannan, has been decided by the Kahal Board: If Yehuda Leib does not pay the required sum by Sabbath, section Ekeb (i.e. over eight days), he will lose his rights.

No. 268 (= II. 305). Of a guarantee for imperial obligations.

Sabbath, We'etchannan Division.

Since the notary Baruch had a guarantee from the wealthy R. Leib

\*The minimal sum proves that it is not a real purchase, but in a sense a tax, i.e. chasaka. D. H.

Aaron, son-in-law of R. Sh. Salman, to the Reich, the Kahal Board has decided to return this guarantee to R. Leib on condition that R. Salman takes over recruit matters for the coming winter. Leib this guarantee on condition that the father-in-law of R. Aaron, R. Salman, takes over the recruit affairs for the coming winter. <sup>91)</sup>

No. 269 (= II. 306). Von den Schächtern.

The watchman R. Jüdel from Radoschkowitsch gave up his post to his son Mendel. Since the other watchmen asked to be joined by another watchman because they were overburdened, it was unanimously decided by all the elected members of the Great Assembly who had signed the final papers, that R. Jakob, son of R. B., and R. Joseph from Beresina are to be employed here as shepherds for three years, starting from today, whereby R. Jakob will also deal with the inspection (the fitness for consumption of the slaughtered livestock). The poultry shepherds will be: the aforementioned R. Mendel for one year, starting next month. In weekly rotation, one of the poultry shepherds shall assist in the shearing of the livestock, both in the shearing and in the inspection. The salary of the cattle slaughterers will be 1½ roubles of silver per person per week, while the poultry slaughterers are to share the entire sum of the salary among themselves. Similarly, it has been decreed that in the coming month of Nisan, one of the poultry shepherds will be chosen to help in the shearing of cattle for a period of one year, who, in the opinion of the Kahal, is best suited. All this has been unanimously decided by us, which is why we sign.

Montag,\*) d. 18. Ab 5562 (4. August 1802) zu Minsk.

Note: The space for the signatures is left blank here, but the signatures are missing. At the end the following is written: R. Isaac, son of Benjamin, objected to these decrees and summoned the members of the commission before the Bet Din (the Jewish court).

No. 270 (= II. 307). From the oath formula for the local butchers. <sup>92)</sup>

\* Note: No. 267 says: It was decided on the Sabbath. Whereas No. 269 says: On Monday: We sign! And so everywhere. D. H.



"In the name of God, the Kahal, the Bet Din and the Nasi (Patriarch) of Jerusalem, I swear without any deceit or guile, thinking of no transgression, with truth on my lips and in my heart, that I will carry out the slaughtering of livestock and the inspection of its interior with all diligence and will obey all the decrees of the Great Assembly and the Kahal, as they are written in this book, fulfilling them in every detail. Furthermore, I will endeavour to be honest with the other two shepherds who work with me and will not allow myself under any pretext to thwart their activities or to harm them with malice.

If, however, one of them makes a mistake in slaughter or inspection, I am to bring it to his attention without insult and without talking about it (to third parties). If any disagreement arises between us about slaughter or inspection, we are to turn to Rabbi Gaon<sup>93</sup>) for conciliation. Likewise, I must not cause any inconvenience to either the buyers or the shepherds or ingratiate myself with them to the detriment of my colleagues. Likewise, during my three years of service, I must not ask the Kahal for a gratuity or an increase in salary, nor steal anything, even half a kopeck, from my colleagues out of all their earnings from both large and small livestock. This I honestly swear, so help me God, glory be to Him, in all my undertakings.

According to this formula, I took an oath in accordance with the law on Tuesday, the 16th.

From 5562 (15 August 1802), at Minsk and sign to affirm: Joseph, son of the late Jacob.

According to this formula, etc.: Simeon, son of Rabbi Shalom. According to this formula, etc.: Bezaleel, son of Isaac.

According to this formula, etc.: Jacob, son of Baruch.

According to this formula, etc.: Shalom Shachna, son of R. G.

I, the undersigned, assisted in the taking of the oath by the above-mentioned butchers on the above-mentioned day in Minsk and sign for authentication:

Baruch, son of Zewi Hirsch, Shammash (plenipotentiary and notary) of the city of Minsk.

No. 271 (= II. 325). Note to the preceding egg.

In the rules laid down for the butchers and their oath, there was the sentence that they must never be late and must always appear at the butcher's house on time. Since, however, no one can take on such obligations under a heavy oath, we, the undersigned judges, have decided to omit this obligation from the oath of the shepherds, but essentially to leave it in full force, as it was decreed by the heads of the Kahal and members of the Great Assembly; the shepherds, however, are obliged to fulfil this provision as well as everything else, irrespective of the fact that the sentence is not in the oath formula.

For authentication we sign:

Sunday, 8. Kislev 5562 (21 Nov. 1802) at Minsk.

Samuel, son of Michael,

Mendel son of Arjeh Leib,

Samuel son of Aaron, Joseph

son of Michael.

No. 272 (= II. 308). Regulations for the shepherds.

The following regulations for the slaughter of livestock and the inspection of the interior have been established by the Kahal and the Great Assembly of our city of Minsk:

1. In the slaughterhouse of our city, three butchers must serve for large and small livestock - two of them specifically for the slaughter and cutting of livestock and one of the three poultry butchers of our city, who must alternate weekly for this purpose. In any case, there must be no fewer than two shechers, one of whom kills the livestock while the other looks after the fulfilment of the legal requirements. During the inspection of the interior, both shepherds must still feel the lungs inside and may not declare them kosher until they have first inspected them in the animal's body and then removed them.

2. The slaughterers must always have three knives ready that are prepared and fit for slaughter<sup>94</sup>). Each time before the slaughter, the three shechers must check the knives.

3. If any injury is found in the lungs, the butchers must not pass over it with silence under penalty of cherem (great ban), but must immediately order that the lungs be taken out to be inspected outside the animal's body. Every time the lungs are found to be trefa (ritually unusable), the slaughterers may not, under penalty of cherem, leave them, until the butcher puts the trefa mark on them. Likewise, under penalty of cherem, the shechers may not let the lungs of lying cattle out of their sight until they have been taken out for inspection.

4. As far as the knives for slaughter are concerned, all provisions on this rightly remain in place - without restriction.

5. The shepherds must stay in the shechita daily from 10 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock in the evening. If there is still livestock to be slaughtered there, they must stay one hour longer. If, however, livestock is still being brought in for slaughter after the prescribed time, they must still fulfil their duty, but receive 15 groschen (7½ kopecks) per head from the butchers or private individuals for this effort, in proportion to the small livestock. If, however, a butcher or a private person wishes to have livestock slaughtered that is lying in the wagon, the slaughterer shall receive 10 groschen per head of large livestock; if the livestock is slaughtered in the house, however, the father of the house shall pay 30 groschen (15 kopecks) for each head of large livestock slaughtered.

6. The salary of these three shepherds is to be paid from the community treasury, namely 1 rouble 50 kopecks per week. The third, who is added weekly by the poultry shepherds, receives the same salary.

7. Under penalty of the strictest Biblical cherem (ban), the aforementioned shepherds are forbidden to ask for a gratuity or salary increase from the Kahal or the congregation - just as the shepherds are forbidden to take any money due to them from the butcher or householder, or to render personal services to them.

The butchers must swear that they will always follow all these regulations, that they will never betray the butcher or the father of the house in matters of shechita-tion, and that they will neither practice deceit and treachery nor cause any harm to each other.

They are forbidden to slander one another. They are also forbidden to slander one another; but if a disagreement arises among them, they must go to Rabbi Gaon so that he may settle the dispute.

8. The butchers are obliged to instruct two people (i.e. Jews) every year in all honesty in slaughtering, inspection of the lungs and examination of the knife, for which they may take 90 roubles in silver from each, but no more. If they have more pupils than these two, they are entitled to demand more than the above-mentioned sum from them by agreement. However, they may only accept those for instruction who have been given permission to do so by the local city leaders.

9. Every quarter, all the shepherds must report to the Rabbi Gaon for the examination of their students. Three examiners must still be present at the Rabbi Gaon's examination.

10. The shepherds may not hold office, either with the administration or with any Brotherhood; but if they are elected members of any Brotherhood, they shall be deprived of their right to vote in the election of members of the Committee of the Brotherhood during the period of their office as shepherds.

11. If the shepherds have to have their knives put in order, they must show the knives before and after to Rabbi Gaon, who gives them instructions in this matter.

These 11 points have been drawn up by us, the chiefs, leaders and representatives of the city elected from the Great Assembly; to confirm this we sign.

Tuesday, 19 Ab 5562 (1802).

(= II. 309). Note: These lists are only made for three years and may not be exceeded by one year. If no new rules are made after this period, then these old ones apply in full force.

City of Minsk.

Samuel, son of Dan,

Saul son of Sew Wolf Ginsburg,  
Zewi Hirsch son of Reuben, Joseph  
son of Isaac,

Moses son of Jacob, David  
son of Eleazar.

Thursday, 5 Elul 5562 (1802).

It has been decided by the heads of the Kahal: Since the poultry slaughterers have received new rights as a result of the new rules for slaughtering, they must, with the exception of the Bezaleeb, pay 2 chervonetz each into the communal treasury, which 4 chervonetz to the R. Judel from Radoschkowitsch are to be handed over. This has been decreed with the consent of all on the basis of law and custom.

No. 273 (= II. 310). On the election of two administrators of the expenditure for the Hospital.

Sabbath, Shostim section of the Pentateuch, 5562 (23 Aug. 1802). The newly built hospital needs greater resources to maintain it. sums and that is for the expenditure in its internal administration.

For this reason, the Kahal Board has ordered two authorised representatives - R. Saul, son of S., and R. Zewi Hirsch, son of Ruben - together, with those elected by the local Holy Brotherhood of Undertakers, to draw up a list of the hospital's budget, to determine its expenditure and the sources for covering it. The power of the seven rulers of the city is granted to all dispositions of these persons over the hospital.

No. 274 (= II. 311). Of the measures for the payment of a fee imposed by the brotherhood of the great

The glass candelabra was purchased from the Welfare Fund.

Sabbath, section Teze 5562 (1802).

Since the elders of the large welfare collection fund have asked the Kahal Board for a source to pay for a glass candelabra, they have purchased for their synagogue, the Kahal Board has decreed that they be allowed to set up a special collection box daily from the synagogue courtyard for the purpose of collecting funds for this item until the Day of Atonement, and to use the collection box daily in the synagogue.

to go around. It has also been decreed that the right to supply wine for the chalice in the synagogue at Kiddush<sup>95</sup>) is to be auctioned publicly and the money used for the purpose of paying for the candelabra. But if the present leader of this matter wants to litigate with the brotherhood because of this, their elders are to be advocates. - As for the innkeepers who need help against the tenants, it has been decreed to sell the right to the possession of the stone shops of Pan Kulyichinsky with the monastery of St. Basil and the uncultivated land situated near these shops, and to hand over the money received from the auction to the innkeepers for the expenses in their matter.

No. 275 (= II. 313). On the election of controllers for the welfare collections.

Monday, 16 Elul 5562 (1 Sept. 1802).

Those authorised for the levies to cover the imperial taxes wish that controllers be appointed from among the merchants and former chiefs with regard to their budget for the purpose of checking expenditure and income. The following are elected for this purpose among the merchants: the rich R. Isaac, son of Akiba, and among the former chiefs: R. Zewi, son of S. W. R. The latter is replaced by Moses, son of R.

No. 276 (= II. 314). From raising the funds to pay for the candelabra (No. 274) to the Brotherhood of the Big Collection Fund.

Sabbath, Bible passage Ki Tabo, 21 Elul 5562 (6 Sept. 1802).

To cover the expenses for the glass candelabra, the elders of the large welfare collection fund have been permitted to sell the following right by auction: the supply of Sabbath candles to the large synagogue for three years. <sup>96</sup>) The money received from this is to be used for the above purpose.

No. 277 (= II. 315). From the prohibition of tailors to engage in furrer work.

Sabbath, Ki Tabo section, 21 Elul 5562 (1802).

It has been decreed to publish in all synagogues and Bethamidrashim a strict prohibition on tailors to engage in the work of furriers, in or out of the city, among Jews and gentiles, five miles around the city, at all pawns of the brotherhood of furriers permitted to them by the Kahal and the Great Assembly. This has been published on the Sunday before the (Jewish) New Year. It has also been announced that no furrier may take orders (in the intermediate trade) from a tailor, but only directly from the orderer.

No. 278 (= II. 316). From the election of the members to the establishment of the rules for the shepherds.

Sabbath, Ki Tabo section, 21 Elul 5562 (1802).

Concerning the local shepherds, for whom no special rules had yet been established, it has been decreed by the Kahal Board that the Rabbi Gaon, the righteous Bet Din and two overseers, to be elected by ballotage, shall determine the rights and duties of the shepherds.

No. 279 (= II. 317). Of the admission of two people

(Jews) from Saslawá among the citizens of the city of Min s  
k. Tuesday, 24 Elul 5562 (9 Sept. 1802), the Kahal Board

ordered that two people be added to the number of our townspeople. to be taken up on condition that Joseph, son of Moses, assures in writing on stamped paper that for one of them he will pay all imperial sensitivities, such as postage, etc, which fall on each citizen, for the whole period of the transfer. For the other, the monies will be paid from the Welfare Fund. However, should the welfare fund not be sufficient, R. Joseph will also have to pay for this. For this admission of the two people, the said R. Joseph and the monthly elder (Parnes Chodesch) have to determine a sum which is to be paid by Joseph into the kahal fund. As soon as R. Joseph has signed these obligations, the Kahal Board must immediately apply to the Magistrate for the admission of these two people.

both people in our city.

No. 280 (= II. 335). Of the questions of the whole

Judenschaft, on the transfer of the members of the  
of all circles to discuss these issues and on the percentage  
collection, needed for the elimination of the  
The government's intentions with regard to the Jews are  
necessary. \*)

Sabbath, 1 Tebet 5562 (3 Dec. 1802), in the week of the Mikkez section.

In an Extraordinary Meeting, in the presence of the leaders of the  
town and the whole Kahal, it was decided:

Because of the unpleasant news from the capital Petersburg,  
according to which the fate of the Jewish community has now been  
placed in the hands of five dignitaries who have been given the authority  
to make all decrees as they see fit, we are compelled to go to Petersburg  
to ask the Emperor that his grace prevent any innovations. However,  
since this matter requires great expenditure\*\*), it has been unanimously  
decided to fix the percentage collection, which is to be done as follows:

1. From the movable private property, goods, etc., 1½% is to be  
levied,

2. of immovable property ¼%,

3. from the annual income from houses and shops 100%, \*\*\*)

4. of young people living off their parents' funds, 1% of their  
consumption, whether these capitals are under their own or someone  
else's management.

Every inhabitant of our town must swear that he will pay this tax  
honestly. If anyone is prepared to pay 50 chervonets (150 roubles of  
silver) in discharge of this tax, he shall be released from the oath, even if  
his obligation exceeds this sum.

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\* This is the matter of the distribution of spirits, which was dealt with in detail by  
Brafmann (Explanation I). D. H.

\*\* Bribes! D. H.

\*\*\* The sums needed for bribes must have been enormous! D. H.



rises. \*) Six persons shall be appointed as controllers of this collection from among the plenipotentiaries for the levies from the slaughter of cattle, with the right to appoint reliable collectors to deal with the collection of this levy in their presence. The servants (notaries) and emissaries of the Kahal shall execute his decrees; their power shall be equal to that of the whole Extraordinary Assembly. The six elected shall, before entering upon their duties, undertake to collect the aforesaid levies.

No. 281 (= II. 339). The percentage collection necessary to verify the orders of the government with regard to the whole youth.

Wednesday, 4th Tebet, Bible passage Wajjigasch 5562 (1802).

The representatives who have to go to Petersburg to appeal to the Emperor's mercy about the fate of the entire Jewish community and to represent all Jews have been appointed: Since this matter requires a great deal of money, all the members have resolved to levy one ruble of silver from every soul in our governorate. The district towns and patches are to provide these monies from the percentage collection, and the local Kahale are to immediately collect the monies (one ruble per soul) and send them to Minsk. The citizens of our town are to immediately fulfil the provisions of the Great Extraordinary Assembly of the previous Sabbath and hand over  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of their property. Likewise, the district towns and patches are to make their payments as soon as possible. Likewise, it has been decreed: If the payment of two districts

\* Just look at the situation! The liquor monopoly was in the hands of the Kahal oligarchs. To save this with the help of bribes, a barbaric tax is imposed on the people (100% of annual income,  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of movable,  $\frac{1}{4}\%$  of immovable property!!). But the Kahal oligarchs, who benefit from the tax, impose the rag money of 150 silver roubles on themselves as a distance payment!!! For the moral and real assessment of the Kahal administration, this fact speaks volumes. Yes, yes, Sarten lacks the state- and culture-preserving cardinal virtues. Where they prevail, every state system perishes. D. H.

is not paid in full, then this payment must be repeated in full. Likewise, the well-known rich Reb Wolf, son of Hirsch, from Minsk, has been appointed treasurer of this collection for the entire governorate, and the rich Reb Aisik, son of Jüdel, has been appointed to keep the books and preserve the documents. The treasurer is to reject the deposit if two circles do not pay in full, or if our citizens should resist. But when the representatives of all the Kahale have assembled with us, the election of those who are to go to Petersburg will take place. The representatives of the other Kahale have the right, if they deem it necessary, to elect a new treasurer with the consent of our commission.

No. 282 (= II. 340). From the same percentage collection.

Sabbath, weekly section Wajjigasch, 7th Tebet 5563 (20 Dec. 1802).

It has been decreed by the Kahal Board and the Extraordinary Meeting:

Whoever has not paid his share of the above-mentioned percentage tax by next Tuesday, shall be considered as no longer belonging to the community. Furthermore, the six chosen ones named in the foregoing are to inflict various punishments on this person (Jew) and to persecute him with all the power that the Israelite people possess. It is commanded that no one may come to his aid. The bath, on the other hand, remains in force for all, except for those who, by paying 50 chervonetz\*\*) (150

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\* From Volume II the reader will see that, despite all the cherems, payment of this incredible tax did not take place, or at least was received only very slowly. D. H.

\*\* This provision in the oath is the height of the inability to govern legally and decently. Just take a look at the whole situation. The poorer families have to swear that they will pay exactly as prescribed. They are persecuted as apostates, socially and economically destroyed and mentally martyred, tortured, mauled, ruined if they do not swear properly. And the Kahal oligarchs, the rich, because of whom the liquor monopoly is saved, the people sucked dry, they do not have to account for their wealth. They pay the paltry gap sum and are exempt from the oath. Happy country, happy people, happy state, where Sarten rule!!! D. H.

Rbl. silver) are exempt from this, as decreed in the above file no. 280. With the agreement of all, the rich Reb Wolf, son of Hirsch, has been appointed treasurer of this collection by the General Assembly, which looks forward to the future. As far as the landlords are concerned, who want to litigate with the Kahal at the Bet Din about the taxes on the houses, the above-mentioned treasurer and the rich Reb Aisik have been appointed as advocates on the part of the Kahal, under the condition that the opposing party must report to court tomorrow; otherwise, no lawsuits will be accepted about this matter. The meeting of the General Assembly was attended by delegates from all over the kingdom.

No. 283 (= II. 341). From the percentage collection as before.

Sabbath, 7th Tebet 5562 (1802).

The General Assembly has appointed plenipotentiaries from among the inhabitants of our city in matters subject to examination by the General Assembly of the whole realm, which is to meet in our city during the winter of the coming year.

Eight persons are appointed to these commissioners. Six of them are those who are the overseers of the levies for cattle slaughter, but the remaining two are: R. Moses son of J., and R. Samuel son of S. These are the representatives of our district in session for the whole kingdom. If for any reason three of them cannot appear in a session, the remaining five votes have the same importance as the above eight votes in all matters important or unimportant. Every decree of the General Assembly of the realm at which these plenipotentiaries are present has full legal validity for the (Jewish) inhabitants of our town without restriction - as do all previous decrees of our General Assembly.

No. 284: Of the innkeepers and the lease.

On the same day, the General Assembly settled the matter of the public house lease and decreed that,

if anyone in our town dares to disagree with the decisions of the tenants, seven elected from the number of innkeepers\*) shall have the right to prosecute that person by all means, and to impose on him all possible penalties. In this case the power of the seven elected innkeepers shall be equal to the power of the General Assembly.

No. 285. (= II. 343). Of the percentage collection in matters of the whole realm.

Tuesday, 10 Tebet 5562 (1802).

By order of the six commissioners for the percentage collection, the following has been announced in all the synagogues: A three-day fast is ordered on account of the very unpleasant rumours from Petersburg, namely for Monday the 16th, Thursday the 19th, and Monday the 23rd Tebet, and this fast is to be strictly observed by all, men and women alike. On these three fast days, the inhabitants are forbidden to hold special meetings for prayers anywhere, but everyone must go without fail to the large synagogue for the common unification and strengthening of the petitions before God and without fail to bring the sum due for the percentage collection. \*) But whoever does not pay the amount due for this collection during the fast days shall be expelled from his people in addition to the other punishments forfeited. (!)

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\* The publicans are the monopoly proprietors who lease to little people. The Kahal oligarchy again merely takes care of its money-bag, and malcontents are both tormented with the lash of mental agony and ruined economically by all means through secret persecutors, through false testimony before Christian courts, and so on. An important example of Kahal despotism.

\*\* So in order for the monopoly holders to keep the monopoly, the people must fast and pray. At the same time this service is used to enforce the payment of the tax. D. H.

# Appendix



## Appendix 1

Circular from the former Chief of the North-Eastern  
Department, Count E. I. Baranow, to the  
Governors. <sup>97</sup>)

[Passed on 24 August 1867.]\*)

Although according to Article 1508, Volume IX on the status of the population of foreign origin in the cities where Jews are registered, these members are subject to the local congregations and the municipal administration, they nevertheless form congregations and bodies separate from the Christians everywhere. According to Article 483 of Volume III of the Regulations for Elections, they form their own rayons among themselves, for the collection of taxes they elect special elders and have their own tax collectors, according to Article 821, Volume II of the Regulations for Persons of Foreign Origin, and perform military service separately from the Christians. Such a privileged position of the Jews only serves to greatly strengthen their seclusion, not only without any benefit to the government, but even to its detriment. This segregation brings about a lot of abuses and burdens for the Jews themselves, because they find their preservation and support in the secrets of the Kahal channels - far from the government.

At the same time, this seclusion, with its Christian institutions, the possibility for the Jew to abuse his relations with the Christians, since every German\*\*) always knows perfectly well that in all cases he will have to be careful with his

\* Cf. also the explanations given by Brafmann on page 7 of his preface to this circular.

D.H.  
\*\*) German = Jew. Since the Eastern Jews all speak Yiddish and this "jargon" must be considered a foreign and secret language to the Poles and Russians, the Jews here are called "Germans".

The Jews live in towns, villages and villages with a predominantly non-Jewish population. Apart from the cities, the Jews live in patches, villages and towns with a predominantly non-Jewish population; in these, especially the work of the farming-Christian is exploited by the Jew, to which public opinion objects.

This segregation of Jewish communities must, in my opinion, be absolutely destroyed; in this connection, the Jews who live in Christian settlements or in villages without their own (Jewish) community administration should be registered in the budget of the village communities to which they belong, with the exception of people who belong to the merchant class. As a citizen of the village community in which he lives, the Jew is already no longer an independent landlord as before; in that, apart from the land tax, he has every obligation in common with the individual owners, he will be bound to them by the same interests and subject to the same power, which, on top of that, is still in the vicinity. If not exactly a moral feeling, the equality and generality of interests and the fear of the power of the courts will then prevent the Jews from using illicit means against the poor Christian cultivator. In that case the government will have the advantage of receiving from them the poll-tax and all the other obligations of the villagers.

In doing so, the possibility arises in our district that, since in If the number of Jewish inhabitants exceeds that of the Christian inhabitants in individual towns and villages, the leadership of such a place falls into the hands of the Jews. In order to prevent this danger, it is to be decreed that no less than 2/3 of the Christian population must be present when voting on the affairs of such a place and that a decision is invalid without the majority of their votes. If, for example

in the past. Franzos emphasised exactly the same for Galicia. Baranov, in order to draw the attention of the Russian government to the danger of a foreign language, presented the Jews as "Germans", just as the Poles had done in Galicia. Since at that time strong efforts were underway - Franzos and others worked purposefully towards this - to elevate Eastern Europe through German culture, the Russians' aversion to the "Germans" = Jews is understandable. This aversion had nothing to do with hatred of the Germans. D. H.



a congregation consists of 30 Christians and 60 Jews, a congregational decision is only valid if at least 20 Christians are present at the vote, 11 of whom must agree.

This proposal is of particular importance and should be chosen by the government as the basis for dealing with the Jewish question and should therefore receive the highest consideration from all sides.

Therefore, in humbly submitting this proposal to Your Excellency, I request Your Excellency's resolution on this matter.

I would also like to mention that the Jewish communities have a number of charitable institutions which they maintain on the basis of the general funds. Some have capital and immovable property, others are in debt among themselves and in some communities are in arrears both financially and in terms of military service. Therefore, for the final and all-round solution of these questions concerning the absorption of the Jews into the Christian communities, it is imperative that the necessary enquiries and clarifications be obtained. Accordingly, I humbly ask you to inform me:

1. The number of (Christian and Jewish) inhabitants in the towns and patches, for each town or patch in particular;
2. the number of houses belonging to the former and the latter in each locality, and the number of house owners;
3. When naming the places, it must be stated whether they have a legal claim to their rights. All charitable institutions of the Jews, such as Talmud schools, hospitals, almshouses, etc., are also to be listed, with an explanation of where they are located and from what they are maintained;
4. Furthermore, all movable and immovable property of the Jews is to be stated, together with the income flowing therefrom;
5. The inventory of the welfare collections of the Jews, the inventory of their coffers as well as the copies of their current financial statements are then to be indicated;
6. Finally, the cash arrears, which are proven by the Jewish communities, as well as the arrears regarding the recruit deliveries, are to be indicated.

## Annex 2

### Brafmann's comments on the Kahal files

- 1) (p. 3) See: Wilnaer Anzeiger 1866, No. 149, under "View of the Jew".
- 2) (p. 4) Choshen ha-Mishpat, § 369, 11.
- 3) (p. 5) Ibid, 369, 23.
- 4) (p. 5) Talmud, Tractate Shabbath 128a, cf. 67a and Tractate Baba mezia 113b.  
- Brafmann, mistakenly constructed an accusation against the rabbis from these passages, thinking that it read: "Emperors are the rabbis". The correct translation has been excluded from the text. D. H.
- 5) (p. 5) By virtue of the (Russian) law. Part III, provision on the right to vote - § 522, 524, 525.
- 6) (p. 5) Choshen ha-Mishpat, § 132-171.
- 7) (p. 6) See Explanations V and XII. Chasaka = the right of the Jews to the real estate belonging to non-Jews. Maaruphia = the same right to the movable property. Chasaka literally means only "taking possession" (front side!), the above term introduces the "back side" of the Jewish moon. D. H.
- 8) (p. 6) See Napoleon I's decree of 20 Nov. 1806 to the Jewish Synhedrion (convened by him): "Allgemeine Zeitung d. Judentums", 1841, page 333.
- 9) (p. 6) Zbior Praw Dubenskiego, page 222.
- 10) (p. 11, Erl. 1) The factor calls the official to whom he is subordinate his pan (lord) or poritz (rogue).
- 11) (p. 13, Erl. 1) Cf. the view of one of the highest rabbinical authorities, the "Rosh" on the distribution of gifts to judges and officials. Question: Is a craftsman who depends on spending his money annually on gifts to officials in matters pertaining to his craft obligated to share in the Kahal's expenses for bribes? Answer: If the Kahal gives rewards to a judge to make him his defender and compliant to him in every case, as it is inevitable to give gifts to the authorities and superiors of every city in the time of our exile, the artisan cannot avoid participation in this; but if the Kahal gives the gifts to the judge for judicial functions which do not affect the artisan, the artisan is free from participation in this". (Teshubot ha-Rosh, § 10).
- 12) (p. 14, Erl. 1) See the comedy "A Word to the Minister".
- 13) (p. 15, Erl. 1) We quote here an excerpt from Derschawin's notes in the original. The author speaks of himself in the third person. (The following account, because it is based on hastily written notes, is extremely bumpy and was difficult to put into reasonably good German. Individual sentences can only be guessed at. D. H.)
- 14) (p. 20, Erl. 2) Shulchan aruch, Jore dea, § 29, regulations on trefa.
- 15) (p. 24, Erl. 2) See files of the Vilnius governorate administration 1867, no. 699 and 73.
- 16) (p. 25, Erl. 3) The book was published (in Russian) under the title "The Local and International Brotherhoods of Jews", Vilna 1869.

- 17) (p. 26, Erl. 4) Kolbo, Prescription on the Reading of the Five Books of Moses, chap. 20.
- 18) (p. 26, Erl. 4) Talmud tractate Megillah 21b.
- 19) (p. 26, Erl. 4) Shulchan aruch, Orach Chajjim § 135.
- 20) (p. 26, Erl. 4) Colbo ch. 20. This also includes the infernal enemy, i.e. the Satan, to understand.
- 21) (p. 26, Erl. 4) See Vilnius Gazette 1866 nos. 149, 151 and 173.
- 22) (p. 28, Erl. 4) More details on this can be found in the collection of literary essays by Kulin, Vilna 1868, pp. 274-278 and in J. Bratmann, Die Bruderschaften der Juden, Vilna 1869.
- 23) (p. 28, Erl. 4) See Orach Chajjim, § 135.
- 24) (p. 29, Erl. 5) Talmud Tractate Baba Batra 54b: "The goods of the gentiles are like the desert, and he who first takes possession of them is in the right", Shulchan aruch, Choshen ha-Mishpat § 194, 2, also § 156, 5: "The goods (belongings) of the gentiles are like ownerless goods, and he who first takes possession of them is in the right (may appropriate them)".
- 25) (p. 30, Erl. 4) See files no. 261 ff.
- 26) (p. 32, Erl. 5) See Kolbo § 139.
- 27) (p. 34, Erl. 5) For more details see Kolbo under "Cherem" § 139.
- 28) (p. 35, Erl. 6) See 4th Book of Moses, Ch. 24, B. 1.
149. 29) (p. 39, Erl. 8) See Choshen ha-Mishpat § 26, 1. and the Acts at nos. 148 and 30) (p. 40, Erl. 8) See Choshen ha-Mishpat, § 1, 4, 5 ff.
- 31) (p. 52, Erl. 14) On the "famous" Kol-nidre cf. today: Bischoff, "Rabbinische Fabeln" (Leipzig 1922, Walther Kramer's Verlag), pp. 42-58.
- 32) (p. 59, file 1) The dating here is done according to the parashas (weekly sections, pericopes) of the 5 books of Moses (the Pentateuch) from the Jewish New Year (in autumn) onwards. Cf. Appendix III, p. 229.
- 33) (p. 62, file 7) II. 46 contains the addition: We are talking here exclusively about craftsmen's guilds.
- 34) (p. 63, file 8) In II. 47 there is the note: The original files speak of Ketab Jewani, which literally means "Greek letter".
- D. H.
- 35) (p. 67, file 15) In II. 54 it says: A logis for the butcher of the poultry from the schoolyard and to pay ½ Sloty per week for it from the Kahal's coffers. D. H.
- 36) (p. 70, file 18) II. 56 brings the remark: "To avoid paralysing the activity of higher authorities: D. H.
- 37) (p. 70, file 18) No. II. 58 still follows: "All these oaths are written out and kept in a book in largon". According to the law, the above-mentioned electors were appointed to vote in Minsk on Wednesday, 16 Siwan 5556 (II. VI. 1796). Five electors took the above oath. D. H.
- 38) (p. 71, file 20) Thus the Russian original. Instead of "Rabbi" (Rabbi), however, "Reb" (Rebb) is apparently meant (as otherwise above), which is the (in the East almost always)

- Talmudically educated householder and is roughly equivalent to our "Lord". - Some of the proper names appear corrupted.
- 39) (p. 72, file 21) In II. 62 it says that the sum is to be entered in the books by the shamhashim (notaries).
- 40) (p. 75, file 25) Cf. II. 66.
- 41) (p. 77, file 32) In II. 73: from Elul 5557 to Elul 5558.
- 42) (p. 79, file 35) After II. 76: "under the cherem".
- 43) (p. 80, file 38) In II. 79 it says: basket tax, a specifically Jewish tax paid to the city.
- 44) (p. 83, file 45) II. 87 adds: "to which the treasury has to contribute 26 roubles for expenses. In addition, 25 Polish Sloty in silver are to be used for this purpose".
- 45) (p. 83, file 47) Choshen ha-Mishpat § 52.
- 46) (p. 88, file 57) II. 97: "It is a basket tax of commerce..."
- 47) (p. 91, file 64) This document is written in jargon (Jewish German) in order to make it accessible to the lowest classes of the population and to those who do not know rabbinic Hebrew.
- 48) (p. 94, file 65) It would be interesting to know what kind of personality this Bulgavovich was, in whose favour the Kahal took such pains. D. H.
- 49) (p. 94, file 67) See note XII.
- 50) (p. 98, file 75) In the chedarim (public schools), the payment for lessons is not the same on average. The Melammed negotiates the amount of payment for tuition with the parents on a case-by-case basis. See note XIII.
- 51) (p. 98, file 75) See note XIII.
- 52) (p. 100, file 81) It is not possible to see what kind of people they are.
- 53) (p. 101, file 83) See note III.
- 54) (p. 102, file 87) The Kahal, thinking himself the legal administrator of all city property, as stated in explanation VIII, orders Rabbi Chajim to buy from the Kahal for the second time what had already been sold to him by the current owner according to imperial law!
- 55) (p. 104, file 87) See note IX.
- 56) (p. 104, file 88) To perform the Bedikat Harea means to inspect the lungs and inner parts of the slaughtered cattle according to Talmudic rules in order to determine whether the meat is trefa, i.e. inedible for Jews. See Explanation II.
- 57) (p. 106, file 88) See note III.
- 58) (p. 106, file 88) See note XIV.
- 59) (p. 109, file 88) Levy on the slaughter of calves see File No. 32.
- 60) (p. 111, file 88) These two pennies in favour of the shepherd, not the treasury of the levies.
- 61) (p. 113, file 89) See note XV.
- 62) (p. 114, file 90) This file, like the following one, is, as can be seen from everything, compiled three years later than file 93 and inserted into the gap that remained.
- 63) (p. 116, file 92) See file no. 64.

- 64) (p. 116, file 92) See note IX.
- 65) (p. 118, file 94) Kinyan means the rite to be performed at the Kabbalat Seder. See Explanation IX.
- 66) (p. 124, file 100) See note IX.
- 67) (p. 125, file 102) From this it is evident that the Kahal represents the highest authority independent of rabbis and Jewish laws.
- 68) (p. 127, file 105) Jatku is the name given by the Jews to the butcher's shops.
- 69) (p. 128, File 106) As happy as the Kahal was about Rabbi Gaon's relocation, the latter must pay for it.
- 70) (p. 131, file 109) Apparently the matter of Isaac did not come to order, as the aforementioned right was sold to Rabbi Samuel.
- 71) (p. 132, file 110) Here we are probably talking about the right which the local Russian authorities granted to the owner J..
- 72) (p. 140, file 130) See note XI.
- 73) (p. 142, file 135) See note XVI.
- 74) (p. 143, File 139) In every town ten people are kept at the expense of the community, called batlans, with the main occupation of sitting in the Bet-Hamidrash (community house) to give all who wish to perform the Bezzibur (congregational prayer in the presence of ten men) there the opportunity to do so. The desire to perform the Bezzibur prayer is very common among the Jews. See Explanation III.
- 75) (p. 149, Acts 149) If a Jew is wronged by a person or community and cannot obtain vindication, he goes to the synagogue or the Bet Hamidrash at prayer time to the lecturer and holds a prayer, demanding help from the congregation for his rehabilitation.
- 76) (p. 150, file 149) See note XVI.
- 77) (p. 150, file 149). These words may be interpreted by lovers of injustice as they please; but in them lies a mandate, though not literal, for the author of the Polish insurrection of 1863, as for a monster perfectly similar to him. (Is no longer comprehensible. The meaning will probably be twofold. On the one hand: He is left without comfort and help at the hour of death and then buried without final honours. On the other hand: He runs the risk that the "secret persecutor" will have him transported to death by his people. D. H.)
- 78) (p. 150, file 149) In order to become clear about the power and rule of the Kahal over the private Jew, as well as about his relationship to the local courts, as well as the meaning of the attested in the Jewish sense, we ask the reader to think seriously about the meaning of the last two documents.
- 79) (p. 158, File 163) From this it is clear that the slightest transgression of a provision of the Bet Din or Kahal puts a Jew in danger of being expelled and branded an apostate. This expresses the despotic regiment of the Kahal and the complete dependence of the individual Jews on him.
- 80) (p. 177, File 206) See Explanation III on the "Zedaka Gedola" brotherhood.

- 81) (p. 195, Acts 247) Reinterpretation of Isaiah 1:27: "Zion shall be redeemed through righteousness." The word "Zedeka" in Hebrew means both "justice" and "alms".
- 82) (p. 198, file 256) The sum of money guaranteed to her in the marriage contract.
- 83) (p. 198, file 256) The woman affected by this exceedingly harsh sentence will probably curse the unjust judges.
- 84) (p. 198, file 257) See note II.
- 85) (p. 201, file 259) See note II.
- 86) (p. 201, file 261) See note V.
- 87) (p. 202, file 261) Requiem: in the Roman Catholic Church, the music of the Mass for the souls of the departed, which begins with the words: "Requiem aeternam dona eis", must have been mistakenly taken by the Jews as the name for a spiritual brotherhood "Rekiten", perhaps because a Christian brotherhood for singing the Requiem existed in Minsk. Cf. also the (different) explanation of the word in the footnote of the text.
- 88) (p. 203, file 261) See note I.
- 89) (p. 203, file 261) See note IX.
- 90) (p. 205, file 266) See note V.
- 91) (p. 206, file 268) The Kahal had his "captors" pick up Jews liable for military service who could not raise the money to buy them out, often even poor little boys, and deliver them to the Russian government as recruits. Since the period of service for the Jewish soldiers was endless, even lifelong, and they were sent to faraway places, most of them (already married at an early age) ritually divorced their young wives so that they would not remain eternal widows. In addition, since the Jewish recruits were usually forced to be baptised and faced the harshest treatment (especially the very young), those threatened often fled into forests and wastelands, others committed suicide or severe self-mutilation.
- 92) (p. 206, file 270) This oath, as well as the following ones in this book, are not written in rabbinic Hebrew, in which all these acts are written, but Jewish German, which is more familiar to the unlearned Jew.
- 93) (p. 207, file 270) Chief Rabbi of the town. It should be remembered once again that in the minutes "rabbi" is almost always understood to mean a Reb, i.e. a Talmudically educated householder.
- 94) (p. 208, file 272) See note II.
- 95) (p. 212, file 274) See note A. VI.
- 96) (p. 212, file 276) During the prayers in the synagogue and the prayer houses on holidays, wax candles burn on the lectern in front of which the cantor reads. These candles are called prayer candles. Their gift is considered pleasing to God.
- 97) (p. 219) To the knowledge of the Vilnius Governor 1867, no. 92.

### Annex 3

List of the (54) weekly sections (parashes or pericopes) of the 5 books of Moses mentioned in the records, which are used to date documents.

1. Bereshit (Genesis 1:1 to 6:8). - 2. Noach (6,9 to 11:32). - 3. Lech lecha (12:1 to 17:27). - 4. wajjera (18:1 to 22:24). - 5. Chajje Sara (23:1 to 25:18). - 6. Toldot (25:19 to 28:9). - 7. wajjeze (28:10 to 32:3). - 8. wajjishlach (32:4 to 36:43). - 9. Wajjescheb (37:1 to 40:23). - 10. Mikkez (41:1 to 44:17). - 11. wajjigash (44:18 to 47:27). - 12. Wajehi (47:28 to 50:26). - 13. Shemot (Exodus 1:1 to 6:1). - 14. wa-era (6:2 to 9:35). - 15. bo (10:1 to 13:16). - 16. shallach (13,17 to 17,16). - 17. Jithro (18,1 to 20,26). - 18. mishpatim (21,1 to 24,18). - 19. teruma (25,1 to 27,19). - 20. wwe (27.20 to 30.10). - 21. ki tissa (30.11 to 34.35). - 22. wajjakhel (35.1 to 38,20). - 23. Pekude (38.21 to 40.38).
24. wajjikra (Genesis 1:1 to 5:26). - 25. Zo (6:2 to 8:36). - 26. Shemini (9.1 to 11.47). - 27. Tasria (12.1 to 13.59). - 28. mezora (14.1 to 15,33). - 29. Acharé mot (16,1 to 18,30). - 30. kedoshim (19.1 to 20.27). - 31. Emor (21:1 to 24:23). - 32. Behar Sinai (25,1 to 26,2). - 32. Bechukkotai (26.3 to 27.34).
33. Bemidbar (Genesis 1:1 to 4:20). - 34. Naso (4,22 to 7,89). - 35. Behaalotcha (8:1 to 12:16). - 36. Schlach lecha (13.1 to 15.41). - 37. Korach (16:1 to 18:32). - 39. chukkat (19:1 to 22:1). - 40. Balak (22,2 to 25,9). - 41. Pinchas (25:10 to 30:1). - 42. Miktot (30:2 to 32:42). - 43. mase (33:1 to 36:13).
44. debarim (Deut. 1:1 to 3:22). - 45. wa-ethchannan (3:22 to 7:11). - 46. ekeb (7:12 to 11:25). - 47. Re'e (11:26 to 16:17). - 48. Shostim (16:18 to 21:9). - 49. Ki teze (21:10 to 25:19). - 50. Ki tabo (26:1 to 29:8). - 51. nizzabim (29:9 to 30:20). - 52. wajjelech (31:1 to 31:30). - 53. ha asinú (32:1 to 32:52). - 54. vesot habberacha (33.1 to 34.12).

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