der the title *Rękopisy Napoleona. 1793–1795 w Polsce* (Napoleonic Manuscripts: 1793–1795 in Poland; 1929). In addition, Askenazy wrote the chapters on Russia and Poland in the early nineteenth century for second edition of the *Cambridge Modern History* (1934). He was also a passionate chess player. His political career may have begun when he played against Józef Piłsudski in the Sans Souci café in Lwów in 1912. He died in Warsaw.

• Jozef Dutkiewicz, *Szymon Askenazy i jego szkola* (Warsaw, 1958); Emil Kipa, "Szymon Askenazy," in *Studia i szkice historyczne,* pp. 183–197 (Wrocław, 1959); Piotr Wróbel, "Szymon Askenazy," in *Nation and History: Polish Historians from the Enlightenment to the Second World War,* ed. Peter Brock, John D. Stanley, and Piotr Wróbel (Toronto, 2006).

—Antony Polonsky

ASSIMILATION. Although widely used in both scholarly writing and public life, the term *assimilation,* without modification or qualification, lacks critical rigor. Conceptually, it can encompass—and is often confused and conflated with—four analytically distinct changes in Jewish behavior and status in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: acculturation (the acquisition of the cultural and social habits of the dominant non-Jewish group), integration (the entry of Jews into non-Jewish social circles and spheres of activity), emancipation (the acquisition of rights and privileges enjoyed by non-Jewish citizens/subjects of similar socioeconomic rank), and secularization (the rejection of religious beliefs and the obligations and practices that flow from these beliefs). In Eastern Europe, as in Western Europe, these processes, while obviously influencing each other, operated in the end independently of each other. Thus, in most East European states, Jewish acculturation and secularization were well in advance of legal emancipation and social integration.

Moreover, because the term *assimilation* is also used to describe a political program for Jewish social and cultural transformation, largely championed by urban, upper-middle-class Jews, it was from early on as much prescriptive as descriptive. For assimilationists, those who championed it as a solution to the stigmatization and marginalization of Jews, it was both desirable and necessary. For the Orthodox and nationalist camps, on the other hand, it was a disastrous, dishonorable, despised project, with the term one of contempt and abuse. Because historians who write about Jewish modernization rarely use the term with precision, often failing to distinguish between assimilation as a complex of processes and assimilation as a cultural and political program, and because assimilation as an ideological project survived the destruction of East European Jewry during World War II and continues to haunt the writing of Jewish history, it is critical to keep in mind the difference between these two usages. This article traces the history of groups advocating and promoting assimilation rather than the history of assimilatory practices. That said, assimilation as a program rested on and evolved from the prior acculturation and secularization of those who championed it as the solution to the plight of the Jews.

Small assimilationist movements flourished in most major East European cities from the last decades of the nineteenth century until World War II. While they differed in size, influence, and ideological emphasis, they were similar in terms of their social composition, their understanding of the character of Jews and the problems they faced, and their recommendations regarding the fate and future of Jews in their respective countries. In Eastern Europe, assimilation as an ideological program took root in the last decades of the nineteenth century in upper-middle-class, highly acculturated, urban families, whose language, dress, deportment, habits, and tastes were similar to those of non-Jews of the same socioeconomic background. They promoted assimilation as a program because they themselves were unsuccessful in winning the respect and acceptance of non-Jews, despite their own upward mobility and cultural adaptation. Government officials, landowners, military men, aristocrats, men of letters, and other pillars of the old order continued to scorn and despise them and refused to admit them to social intimacy or improve their legal status. The rise of modern political antisemitism at the end of the century made their position even more difficult. Frustrated and angered by the disparity between their cultural and economic achievements on the one hand and their low social and political status on the other, they championed assimilation as the solution to both their own immediate predicament and the plight of Jews more generally, seeking to encourage other Jews to follow the path of assimilation.

Like German and French Jews, East European assimilationists redefined the character of Jewish collective existence. To create space for their ideological integration, they declared that Jews were no longer a separate nation but an organic part of the larger nation in whose midst they lived. Religion alone marked their difference from their neighbors. In 1919, for example, the Association of Poles of Mosaic Faith expressed its opposition to the Minorities Treaty, with its guarantee of national rights to minorities in the successor states, on the ground that Polish Jews were of Polish rather than Jewish nationality. Assimilationists everywhere in Eastern Europe envisioned a liberal, Western-style solution (emancipation and integration) to the Jewish Question. To achieve that goal, they urged the mass of Jews, whose customs and habits they viewed as backward and fossilized, to eliminate their cultural and social distinctiveness, which, in their view, bred hostility toward all Jews. In Russia and Poland before World War I, they sponsored programs to promote the disappearance of Jewish distinctiveness. These included erection of Western-style synagogues, provision of vocational training, creation of a class of Jewish agriculturalists, and promotion of secular education and knowledge of non-Jewish languages.

Assimilationists were wildly optimistic, at best, and woefully deluded, at worst, about the future. The integration and acceptance they envisioned depended not only on the transformation of the Jewish masses but equally on the transformation of the societies in which they lived. Specifically, their solution to the Jewish Question required the triumph of liberal individualism and religious tolerance, the emergence of political and social systems that would support these values, and the demise of corporate, organic notions of collective identity—none of which, it is now clear, was likely in Eastern Europe (with the possible exception of interwar Czechoslovakia). Symptomatic of their optimism was their attitude to antisemitism, whose threat to Jewish security and prosperity they minimized or even ignored. In their view, Jewish tribalism, as much as gentile ignorance, created antisemitism; as it weakened, they claimed, antisemitism would fade.

The reverse side of this attitude was their emphatic insistence on the undying and undivided loyalty of Jews to the nations in whose midst they lived. Miksa

Postcard depicting a family on its way to a synagogue. The grandfather is bearded and traditionally dressed, while the next generation wears modern clothes and the man is beardless. (Publisher unknown, printed in Germany.) (YIVO)

Szabolcsi (1857–1915), editor of the Budapest assimilationist weekly *Egyenlőség* (Equality), told Theodor Herzl in 1903 that Hungarian Jews neither wanted to be nor could be anything but Hungarians. The love of the Hungarian fatherland broke through in them, even when not summoned, because it was part of their blood and had struck deep roots in their hearts. Polish assimilationist patriotism could be equally shrill. In 1885, for example, when Izaak Cylków (1841–1908), rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, devoted a sermon to Moses Mendelssohn, extreme assimilationists protested, since, in their view, Mendelssohn, like Otto von Bismarck, was a Pole-hating German. In 1891, when Cylków memorialized the German Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz, similar protests were made. Even in Russia, where conscription weighed so heavily on the Jewish masses during the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855), the assimilationist leadership in Saint Petersburg devoted much time and effort to erecting a public memorial to Jewish soldiers who had fallen in the defense of Sebastopol during the Crimean War (1854–1856).

Except in tsarist Russia, what most clearly distinguished assimilationists from other acculturated Jews was their ideological identification with a larger, non-Jewish nationality. Assimilationists professed in good faith that they were Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, and so on. While knowledge of non-Jewish languages and other markers of acculturation became increasingly common outside assimilationist circles between the 1880s and the 1930s, no parallel, large-scale shift in self-identification accompanied these changes. The mass of Jews in Eastern and East Central Europe continued to think of themselves as a separate national group; they did not believe that the acquisition of non-Jewish languages, manners, habits, and taste, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, transformed them into East Europeans of the Mosaic faith.

The rise of Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century represented a new challenge to assimilationist groups. Whereas previously they had viewed the social separatism and religious traditionalism of the masses as brakes on assimilation, they now faced a political opponent that simultaneously embraced modernity and celebrated Jewish national distinctiveness. Zionist activity, even when limited in scope and impact, forced assimilationists to sharpen their own ideological stance and harp even more on their patriotism. In fin-de-siècle Budapest, for example, where Zionism made few inroads, assimilationist spokespersons lashed out at the new movement as incompatible with the patriotism of Magyars of the Mosaic faith. Márton Schweiger, president of the Neolog (Reform) community, declared: "Every endeavor of Hungarian Jewry is diametrically opposed to the trends of Zionism. It does not dream of a Jewish kingdom but wants to merge with Magyardom while maintaining intact its ancestral religion." Sámuel Kohn, chief rabbi of the Neolog congregation in Pest, considered Zionism "sheer folly, a dangerous craze," predicting it would attract few followers in Hungary, since it aimed to make a nation out of a religious denomination.

Nationalist and religious opponents of assimilation, as well as some historians of the late twentieth century, frequently branded it mere opportunism, a case of convenience triumphing over conviction. While it is undoubtedly true that assimilation harmonized with and complemented upward mobility and social ambition, it cannot be dismissed as simply an unprincipled ploy. Jews who championed assimilation as a program were not rank opportunists; they continued to identify as Jews and took part in communal life. They opposed total absorption and endorsed Jewish continuity in the lands where they lived; they were emotionally and ideologically unable to renounce their Jewishness or abandon their fellow Jews. By contrast, rank opportunists either took no part in communal life, leaving Jews to their own fate, or left Judaism altogether by converting to Christianity or, where legally possible, formally withdrawing from the community. That said, however, assimilation failed to hold the loyalty of later generations. The grandchildren of the founders and earliest supporters of assimilation lost interest in Jewish concerns or even converted to Christianity. In Warsaw, for example, the founders of the impressive Western-style Great Synagogue, which opened in 1878, left few Jewish heirs. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Christian descendants of its founders were already placing notices in *Izraelita,* the assimilationist newspaper, offering to sell the front-row synagogue seats of their ancestors, which they had inherited but obviously did not need.

Although the number of assimilationists in Eastern and East Central Europe was never great (except in Budapest) relative to those whose primary identity remained Jewish, their influence was strong, far outstripping their numerical strength. In Warsaw, Lwów, and other Polish cities, for example, assimilationists dominated communal councils until the interwar period, while in tsarist Russia the banker Baron Evzel' Gintsburg (1812–1878) functioned as *shtadlan* (behind-the-scene intercessor) and de facto head of Russian Jewry, as did his son Baron Horace Gintsburg (1833–1909) after him. The source of assimilationist influence was their wealth—before World War I assimilation was largely a program of the haute bourgeoisie of finance and industry—and their access to government officials, which they owed to their involvement in state-sponsored economic undertakings.

The ties cultivated by the Gintsburgs and other Saint Petersburg bankers and railroad contractors were virtually the only means through which Russian Jews could hope to reach and possibly influence tsarist ministers and bureaucrats. Their wealth also allowed them to sponsor organizations and institutions dedicated to promoting acculturation and upward mobility among the Jewish masses, such as the Society for the Promotion of Culture among the Jews of Russia (known by its Russian acronym OPE), established in Saint Petersburg in 1863, and to offer patronage to reform-minded writers and intellectuals by employing them as secretaries and tutors.

Russia

The assimilation program in Russia was an outgrowth of the thinking of the Haskalah (Enlightenment). While one current of the Haskalah—that which emphasized the revitalization of the Hebrew language and the modernization of Jewish cultural life—flowed toward nationalism, another—that which emphasized the broadening of Jewish cultural horizons—moved in a very different direction, urging acculturation to Russian ways as the solution to the plight of that country's Jews. The most enthusiastic supporters of assimilation were bankers, merchants, industrialists, and intellectuals living in Russia's urban centers—especially Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa—new communities in which the influence of traditional Judaism was weak.

The central organizational embodiment of assimilationism was the OPE, funded and controlled by the city's Jewish notables, most notably the Gintsburg family. Overcoming government opposition, provincial branches were established in Odessa in 1867 and in Riga in 1898. Its founders viewed the organization as the central political voice of Russian Jewry, with the tasks of mediating between the government and the Jewish people and presenting the best possible image of Judaism and Jewish life to the non-Jewish world. Its principal internal mission was to Russify the Jewish masses. To this end, it subsidized Russian-language Jewish newspapers, tried (but failed) to publish a Russian translation of the Hebrew Bible, distributed textbooks to Jewish schools, funded elementary schools for girls, and supported Jews studying in Russian universities and other institutions of higher education (two-thirds to three-quarters of its annual expenditures went to student financial aid). The other major assimilationist body was the Society for Handicraft and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia (ORT), established in 1880, to correct the "abnormal" economic structure of Jewish society. Its work focused on support for vocational education and cooper-

Moyshe Tolpin (seated, right) and his family, Ostróg (now Ostroh, Ukr.), 1906. Tolpin was a teacher in one of the government schools established by tsarist edict in 1844 to combat the influence of traditional Jewish education and to promote assimilation. Photograph by Rekord. (YIVO)

ative marketing schemes and credit societies.

Russian-language Jewish newspapers, even though difficult to launch and sustain, provided a critical forum for the articulation of assimilationist views. In their pages, reformers and modernizers debated the character of cultural rapprochement, bewailed the shortcomings of the Jewish masses, and refuted the prejudiced views of Christian society. The first periodical was the weekly *Razsvet* (Dawn), which appeared in Odessa in 1860 under the editorial direction of Osip Rabinovich (1817–1869) and Joachim Tarnopol (1810–1900). It closed after a year, largely due to problems with the government censor. Its successor, *Sion,* also lasted only a year. In 1869, the Odessa branch of the OPE launched *Den* (Day), but it ceased publication when disillusionment set in following the Odessa pogrom of 1871. That same year, Aleksander Zederbaum (1816–1893), publisher of the Yiddish *Kol mevaser* (Voice of the Messenger) and the Hebrew *Ha-Melits* (The Advocate), launched *Vestnik russkikh evreev* (Russian Jewish Herald) in Saint Petersburg, but it too had a short life, closing in 1873. Two further Russian Jewish weeklies appeared in Saint Petersburg toward the end of Alexander II's reign—in 1879, *Razsvet* (not to be confused with the earlier Odessa *Razsvet*), whose outlook shifted from moderately assimilationist to nationalist before its closure in 1882, and *Russkii evrei* (The Russian Jew), which was firmly in the assimilationist camp and lasted until 1884.

Ideologically, the assimilationist program in Russia differed from those in Poland and Hungary in one major respect: it did not define Jewishness solely in religious terms. Russian advocates of assimilation never claimed to be Russians of the Mosaic faith nor did they ever renounce the national dimension of Jewish life. This was due to the multinational character of the tsarist empire, which, unlike the nation-states of the West, included diverse peoples and nations. In fact, the overwhelming majority of the tsar's Jews—those in the Pale of Settlement—did not live in the midst of Russians. Their neighbors were mostly Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians.

The pogroms and May Laws of 1881–1882 weakened the authority of the assimilationist notables in Saint Petersburg, as did their refusal to support mass emigration. University students and intellectuals derided their gradualism, declaring the assimilationists' faith in the triumph of liberalism and enlightenment bankrupt. New radical ideologies—Zionism and Bundism preeminently—took hold in the following decades but, contrary to popular belief, their emergence did not mark the disappearance of the assimilationist camp. While the notables no longer looked to the autocracy to effect reform, they, along with increasing numbers of university-educated Jews (lawyers, engineers, journalists), continued to advocate the modernization of the Jewish masses and sought the eventual triumph of Western liberalism in Russia. In the decade before World War I, Jewish lawyers and other activists in Russia's cities who retained their faith in a liberal, assimilationist solution found a political home in the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets). With the overthrow of the tsarist regime in 1917 and the subsequent emergence of the Soviet system, assimilation as an ideological program vanished, since, in theory, Jews were no longer the objects of discriminatory measures.

Poland

The assimilation movement in Poland emerged in Warsaw in the mid-nineteenth century among the descendants of Jewish financiers and army purveyors, largely but not exclusively from Prussia, Saxony, and Moravia, who settled there after Prussia occupied the city in 1795. Through their contacts with foreign banking and merchant houses, they remained in touch with the transformations in Jewish life taking place in the West. They wore European dress (the men were clean-shaven), gave their children a secular education, and discarded or attenuated old customs. In their petitions to obtain municipal citizenship and civil rights (for themselves and their families, but not for Warsaw Jewry as a whole), they disassociated themselves from the mass of traditional Jews, emphasizing their own sartorial and linguistic acculturation, enlightenment, and service to the state. Contributing to this assimilatory behavior was the need to feel comfortable when mixing in offices, salons, and drawing rooms, with government officials, the dispensers of civil privileges and economic monopolies.

The institutional strongholds of the assimilationists in nineteenth-century Warsaw were the Skoła Rabinów (rabbinic school), a modern secondary school that, despite its name, did not train rabbis; the communal board, which the assimilationists controlled from the failed Polish uprising against Russia of 1863 until the end of World War I; and the Great Synagogue in Tłomackie Street. The Rabbinic School, founded in 1826 by Antoni Eisenbaum (1791–1852), educated several thousand young men from wealthy merchant, banking, and professional families until its closure in 1862. The school's classes, except those in religious subjects, were conducted in Polish and the atmosphere was imbued with Polish patriotism. The school's synagogue, which introduced a few modest innovations, including a male choir and Polish sermon, also attracted worshipers from assimilationist circles.

The Great Synagogue, which opened in 1878, replaced several earlier ones that served the wealthy. Neither it nor its predecessors were Western-style Reform congregations with a universalized, abbreviated, denationalized liturgy. Rather, because they were committed to the regeneration and modernization of the Jewish masses, they avoided introducing liturgical reforms that departed from Jewish law. However, the formality and grandeur of the Great Synagogue, along with the elegant dress and decorous demeanor of its worshipers, led traditional Warsaw Jews, who called it *di daytshe shul* (the German synagogue), to view it as a complete abomination that in the end would destroy Judaism and drive Jews into the arms of Christianity. While it is unlikely that the Great Synagogue "caused" indifferent Jews to convert, it is true that very few of the founders' children followed them in worshiping there. Assimilationist Jews opened synagogues as well in Lwów (Lemberg) in 1844 and Kraków in 1862. The former deviated from Orthodoxy more than the Warsaw and Kraków congregations and was close to Hungarian Neolog Judaism in practice.

The chief vehicle for the articulation of the assimilationist program in Warsaw was a series of Polish-language Jewish weeklies. The first was Eisenbaum's *Dostrzegacz Nadwiślański / Der Beobakhter an der Vayksel* (Observer on the Vistula), which was published in both Polish and in German rendered in Hebrew letters in 1823–1824 (an attempt to reach Jews who were unable to read Polish). In 1861, the writer Daniel Neufeld (1814–1874) founded a new Polish-language weekly, *Jutrzenka* (Dawn). Following the failure of the 1863 uprising, the Russian authorities closed it and sent Neufeld to Siberia. The most enduring of the weeklies was *Izraelita,* which was launched in 1866 and

continued to appear until 1913. Edited for three decades by the writer Szmul Hirsz Peltyn (1831–1896), *Izraelita* often took positions more radical than those held by the first generation of Warsaw assimilationists, the families who controlled the Great Synagogue. It agitated, for example, for the introduction of substantive, ideologically based, German-style reforms, and Peltyn himself took the lead in an unsuccessful attempt to establish a Reform synagogue in 1880 in the belief that only radical changes would stem the growth of drift and defection among the young. With the upswing in political antisemitism in the 1880s, the newspaper faced the dilemma of how to reconcile its advocacy of rapprochement with the spread of Polish hostility to Jews. The answer it gave was that the Polishness of Jews in Poland was an essential, nonnegotiable condition, independent of what Poles thought. The edition of 2 April 1882 proclaimed defiantly: "Whatever happens let it come, let volcanoes erupt here and there out of the womb of this earth, let the scum of this nation in moments of madness act with hostility against us—we have no right in such moments to be disloyal to this land, to this nation, and to ourselves!"

During World War I, Henryk Nussbaum (1849–1937), a successful physician, professor at the University of Warsaw, and son of the assimilationist historian and communal worker Hilary Nussbaum (1820–1895), edited and published the assimilationist monthly *Rozwaga* (Reflection, 1915–1916). Its editorial line represented a turning point in the assimilationist position in Poland. It started not with the question—What is good for the Jews?—but with the question—What is good for Poland? Seeking to placate Polish nationalists who feared that the absorption of Jews would damage the Polish nation and Polish culture, it argued that the opposite was true, that the absorption of 2 million Jews would benefit Poland and not alter its essential character. The goal, it suggested, was the total immersion of Jews. Soon after Poland gained independence, Nussbaum himself converted, as did the last editor of *Izraelita,* Józef Wassercug-Wasowski (1885–1947).

In the interwar period, the social makeup of the assimilationist camp changed. Professionals and university graduates (doctors, lawyers, engineers, economists, writers, scientists, journalists, and officials in banks, industrial enterprises, and public institutions) replaced industrialists and entrepreneurs. This change reflected both the spread of higher education among the Jewish population and the defection of the descendants of the old plutocratic elite. While many of the new assimilationists were involved in one way or another in Jewish society, they were distant from religious practice, attending synagogue only on the High Holidays. Their language, culture, and thought were entirely Polish. At the same time, they were sensitive to the claim of Polish nationalists, emboldened by the country's newly won independence, that Jews were aliens, not Poles. In May 1919, assimilationist activists gathered in Warsaw to create the Zjednoczenie Polaków Wyznania Mojżeszowego Wszystkich Ziem Polskich (Association of Poles of the Mosaic Faith of All the Polish Lands). As was true of their nineteenth-century predecessors, they blamed Jewish cultural distinctiveness for Polish antagonism. They were particularly troubled by the gains made by the Zionist movement in the years immediately after the war, both on the international diplomatic scene and in the Jewish street. They condemned Zionism and, indeed, any effort or measure to treat the Jews as a distinctive national group, including the Minorities Treaty of 1919.

The assimilationist movement gained few adherents in the interwar period and saw its influence in communal affairs plummet. In the 1920s, the Association of Poles of the Mosaic Faith became dormant, and assimilationists lost their seats on communal boards, even those formerly under their control. Following independence in 1924, a group of young assimilationists attempted to revive the movement with the creation of the Związek Akademickiej Młodzieży Zjednoczeniowej (Association of Academic Youth for Unity; known by its Polish initials as ZAMZ or simply as Unity). It soon became dormant as well, but resurfaced in 1928, its optimism revitalized by Józef Piłsudski's coup in 1926 and the short-term improvement in the situation of the Jews it ushered in.

Hungary

In Hungary, assimilation as a program enjoyed broader support than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In Budapest, in particular, it represented the outlook of the overwhelming majority of Jews. In this sense, the urban Jews of Hungary more closely resembled the Jews of Germany than the Jews of Poland and Russia. Assimilationist Jews in Hungary not only spoke Magyar but also viewed themselves (and were even viewed by others) as Magyars—of the Mosaic faith. From the late nineteenth century, more than 90 percent of Budapest Jews were associated with Neolog Judaism, the Hungarian variety of Reform Judaism, which defined Jewishness as a religious identity alone. The obverse of this was the absence of support for Zionism, which attracted a smaller percentage of the Jewish population than elsewhere in East Central and Eastern Europe. Only in provincial towns, where Magyarization was less prevalent than in Budapest, was Zionism attractive to more than a handful of Jews. Budapest native Max Nordau, Theodor Herzl's lieutenant in the early years of Zionism, characterized Hungary as the land of ideological assimilation par excellence, unequaled by France or Germany. Assimilationists who wished to give visible expression to their devotion to Hungary Magyarized the German-sounding family names that were characteristic of Hungarian Jewry. From 1891 to 1918, almost 40,000 Jews, mostly men, changed their names, which means that by the end of World War I, there were about 160,000 Jews (16% of the total) with newly acquired Hungarian names (this estimate takes into account the wives and children of those who changed their names).

Three specific historical developments

Polish Jewish patriots Leon Hertz, a Jew who fought in the Polish national uprising against Russia in 1863, with his nephew, Henryk Barciński, an actor, director, and officer in the Polish Legion, Warsaw, 1916. (YIVO)

explain the strength of assimilationist ideology in Hungary: the integration of its chief communities (Budapest above all) into the German Jewish cultural orbit of Central Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century; the unofficial alliance between the Hungarian nobility and the Jewish middle class before World War I; and the expansion of the Jewish commercial, industrial, and professional middle class, beginning in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Initially, Hungarian Jewish acculturation took the form of Germanization. As subjects of the Habsburg Empire, Jews were receptive to Enlightenment currents in nearby Vienna, where German, as throughout the empire, was the language of the cultural elite, the propertied classes, and the imperial bureaucracy. With the birth of Hungarian nationalism, the crushing of the 1848 Revolution, and, especially, the 1867 *Ausgleich* (Compromise), which granted Hungary autonomy within the empire, the cultural and ideological orientation of Hungarian Jews shifted from Vienna to Budapest (although knowledge and use of German as well persisted until Hungary fell under Soviet control after World War II).

The Hungarian political elite welcomed and encouraged this development because it saw the value of Jews, like other non-Magyars who were willing to renounce their national origins, as Magyarizers in the vast Hungarian kingdom, especially in the borderlands, where Hungarians were a minority. Moreover, the socioeconomic structure of Hungarian society, with its gentry–peasant split, created space for the emergence of a prosperous Jewish middle class of professionals and businessmen. This suited Hungarian leaders, who favored economic modernization, despite their noble background. And, as so often happened, the attainment of middle-class status in turn encouraged acculturation and then national identification with the dominant majority.

The dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, the emergence of a fully independent but much truncated Hungarian state, and the short-lived Communist government of Béla Kun, who was Jewish, as were many of his fellow revolutionaries, pushed interwar Hungarian politics in an extreme rightward direction and weakened the alliance between Jews and their former noble patrons, ultimately with disastrous consequences. Assimilationists, whose control of the community remained unchallenged, reacted to counterrevolutionary terror, educational and professional quotas, anti-Jewish boycotts, and antisemitic agitation in two ways. Most, especially the communal leaders, continued to think of themselves as Hungarians of the Mosaic faith, denounced Zionism as a reckless folly, and minimized the scope of antisemitism. More than ever they asserted their loyalty—a few became shrill chauvinists.

Smaller but significant numbers, the most secularized and deracinated, abandoned the assimilationist dream of being Jewish and Magyar simultaneously and chose baptism, becoming nominal Christians. Whereas the numbers of Jews who converted between 1900 and 1914 oscillated between 440 and 540 a year, these numbers soared between the end of World War I and the end of World War II, a period when the Jewish population was half the size it was before Hungary's territorial losses. During the last five months of 1919, more than 7,000 Jews were baptized in Budapest alone. While the rate of conversion dropped in the 1920s, it again rose dramatically during the six years of acute antisemitism before the German occupation (1938–1943) to almost 28,000 during that time in the country as a whole.

Bohemia and Moravia

As in Hungary, ideological assimilation in the Czech lands at first embraced German, the medium of high culture and imperial administration in the Habsburg territories, as well as the language of the then-dominant ethnic Germans of Prague. In the 1840s, the rise of the Czech national movement created a dilemma for assimilationists who identified with the German-speaking minority: in an ethnically divided society, with whom were Jews to identify? While some students and intellectuals promoted Czech nationalism, the hostility of the Czech movement toward Jewish rapprochement was an obstruction at the time to the emergence of identification with the Czech nation. Modernizing Jews continued to embrace German culture and language.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the migration of Czech-speaking Jews from the countryside to the cities of Bohemia and Moravia created the social and demographic foundation for the emergence of a Czech-oriented assimilationist movement. The first organization to challenge the Habsburg-German orientation of Bohemian and Moravian Jewry, the Spolek Českých Akademiků-Židů (Association of Czech Academic Jews), was founded by university students in Prague in 1876. In 1883, leading members of the association created Or Tomid (Eternal Light), a society to promote use of the Czech language in public celebrations and religious ceremonies in which German was then being used (for example, in sermons, lectures, and announcements). It sponsored an ambitious publication program, issuing a Czech–Hebrew prayer book in 1884 as well as numerous textbooks for religious instruction.

The Národní Jednota Českožidovská (Czech-Jewish Union), founded in 1893, was more explicitly political, challenging institutions that supported the hold of German language and culture in Jewish society. In particular, it made great efforts to close German Jewish elementary schools in rural areas. Its fortnightly newspaper *Ĉeskožidovské listy* (Czech Jewish Press), published between 1894 and 1907, also contributed to the transformation of the national orientation of the Jewish community. The single most important organ of Czech Jewish assimilationism in the twentieth century was *Rozvoj* (Development), which started as a fortnightly in 1904, became a weekly in 1907 when *Ĉeskožidovské listy* closed, and continued to appear until 1939. By the first decades of the twentieth century, the acculturation of Bohemian and Moravian Jewry to Czech was well advanced, although many Jews in Prague and Brno still clung to the German language and educated their children in German schools.

When Czechoslovakia became independent following World War I, Jews with a Western outlook no longer had to decide between competing national identities. At the same time, because the new republic was officially a multinational state (Czechs, Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Rusyns), it did not coerce non-Czech citizens to transform themselves into Czechs. Thus, interwar Czechoslovakian Jewry lacked ideological assimilationist groups who defined themselves as Czechs of the Jewish faith in the manner of Polish and Hungarian assimilationists.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe

The number of Jews elsewhere in Eastern Europe who identified with the non-Jews in whose midst they lived was tiny. Assimilation as a project was absent in the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian Jewish communities. Only in Walachia in Romania, especially in Bucharest, were there small numbers of assimilationists

in the first few decades of the twentieth century, and even they, despite their acculturation, refrained from advocating a Romanian national identity (with the exception of a handful of intellectuals). The Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni (Organization of Native-Born Jews), established in 1910, and its postwar successor, the Uniunea Evreilor Români (Union of Romanian Jews), fought antisemitic measures, championed emancipation, and promoted Romanianization, but never reduced Jewishness to a religious identity alone. In Czernowitz (Chernivtsi), in Bucovina, which was part of the Habsburg Empire before it was attached to Romania, the Jewish upper middle class had been German-speaking but there was no substantial German population with which it could identify.

[*The principal figures, organizations, and periodicals mentioned are the subjects of independent entries. For discussion of assimilation in the postwar period, see entries on particular countries.*]

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—Todd M. Endelman

ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH WRITERS AND JOURNALISTS IN WARSAW (1916–1939; Yid., Fareyn fun Yidishe Literatn un Zhurnalistn in Varshe; Pol., Związek Literatów i Dziennikarzy Żydowskich w Warszawie), a trade union, advocacy group, and social meeting venue for writers. In March 1916—less then a year after Y. L. Peretz's death—60 Jewish writers and journalists gathered at Hazomir Hall in Warsaw to establish a trade union. The first chair of the group was the Yiddish writer Yankev Dinezon and its initial location was at 13 Tłomackie Street, an address associated with the Jewish secular cultural movement. The premises functioned as a social meeting place not only for members, but also for actors, artists, teachers, guests from abroad, and others who were interested in Jewish secular culture. In addition, the association offered a large variety of literary and other activities, both for its members and for the general public.

In the early 1920s, young modernistic Yiddish poets, writers, and artists settled in Warsaw (for example, Melech Ravitch, Uri Tsevi Greenberg, Perets Markish, and I. J. Singer) and used the association's podium to express their new, revolutionary

(Bottom) Membership card from 1932 belonging to Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer, from the Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Warsaw, with (top) Singer's press card as a reporter for *Undzer ekspres* from the same period. (YIVO)