

WHAT'S NEW?

Lamed Shapiro

[196] I'm a strong man; talush-turned baal-guf;
violence itself as transformative

[199] Chap. IX: countercovenantal

Yosef Hayyim Brenner

[248] apocalyptic landscape = arrival of more Jewish refugees
another talush; filtered through his consciousness

[255] teacher carrying a corpse; ironic cf.; Pieta; Akedah
antiheroic; essential human bonding; aided by a Turk

Isaac Babel

[278] bricolage of Braslavsky's belongings
detritus of the revolution
how can these disparate objects belong together?
Who's speaking and why?

Hayyim Hazaz

[315] nature proclaims the apocalypse; Expressionist pathos

[319] beg. of chap. X: Lamentations Plus
failure of the Jewish Union; Shtetl abandoned to its fate

Itsik Kipnis

[329] Shtetl landscape defamiliarized
after the pogrom; time = out-of-sync

[334-5] The Christian-Jewish Debate in the marketplace
the Priest vs. the Rabbi

New Genres:

- 1) psychological short story
- 2) Expressionist prose;
- 3) lyric-documentary novel

competition of Muslims, who turned more readily towards other professions, and to whom authority would in any case have found it difficult to entrust duties whose Islamic legality was questionable; the *dhimmis*, whose situation depended more on the favour of prince or vizier, were more faithful to them. Nowhere had Jews and Christians played a more important part in these matters than in Egypt under the Fātimids; much the same position arose, however, at certain periods in Spain, and even in the east, al-Māwardī, the theoretician of Caliphal revival, admits—legitimizing past instances—that even a *dhimmi* vizier was possible, provided that his vizierate was 'executive' (*tanfidh*) and not with power to command, i.e., that in practice he should neither exercise explicit political responsibility for major political decisions nor, in particular, sit in judgment over Muslims or take the initiative in matters where Islam was concerned. Obviously, it happened on many occasions that the condition upon which a *dhimmi* could secure or retain a high post was that he should become a convert to Islam; but the bonds of clientship and patronage still held, and the official new Muslim could protect the *dhimmi* staff to whom he was used.

Moreover, since the *dhimmis* remained to some extent under the jurisdiction of their own leaders, it followed that the latter were officially invested by the Muslim ruler—to whom the community did not hesitate to appeal when they disagreed on a candidate. The Jews thus came officially under the government of their Exilarch, and the Christians of different denominations similarly under that of their respective Catholicos and Patriarchs; in this respect the position of the Zoroastrians is less clear. In 'Irāq, the Catholicos of the Nestorians had some precedence within the entire Christian community.

One single persecution of the *dhimmis* has been recorded in the classical centuries of Islam, that of the Fātimid al-Hākim [q.v.], which made a considerable impact in both East and West, because of its severity and of the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre; this was, however, the work of a visionary caliph, whose decision, difficult to explain, may not derive from ordinary processes of reasoning; he himself, at the end of his reign, retracted his measures, and his successors until the end of the dynasty restored the previous tradition of an extremely broad toleration. Even the Ayyūbid conquest, which adversely affected the Armenian community, hardly impaired the administrative position of the Copts. The restriction of *dhimmis* in special quarters in Jerusalem was an exceptional move on the part of the Fātimids, and was intended to ensure their safety.

One cannot, therefore, say that it was persecution which led in some cases to the diminution and in others the complete disappearance of non-Muslim communities. The factors, essentially social, involved in this process cannot be discussed here; it must, however, be emphasized that the general position of the *dhimmis* was gradually transformed by the fact that they passed almost everywhere from the position of a majority to that of a minority community. Moreover, instead of consisting, as previously, of a variety of communities, the gradual disappearance of Christians (foreigners excepted) in the Maghrib, of Christians also in Central Asia a little later, and of Zoroastrians in Irān, bring it about that in some regions the category of *dhimmi* had practically ceased to exist, while in others it had come to comprise only the Jewish community, more

tenacious but by now almost exclusively urban. These proportions were of course to be reversed after the establishment of the Ottoman empire in Europe, but this represented a new phenomenon which was to lead to no modification in the rest of the Muslim world.

It cannot be denied that from the last three or four centuries of the Middle Ages there was a general hardening against *dhimmis* in Muslim countries, helped materially and morally by the change in numerical proportions. Before proceeding further, however, it must be noticed that this hardening of opinion was contemporary with that which appeared in Christendom against the Jews and against Muslims where there were any, 'without our being able to say to what extent there was convergence, influence, or reaction. On the other hand it must be emphasized that the populace were more easily excited as a result of the deterioration in the economic climate, and that generally changes in the Muslim attitude had been occasioned more by political than by religious considerations. Hitherto there had been scarcely any difference in the treatment accorded to Christians and Jews (at most they were distinguished by prescribed differences in dress); but it later came about that some categories of *dhimmis* were looked on as friends of foreign powers and were worse treated, and naturally some Christians were in this respect more of a target than the Jews. There is nothing in mediaeval Islam which could specifically be called anti-semitism.

Although it has sometimes been considered that the formation of the Salḍjūk empire aggravated the condition of the Christian community, this is only very marginally true. The Salḍjūkids, partly because the numerical proportions of the various communities made it less of a natural conclusion, employed Christian functionaries less than their predecessors, whence doubtless there were a few less safeguards in the life of the community; nothing, however, was directly changed in the régime of which they were the beneficiaries. In Asia Minor the Turkish conquest evidently caused much suffering and loss to Byzantine Christendom, but interdenominational relations became singularly good once a stable political situation had been established. Contrary to what might have been expected, the Crusades had at first no noticeable effect on the condition of the *dhimmis*, because the eastern Christians were not of the Latin rite and maintained on the whole an attitude of correct loyalty to their masters—except for the Armenians, who were only to be met with locally. The first suspicions seem to have mounted against the Copts at the time of the Frankish expeditions into Egypt; there may also have been some in Syria and the neighbouring lands after the penetration of Latin missionaries, whose ministries were in vain precisely because it was impossible for the local Christian communities to come into contact with them without becoming politically suspect. The climax came with the Mongol invasions which, wherever they occurred, were of temporary advantage to the Christians, as there were Christians in the Mongol ranks, and because the Mongols held the balance between the various faiths; several acts of excess by Christians against Islam followed locally; but finally Muslim reaction made the Christians pay for their behaviour, and the expansion of intolerant nomads to the detriment of cultivators was a grave blow to rural Christian communities in Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia even when these were under Mongol