

10/13/00

The Jews and the Tsars through 1880

- Jews excluded from Russia in Middle Ages.

loc of: Division of Poland, Russia gained largest # of Jews from Poland.
New question: how to incorporate Jews into Russian society?

(Religious diff - acute w/ regard to Jews - many religions in empire).
Categor. problem - occupational classification of Jews (stuck out like
sore thumb - esp. in E. Europe). Majority of Christians - agricultural
peasants under servitude, feudal regime. Jews, however poor they
might be, occupied middle-class kinds of occupations. Concent.
of Jews in (petty) commercial functions (Germany / France). Signif.
segment of Jewish pop was artisanal - smiths, artisans - earned
living through sweat of their brow, not through trading. 30-35% E.

European working Jews artisans, as opposed to 1-2% of W European Jews.
WHY? Jews more isolated in communities - E. Europe not as advanced

Polish Jews - conspired over course of centuries not to create indigenous
society middle-class. Were able to spread over wider range of
mid-class functions; Also - large # of Jews - comprising 10-11%
of population as a whole; 30-50% of urban population; fairly tight-
knit geographically located - more of an internal market to cater to

Russia

occupational
structure
of
Jews
-
Diffs

Because Jews were Mercantile & artisanal - belonged to middle-class estate, Russian (zarist
policies - fit Jews in to economic categories to Russify them.
Traditionally/historically/religiously separate grouping meant Jews
had separate government - Kahal. Administrative duality -
Jews subject to both Russian merchant/estate laws and own
internal Kehilla. Sometimes contradictory. Merchant regulation -
urban regulations. But also spread out among countryside -> Didn't
fit. Further problem - what roles were countryside Jews
performing & how were they interacting w/ non-Jews. Went back
to Feudal society - Jews often served Polish landowners -
organized agricultural economy of the large, E. European
noble estates; as well as purchasing/possessing monopolies on
certain foods/commodities/goods. Most often, it was
ALCOHOL.

