

10/18/00

Czar Alexander II - reforms from above to ~~to~~ modernize while maintaining autocratic rule  
1855-1881

- beginnings of liberalization in Russia
- 1861 - liberation of serfs (essentially slaves)
- modified cantonist system, reduced # of Jewish conscriptions
- 1 - loosening of residential restrictions <sup>of Pale</sup> opening up Crimean agricultural lands (new territories)
- 2 - make it possible for Jews w/ certain professions or pass educ. tests to live in cities (principle one - St. Petersburg - 20,000 legal Jews residing, maybe 80,000 illegal Jews)
- more support to Haskalah
- opened portals of reform & raised expectations that he could not fulfill. 1870s/1880s - becoming more conservative

> Peasants/serfs feeling increasingly frustrated.

↳ new political organizations - some radical & devoted to revolution in Russia through terrorist means.

- The People's Will (1881) - assassinated Alexander in May 1881.
- Anarchists - cut off head, body will die - resurrect secretly.
- Terrorists captured, imprisoned, and some executed.

- BUT - wave of pogroms - destroyed vast amounts of Jewish property (esp. Ukraine). < 100 Jewish lives lost in April-July 1881 pogroms. Terrorized and shocked Jews on the whole.

WHY? - No serious violence against Jews in org. fashion since 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Had confidence things were getting better - more liberal & tolerant. Pogroms shattered that idea.

- Jewish intellectuals start questioning fundamental Haskalah beliefs & core values - criticism of Haskalah, Moses Mendelssohn - idea that anti-Semitism was fading. Beginning of idea of secular Jewish nationalism.

"It is Time to Plant" 1870s - prior to pogroms of 1881  
"Let Us Search Our Ways" (~~1881~~) Peretz Smolenskin (Hebrew writer)

- reality - anti-Semitism permanent condition; Jews not adherence of a religion - they are a national grouping. ROOTS OF ZIONISM  
idea: all Jews are brothers

religion fabric which Jewish nationality had always taken "היהדות היא לא דת אלא עם" ~~1881~~