

Based on a wealth of documented data this book deals with logical rigor on pseudo-Messianism. From the contents:

Hassidism Debunked

Blind belief in the tsaddik gives way to a pernicious fanaticism, a militant obscenism. Mystic ecstasy is no longer distinguishable from drunkenness, and the tsaddik does not let anybody outdo him. He becomes an adviser in business and family affairs, if not impostor and fraud, healing the sick and the lame, "blessing" childless couples with off-spring—all for a price... The Lublin, Jacob Isaac Hurwicz, performed his miracles according to a price tariff. No woman was safe in his presence, he died by falling out of his window dead drunk, an event that legend turned into a punishment for his having accused God of delaying the coming of the Messiah.

Ritual Sex

The religious rites of the Frankists consisted of ecstatic songs and dances accompanied by wild clapping of hands, similar to the Hassidic dances, but with female participation and ending in an orgiastic ritual. The service usually began with Frank kneeling down and fastening two burning candles to a wooden bench, driving a nail into the wood between them and pointing a cross in all directions, exclaiming: "*Fersa damus para verti, seibul grandi asserverit!*" (in Ladino, the Spanish dialect of the Sephardic Jews: "Give us the strength to see you, the great bliss to serve you!") Then the lights were extinguished and pandemonium broke loose. Men and women undressed completely "to get at the truth in its nakedness" and took to copulating pell-mell, with only the leader keeping aloof in the midst of it all.

Zionism without Zion

He petitioned the king to assign to him a territory in eastern Galicia where he could settle with his followers in a vassal state with himself at the head. The Jews of the whole world would flock then to Poland and enrich her. In other words, a Zionism without Zion, as it was advocated under the name of Territorialism in the first few decades of the present century, leading to various projects of settling the Jews of eastern Europe in Uganda, Biro-Bidjan and other places. The plan found favor with both king and magnates, but floundered on strategic considerations, that is, the risk of settling a group with close relations to Turkey on the Turkish border.

Messianic Militarism

Frank organized his following into a clandestine, highly disciplined, military "encampment," with various ranks for men and women alike, battle training and regular maneuvers. He told them they would have to take up arms before long and ordered his "apostles" to spread the word: "Go to the Jews and tell them: Be ready, a war is coming. Train yourselves in warfare, also the women and the girls and all children over six. As it has been said: *Wejssroel ossa hayil*—and Israel formed an army. Then nobody will perish." He saw himself already at the head of an army of ten million Jews and one million gentiles, the officers acknowledging no religion, all dressed in red, the color of revenge. Years later, Frank's "uhlands, hussars and cossaks" actually wore predominantly red uniforms.

The Female Messiah

Eve Frank became a sort of counterpart to the black madonna of Czenstokhova, and next to the cult of Mary a cult of Eve established itself there, with Frank himself submitting to it: "For she is the true Messiah! She will save the world! Where is it required of the Messiah to be a man or Jewish? The exodus from Egypt was imperfect because the leader was a man."

Frankists in the U.S.

A number emigrated in 1848 to the United States, carrying the Frankist tradition of intermarriage with them. Their most famous descendant was the late Justice and leading Zionist, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, married to Alice Goldmark of another Frankist family. His mother was a sister of Gottlieb Wehle. Like other Americans of Frankist descent, Brandeis considered Eva Frank a saint and had her picture on his desk. Another member of the U.S. Supreme Court, Benjamin N. Cardozo, had among his ancestors one of the most prominent supporters of Sabatai Zevi.

Epilog

There will always be finaglers making history. Besides, the flight from the ghetto has changed by now into a flight back to ghetto mentality by *Chabab* and other neo-Hassidic groups with their weird, guru-like appeal to American intellectuals, aided and abetted by the sentimental writings of Bashevis Singer and Elie Wiesel.

Mandel

The Militant

Messiah

The Militant Messiah

by

ARTHUR MANDEL



A Peter Bergman Book

Arthur Mandel:

The Militant Messiah

or

The Flight from the Ghetto

**The Story of Jacob Frank
and the Frankist Movement**

At the time this book went to press, the world was stunned by the news of the mass suicide in Guayana which demonstrated the power a pseudo-Messiah can have over his followers. The subject matter of the present study is a case in point. It throws light on a dark corner of the eighteenth century and offers a new view of Frankism, that strange mixture of mystic messianism, militarism, and sex, which originated among Polish Jews at the beginning of the so-called Emancipation, found a faint echo in the French Revolution and even reached the shores of the United States.

The rise and fall of Jacob Frank, and of his daughter Eva and cousin Junius Frey, was so baffling to contemporaries and historians because in comparison all past and present Gurus, courtesans, and political mesmerisers seem nothing more than small bunglers. Based on both hitherto unknown documents and a host of Frank's sayings which sound like the anti-establishment and sexual liberation slogans of today, Frankism is set here against the background of its own time and ours, a fascinating tale, cutting across cherished illusions with verve and wit.

The author dares an incidental critique of Martin Buber's Hassidic concept, which is spreading generally in New Theology, that "the same deed that would be evil committed by an ordinary man, committed by the tsaddik is good," a concept that raises the question: "What was the divine spark in Hitler or Stalin?" It is left to the reader to extend this question even to democratic dissemblers in messianic pose.

About the author:

Born in that part of Austro-Silesia which fell to Poland after World War I, Arthur Mandel studied in Vienna and Berlin and lived for some time in Paris and Geneva. Since 1942 in the United States, he taught European and American economic history at Stanford University and the University of California. Retired now, he turned to exploring the obscure byways of history, the present volume being the first fruit of this endeavour.

The portrait of François Chabot, a geomantic etching by F. Bonneville, has been reproduced with the permission of *Bildarchiv*, Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

Cover picture: Jacob Frank on his death bed surrounded by his body guard.

Jacket design by Gunther Jansen

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THE MILITANT MESSIAH

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Jacob Frank

The Militant Messiah

or

The Flight from the Ghetto

The Story of Jacob Frank
and the Frankist Movement

by

Arthur Mandel

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Frank leaving for his prayer service
Frank on his deathbed

1

The End

When Danton and his friends were beheaded, two brothers, Junius and Emanuel Frey, were also executed although they did not belong to Danton's faction. They had played a minor part in the trial—not enough for Paris' newspapermen to report about them. Only the correspondent of the Berlin *Vossische Zeitung* paid attention to the Freys because they were well known in the German colony in Paris. He may even have been a visitor in their house in the rue d'Anjou, which was a refuge for German emigrants. He described how the brothers crouched in the back of the large two-wheel cart, the younger, Emanuel, crying on the shoulder of the older, who tried to calm him.

Behind the morose driver stood Danton, gesturing with his fists as he had always done, trying to harangue the mob which lined the street. His words were drowned out by the crowd, the same crowd who—when was it? yesterday? yester-year?—had cheered him madly.

It could not be far to the place of execution—the cart was already rumbling through the suburb Saint-Honoré. Now it passed through rue d'Anjou. Junius took a look at the windows of number 19. Was Léopoldine still there? She had been released from prison, that much he knew, but what had become of her? The shutters were closed tight and nothing stirred behind them.

The cart at last reached the Place de la Révolution.

The brothers did not have to wait long. When their turn came, they embraced and kissed each other. Camille Desmoulins stopped sighing for his beloved Lucile for a moment as they were led past him, and Danton looked at them indifferently. He had had nothing to do with them.

It was the 14th Germinal of the year II of the one and indivisible Republic, the 5th of April, 1794, of the old calendar.

Who were the brothers Frey?

The trial papers tell us, although they do not agree in every detail. Clerks did not take it too seriously then; the accused were doomed anyhow, and the clerk put down whatever he heard in the din without taking pains to ask for the spelling of the foreign names. The papers speak of the brothers as the bankers and army suppliers Junius Gottlob (Kotlo) and Emanuel Ernest Frey (Fraye). The executioner listed the younger under No. 564 as Emanuel Frez, his brother, No. 565, oddly as Junius Eschine Portock. Otherwise there is no divergence in the data. Both are called barons, living together with their 16-year-old sister Léopoldine, alleged daughter of Emperor Leopold II of Austria and wife of the former Capucin monk and prominent member of the National Assembly François Chabot, who perished under the guillotine with Danton and the brothers Frey. Age of the latter: Junius 36, Emanuel 27; place of birth: Bruenn (Brune), Moravia, "*pays impérial*"; domicile: Vienna; for the last two years Paris, 19 rue d'Anjou, Faubourg Saint-Honoré, which was also Chabot's address.

Childhood of a Messiah

What had brought the brothers Frey and their sister to Paris?

The answer goes back, via several intermediary points, to the village of Korolowka in the easternmost corner of the Polish province of Galicia where, in the year 1726, Rachel, the wife of Leib, an innkeeper, gave birth to a boy who, under the name of Jacob Frank, was to play an important, though by no means praiseworthy, role in Jewish history as the leader of a messianic movement. He was the second cousin of the brothers Frey, and Junius his heir apparent.

Although he himself had no desire to study, Frank spoke of his father, not without pride, as a learned rabbi in Czernowitz and later Bucharest; on another occasion, however, and probably closer to the truth, he described him as a leaseholder of some Polish landowner. Several years before his death, Frank revealed to his followers a great secret, according to which he was the son of a mighty king whose empire was seven years beyond the sea and who left him a treasure buried at the mouth of the Danube where it flows into the Black Sea. This fairytale sufficed to make his followers fill his empty pockets with gold and his creditors allow for advances.

Frank's mother came from a well-to-do family in

Rzeszow, western Galicia. Frank loved her fine bed sheets and pillowcases embroidered with gold and silver, as well as the lace-covered shirts she used to sew while the maidservants made bedclothes from raw linen to be given away to poor Jewish girls as part of their dowry.

His mother told him once of a dream he had when he was four years old, in which he saw God's beautiful face. He was sitting on God's knee and God gave him a ball of golden thread saying, "Hold on, my child, to this ball, and let it not fall out of your hand when the time comes to unroll it." Whether this was a true childhood dream or a late fruit of Frank's vivid imagination may better be left undecided here.

Frank was very fond of his grandmother, "a well-experienced stargazer" who protected him from the witches who surrounded his cradle with their queen in front. "Take good care of this child," she is said to have admonished his parents, "for he will bring something new into the world." And he goes on reminiscing (as recorded by a disciple): "She was a truly decent and charitable woman. When there was famine in the country, she distributed food to the needy, Christian and Jew alike, and nobody was turned away empty-handed. People came to see her from far away for she was blessed with the virtues of our ancestral mothers, the wives of the biblical patriarchs. Half a year before she died, she fell very sick. They rushed to her bedside from all over because she was famous for her charity. People assembled in the synagogue and cried and implored God for her life and well-being, and handed out many alms. It was all in vain."

Frank's father was a strict man. When his children reached the age of five, he used to seat them at the table and teach them good manners. Whosoever did not be-

have got a spanking; the punishment was the same for refusing to eat. He once brought a sky-blue suit home for his son, and when little Jacob asked him where he got it, he said from God in heaven. But then he put it away for the holidays. "So I took my clothes," Frank remembers, "and buried them in the ground and came home all naked. And when they asked me: 'Where are your clothes,' I said, they have been stolen from me and now I must walk around in the nude. So they had to give me the new suit and the white shirt they had made for me to wear on the holidays, and I paraded in them all over town."

There was also an uncle in the house. "I used to crawl into his bed and would not leave him alone until he joined me in saying good night to everybody, even the mice, big and small, as well as to the snakes and all the animals in the forest, including the birds; to all and everyone I said good night."

3

The Polish Jews

These were not good nights for the Polish Jews. Polish statehood was disintegrating, and the Federation of Jewish Communities, the so-called Synod of the Four Provinces, with it. This body, established in the sixteenth century for the collection of the Jewish head tax, had developed over time into an autonomous organism with judicial, fiscal, religious, educational, and even some penal prerogatives, a veritable state

within the state. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, it was only a shadow of its former self. In addition to being torn apart by intrigue and corruption, a faithful copy of the Polish diet, the Sejm, it was burdened by heavy debts to the Catholic church, mainly to the Jesuits, whose total assets in 1773, at the time the order was dissolved, consisted of 100's from the Jewish communities bearing 30 percent a year.

The indebtedness of the Jewish communities resulted from the general impoverishment of Polish Jewry dating back to the devastating revolts of the Ukrainian peasants during the seventeenth century, especially those under the command of the Cossak hetman Chmielnitsky. In the wake of Poland's expansion to the East, the Jews arrived in the Ukraine as tenants, publicans, and tax collectors of the Polish overlords who entrusted them not only with the management of their domains, but even with the collection of church taxes. Thus it was not unusual for the Jew to post himself Sundays at the church door and collect an "admission fee." The keys to the church were also in his custody, and no baptism, wedding or funeral could take place without his handing them over—of course, against payment of the customary dues. Little did it matter that he acted on behalf of his Polish master, who received the lion's share. The Jews were first and foremost to feel the brunt of the revolts. They were massacred by the thousands (100,000 in 1648 alone) and 300 Jewish communities went up in fire, the biggest holocaust before Hitler.

The turmoil that followed (interior factionalism, decay of the towns, Swedish and Russian invasions) certainly did not help the situation. By way of "comfort" to their suffering people, Jewish officialdom had only

to offer heavier taxation and the old tune that God had punished them for their sins; in other words, they should blame themselves for what had happened. Besides adding insult to injury, this only heightened the desire for salvation. Preachers and prophets appeared, heralding the imminent coming of the Messiah.

Then, spreading like a hurricane through the Jewish world, the news came of his arrival in 1665, in the city of Smyrna way down in Turkey, under the name of Sabbatai Zevi. Why, was he not, as predicted, born on the anniversary day of the destruction of Jerusalem and had he not done the abominable and pronounced the name of God without having been swallowed up by the earth? The Jews of Europe from as far away as Amsterdam and Hamburg were caught in a wild frenzy; many sold off their houses, packed their belongings, and took to the road to join the Messiah—only to run head-on into the frightful news of his conversion to Islam! Imprisoned by the suspicious Sultan, he had been holding court in jail and receiving delegations from all over Europe until he was given the choice: conversion or death. He chose life, and his companions with him. The initial disappointment, far from being the end of Sabbatai Zevi's adventure, turned quickly into a renewed and more obstinate faith. Had they not been told time and again of the Messiah's sufferings, his birth pangs? Of the strange things he would have to do in order to bring salvation? Of the necessity of his descent into the abyss of sin and his passing through the 49 gates of abomination? Just as the "scandal" of the crucifixion became the symbol of salvation in the eyes of Christ's disciples, so the followers of Sabbatai Zevi accepted the apostasy of their master as only one more proof of his veracity; and even his death, far from robbing

them of their belief, only made them look forward faithfully to his second coming.

Excommunicated and persecuted by the rabbis who felt threatened in their positions, the heretics went underground, often under the guidance of outstanding personalities such as the much-maligned rabbi of Prague and later Hamburg, Jonathan Eibenschuetz (1690-1764), who escaped excommunication only by joining the signers of the ban (which was also signed by Aaron Baer Wehle, a leading Sabbataian and prominent member of the Prague Jewish community). Scattered all over Europe, the heretics kept in touch with each other, published a vast array of writings, and seemed only to wait for a renewed call to break camp. From their ranks came the many messianic prophets and "balsheems" (from the Hebrew *baal hashem*, master of the divine name) who roamed the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most popular among them were Mortke Eisenstadt, Haskel Wormser, Moshe Kamionker, and particularly Yidl Hassid and Haim Malakh who, at the head of 1,200 white-clad penitents, wailing and weeping Jewish *flagellantes*, made, in 1700, their way from Poland via Austria and Italy to the Holy Land. Failure and disappointment notwithstanding, they always found numerous believers. Here, apparently, was an inexhaustible source for messianism to draw on and only a charismatic leader was needed to kindle the flame anew. He arose, not in one, but in two men; and although the popular movements they initiated were quite different in character—disdain for the world and escape into the realm of the soul in one, world hatred and destructive nihilism in the other—they were only two sides of the same coin, two different ways of reacting to the same cause, two veritable grass-root revolts

against the oppressive, petrified rule of the rabbis, with many affinities and a similar end.

4

Ghetto Mysticism

Hassidism and Frankism, the two movements which deeply disturbed European Jewry during the eighteenth century and beyond, belong to the long chain of heretic sects that goes back to the early Christians and the Gnostics. The founders of both came from that remote corner of eastern Europe, the forest and mountain country of eastern Galicia and the adjoining Ukraine which saw the last offsprings of gnostic Manicheism and the Bogomils.

The founder of Hassidism (from the Hebrew *hassid*, pious) was Israel Balshem (1700-1760), called Balshem Tov, the good balshem, in distinction to the many other balsheems, among them even one in London. Israel was a simple Jew and tavern keeper, a dreamer who liked to roam through fields and forests, watch the clouds, and listen to the wind. In the year 1736 he is said to have had an illumination when "a little peasant" in the woods showed him the "religion of love," which was probably the "religion of love" of the Khlyste, a mystic sect of Russian, Ukrainian, and even Polish peasantry that existed into the late nineteenth century. Jacob Frank (1726-1791), he too an uneducated man, also knew the Khlyste, and their orgiastic rites could hardly have escaped his attention. Despite

these coincidences, no conclusions should be drawn concerning mutual influences. Contrary to the Jewish sects, the Khlyste had a negative attitude towards life; they abstained from meat and intoxicating beverages, kept long fasting periods, and chastised and castigated themselves (their name comes from the Russian *khlyst*, whip). If they are mentioned occasionally on the following pages, it is not for the sake of establishing correlations, but to show that different soils may bring forth similar flowers. Any similarity is strictly coincidental, that is, not the result of historical causality or interdependence, but rather (to borrow from Jungian terminology) a case of synchronicity, an independent parallelism of development, in this instance the unfolding of a certain process common to all established churches of the time. And the time was one of overall ferment and restiveness, a fertile ground for sectarianism in East and West alike. Some scholars even thought to discover in Hassidism traces of English Pietism and Mongolian Buddhism, while others regarded the Russian sects as a sort of Christian Hassidism. Be that as it may, whether Russian Khlyste, German Hüpfer, English Jumpers, or American Shakers, they show some striking similarities with those wretched Jews of the god-forsaken hamlets in eastern Galicia both in the spiritual and formal sense. What they all have in common is the dissatisfaction, if not open disgust, with the empty formalism of institutionalized religion, coupled with the perennial longing for a personal communion with God, the *unio mystica*, frustrated time and time again by the churches and clergies of all brands and denominations.

The Balshem proclaimed that God can be reached by anybody, no learned rabbi is needed. God is omnipresent, not only in the synagogue at the determined

hours of prayer, but even in such unorthodox places as an open meadow or deep in the woods. He wants to be served not in sadness, penitence, and mortification of the body, but in joyful song and dance; not just by word of mouth, but by anything one does: walking, eating, working, making love; in short, with every part, movement and function of the body. Hence the noisy prayers of the Hassidim, their ecstatic outcries and clapping hands, their shaking and twisting bodies, their suddenly jumping off the ground while praying, their bending and swaying "like trees in the wind," totally oblivious to what is going on around them. It was only perfect logic, in the light of such ideas, for a Hassid once to defend himself against the reproach of impiety: "Chewing tobacco or emptying my bowels is more meaningful than all your prayers." Salomon Maimon (1753-1800), who took the jump from Hassidism to Kantian philosophy, described in his *Autobiography* how the Hassidim, "not unlike the Greek cynics, violated all laws of good behavior, ran around naked in the streets, relieved themselves in the presence of others and the like. . . . Some even became insane and believed they did not exist at all."

Even sin may be turned into a service to God, for there is no evil as such; sin is "the throne of the good" and contains one of those divine sparks which fell down into the depths from the work of creation; and whoever raises it by "entering and smashing the shells that imprison it," is the truly righteous one of his time, the *tsaddik*. Anybody can do it and many are called upon, but few are chosen.

For the *tsaddik* is the mainstay and pillar of the world. And if the world has not perished yet, we owe it to him. The *tsaddik* has superhuman powers at his

command, he can be in two places at the same time, has access to heaven where (as the Balshem told of himself) he converses with the Messiah and the ancestors, pleads the case of his people, remonstrates with, and may even summon, God to court as a witness or defendant! Arguing with God is an old Jewish habit, starting with the patriarchs (Jacob's by-name is Israel: he who wrestled with God) and going on to Moses, the prophets, and so forth. When Nahman of Horodenko emigrated, in 1764, to Palestine with his community, their ship was caught in a storm. The tsaddik asked the men to put on their shrouds and prayer shawls and to assemble on deck, and thus turned to God: "If the heavenly tribunal has decided our doom, I, in the name of this holy community, appeal this decision and ask it be rescinded!" The sea, so the story goes, calmed down immediately.

Reprimanding God puts the tsaddik obviously in great jeopardy. He takes the danger upon himself out of love for his people, whose absolute faith is his only protection. He often has to use the weirdest means, such as disguising himself as a peasant, thief, or robber and even committing the forbidden in order to unite with the transgressor and keep him from sinning.

The slightest doubt by any of his followers may be the tsaddik's doom and prevent him from ever finding the way back to himself. One owes him, therefore, absolute obedience, for whatever he does is good, whether it looks so or not. To the historian of religion this may sound like talking about the wide-spread medieval sect of the "Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit," who considered themselves to be one in God and above good and evil like the thirteenth-century German mystic Master Eckhart to whom God and man were essentially

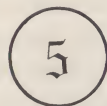
equal, a view which, after his death, was condemned as heretical.

In Hassidism the concepts of good and evil undergo a certain qualification. They no longer are determined by the deed itself, but depend on the doer. The same deed that would be evil committed by an ordinary man, committed by the tsaddik is good. For the tsaddik is holy and what he does, says, touches is holy. Even to speak of him is holy and equal to prayer. Decisive is not the What but the How or, in the words of Martin Buber, "not the given action, but the dedication of all action. . . . There is no definite, exhibitable, teachable action, but the hallowing of all actions without distinction. Each action can be the one on which all depends; what is decisive is only the strength and concentration of hallowing with which I do it. . . . For all that man does he shall do with his whole being." Certainly, Buber concedes, "the man who has to do with evil in this manner runs a great risk," but he is protected by the circumstance that "sin is just that which by its nature cannot be done with the whole being."

This was written in the 1920's. Today we know better. What was the divine spark in Hitler or Stalin? Evil may, and good need not necessarily, be done "with one's whole being." After all, the human condition is not so much the dilemma between right and wrong as that of right against right. And there is often no way out of it.

Hassidism, although frequently called a sect, was a popular movement. It had won over most of eastern Europe's Jews by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Balshem did not teach esoteric ideas for the few or advocate a secret brotherhood with hair-raising initiation rites or introduce unintelligible symbolism. He

brought religion down to earth and taught a mysticism to be lived by everybody, easy to grasp and fitted to the psychic needs of the little man who, poor and uneducated as he was, saw himself suddenly placed above the rabbis and their scholarly arrogance. No obtruse casuistry here, no bone-dry, hairsplitting exegesis; but parables and folktales, songs and tunes, not in the unintelligible, though sacred Hebrew, but in the vernacular Yiddish, "the language of the kitchen maids," which was now fit for reciting the prayers. And enthroned above it all—the holy tsaddik, the man of God.



Hassidism Debunked

It is here, in its very heart, that Hassidism carried the germ of doom. Once more an intermediary arises between man and God. The road to salvation passes through the tsaddik. Only his devotees find grace in the eyes of God, only he who is devoted to the tsaddik is devoted to God. From popularization to vulgarization is but one step. Contempt for the study of the scriptures turns into contempt for any study whatsoever, particularly the secular sciences, but also for the Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages like Maimonides "who built upon what Aristotle, damned be his name, spat out." (Maimonides was and still is the perennial target of Jewish orthodoxy; his *Guide of the Perplexed* was

the first book to be burned by the early Inquisition, and that at the request of the rabbis of Montpellier in 1232.) Blind belief in the tsaddik gives way to a pernicious fanaticism, a militant obscurantism. Mystic ecstasy is no longer distinguishable from drunkenness, and the tsaddik does not let anybody outdo him. He becomes an adviser in business and family affairs, if not impostor and fraud, healing the sick and the lame, "blessing" childless couples with off-spring—all for a price. This erosion of the role of the tsaddik was not an isolated or late phenomenon. Thus the tsaddik Eli-melekh of Lezaisk (died 1786) likened his position between God and man to that of an intermediary between seller and buyer and charged a brokerage fee for his services. And that "luminary" of Hassidism, the tsaddik of Lublin, Jacob Isaac Hurwicz, performed his miracles according to a price tariff. No woman was safe in his presence; he died in 1815 by falling out of his window dead drunk, an event that legend turned into a punishment for his having accused God of delaying the coming of the Messiah. What Buber saw in Hassidism applies to the time of the Balshem at best, and only with reservations. After all, the Balshem was, like the other balshems, a fortune teller, healer, and exorcizer whose main income came from the sale of amulets for the protection of women in childbed and which were so much in demand that he employed two men for their manufacture. Thus the populace saw him, thus his disciples saw him, and thus surely he saw himself.

What came afterwards, and it came surprisingly fast, was what inevitably had to come. Every aberration, every degeneration of Hassidism was contained in its very origin (as even Buber admitted). Jews may be as prone to mysticism as other people are, but there

is an old rationalistic residual in their way of thinking which puts a sceptical, if not ironical, damper on their relation to God and on mystical exaltation in general. Nothing illustrates this better than the following anecdote reported by the Talmud: The rabbis were once arguing about some point of law when a voice was heard from heaven taking sides with one of them; thereupon another turned around and shouted: "Quiet up there! Here we decide by majority vote!" Or that popular story of the old Jew who had kept the commandments scrupulously all his life and then said on his deathbed: "Would be funny if there were nothing over there either." What goes by the name of Jewish mysticism is not so much a search for God, as for the hidden meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and that is essentially the history of the Hebrew people. This is what the Cabbala is after, and Hassidism is her legitimate child. Not the story of a people, but the passion of a man, the New Testament could give rise to the intimate confessions of the great Christian mystics. Christian mysticism is unhistoric, Jewish mysticism impersonal and not conducive to a personal outpouring of the soul. God, the all-creator, is too remote to allow for more than exuberant admiration of his awesome majesty. A religion without myths or mythology, a deity which, according to the Jewish credo, cannot be imagined or experienced in any way (hence not the hidden God of mystic-gnostic lore, the *deus absconditus*) but a God who *cannot* communicate with man (Spinoza's *substance*)—to be sure, this does not preclude mysticism altogether, but lends itself equally well to agnosticism or atheism.

What happened to the Balshem was only what had happened to many a prophet before him. Like most of them, he has left no writings of his own. The stories

he told on his walks through the fields or in the darkness of his little room and which are a true match for the *Fioretti* of St. Francis of Assisi, were written down after his death by his disciples, who added some of their own and put them into the mouth of the master. As time went on, these tales grew in volume. However, as long as the Balshem was alive, everything seemed idyllic and free of coercion. But already his immediate successor, the "Great Maggid" (preacher) Dov Baer of Mesritch (died 1772) put the movement into a straightjacket. Unlike the Balshem who travelled from place to place to see the people, the Maggid established a permanent residence and made it the holy duty of every Hassid to come to see him at least once a year, bearing gifts. He also introduced the hereditary succession; for holy as the tsaddik, so is his son and even grandson (which gave rise to the accession of several baby-tsaddiks, not unlike the Tibetan baby Dalai-Lamas). The Balshem's only son was feeble-minded; in his stead, one of his grandsons by his daughter became a tsaddik, greedy and pleasure-seeking, with an ostentatious household, magnificent coach, brassband, and even court jester. The "Great Maggid," blessed with seven sons, crowned them all tsaddik, whereupon they promptly took to competing with each other, not always in irreproachable ways. With Israel Friedmann, the Maggid's grandson and founder of the notorious dynasty of Sadagora, we are already way down the road of the dark men of Hassidism with their princely courts, luxurious lifestyles and bejeweled women.

There are many sayings of the Balshem and his disciples that fit Buber's philosophy of mystic existentialism quite well; others do not at all. By concentrating on the former and underestimating, if not over-

looking, the dark side of Hassidism, Buber arrived at an idealized, retouched picture, just as if one tried to interpret Christianity in the light of the beautiful—but only the beautiful—logia of Jesus Christ, omitting his curses and damnations, let alone the dogmatic intolerance of the Church. To the adherents of contemporary Hassidism, so far as they ever heard of him, Buber was an “apikoires” (bowdlerized from Epicurean), a blasphemer, and Buber seemed to be aware of it when he said he “carried the message Hassidism did not want to be, but was and is, into the world against its will.”

Hassidism encountered the immediate opposition of official Judaism, especially that of the greatest rabbinical authority of the time, the Gaon (scholarprince) Elia of Vilna (at whose funeral in 1797 the Hassidim danced for joy.) Denounced by their opponents (*Missnagdim* in Hebrew) as heretics and believers in Sabbatai Zevi, the Hassidim were repeatedly excommunicated. In the struggle that followed, the two sides were not too choosy in their means, not excluding book burning and physical force. Before long, however, the axe was buried and the two enemy brothers hurled themselves upon a third one, the Enlightenment coming from the West and slowly making its way into the ghetto. And here they did not even shrink from murder, witness the poisoning of the rabbi Dr. Abraham Kohn by the Hassidim of Lemberg in 1848.

Subsequently the conflict between Hassidim and Missnagdim simmered down to a reconciliation starting with the rehabilitation of the scriptural studies by the tsaddik of Ladi, Shneyer Salmen (died 1812) who, denounced by his enemies, still had to spend some time in Russian prisons. He succeeded afterwards in legalizing the “Sect of the Hassidim” with the Tsarist

government, probably in reward for the services he rendered them during the Napoleonic war. (Only a last minute getaway saved him from falling into the hands of the French.) What a paradox: the tsaddik allied with the Tsar who oppressed the Jews, against Napoleon who brought them their freedom wherever he went.

Spying and informing on Socialists and Zionists alike have ever since remained trademarks of Hassidism, and the tsaddiks, with few exceptions, were con men of the Russian and Austrian, later Polish and Rumanian, police. One of these exceptions was Nahman of Bratslav, the great-grandson of the Balshem and, next to him, the most outstanding personality of Hassidism. He attacked the tsaddiks (“devil’s henchmen,” he called them) for their corrupt way of life and their venality, arousing only fury and hatred. An inflammatory campaign was unleashed against him in the course of which his house was burned down and he himself almost killed. Broken in body and spirit and chased from town to town, he died in Uman in 1811 at the age of 38. Yet, even this most pathetic figure turned fanatic when it came to fighting the hated Enlightenment. His “noble character” was of some questionable nature, besides. Thus, when he decided to travel to Palestine and his wife asked him what she was to live on while he was away, he answered: “You will move to your father’s, your older sister will hire herself out as a servant, the younger one will be taken in by somebody else, your mother will find work as a cook, and I will sell all we have to pay for the trip.” More will be said later about the astonishing similarities between this radical representative of a refined Hassidism and Jacob Frank, the prophet of an equally radical materialism.

Mention should be made in this connection of such prominent Hassidim as Moshe Friedmann, son of the above mentioned tsaddik of Sadagora, who turned his back on Hassidism and joined the Enlightenment at the risk of his life; the son of the tsaddik of Ladi, who turned his back on Judaism and became a Catholic convert; and Mendel of Kotsk, probably the most popular tsaddik of his time, who turned his back on God and became an atheist, only to be imprisoned in a cage by his followers for the remaining twenty years of his life.

To the non-Jewish world Hassidism remained *terra incognita* into the 1920's; Poland, the Balshem's homeland, no exception. Dwelling together for centuries and rubbing shoulders every day, Poles and Jews knew next to nothing of each other. They lived in different worlds and spoke different languages. This mutual ignorance lasted as long as there were Jews in Poland. If there was a growing number of Jews who spoke Polish, there were hardly any Poles who spoke Yiddish (or jargon, as they liked to say derogatorily). In vain were the efforts of such prominent writers as Julian Niemcewicz and Eliza Orzeszko to break down the barriers of hatred and contempt. To the Pole, the Jew was by and large a cheat and fanatic when poor, a boaster and braggart when rich, a scabby, evil-smelling garlic eater in any case. To the Jew, the Pole was more animal than man when poor, an arrogant nincompoop unable to handle his own affairs when rich, a chronic drunk in any case. When it came to Hassidism, even Eliza Orzeszko identified it with orthodox Judaism *tout court* (however, by the time she did so, in 1882, she was no longer off the mark) and the Balshem was to her just another of those "half savage" rabbis.

On the whole, prewar Polish literature was, if not indifferent or hostile, critical-tutorial toward the Jews, of a well meaning, yet impotent do-goodism that did no harm. Hassidism drew a complete blank and found refuge only in the works of one single writer, Stanislaw Vincenz, who, without criticizing or moralizing, accepted it as it was and included some beautiful Hassidic legends in his stories of the Carpathian highlanders.

Today, with no Jews left in eastern Europe, what has remained of Hassidism except the somewhat questionable groups in Jerusalem, western Europe and the United States? Perhaps the "singing rebbe" Shlomo Carlebach with his electric guitar? Books remain. Books by such Yiddish and Hebrew writers as Agnon and Anski (author of the *Dibbuk*), J. L. Perez and M. J. Bin-Gorion, and most of all the *Tales of the Hassidim* by Martin Buber, a monument *aere perennius* to the vitality and creative power Hassidism once was.

6

The New Messiah

This was the world into which the child Jacob was born—he who could not sleep without telling the mice good night and who was to become the Balshem's antipode. It is highly improbable that the two men ever came to see each other. Hassidic tradition has it that the Balshem participated in a church-organized disputation between rabbis and Frankists "because he spoke Polish." The official record, however, does not mention

him. Anyhow, the rabbis would not have called on the assistance of an excommunicated person who was not even a rabbi, and the reconciliation between Missnagdim and Hassidim came only long after the Balshem's death. The rabbis were ignorant of the Polish language, and their speaker was the wealthy wine merchant Baer Bolekhover, not the Balshem. Speaker for the other side was the Polish adventurer Anton Kossakowski-Molivda who had been active among Russian peasant sects; once friend and adviser to Frank, he later became his accuser before the Warsaw Inquisition. Frank arrived only towards the end of the disputation (which took place in Lemberg, from July to September, 1759) and was too busy preparing, or rather delaying, his baptism to actively take part in the proceedings. Be that as it may, the two protagonists must have heard of each other. Neither mentions his counterpart, but the Balshem is said to have died broken-hearted at the news of Frank's conversion to Catholicism. Although the two dates are not far apart—November 1759 and May 1760—the story may be taken as a pious mystification to emphasize the noble mind of the Balshem and to blame the renegades for his death.

Frank was the very opposite of the Balshem in character as well: not a quiet, introverted child, but an unruly boy of unusual strength, the terror of the town. He relished telling of his youthful doings, which ranged from more or less harmless mischief in the synagogue to serious robberies and holdups. One night he went from house to house banging a wooden hammer twice against each door, the customary signal of a death in town. Everybody came running out into the street in their nightgowns shouting, Who has died? At the age of twelve he commanded a gang of a hundred boys,

Jewish and non-Jewish, who hijacked travellers, threw sand into their eyes, and robbed them of their last shirt.

The unsteady life of the family may have had something to do with it. A follower of Sabbatai Zevi, Frank's father was forced to move from place to place, settling finally in Bucharest which then belonged to Turkey. He gave his 13-year-old in apprenticeship to a spice merchant, much to the youngster's dislike. Soon the boy had a gang of teenagers at his command, fighting bloody battles with other gangs and terrorizing the neighborhood. An extortion attempt landed him in jail, and only the intervention of "a noble lady" helped him out of it. Back it went to the spice shop, but not for long. Trying it on his own, he dealt not in spices, but in silk and jewels, a trade which took him, during the next few years, as far as Smyrna. He bragged about his luck with women, who were not only his best customers, but who also favored him in other ways—allegedly thanks to a magic stone in his possession which made him irresistible. A less magical explanation may be found in his manliness and animal strength, underscored by his pockmarked face. The sexual element later played a dominant role in the rites of his sect. Next to women, Frank's passion was horses. He was an excellent horseman and once crossed the swollen rapids of the Dniester river on horseback to the astonishment of a crowd of onlookers.

Smyrna became the turning point of his life. Under the guidance of a certain rabbi Issakhar he plunged into the mysteries of the Cabbala, soon acquiring the reputation of a Cabbalist, although by his own admission he understood little of it. A small following gathered around him, led by his steady companions Mortke of Prague, Nahman of Poland, and the "blind Nossen."

Upon learning from his teacher that the call of God was to reach the Messiah in Salonica, he decided to go there and become a servant to God's yet to be chosen emissary:

"I want to serve him with all my heart. If he needs wood, I shall cut wood for him. If he wants me to fetch water, I shall do it. If he needs somebody to fight his wars, I shall put myself at the head of his hosts."

Salonica was the refuge for many Jews fleeing Poland and other parts of Europe. They were called Franks by their Turkish coreligionists, and so our hero came to be called "Jacob the Frank", and later, back in Poland, simply Jacob Frank. Frank or Frenk was a generic name for European in the Near East, going back to the time of the Crusades and the predominantly Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099-1199. Strangely enough, the oriental immigrants in modern Israel are called Frenks, probably because so many of them speak French, having been educated in the schools the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* established for the dissemination of the French language among the Jews of North Africa and the Near East.

Salonica was the seat of the Messiah according to the Doenme (Turkish for apostates), those followers of Sabbatai Zevi who, together with him, had been converted to Islam without renouncing their Judaism, somewhat like the Spanish Marranos or pseudo-Christians, many of whom had found a haven in Turkey. The rites of the Doenme (some of whom, we are told, survive in present-day Turkey) culminated in orgiastic dances to the singing of the biblical Song of Songs. They believed in the immortality and pre-existence of the Messiah (in Jewish lore he existed even before the creation of the world); summoned by God, he appeared on earth in the

persons of Moses, Jesus Christ, and Sabbatai Zevi. Frank reached Salonica in 1753; he familiarized himself with the teachings of the Doenme and decided to proclaim himself Messiah. He betook himself to the main synagogue of Salonica and announced he was the reincarnation of Sabbatai Zevi. The latter, he said, had been unable to accomplish his mission because he did not taste "the sweetness of power." Still in Smyrna, Frank once had asked his mentor, Rabbi Issakhar, why Sabbatai Zevi had to die; he was told that "Sabbatai had come to taste everything, even the bitterness of death." Whereupon Frank queried, "Why then did he not taste the sweetness of power?"



Visions

A true visionary, Frank had visions, first on November 20, 1754:

Ruah Hakodesh (Hebrew, the holy ghost) descended on me and I heard a voice calling, "Go and get me the wise Jacob, and as soon as he enters the first room, all doors shall open before him!" Two maidens, the fairest there are, took me under my arms and flew me through space toward the rooms. In some of them there were women and maidens; in others, teachers and pupils, and I had only to hear one word in order to understand everything. In the last room there was the First One (Sabbatai Zevi) in the midst of his disciples, wearing Frank-

ish clothes. He said to me: "Are you the wise Jacob? I have heard of you, of your courage and strength of mind. I made it up to here, but I am too weak to continue. If you care, gird your loins and may God help you! Quite a few have tried it and have broken down under the burden." He pointed through the window to a dark abyss that looked like the Black Sea and a mountain beyond it which reached into the sky. And I exclaimed, "Well then, I shall go! So help me God!"

This was easier said than done. He proclaimed himself Messiah and *Santo Señor*, but somehow the spark did not catch fire this time. First of all, the new Messiah was not well to do; messiahs seldom are. Second, he had just married the beautiful, but poor, Hanna. His arrogant behavior in the synagogue irked the people; the next time he was thrown out into the street and greeted there with not only mud and rocks, but worse, with laughter and derision. Frank never forgot the abuse he suffered in Salonica and kept complaining about it for years; he felt like a jeweler displaying a very precious stone with nobody around to appreciate it. "Laugh your mouth full," he scolded his scoffers, "but let me tell you, there will be more Jews following me than you have hair on your heads!" Yet, matters grew worse. He was ejected from his lodgings, had to sleep in the open and even beg for food, "but I took it upon me for the love of God." Finally he fell ill with boils all over his body; by then he was definitely sick and tired of the Messiah career and wanted to go back to the jewel trade, to the great dismay of the trio Mortke-Nahman-Nossen: "What? That's what you want? Making money? This is not your way!" He gave in, but Salonica was no longer an abode for him. His health had im-

proved somewhat, but his reputation was gone. And so he decided, upon the advice of his friends, to go to Poland where great numbers of Sabbataians lived in expectation of their Messiah's return. Later he presented this decision as the result of a series of visions in which the prophet Elia and Jesus Christ ordered him to Poland. He did not obey at first: Why Poland when he was doing fairly well in Smyrna? Thereupon he fell sick again and saw in his fever dream a gray-bearded man telling him, "You will get well in Poland; here you will die." He brushed the apparition aside, but his fever rose; his condition grew worse until he lost his voice and could not move. They held some down to his nose to see whether he was breathing, then closed his eyes as if he had died. Let him tell in his own words what followed next:

I saw a beautiful bearded man before me who told me to go to Poland. I turned toward the wall, but there on the wall he stood again and I became terribly scared. He took me by the hand, where one feels the pulse, and told me to rise. I tore loose and threw myself around, but there, in the middle of the room, he stood again, all nude, with outstretched arms and open wounds on his hands and feet. I jumped out of my bed and fell to my knees before him. But he said, "I have sent you Elia twice, but you did not listen. So I came myself. Do not fear! You will go to Poland." I answered, "How can I go to Poland without even speaking their language? I have my bread here and a young wife who will not go with me." But he said, "You go first, she will follow later. I am going to give you a sign by which you will recognize the believers in the true faith. Whenever the going gets rough, I shall send you Elia." With these words he disappeared and I have never seen him again. The people around me

had not seen or heard anything of this. When I jumped out of my bed and fell to my knees, they had run away, scared stiff, and were now staring into the room from outside. But I got up and ate and drank as if nothing had happened, and was well ever since.

Off to Poland! He left his wife in the care of her parents in Nicopol (today Bulgaria) where she bore him a daughter, Eve, or Avatcha as he liked to call her. It was also in Nicopol that he almost fell victim to a cutthroat, hired by Turkish Jews, who inflicted some wounds on his head and chest. At long last, on December 5, 1755, he crossed the border. In the distance, on the other side of the river, one could see the Polish guards, who did not let anybody pass. "There appeared to me," Frank reminisces, "the prophet Elia, exactly the way I had seen him in my dreams, gray beard and white coat, saying, 'Go on and fear not!' The coachman had not noticed anything and hesitated as we approached the guards, so I told him, 'Go on and fear not!' And we passed unmolested; and when we arrived at the village, the innkeeper could not stop wondering how we could have made it."

Thus Frank arrived at his birthplace, Korolowka, and put up at his uncle's. His uncle's wife took offense at his strange ways, his un-Jewish way of praying, his eating "Christian" food, and the like. But she changed her mind when she heard him telling of the purpose of his coming: "If you knew why I came to Poland, you would wet the earth with your tears. I say to you, there will be lords and princes coming and waiting for days at my door to see me. What will happen afterwards, however, I cannot tell you yet."

A number of people joined him immediately. He

thought he saw an aura around their heads and realized this was the promised sign. A group of wealthy Jews from Lemberg was refused admission because they did not have it. The news of his coming spread rapidly and he was greeted everywhere with open arms, even by rabbis and notables. His main followers, however, were the poor and destitute, who recognized in him one of their own who, far from hiding his origins, took pride in calling himself a "prostak," or rude fellow: "If a learned man were needed, God would have sent one."

Actually a number of Polish gentlemen showed up with their ladies, curious to see the Jewish Messiah. He did not disappoint them and performed some "miracles," like catching a pickpocket who put his hand into Frank's coat and could no longer withdraw it. Or removing the huge pillory to which thieves and harlots were tied for a lashing; three men could not move it from place, yet he did it all by himself and crossed the river on it (a miracle which is also reported to have been performed by the Balshem and other tsaddiks on their coats, scarves, and similar "means of transportation," later a favored theme for satirical folk songs).

*End of the Law*

Frank has been called a false Messiah à la Sabbatai Zevi, and Frankism—pseudo-messianism. Vulgar messianism would be more to the point. In Hassidism the messianic idea is pushed into the background by the

mystical longing for individual salvation to such an extent that in 1860 for instance, when the waves of messianism were rising once more, the tsaddik Eliezer Dzikover could publicly declare that, notwithstanding his daily expectation of the Messiah, he could take an oath on it that he would not come this year. Frankism, on the other hand, diverted the messianic idea into a new path, and with Frank a new kind of Messiah entered upon the stage. No more talk of a return to Palestine, not a word of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Instead, a materialistic religion; in Frank's own words, "not to the sage and the learned was it given, but to me, an ignorant fellow; for the sage look up to heaven where there is nothing to see, while I look down to earth and see what God does on it."

He likened himself to the unskilled apprentice who drills a hole through the perfect pearl which no master dared to pierce: "So I will with God's help pierce all and bring life to you." And by life he understood well-being and freedom in the fair country of Poland, whose name in popular belief comes from the Hebrew *po lin* (here shall you pass the night) and which he would not trade for all the countries in the world filled with diamonds to the rim.

Hassidism never transgressed the legal framework of traditional Judaism. Even the heresies of which it was accused amounted to no more than a lax and noisy prayer service and the substitution of a corrupted Sephardic (Spanish-Jewish) liturgy for the Ashkenasic (German-Jewish). Frankism, however, is sheer antinomianism.

Like so many since St. Paul, yet surpassing them all, the new Messiah proclaimed the end of all law, not just the Jewish one: "I have come to abolish all laws

and religions and bring life to the world. . . . Do not believe that only the Jews have to be saved, God forbid, all mankind has to." And for that purpose all social institutions have to be destroyed because they stand in the way of salvation.

It is here that the philosophical structure of Frankism breaks down. The place of the old myths which are to be destroyed is taken up by a new one: The work of destruction has to be accomplished by man's descent to the lowest depths of abomination.

Old Jewish ideas meet here with Christian and Gnostic ones. It was common belief that the coming of the Messiah would signal the end of evil and sin. That could mean two things: either that no more sins would be committed or that they no longer would be considered sins. In any case, according to the Talmud, first the world will have to be filled with heresy, the same answer (with opposite value signs, of course) Christianity gives about the second coming of Christ. For, in the Talmud, the Hebrew word for heresy, *minuth*, usually stands for Christianity. The Frankist propaganda referred copiously to this and other talmudic quotations which picture "the end of the days" as an era of general depravity, when all houses of worship will be houses of whoredom, when the wisdom of the scholars will stink to heaven and virtue be scoffed at; in short, the world will be turned upside down. Frank saw his calling in achieving this goal and leading humanity through this time:

I have not come to uplift, I have come to destroy and debase everything until it has sunk so low that it cannot sink any lower.

The road into the abyss is terrifying and fearsome. Even our father Jacob was afraid of it and did not dare to step on the heavenly ladder. It con-

sists of two converging parts that meet at the bottom, one part leading downwards, the other upwards, and there is no ascending without descending first. So the world was to wait for another Jacob.

The idea of no ascent without descent is drawn from the Talmud and was very popular with Cabbalists. Hassidism, too, knows of a state of lawlessness, not in the abyss of abomination, but on the heights of ecstasy where "the distinction between sacred and profane no longer exists because all has become holy" and—to quote Buber once more—"laws and commandments are folding their wings because annihilated is the evil urge that hovers over them," in other words, not suppressing sin, but conquering it by hallowing the profane. Frank's only concern, however, was the descent into the abyss:

Down the abyss leads the way and everybody must have a lion's heart and no fear, for I shall go ahead.

And as I stand before you, ignorant and crude—I have been chosen, for I am the darkness out of which the light emerges!

It has been said: "A star came forward out of Jacob." This star has existed from the earliest beginning and has been falling lower and lower ever since. All vile and heinous things are in its power, and it is the gate through which I shall lead you.

Ritual Sex

This is nothing but the old Pauline-Gnostic idea of the *felix culpa*, the holy sin, of the road to God leading through sin, the perverse desire of fighting evil with evil, of doing away with sin by sinning. One is reminded of the Khlyste and their call: "Go down into yourself like into a grave and be as Christ who became flesh to destroy sin with sin!" This, of course, was not a call to theft and murder, but meant, as with St. Paul, "the sin of the flesh." Besides public meals on fastdays (also practiced by the young Jewish revolutionaries of eastern Europe as part of the "class war") it took, with the Frankists, the form of a ritualistic libertinism. Under the guise of the (misread?) Bible verse "Praise the Lord who permits the forbidden" (Psalm 146) and such bewildering sayings of the Talmud as "Great is the sin committed for its own sake, greater than the good deed not committed for its own sake" or "The subversion of the Law is its fulfillment," a complete reversal of values is attained. Everything is permitted, lies, deceit, adultery ("there is no such thing in heaven"), all moral concepts reversed, and truth turned into absurdity. Interrogated by a rabbinical court, some Frankists admitted to having had sexual intercourse with married women in the presence and with permission of their husbands, while others confessed to incestuous intercourse. Championing this, even before Frank's arrival in Poland, was the

family of the rabbi of Rohatyn, Elisha Schorr, whose daughter Hanna, a kind of Frankist priestess, uttered in sexual rapture whole passages of the *Zohar*, the Cabalistic bible.

This was something unheard of in the ghetto. The Cabbala contains a host of paradoxes and the *Zohar* is overflowing with sexual symbolism, albeit transposed to the divine and accessible only to the few. The populace swallowed it eagerly. Their walled-up hatred of the clergy found an outlet at last and turned into a destructive mania, the morbid lust for tearing down and trampling under foot all that is holy. This passionate nihilism was the motive power of Frankism. It found expression in numerous sayings of Frank which often sound like the sexual freedom and antiestablishment slogans of nowadays. So does Sabbatai Zevi's call for woman liberation from under the yoke of male domination. Here follow some of Frank's characteristic pronouncements:

Throw away what you have learned! Trample on all the laws you have obeyed and obey only me!

How many times have I told you: We have to trample under foot everything we know! All the prayers that have been sent up during the five thousand years the world has existed are nothing but empty words!

Whatever I step on, will perish. I have come to destroy everything!

Or such Manichean and openly cynical remarks as:

How could God allow a world to exist full of death and misery? This would contradict his omnipotence. No, he who created this world cannot be the true God.

Even God cannot be approached without money.

But then again:

A hero is not he who subdues his enemy by force, but he who can suffer distress and grief.

Do not let an ugly word pass your lips and do not say bad things about other people, for it was not given to you to examine the heart of man and to judge between good and bad.

Whosoever does not love his neighbor and takes joy in hurting him, whosoever swears and slanders is not a true human being and cannot stay with me under one roof.

And what possibly were the most beautiful words Frank was ever to utter and which can almost serve as a counterpart to Jesus' cursing the figtree (Matt. 21:19).

I was on the road once. The sun was very hot and I was tired and had no place to rest. Then I saw a tree with cool shade. The fragrance of its fruit filled the air and a brook of fresh water rushed past it. I lay down under the tree, ate some of the fruit and drank the sweet water. When I awoke, I asked the tree, how shall I thank you? By wishing you many branches? You have them. By wishing you sweet and fragrant fruit? You have them. A brook of fresh water? You have it. All I can wish you is this: May many more people come and find rest in your shade and give thanks to God for having created you.

The religious rites of the Frankists consisted of ecstatic songs and dances accompanied by wild clapping of hands, similar to the Hassidic dances, but with female participation and ending in an orgiastic ritual. The service usually began with Frank kneeling down and fastening two burning candles to a wooden bench, driving a nail into the wood between them and pointing

a cross in all directions, exclaiming: "*Forsa damus para verti, seibul grandi asserviti!*" (in Ladino, the Spanish dialect of the Sephardic Jews: "Give us the strength to see you, the great bliss to serve you!") Then the lights were extinguished and pandemonium broke loose. Men and women undressed completely "to get at the truth in its nakedness" and took to copulating pell-mell, with only the leader keeping aloof in the midst of it all.

The Khlyste had similar rites, with dervish-like dances, ceremonial extinguishing of the lights, and "common sin" or "love of Christ," so called because the Holy Ghost was supposed to bring the couples together. Ritual nakedness symbolizing the sinlessness of Adam before the Fall, was also practiced by the "Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit." Their mass was conducted by a nude priest and accompanied with much singing and rejoicing by an equally nude congregation. They engaged in free sexual intercourse, even incest, because, referring to the saying of St. Paul "To the clean everything is clean," they did not consider sinning whatever they did—exactly as the tsaddiks who often speak as though they had been disciples of Master Eckhart.

A weekly high point of the Frankist ritual was the Friday evening reception of "Queen Sabbath" where the men, singing the prayer "*Lekhu doidi likrass kollo!*" (Hebrew for "Come, my lover, meet the bride!") danced around a "topless" young woman who was crowned with the sacred paraphernalia of the synagogue and then hurled themselves upon her.

The sexual element also played a distinct role in Hassidism, but was by far not as important. It arose from two sources, joy of life and mystic symbolism. Contrary to Christianity, Judaism takes an affirmative view of sex and does not regard it as sinful, even if it

does not serve procreation. (Compare this to St. Paul who called it whoredom, or St. Jerome who called it filth.) Any abstinence, be it temporary or permanent (celibacy), is therefore forbidden and any vows pertaining to it are valid only for one or two weeks at most and only with the partner's consent. The use of contraceptives is not forbidden whereas the only way to pregnancy control tolerated by the Church, the so-called rhythm or cyclical method, is frowned upon as equal to temporary abstinence. Whereas the Christian Sunday is a day of contemplation and sexual abstention, the Jewish Sabbath is a day of rest and enjoyment, sex not just included, but expressly recommended. Religious Jews are therefore not as biased in sexual matters as Christians are. What would sound obscene from the mouth of a teacher of the Church or a Christian mystic, sounds perfectly innocent from the mouth of the Balshem and offensive only to prudish ears. This explains, by the way, the inclusion of the erotic Song of Songs among the Holy Scriptures (although interpreted symbolically as the love of God for his chosen people and the two "fawn-like breasts of Shulamite" allegorized as the lawgiver Moses and his brother Aaron)—the Song is usually recited on Friday evenings, announcing the customary night of copulation.

The Talmud provides the second source of the Jewish attitude, the mystical one. The Shekhina or divine presence, a synonym for God, is present when man and woman join in love and she rejoices over it. The Shekhina (perhaps because the word is of the feminine gender) appears in the Cabbala as the female counterpart of God, the incarnate form of divine splendor; and the relation of Moses to God, as the sexual intercourse of Moses with the Shekhina.

Thus the Balshem regarded the prayer as the pairing of man with the Shekhina, and "just as the joining of man and woman begins with a vigorous movement back and forth, one should begin one's prayers moving back and forth, but then stand motionless and embrace the Shekhina tenderly." This was for the tsaddik Shneyer Salmen of Ladi the best way to get rid of the "unclean thoughts" arising during prayer or study, and to reduce them to their divine roots ("sublimation of the libido," Freud might have said). The tsaddik Levi Isaac of Berdichev dared to compare Israel to a woman receiving from God's overflow, always longing for her lover and trying to seduce him. Divine love turns into "divine concupiscence" and the tsaddik becomes the "hose" through which God's blessing flows down from heaven to earth. The closest pupil of the Balshem, Jacob Joseph of Polnoy, demanded of his disciples to let the "sinful thoughts" rise to the surface in order to smash them and "uplift the divine spark they imprison." In vulgar Hassidism this led to such advice as "Imagine during the prayer a naked woman and let it come to an ejaculation in order to cleanse yourself and ascend to a higher level." Whatever one may think of this kind of "cleansing oneself," it was a far cry from the practices of the Frankists.

10

*A Puzzle to Jews
and non-Jews*

Frankism has remained a puzzle to Jews and Poles alike. With the exception of Gershom Scholem who at

least credited Frank's followers with a "pure heart," and Salman Rubashov-Shazar, the former president of the State of Israel, who called them "brothers nevertheless," no historian, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, tried to do justice to Frank. If they did not shun him altogether, they heaped deprecation and disdain on him and did not care to collect Frankist documents. The late president of the Zionist World Organization, Nahum Sokolow, discontinued his Hebrew translation of Alexander Kraushaar's work on Frankism upon learning of the author's conversion to Catholicism. The booklet *Frank und die Frankisten* by Heinrich Graetz, the noted Jewish historian, abounds in such terms as liar, impostor, arch-liar, charlatan (*Lügner, Betrüger, Erzlügner, Aufschneider*), and the *Great Polish Encyclopedia* of 1964 begins the article on Frank with the words "notorious charlatan." To the Poles the Frankists were first a repentant flock returning to the fold of Mother Church, then a gang of heretics; to the Jews, an abomination of the foulest kind, a bunch of renegades one could not get rid of fast enough. Both were wrong. The sublime and the abject, the angelic and the diabolic are so intimately intertwined in Frank's character that it is impossible to separate the prophet and visionary from the rogue and charlatan, and to call him the one or the other. Yet, impostor or not, the man had a power-nourished vision of leading his brothers, the Polish Jews, out of their miserable wretchedness. And to this end all means seemed fit to him. He had charisma, impossible to deny, and an almost hypnotic power over his people, who followed him blindly.

The similarity of the Frankists rites to those of the Khlyste and their Living Christs (each village had its own) on the one hand, and to those of the Barbelo-

Gnostics, Carpocratians, and other sects of early Christianity on the other, is striking. Elasar Flekeles, a Prague rabbi, accused the Frankists in 1799 of "all sorts of evil, godless and infamous deeds unheard of even among the wildest barbarians. These people are worse than all the villains and criminals who ever lived since the beginning of the world. . . . They have a secret according to which it is good to masturbate and smear the body with the outflow. . . . They consider it pious and highly commendable to sleep with your neighbor's wife, in the presence of ten men-folk [probably a religious performance because ten is the minimum number of adult men required for the Jewish community prayers, the so-called *minyan*], and in addition recommend other abominations and horrors such as fornication with male persons and even with animals. They worship idols, practice witchcraft, live in debauchery and whoredom. . . ." These could be literal quotations from the *Panarion* of St. Epiphanius or other anti-Gnostic writings of the Church Fathers.

All these various sects had one thing in common: the female element, which was missing in both the strict monotheism of the Jews and the Christian Trinity and which re-emerged during the Middle Ages with the Cabbala and the cult of Mary. Jacob Frank found the concept of the mystic trinity in the Cabbala and the Doenme teachings and shaped it into the union of the Holy Primeval One (*Attika Kadisha*, the cause of all causes), the Holy King (*Malka Kadisha*, the Messiah or *Santo Señor* himself) and the Great Mother (*Matronita Elyona*, Frank's wife, and after her death his daughter Eve). The female counterpart of the Messiah already existed for Sabbatai Zevi in the person of the Polish-Jewish girl Sara, a fugitive from the slaughter of

the Jews by the Cossaks, who had landed in a Leghorn bordello. There Sabbatai Zevi appeared to her in a dream to make her his bride and eventually wife, exactly as Simon Magus, the grandfather of all heretics, who also found his heavenly bride Helena in a brothel. Frank reserved the part of the female Messiah for his daughter who, after his death, stepped to the head of the sect.

And as late as 1823 a Saint-Simonist delegation made the rounds of the Jewish communities of Turkey in search of the female Messiah and virgin-mother to take her to Paris where, together with the male Messiah, Père Enfantin, she was to bring salvation to mankind.

Saint-Simonism has other affinities with Frankism, e.g. the messianic concept of the abolition of sin and the anti-Paulinist "rehabilitation of the flesh" (*réhabilitation de la chair*.) Perhaps this was due to the influence of some Saint-Simonists of Frankist descent. The most prominent among them was Jean Czynski who had fled to Paris after the Polish insurrection of 1830 and tied the liberation of Poland to that of the Jews.

11

*In the Crossfire of
Church and
Synagogue*

The Frankists did not make any bones about their orgiastic rites and soon became a public outrage. In the summer of 1756 they were excommunicated by the Synod of the Jewish Communities: all contact with them was forbidden, their women were branded as harlots,

their children as bastards, and, in many cases, were forcibly removed from them. At the same time the study of the Cabbala was made anathema to anyone under the age of thirty, that of the *Zohar* to anyone under forty. Referring to the decree forbidding the establishment of sects, the Synod demanded the Catholic Church declare the Frankists heretics, which would have condemned them to be burned at the stake. The rabbis were so sure of their case that they sent out invitations to the spectacle. (As can be seen the Jewish clergy was no less fanatic than their Christian peers. A characteristic example is the excommunication of Uriel Acosta by the rabbis of Amsterdam in 1632 which says: "We have induced the Government to confiscate all his books, burn them publicly, and put him into prison; we tried hard to expel him from the town. Since, in this Government, freedom of religion exists and there is no Inquisition, it was not in our hands to bring against him the death penalty, only to exile him. But may his sins ensnare this wretch to die like a dog in his place of exile." These are the words of the very victims of the Spanish Inquisition.)

Chased from house and home, brought to beggary, deprived of their children, the Frankists had sufficient cause to hate the rabbis. There is no doubt that the persecution by the Synagogue actually drove them into the arms of the Church (just as it drove Uriel Acosta to suicide). Even the Balshem is reported to have blamed the rabbis for the subsequent schism. Apprehended at their services in the little town of Kopyczynce, a group of Frankists were dragged through town with ropes around their necks and handed over to the local authorities to be punished for flagrant violation of human decency, Jewish and Christian alike. They turned to the

Church for help, calling themselves anti-Talmudists. (The name Frankist is a much later usage). Bishop Dembowski of Kamenets-Podolsk, a notorious Jew-baiter, ordered them to be released, with a religious confrontation (or disputation) to follow between them and the rabbis. He thereby knowingly overstepped his legal competence because the Polish Jews had been granted religious freedom by the Statute of Kalisz (1264) which expressly exempted them from this kind of confrontation. When, therefore, no Jew showed up for the disputation, the bishop set a new date, commanding the Jews to appear under threat of flogging. This time a Jewish delegation did appear to contest the legality of the proceedings, supporting their claim with the Statute of Kalisz which had been solemnly confirmed by several kings. The bishop rejected this plea, and the disputation began. It lasted for eight days, June 20 to 28, 1757, with Frank himself not taking part. The rabbis were asked to take a stand on the following Frankist theses:

I. We believe in everything God has said in the Old Testament and has told us to believe.

II. The Mosaic, the prophetic, and the other books of the Old Testament are like a richly clothed virgin who hides her face behind a veil so that her beauty cannot be seen; these books, full of divine wisdom and of mysterious things to come, cannot be understood without the help of God.

III. The commentaries to the Old Testament are called Talmud and contain many fairy-tales, lies, and assertions that contradict God and God's teachings.

IV. We believe, according to the Holy Scriptures, that God is one, with no beginning and no end, creator of heaven and earth and of all visible and invisible things.

V. We believe that God consists of three persons who are alike and indivisible.

VI. We believe that God adopted human form and ate, slept, and satisfied all other human needs without defiling himself.

VII. We do not believe that Jerusalem will ever be rebuilt.

VIII. The belief of the Jews that the Messiah will exalt them over and above anybody else and bring them happiness and respect is false.

IX. God himself will appear in human form and redeem the whole world from the sins of all past generations.

The rabbis accepted theses I, II and IV without reserve, thesis III up to the words "and contain," demanding proofs for the second part. They refrained from disputing the remaining theses so as not to expose themselves to an accusation of slander of the Church or blasphemy. Curiously enough, the theses do not mention Jesus Christ and refer only to the Messiah who will be God himself in human form. They come rather close to the Christian articles of faith, although some of them could also be taken from the *Zohar* and appear to represent the Frankist creed except for one point which is prudently withheld: namely, that the Messiah or God in human form is supposed to be Frank himself.

The bishop pronounced judgment: Brazenly disregarding the issues involved, he found the rabbis guilty of having wronged the Frankists and sentenced them to flogging and to the paying of heavy fines and the cost of repairs to the cathedral tower of Kamenets. The Talmud was denounced as blasphemous and ordered to be burned in public. As was customary, the execution of

these orders was left to the lay authorities. Surprisingly enough, but characteristic of Poland at that time, they were satisfied with the burning of the Talmud and simply disregarded the rest of the sentence. During the search for the books many Jewish homes were pillaged, and thousands of Talmud folios were burned in a great auto-da-fé in the cathedral town and elsewhere. While the rabbis proclaimed a day of fasting and mourning and appealed to the Pope for help, the bishop died suddenly in the midst of it all. A sigh of relief went through the Jewish communities. The tables were turned and the rabbis resumed their offensive, assisted by the non-Jewish populace who only yesterday had ransacked Jewish homes, but now saw in the bishop's death an act of God or the work of Jewish sorcery.

Deprived of their protector and made outlaws, the Frankists found themselves caught in the crossfire of Church and Synagogue. They tried to escape to Turkey, but were not admitted, probably because of rabbinical intervention, and were left wandering aimlessly with no shelter, hungry and cold in the no-man's-land at the Turkish-Polish border, with some of them smuggling themselves across. Frank himself, being a Turkish subject, was allowed to pass, and joined his wife who, a year later, gave birth to a boy (who died at the age of three). Fearing an attempt by Turkish Jews on his life, Frank decided to follow the example of Sabbatai Zevi and to become a Moslem, together with a number of his followers. Years later, before the tribunal of the Warsaw Inquisition, he defended this step as having been taken under duress and only for appearance's sake.

The ease with which he could make this change did not disillusion his followers. It strengthened their belief that he was the successor of Sabbatai Zevi. This was

all the easier for them, as the idea of the Messiah's necessary apostasy and death had by now become an essential part of Jewish messianology. (As Rabbi Issakhar of Smyrna had said, the Messiah had to taste everything, even death.) Frank, for his part, now took to introducing his people into his divine mission by some strange ceremonies. For example, he had four of them form a circle with him as the fifth, and stand there for an hour with heads pressed against each other, arms around shoulders and "breathing heavily." Or he would proclaim himself lord and master in the following way: He would fix nine candles to the rim of a barrel, light them with a tenth candle and whisper: "Who is like you? No one is like you!" Then he would blow out the candles, light them again and repeat it once more; pronouncing the same words in a loud voice, everybody would step forward, first singly, then together, forming a "royal line" (*kav hamlikho* in Hebrew) and rendering him homage as "the Lord." The three main books of the Frankist bible accordingly bear the titles *The Book of the Lord's Words* (*Ksiega słów panskich*), *The Book of the Lord's Dreams* (*Ksiega snów panskich*), and *The Lord's Chronicle* (*Kronika panska*). Only the first one has been preserved in the library of the University of Cracow in a handwritten copy, which contains more than two thousand of Frank's sayings. The other two are only known in fragments, from quotations. There also existed a fourth book, *The Prophecies of the Prophet Isaiah, Member of the Holy Sanhedrion, as Revealed by the Great Shaddai, Lord of White Magic*. This pseudo-Isaiah was like the other three books, written symbolically in red and green ink in somewhat clumsy Polish by the three elders who, after Frank's death, became the spiritual leaders of the sect. It contains abstruse proph-

ecies about a coming world war in which the great powers of Europe will perish and the "new Jacob," the man in the form of God (cf. Jesus, God in the form of man) will rise from the dead. He will gather Israel, "this little, despised, miserable, yearning, scarcely breathing people from all corners of the world and lead them to Jerusalem and the country God promised to Abraham. . . . All nations then will turn to the house of Jacob; the proud rulers of the world will be imprisoned and deprived of everything so as to make them taste the fate of the children of Israel. And Jacob will rule forever over his oppressors."

The paucity of Frankist literature is mainly due to destruction. Later generations of Frankists, having risen to the highest levels of Polish society, were ashamed of their dubious, maybe incestuous, origins and destroyed any evidence they could find. An additional factor was the attitude of Jewish historians who did not care to collect Frankist writings for reasons we have mentioned already.

12

Back to Poland

The new adepts of Mohammed obtained a "firman" from the Sultan, which gave them safe conduct for their return to Poland and entitled them to claim damages for the losses they had suffered there. Armed with this document, the group (or "Company" as Frank called them) returned to Poland, hardly two years after the

"Lord's" flight to Turkey. Putting themselves under the protection of the Polish king, they settled in the form of a commune of three camps in eastern Galicia. Frank ordered "all money to be delivered to the treasurer who will husband it and care for the needs of the brothers. Nobody is to regard anything as his own, but everything has to be shared with all others."

With royal permission, the Frankists demanded not only damages for property and goods, but also the return of the wives who had been taken from them. This was done, even if the women had remarried and had to be returned by force. People by the thousands flocked now to the miracle worker who healed the sick and the lame and exorcised evil spirits. For the first time there was also talk of a possible conversion to Catholicism.

While the Company of Frank's followers led a modest life, Frank surrounded himself with oriental splendor, armed bodyguards, and a harem of twelve odalisques. But he thought revenge against the rabbis. In this endeavor an event came to his aid which turned the people's wrath against the Jews: the libel of ritual murder raised its head once again.

This slander was first used by the Romans against the early Christians and by the Fathers of the Church against the Gnostics. During the Middle Ages it was directed against the Jews, leading often to cruel persecutions. Although branded as a vicious falsehood by several popes and Catholic theologians, it has been raised time and again. (The Khlyste were also accused of it). At no time, however, did accusations of this kind multiply as much as in 18th-century Poland. Under the influence of the Jesuits, Poland had changed from a country of religious tolerance to a hell for all non-Catholics. Not only Jews were persecuted, but also Protes-

tants and especially Arians, whose famous cultural center, the academy and printing press of Rakow, was burned to the ground. Yet, nobody had to suffer as much as the Jews. There was practically no town without a ritual murder trial. The Jews appealed to the king, referring to the royal prohibition against accusing them of the use of Christian blood, a decree that had been reaffirmed at the coronation of several kings. They also dispatched a delegation to Rome with a copy of the papal bull of 1247 exonerating them from this accusation and unequivocally declaring them "innocent of such things which contradict their laws." Pope Clemens XIII instructed his Warsaw Nuncio to intercede on behalf of the Jews, but not before a number of them had been put to the rack and quartered alive.

Exploiting the heated mood of the day, Frank demanded resumption of the disputation of Kamenets. The papal Nuncio and the Cardinal-Primate of Poland came out against it, but the disputation was already under way and they were faced with an accomplished fact. Frank had apparently hinted at conversion, and the Canon Mikulski of Lemberg already foresaw mass conversions of Jews. Both Primate and Nuncio had good reasons for their opposition. They did not believe the sincerity of Frank's possible conversion and reported to the Curia in Rome that they suspected him to be a dangerous sectarian who wanted to use the conversion as a cover-up for a new sect which practiced polygamy and other "abominations." Besides, conversion would protect him against the rabbis and improve the living conditions of his followers. However, their objection to a renewal of the disputation was of no avail.

Zionism without Zion

As a matter of fact, nothing was further from Frank's mind than conversion. What he really wanted was to fulfill his mission, with himself as the resurrected "Lord" and twelve of his closest associates as his apostles or ministers of state. He petitioned the king to assign to him a territory in eastern Galicia where he could settle with his followers in a vassal state with himself at the head. The Jews of the whole world would flock then to Poland and enrich her. In other words, a Zionism without Zion, as it was advocated under the name of Territorialism in the first few decades of the present century, leading to various projects of settling the Jews of eastern Europe in Uganda, Biro-Bidjan and other places. The plan found favor with both king and magnates, but floundered on strategic considerations, that is, the risk of settling a group with close relations to Turkey on the Turkish border.

In the meantime, the Canon of Lemberg had become impatient. Frank had promised the baptism of his approximately 30,000 followers, but was delaying it with one excuse after another. First he pretended he had to prepare them for this important step and would need several months for it. Then he listed a set of conditions, under which the Frankists would be allowed to continue wearing beards and earlocks, to dress the Jewish way, to keep their Jewish name along with the Christian one,

Zionism without Zion

to marry only among themselves, to keep both Saturday and Sunday as days of rest, to study the holy books of the Cabbala, especially the *Zohar*, and not to eat pork.

Similar conditions were set some 300 years earlier by those Spanish Jews who agreed to be baptized. They implored the Inquisition not to force them to eat pork, at least. This, of course, was rejected, and any pseudo-Christian was now easily recognizable by his instinctive aversion to pork. Strangely enough, the descendants of these forced converts still living on the island of Majorca are contemptuously called by the common people "*chuetas*," bacon eaters.

Frank was in no hurry to be baptized but waited for the right moment to establish a Doenme-like sect (which had similar features: two names, two days of rest, etc.). Even his request that the disputation be resumed was a delaying maneuver because he still hoped to get permission for his settlement project.

But why the hurry of the clergy?

The biggest ritual murder trial of that time was the one in Zhitomir, in the wake of which 11 Jews were cruelly executed. The Jewish delegation which had gone to Rome prevailed upon the Vatican to have a new trial. The new inquiry established as the instigator of the plot Bishop Soltyk of Zhitomir who, leading a dissolute life, had confiscated the fortunes of the imprisoned Jews to pay his gambling debts. A new disputation, he thought, would not only help him escape papal censure, but possibly bring him praise if some Jews, the Frankists, would admit the blood libel. Upon his insistence the disputation was resumed posthaste. (This is the one in which the Balshem is supposed to have participated.) It was not a mere repetition of the Kamenets disputation, but a well staged show on a big scale. The

Lemberg cathedral was surrounded by a huge array of soldiers and the public, mainly nobles and patricians, were admitted for a high fee. The rabbis were made to enter the church under threat of heavy fines, and all holy pictures and statues were veiled from sight, in order to protect them from the rabbis' "evil looks." Again, rabbis and Frankists faced each other, but this time it was an open confrontation between Church and Synagogue, with Canon Mikulski as mediator, accuser, and judge all in one, and the Frankists just a tool in his hands. The rabbis were given a "Manifesto" of seven theses, each to be answered within several days. The first six of them were more or less identical with the theses of the first disputation and, likewise, do not mention Jesus Christ, but only the Messiah or the true Messiah. Thesis VII accuses the Jews of ritual murder.

Although the Frankists had good reason to take revenge on the rabbis, thesis VII apparently was not of their doing. (This is also the assumption of the Jewish historians Mayer Balaban and Gershom Scholem, the latter emphasizing that in no Frankist writing is there any hint of ritual murder, let alone a possible belief in the truth of that accusation.) The original version of thesis VII was in all probability the same as that of thesis III of the Kamenets disputation, which merely declared the Talmud blasphemous, while here the Talmud is accused of commanding the use of Christian blood. This is a charge against Judaism that has nothing to do with Christian faith and goes beyond the scope of the Manifesto which deals with Christian dogmas. Everything points to bishop Soltyk's having altered the text at the very last moment. In any case, the Frankists were not consulted and the disputation was hastily called to order.

The spectacle dragged on for almost two months.

The public began to show signs of boredom and the ladies, it is reported, yawned shamelessly. Mikulski was desperate. The Nuncio had urged him to stop the sorry show, so he simply skipped points V and VI to get at the main issue: Thesis VII and the blood libel. He had saved his trump for the very last, but lo and behold, the Jews out-trumped him. Exactly as in the great disputation of Barcelona in 1263, the scales weighed in favor of them. (To be sure, this earned the Spanish Jews the accusation of blasphemy. No matter how you cut it, the Jew cannot win.) The climax of the disputation was the plea of Haim Rappaport, the chief-rabbi of Lemberg, concluding with these words:

It is against the laws of nature and of human reason that we, the sons of Abraham, would use human blood. The Holy Scriptures state: He who spills human blood, his blood shall be spilled, for man is made in God's image. Popes, emperors and kings as well as your own experts have given us their unequivocal testimony, to wit that we behave according to the Holy Scriptures and God's commandments. Highly venerable Lord Canonikus, please bear in mind that the accusations against us are based on erroneous translations. We appeal to your conscience and put ourselves under the protection of your grace in the deep conviction that God Almighty who gave the Holy Scriptures to all of us, has chosen you because of your wisdom to acknowledge our innocence and free us mercifully from this accusation.

Abounding as it was with quotations from the Fathers of the Church and Christian theologians, this speech was by no means the work of the rabbi, who did not know a word of Latin or Polish and certainly had never heard of Origen, Epiphanius, Jerome or Hugo Grotius, Roberto

Bellarmini, and Gregory Leti, all mentioned in the rebuttal. It was composed in German by Dr. Abraham Usiel, a Jewish physician in Brody, and hurriedly translated into Polish by a German bookseller aided by the speaker of the rabbis, Baer Bolekhover, who read it in the last session of the disputation, with the white-haired rabbi at his side.

The speech did not fail to make a deep impression. The Nuncio reported to Rome of the excellent defense of the Jews. Frank had watched the proceedings from a place nearby and hurried now to the aid of his cause. He did it by showing himself to the public, driving daily through town in a coach-and-six, escorted by twelve horsemen with drawn sabres, followed by another coach with his wife in the dress of a harem-lady, and an array of carriages with his entourage. The clergy angrily forbade the display, and the disputation came to an inconclusive end. The records were all sent for scrutiny to Rome where they gather dust up to this day. (Bishop Soltyk died in a state of madness.)

Now, however, Mikulski insisted on his part of the deal. He had provided three months room and board for the Frankists at a cost of 7,500 florins. So he wanted to get it over as fast as possible and have them baptized. But Frank kept dallying and coming up with new demands: The ceremony should not take place in Lemberg, but the whole Company should travel at Church expense to Warsaw and be baptized there in the presence of the king and the royal court. Besides, he claimed to need more instruction in the New Testament, since he knew only the Lord's Prayer and a part of the Gospel according to St. Luke, and that in Hebrew. However, he realized that he was cornered this time and knew that he would encounter the stubborn

resistance of his own people. They could stand his conversion to Islam, remembering Sabbatai Zevi, but Christian baptism—that they could not stomach. So he tried to make it palatable to them by flavoring it with all kinds of ingredients. Baptism was a necessary evil, the lowest point of the descent into the abyss after which the ascent would start. The shell was to be changed, not the core; the jug, not the wine. Like Sabbatai Zevi before them, they would have to adopt, if in appearance only, a loathsome creed in order to continue their work unmolested by anyone. Baptism would be the beginning of the end of Church and society, and they, the Frankists, were chosen to accomplish the destruction from inside “like soldiers storming a city through the sewers.” Absolute secrecy and strictest discipline were now required, together with a meticulous conformism to the commands and practices of the Church so as not to arouse suspicion. While paying lip service to the Catholic Church, they should never lose sight of their true goal or forget that they belong together. In his petition to Empress Maria Theresa, Galinski, a defector from Frank and former rabbi who sued him in 1776 for return of money he had given him, quoted Frank as saying:

Our Lord and King Sabbatai Zevi had to pass through the faith of the Ismaelites. . . but I, Jacob, the most perfect one, have to pass through the Nazarene faith because Jesus of Nazareth was the skin or rind of the fruit and his coming only permitted in order to open a path for the true Messiah. We have, therefore, to accept *pro forma* this Nazarene religion and observe it meticulously so as to appear as better Christians than the Christians themselves. . . Still, we must not marry any of them nor enjoy any of their whores. . . and in no way mix with other nations. And although we profess Chris-

tianity and attend dutifully to all their commandments, we must never forget in our hearts the three heads of our faith, the Lord-Kings Sabbatai Zevi, Berakhya [his successor, died 1720] and Jacob Frank, the most perfect of them all.

It is amazing what heights of persuasion and vigor, even beauty of expression, Frank reached. Running the full gamut of emotions from black despair to rosy vistas of future wealth and happiness, he bewailed the faint-heartedness of his people who were unable to follow the eagle-flight of his thoughts:

You do not understand me, and my words bounce off you like marbles off the wall. My cat here knows more than all of you together. Something divine grows in me like a pearl, and I have nobody to show it.

People say my way is crooked, and even I have often asked myself whether it could not be simpler. But when I consider the goal, how plain and clear it is, I keep going step by step, no matter how.

At other times, he promised them pie in the sky and flattered their vanity. The world will stand on its head, the lowest will be at top, the highest at the bottom. The great Polish lords will have to earn their living as poor cobblers and tailors "with little red goatees," while the Frankists will have princely titles, wear swords, and parade through town in ornate clothing. "*Ad kan!*" he exclaimed, swinging himself into the saddle of his horse, "*Baderekh hamelekh nelekh!*" (Hebrew for Up to here! Let us travel the king's road!) He told them exciting parables of his superhuman powers and their divine mission with cryptic hints about a forthcoming war which would topple state and church and in which the Jews would take up arms to save the world:

Far away, out in the ocean, there is an island and a big ship anchored nearby with many arms and cannon. The island is inhabited by God-fearing Cabalists who once a month row out to the ship and ask whether the time has come yet. One day a stranger will appear and knock on the hull of the ship to signal the beginning of the big war.

All wars, all bloodshed, even the atrocities of a Chmielnitsky, have not changed a thing on earth. But when the big war comes, God will show himself and bring something new to the world.

When the dogs fight and somebody tries to separate them with a stick, they do not care and keep on biting each other. So we will take what is ours while the world drowns in blood. For it pays to fish in troubled waters. . . If you will harken then to me and obey my orders, you will get rich like your fathers and forefathers never dreamed of. Then you will count my steps and search for my footprints in order to kiss them.

This kind of talk rose to the heads of the simple folk from the Polish ghettos. They saw themselves already as shining knights with fiery swords, saviors of mankind. Yet, baptism had to come first. True, it was only the gate, and Christianity a way station to what Frank called his *dass* (Hebrew for religion). But only he who passed through the gate and entered the station could become a true believer, according to Frank: "If you knew what my *dass* is all about, you would come running to me."

Here follow some more of his sayings from the time preceding baptism:

When one drills a well, one hits the dirty, muddy water first; then only the clean and sweet water comes up.

I have told you of things which sounded empty to

you. But when one cracks walnuts, the outer shell is, as everyone knows, green and bitter and blackens the hands, while the meat is sweet (a favored Hassidic saying as was also the preceding one about drilling wells).

There is an invisible tree with three branches, one of lead, one of copper, one of gold. Everybody clings to one of them. One day the tree will become visible and then it will be seen who holds on to the golden branch.

I will shed my clothes and put on new ones. First the world will prick up its ears, but then—ho-ho! (The unnamed disciple who recorded these words adds: Here the Lord raised his holy finger.)

It is one thing to serve God, another to serve me. For I walk ahead of God. (This too is a favored Hassidic image: The tsaddik stands higher than the angels; they rest in God, he walks ahead of him.)

No man has ever seen God or known his name and dwelling place. But I will show you God, for mine is the power and the glory. And when you will see God, you will bow your head and say nothing but "God, my God!"

14

The Big Step

Thus, at long last, the day of reckoning arrived. But in spite of Frank's untiring efforts and to his great disappointment, only a small fraction of his followers, hardly 1 in 10, showed up for the conversion ceremony. Frank never forgave them this betrayal and accused them of treason for the rest of his life. Of course, he

The Big Step

could not foresee that most of their children and grandchildren would follow his way, although for other reasons. Still, some 1,200 Frankists, men, women and children, stepped up to the baptismal font of the Lemberg Cathedral in the summer of 1759, hesitatingly and only in Frank's presence. (According to the Nuncio he was standing by and nodding them on.) About as many did it in other places. Some sources put the total at 20,000. Following an old Polish custom, they were raised to the noble rank of *Generosus* or *Nobilis* (which earned the royal chest 500 florins a piece) and received swords and coats of arms, with members of the high nobility and clergy serving as godparents.

The world has never seen anything like it. It was not altogether unusual to raise converts to the rank of nobility, especially when they had rendered good service to their masters, as had the many Jewish bankers and court physicians, with popes and kings their godfathers. Thus in 1492, the year the Jews were driven out of Spain, Queen Isabella and Cardinal Mendoza assisted as godparents at the baptism of the royal treasurer Abraham Senior, the head of the Jewish community in Spain. Somewhat later in Italy the Jewish musician and composer Juan of Florence was baptized and received from his godfather, Giovanni de Medici, later Pope Leo X, the name Juan de Medici and the castle Verrocchio with it. The Augsburg *Chronica of New Things* for the year 1515 tells the following about it: "There was Pope Leo X at Rome who had the best lutanist that there was at the time in the world. He was a German Jew and the Pope dubbed him a knight." In 1583, Pope Gregor XIII baptized his physician Jekhiel of Pesaro, who was given the name of Vitale Medici by his godfather Cardinal Ferdinando de Medici; the Cardinal of

Bologna and the Archduke of Ferrara were among the godparents of his seven children. In 1599, Pope Pius V baptized the head of the Jewish community of Rome, and in 1704, Pope Clemens XI a wealthy Leghorn Jew with his wife and daughter. These individual cases were celebrated with much pomp and circumstance, but could not match the described mass baptism of the Polish Frankists.

Frank himself was baptized on November 18, 1759, in Warsaw with King August III as his godfather. (The officiating bishop lost his miter at this occasion; it fell off his head, and the Frankists saw it as an act of God.) Frank's certificate of baptism is signed in Hebrew: Jacob Joseph Frank. The other converts received new names, usually according to the day or month of their baptism (their descendants can still be recognized by them), e.g. Niedzielski and Niedzialkowski (from the Polish *niedziela* for Sunday) or Lutoslawski (from *luty*, February), Kwiecinski (from *kwiecień*, April), Majewski, Junicz and the like; others after their birthplace, like Niemirowski; still others in an altered or translated form of their previous name, like the two adjutants of Frank, Leib Krysa, baptized Dominic Anthony Krysinski, and Shlomo Schorr, baptized Luke Francis Wolowski (*shor*, Hebrew for ox, Polish *wol*), both of them founders of two prominent Polish families.

However, when Mayer Balaban, like Heinrich Graetz before him, concluded his *History of the Frankist Movement* with the words "Thus the sorry affair was closed as far as the Jews were concerned," he was mistaken indeed.

* * *

The big step had been taken. Frank immediately

petitioned the king once more for assignment of a territory, an idea he never was to give up, and started organizing his sect. Of course, he could not do it openly and therefore demanded strict obedience and deepest silence from his people:

Do not talk, do not ask questions, do not look left or right, but follow me through thick and thin, through fire and water, step by step, without fear or doubt, until we reach our goal.

Better let your eyes move than your lips. Keep your thoughts to yourself!

Shut your mouth and when they ask you, say I know not. Put a lock on your lips!

You have been given into my hand and I can do with you as I wish. If I wish to have you with me, you will come, even from the farthest corners of the world, whether you like it or not. For all power is with me, and you are to me like clay in the hand of the potter.

The "burden of silence" is a Cabbalistic concept and was also common among the Khlyste. They had to take an oath to keep their faith to themselves and not to divulge it to anyone, not even at confession or under torture, "even when they take to burning you alive or cutting you to pieces." The believer's strength shows itself not in revealing, but in concealing. Their Christs also demanded absolute obedience and selfdenial:

If you want to follow me, you have to deny yourself, and this means: forget all earthly things, reason, memory, knowledge, conscience, property and all virtuous exercises, practices and rules.

Walk behind me and wherever I send you or whatever I order you to do, do it without reflection. Whatever I demand of your property, give it without hesitation and do not dare to have a will of your own.

And this sounds like the call of the "Brethren of the Free Spirit": "Give, give, give your home, your horse, your goods and chattels, do not consider anything your own, but belonging to everybody"—a call that has not been silenced from the days of the Jewish sects of the Essenes and Nazarens.

Strange similarities surface here between Frank and the tsaddik Nahman of Bratslav and make them almost appear to be kindred souls. *Les extrêmes se touchent*. Many remarks of the tsaddik could be attributed to Frank, and he was actually accused of being a Frankist. He, too, demanded absolute obedience from his followers. They had to deliver themselves into his hand for better or worse, without looking left or right, leave aside any doubts and rely on the wisdom of the tsaddik rather than their own. He ordered them to appear "like one man" three times a year before him, for just to look at him pleased God. He imposed upon them regular taxes and made long journeys to collect them. It was their holy duty to buy his writings "even if they had to pawn their last shirt." Just to own the books without reading them was a blessing from God and a protection against loss of property and other misfortune. He called himself the only true tsaddik, the others were "Jewish devils" (*shedim yehudim* in Hebrew; Frank called the tsaddiks by the same name and the early Hassidim used it to refer to the rabbis.) He was the beginning of salvation, the harbinger of the Messiah:

I do not know what will become of me. But this much I know, because I had God promise it to me: One of my descendants will be the Messiah (cf. Frank, the father of the female Messiah.)

I am a nothing (cf. Frank, the "prostak"), but mankind needs me, for I have come to bring them

something new and wonderful. . . and if I were to reveal myself completely, the whole world would follow me.

If you knew why I travel from place to place, you would kiss every inch of my footprints, for every single step of mine is one step closer to salvation.

I am like the seed that has to putrefy in the soil in order to blossom and become a shadow-giving tree (a favored Hassidic parable, appearing also in the mythology of many people in this form or that of the sacrificed and risen God. Frank, too, compared himself to the grain of seeds which "looks mortal, but carries life within. The wheat can only grow after it has been rotting under ground.")

The tales and parables of Nahman of Bratslav also are like those of Frank, full of mighty kings, bewitched princes, kidnapped princesses, pirates, highwaymen and miraculous heroes. And Frank's dream of an eternal Sabbath "when everybody will wear white clothes" comes to life in J. L. Perez' drama *The Golden Chain* and the desperate outcry of the tsaddik: "Let there always be Sabbath!"

Frank organized his following into a clandestine, highly disciplined, military "encampment," with various ranks for men and women alike, battle training and regular maneuvers. He told them they would have to take up arms before long and ordered his "apostles" to spread the word:

Go to the Jews and tell them: Be ready, a war is coming. Train yourselves in warfare, also the women and the girls and all children over six. As it has been said: *Wejissroel osso hayil*—and Israel formed an army. Then nobody will perish.

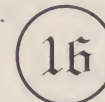
He saw himself already at the head of an army of ten million Jews and one million gentiles, the officers acknowledging no religion, all dressed in red, the color of revenge. Years later, Frank's "uhlands, hussars and cossaks" actually wore predominantly red uniforms.

This mentality and education made many Frankists choose a military career and often rise to high ranks. Joseph Jakubowski and Ignace Majewski were generals in the Polish revolutionary army of 1794, so was Jacob Jasinski, a gifted poet and writer, who advocated a typical Frankist libertinism and wrote biting pamphlets against clergy and nobility. Designated dictator of Poland by the Polish Jacobins, he was killed during the Russian siege of Warsaw in 1794. (Also participating in the uprising was a Jewish, non-Frankist brigade under the command of Colonel Berek Josselwicz.)

Several Frankists distinguished themselves in the service of Napoleon Bonaparte: Jacob Lewinski, chief-of-staff of the Polish cavalry; Alexander Matuszewicz, general of artillery; General Jan Dembowski, later governor of Ferrara; and General Joseph Szymanowski. In the insurrection of 1830, General Jan Krynski, son of Leib Krysa, the above mentioned adjutant of Frank, held out against the Russians longer than any other Polish commander; his brother Xavier was auditor-general of the Polish forces. Numerous Frankists fought also in the revolution of 1863, among them General Anthony Jezioranski; his cousin Jan belonged to the revolutionary government whose members were all

hanged by the Russians. Adalbert (Wojciech) Jakubowski, aide-de-camp of Louis XV, was a Frankist, as was Count Maurice Hauke (probably, in any case a baptized Jew), who took part in the revolt of 1793, was chief-of-staff of the Polish legion which fought under Napoleon, and later, by appointment of Tsar Alexander I, minister of war in the short-lived Principality of Poland; he was killed by the Polish insurgents in 1830. His grandson married a daughter of Queen Victoria and became the founder of the English line of the house Battenberg-Mountbatten. The Doenme also developed some military talents; general Kemal Atatürk, father of modern Turkey, was one of them.

The army seems to have a peculiar attraction for Jews in general. When they are allowed to become officers or when they are on their own, like in present-day Israel, they display extraordinary military gifts. Many Jews were members of the general staffs of various nations during the past two centuries.



*Before the Tribunal
of the Inquisition*

But back to Frank. The new splendor did not last long. His activities did not remain unnoticed, and three months after his baptism he found himself standing as a defendant before the tribunal of the Warsaw Inquisition. Some Frankists had bragged about his being the resurrected Christ, and that was enough to have him

accused of heresy. Frank defended himself well and caused the Inquisitor frequent embarrassment. When asked about his conversion from Islam to Christianity, he said: "Had I held the Mahometan religion to be true, I would not have accepted Christianity."

Addressing Frank in the third person, as was the custom with the Inquisition, the Inquisitor asked:

"Why did he give apostolic names to twelve of his followers?"

"First of all, they were fourteen, not twelve, but two died, so there were only twelve. Second, it was not I who gave them the names, but they themselves; and third, they were not apostolic names, because one was Francis."

"Why did he stop preaching the holy word of the Church to his people after he was baptized?"

"This was necessary before baptism, now it is up to the priests."

"Was he aware that his people believed him to be the Messiah and what does he think himself to be? Why did he allow them to bow before him and to sing pious hymns, while he was chewing tobacco and sipping coffee?"

"It is not known to me that they believed me to be the Messiah. Had I known, I would have stopped it. As for me, nothing could be further from my mind. I do not recall them bowing to me and singing pious songs, while I was chewing tobacco and sipping coffee."

"Why did he let them wait on him from head to toe, even when he was relieving himself? Why did he let them prostrate themselves to receive his blessing?"

"It may well have been that some brother helped me into my caftan and I let it happen because it was out of love. It is not true that they helped me when I

was relieving myself. True it is, however, that they once asked me to bless them, which I did without pretending to be more than an ordinary human being."

"Why did he lie down on his bed with outstretched arms? Did he mean to imply by this that he was the crucified Savior?"

"If I did it in my sleep, I knew nothing of it. I would have been crazy to do it awake."

Other questions drew from him evasive answers such as: "I am a little weak in my head."

The tribunal was at a loss. As a last resort, it sent a copy of the interrogation to Rome. In the meantime, Frank was confined to the fortified monastery of Czenstokhova. He was taken there in his own coach under heavy military guard and given permission to bring along his cook. Rome had other worries; the papacy was at a low ebb in its power, and the case of Frank fell into oblivion. His honorary detention dragged on for thirteen years.

Once again his power over people asserted itself. The bleak fortress turned residence. The garrison passed daily in review before him, presenting arms. His wife and daughter with a number of his followers were allowed to join him and like Sabbatai Zevi he held court in prison. Czenstokhova, the national shrine of Poland where every year thousands of pilgrims gather to adore the picture of the black madonna, Poland's patron saint, became also a center of pilgrimage for the Frankists. Baptized or not, they flocked to their master, carrying lavish gifts, just like the Hassidim to their tsadik. Many moved there to be near him, and the town became an important Frankist center next to eastern Galicia and Warsaw. Frank's wife bore him here three sons, Jacob, Rochus and Joseph. She died in 1770, one

year after her son Jacob. Both were buried in a cave near Czenstokhova.

Frank sent emissaries to the Jewish communities of eastern and central Europe to win them over for his sect, foretelling them, in 1767 and 1768, a dark future, unless they joined him:

There is coming a time when you will be hated by rulers and kings, also by King Frederick (of Prussia), all lords and princes, they all, all will hate you, and whosoever will meet a Jew, will spit at him. . . Plagues such as the world has never seen will be visited upon you, in all parts of Poland, in Lithuania, Russia, Hungary, Walachia, Moldavia, Tartary, in all the provinces of Ismael (Turkey), in France, Germany, Prussia, in short everywhere there are Jews. Woe, woe onto you, your wives and your children! For there will be many dead and nobody to bury them and the dogs will drag their bones through the fields. If I wanted to describe everything that awaits you, the paper would not suffice. . . You could, however, escape this if the law of Moses is fulfilled and you enter the holy religion of Edom (Christianity). Whoever is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will, therefore, have no other choice but to do just that.

Frank foretold also the imminent partition of Poland which would (and actually did) bring him his freedom. Betting on Russian might, he sent a delegation to Moscow to sound out the Holy Synod about a possible conversion of the Frankists to the Russian-orthodox religion. When the delegation returned empty-handed, Frank exploded in furious exasperation: "The day of revenge is near, hidden in my heart. Remove everything and make room for what is coming. Revenge for the agony, revenge for all the spilled blood!" With the same words

("The day of revenge is near, hidden in my heart," actually a saying of Isaiah) Sabbatai Zevi comforted a delegation of Polish Jews for the atrocities suffered by the hordes of Chmielnitsky.



The Female Messiah

Assuming more and more liberties, Frank stopped going to mass and confession, allegedly because of a plot to poison him at communion, but actually because of failing health. According to the *Chronicle of the Lord* he started taking "various salts." In order not to alarm his people, he discovered his messianic immortality, but started simultaneously to prepare the ground for his successor, his daughter Eve-Avatcha, immortal as he. So Eve Frank became a sort of counterpart to the black madonna of Czenstokhova, and next to the cult of Mary a cult of Eve established itself there, with Frank himself submitting to it:

For she is the true Messiah! She will save the world! Where is it required of the Messiah to be a man or Jewish? The exodus from Egypt was imperfect because the leader was a man. Did not the prophet already say: *Ki hu sera haba mimokom akher*—for he is the seed that comes from somewhere else?

For she is life eternal, and he who is found worthy of seeing her will not suffer sin, disease, or death. In order to deserve this, one has to be clean-hearted, to deny all teachings, laws, religions, and

customs, and stand one step higher than the others. I will lead you to her, provided you do all I say until she lets me bring you before her face. . . If you are called up, do the following: Take a bath, cut the nails of your fingers and toes, and dress all in white. Step up to her with a glad heart, for she is the queen of the world, and nothing can happen without her will. Keep your eyes closed, fall on your face and kiss the floor. She will ask you what you want, and you answer: "I have served God until now, but from now on be you my guide!" You will approach her, kiss her feet, and stand up; putting one hand on your heart, you will look at her, but with one eye only! She will call you brother and allow you to kiss her hands. Then she will stroke your eyes and cheeks and open all gates to you. "You have been blind," she will say, "but now open your eyes and see!" And you will see what your fathers and forefathers never were given to see. But she will rejoice with you and lead you away all naked. . . The earth will then be saved from all curses and turn pure gold. There will be no more cold or heat, but only mild weather; the roses will bloom daily and this will last for a hundred and ten years. There will be eternal day and no night, for the night is the curse of the world.

For the time being, however, he withdrew the apple of his eye from public sight, and Eva-Avatcha-Avat-chunia spent her days behind fortress walls in the company of fourteen playmates under the care of her father. Only once in all those years did he make an exception when some young noblemen, having heard of her beauty, asked permission to see her. He gave in to their flattery, whereupon the young gents tried to abduct the girl, but were foiled by the guards.

In the years of his confinement, Frank's theology changed. Next to the trinity there was now a foursome of

gods: the god of life, the god of wealth, the god of death, and the god of gods or big brother above them. The supreme commandment was the love of all men, even the worst. Frank warned his followers against the church:

Beware of the cross, it points here and there, and you might lose your way, like on a crossroad.

I saw in a dream the Christ, surrounded by his priests, sitting next to a brook of fresh, clear water. But the brook moved away from him and came over to me.

The soul has human form and is hidden in a secret place. Nobody has ever possessed or seen it, not even the patriarchs nor the kings of Israel. Man feels he is missing something and does not know what. We, however, will be full men and have a soul.

The world is finite and God cannot enter it. All existing things have to turn into dust and ashes first.

The keynote of Frank's religion, however, continued to be lascivious sensualism. The orgiastic rituals continued to be performed, and some new practices were added. Thus, one day, Frank ordered two of his men "to unite with sister Henrietta." Another time, meeting a widow during his morning walk on the ramparts of the fortress, he told her: "Widow, widow, tonight you will be comforted"—by four of the brethren, as it turned out. One day the monks of the monastery came storming into Frank's quarters, demanding "with loud cries" that boys and girls should be forbidden to spend the night there together.

On March 12, 1771, sister Marianna came from Warsaw "and the Lord [Frank] sucked at her breast six

times, whereupon she left," as laconically reported by the *Chronicle of the Lord*. The same happened to other women. As this took place "in front of everybody," it is hard to tell whether it was a ritual ceremony or a popular remedy. Probably both. A Polish legend tells of a knight who was imprisoned with his daughter who kept him alive with her breast milk. Similar tales are known among other people.

This motif appears in world literature from Pliny the Elder to Dante, Boccaccio, Byron, Maupassant, and beyond and can also be found in painting and sculpture. It entered Christian mythology as *Maria Lactans* or *Virgo Lactifera*, the Holy Virgin nourishing a dying man with the milk of her breast (whose miraculous powers, incidentally, may also be imbibed with a brand of Rhine wine called *Liebfrauenmilch*, Holy Virgin milk).

In the meantime, the military situation of Poland deteriorated, and one day the Russians appeared at the gates of Czenstokhova. The fortress had received reinforcements and resisted the assault. Yet, some people fled the beleaguered town, many Frankists among them. Frank felt deserted and through a messenger, who managed to smuggle himself out of the fortress and reach Warsaw, he sentenced them to a mutual flogging. So strong was his power over them that they submitted to his order without resistance or exception, men and women alike.

At long last, the fortress capitulated. Presenting himself to the Russian commander as a prisoner of the Poles, Frank was set free. The news of his liberation reached Warsaw ahead of him. He was greeted there jubilantly and immediately resumed his old activities. Deepest secrecy was required now in order not to spoil everything again:

When you meet me in town, keep walking as if you do not know or see me. Not a word about our plans to your wives or children, let alone to strangers.

Be careful and hide our aim behind pretty words and meaningless phrases. Be cunning and sly like the snakes so that we may get everything we are after.

When you see me doing childish things, foolish tricks, or other follies, do not turn away from me, but hold on and stay firm and strong, because everything happens out of love for you, for your benefit and happiness.

He received letters from abroad with invitations by the followers of Sabbatai Zevi to join them. His own messengers were held up at the border and sent back. With Poland partitioned and the occupying powers introducing harsh measures of surveillance and oppression, he finally decided, although with a heavy heart, to leave Poland and move to Bruenn, the capital of the Austrian province of Moravia, which, for the next thirteen years, was to become the center of Frankism.

18

Why Bruenn?

With this move to Austria a new chapter begins in the history of Frankism. Frank had chosen Moravia because of the many followers of Sabbatai Zevi who lived there. They were headed by the notorious Loebel Prossnitzer who used to smear the four letters of the divine name JHVH in a phosphorous substance on his chest and let them light up in the dark before the baffled eyes of his

THE MILITANT MESSIAH

congregation. He had been in touch with Frank and arranged for two of his emissaries to preach in the Prossnitz synagogue, which led to a riot in the local ghetto. Frank picked Bruenn for his residence because it was the home of his cousin Sheindel Hirschel. Her father, a brother of Frank's mother, had moved from Rzeszow in western Galicia to Breslau and on to Prossnitz. Born in Breslau and known for her beauty, Sheindel was married to the wealthy tobacco merchant Salomon Dobrushka and was the mother of six boys and six girls. An excellent businesswoman in her own right, she took over her husband's business after his death and in addition managed to become the sole tenant of the Austrian potash monopoly and collector of the head-tax paid by traveling Jews. She was a great admirer of Frank and supported him with substantial amounts of money. (In the writings of the rabid anti-Frankist Jacob Emden she is called "that big whore from Bruenn.") In her house any Frankist was welcome. Jonas Wolf Eibenschuetz, the son of the Hamburg rabbi mentioned earlier in this book, found a refuge there from his many creditors and enjoyed the special favors of the lady of the house. Later, under the name of Baron Adlersthal, he established a Frankist community in Dresden which was a way station for Frankist pilgrims.

Salomon Dobrushka was the first Jew to be authorized to live in Bruenn. He removed the image of the Virgin Mary from above the entrance of the house he had bought, which led to a riot that had to be quelled by military force. At the same time, the Creditbank of Bruenn and the newspaper it owned were taken over by Israel Hoenig von Hoenigsberg who, following Dobrushka's example, removed the words "of our beloved

THE FAMILY DOBRUSHKA

Salomon Dobrushka, 1715-1774, married to Sheindel Catharina Hirschel, 1735-1791.

Children:

1. Carl, 1751-1781, baptized 1764 Carl Joseph Schoenfeld
2. Moses, 1753-1794, baptized 1775 Franz Thomas Schoenfeld, married to Elke Joss, 1757-1801, baptized Wilhelmine
3. Gerson, 1757-1833, baptized 1775 Joseph Carl Schoenfeld
4. Bluemele, 1758-1808, baptized 1775 Theresa Maria Josepha Eleanora Schoenfeld
5. Sara Rosalie, 1760-1833, baptized 1791 Maria Louisa Schoenfeld
6. Rebecca Regina, 1761-1815
7. Gitl, 1762-1793, baptized 1791 Marianna Schoenfeld
8. Joseph Naftali, 1763-1839, baptized 1775 Maximilian Schoenfeld
9. Joseph, 1764-1800, baptized 1775 Leopold Prokop Schoenfeld
10. David, 1765-1794, baptized 1775 Emanuel Nepomuk Schoenfeld
11. Fradl Franziska, 1770-1795, married to Wolf Ludwig von Hoenigsberg, 1764-1833
12. Ester Leopoldine, 1771-1795, baptized 1791, married to François Chabot, 1756-1794.

Lady" from both the signboard of the bank and the front page of the paper. Dobrushka's firstborn, Carl, had run away from home at the age of thirteen to join the Catholic church. In 1775, one year after their father's

death, the remaining five sons and the oldest daughter, Bluemele, also converted to Catholicism; they were raised to nobility in 1778 under the name of von Schoenfeld. It may be assumed that their conversion came about upon the instigation of Frank, because the district commander of Bruenn reported to the chancellery in Vienna that Frank had succeeded "in converting one or the other Jewish family to the true faith." Four of the brothers became subalterns in the Austrian army; we have met the other two, the second-born and the youngest, Moses and David, baptized Franz Thomas and Emanuel Schoenfeld, under yet other names—Junius and Emanuel Frey—in Paris on their way to the guillotine. Their sister Bluemele, baptized Theresa Maria Josepha Eleonora, became the mistress of the lion of Vienna's high society, Count Wenzel von Paar. She took care of her younger sisters and led three of them, Sara, Gitl, and Ester, to the baptismal font shortly before the death of their mother in 1791. Only two of the twelve Dobrushka children remained Jewish, the sisters Rebecca and Fradl.

The ties of the Dobrushka family to Jacob Frank seem to have aroused the suspicion of the authorities. Their first petition for the elevation to nobility remained unanswered, and in the second one they protested their sincerity and presented themselves as veritable Christian martyrs, denying any intent "to remain what we are." The petition was addressed to Empress Maria Theresa by the oldest of the brothers, Carl; to promote the case, he said:

With regard to myself, it is a well-known fact that, already in my early youth and out of a true inner impulse, I went over to the holy Christian-catholic church, abandoned my father's house where

I had all possible conveniences, and enlisted in the famous infantry regiment of Count Siskowitz. After nine years of service during which I willingly endured all the hardships of this career, I advanced to first lieutenant, having used up the little money my father had given me—which circumstance in no way makes me unworthy of the sought-for honor. . . . Concerning my brother Franz (at present adjoint to Father Denis at the Garelli Library of the Imperial Theresianum School), it speaks in his favor and is the undeniable truth that he, too, adopted the holy Roman Catholic religion out of a pure inner impulse. This step made him forfeit his share in the family fortune of 12,000 to 16,000 florins and also the inheritance of several hundred thousand florins of his wife, the adopted daughter and sole heiress of the well-known Joachim Popper. Furthermore, in addition to his wife and three children, he took with him into the holy Christian community his younger brothers and several servants, after having refused an offer of 150,000 florins to desist from doing so. Thus he sacrificed wealth, family, and everything else in order to embrace the holy Christian religion and has been a Christian for the past 14 months without demanding anything. On the contrary, in order to convert his mother, he stayed for some time in Bruenn and spent 1,500 florins for that purpose. Concerning my little brothers, it is true that they showed much firmness against their mother and other relatives, so much so that anybody learning of their sufferings practically came to admire them as martyrs. This heroic behavior refutes in advance the presumption that we changed our faith for the sake of private gains or that we would remain what we are. . . . Hence, a whole family renouncing all wealth out of truly holy motives and having no desire but to be honored by the raising of their social status—the more so because there still persist many prejudices which only the granting of this honor can disperse. Should, however, the granting of same be

delayed or even denied, it would cause us great anguish and make us the laughing stock of Jews, Christians, and my regiment.

The patent of nobility does not go into these details and speaks instead of the merits of the late Salomon Dobrushka as supplier of the army and tenant of the Moravian tobacco monopoly. It also makes laudable mention of a recent translation by Moses Dobrushka (Franz Schoenfeld) of a French book "which proved to be very useful for the dissemination of our Catholic religion" (without giving the title of this otherwise unknown book). As for the devotion and missionary zeal of Franz Schoenfeld and the martyrdom of his little brothers who, in the words of the first petition, "so to say tore themselves out of their mother's womb," they all continued to live on good terms with their mother. Being a Frankist, she would have had no objection to their baptism, although she herself remained Jewish. The fact that she changed her name to Catharina does not prove the contrary. Her five younger daughters also changed theirs, with two of them remaining Jewish for life, the other three for the next four years. They all did it in compliance with the Imperial Patent of July 23, 1787, which made the Austrian Jews adopt German names. As for Sheindel herself, she was, according to some documents in the Austrian National Archives (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*), in her last years very active in Jewish charity, such as furnishing a house for traveling Polish Jews and providing kosher food for Jewish prison inmates. Moreover, she was granted permission to purchase, and export for sale, the treasures of the monasteries and churches dissolved by Joseph II, a transaction inaccessible to a Christian and liable to lead to excommunication.

On the other hand, whatever the petition says about Moses Dobrushka's matrimony is correct. He was married to Elke Joss, the adopted daughter of the Prague financier Joachim von Popper who, together with Israel Hoenig von Hoenigsberg, Dobrushka, and others, held the Austrian tobacco monopoly in tenancy, at a joint fee of 1.8 million florins. Being childless, Popper adopted Elke Joss, a niece of his wife, as his daughter and sole heiress. When however she turned Catholic, together with her husband and children, and was baptized Wilhelmine Schoenfeld, he disinherited her against an indemnity of 3,000 florins and put his nephew Abraham Duschenes-Dusensy in her stead. After Popper's death in 1795, she tried unsuccessfully to contest his will. Dusensy became Catholic in 1803 and in the end the huge Popper fortune fell to the Church.

19

Dobrushka-Schoenfeld-Frey

De Luca's *Das Gelehrte Oesterreich* (Vienna 1778) and others afterwards tell the following about Moses Dobrushka, evidently according to his own account: "The first kind of education Salomon Dobrushka let his son have consisted of talmudic studies, and as he wanted him to become a great rabbi, he removed from his schooling anything standing in the way of this goal. . . . However, he also studied Hebrew and Chaldean [i.e. Aramaic] poetry and rhetoric, as well as German and Latin. A lucky genie

procured him the works of [the German-Swiss pastoral poet] Gessner, the first reading of which caused him difficulties, but did not make him abandon these excellent writings. He read them until he understood everything, and they inspired him to acquaint himself with the best poets. He persuaded his father to give him 1,500 florins for the purchase of some good books. Acquiring knowledge of English, French, and Italian, he devoted himself entirely to the art of poetry."

Moses Dobrushka earned his spurs as a writer in 1774 with a book written in Hebrew and dedicated to his father-in-law: *Sefer Hasha-ashua* (*Book of Entertainment*), a linguistic commentary to the widely known and frequently translated *Bekhinath Olam* (*World Scrutiny*) by Yedaya Bedersi, a Jewish philosopher of the early fourteenth century. It is characteristic of young Dobrushka (or, as he called himself here, Dobrushki, the name Jacob Frank later added to his own) that he chose for his study the work of a pessimistic rationalist whose thoughts approach those of Duns Scotus, but who could also write such books as *Ohev Nashim* (*The Lady-Lover*) and an introduction to chess-playing. De Luca calls the work of Dobrushka, obviously according to his own inflated account, *A Theory of the Beautiful Sciences: On the Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews*. At about the same time Dobrushka published, in one volume, three one-act pastoral plays in German, dedicated to the Duchess Maria Josepha zu Fürstenberg. The dedication starts with these words:

It is sheer audacity on my part to dedicate my pastoral plays to Your Grace. Audacity in more than one sense for me, a twig on the withered branch of the tree of humanity, to bear fruit of common sense

and wit and to offer them to Your Grace. With the most timid mien I introduce the children of my rustic muse to ask Your Grace to protect them.

In the preface he declares Gessner his favored poet, whose wit he wants to combine with the "aetheric" mind of Wieland. Maria Josepha was a member of the Star-Cross (*Sternkreuz*), an order of noble Austrian ladies for the promotion of prayers to the Holy Cross, virtue and charity. The fact that Dobrushka dedicated his first German work to her sounds like an announcement of his intention to change his faith. He accompanied it, so to say, at the threshold of baptism, with *A Hebrew Poetic Translation of the Golden Sayings of Pythagoras* (Prague 1775) and a *Prayer or Christian Ode in Psalm Form* (Vienna 177-), both of them impossible to locate. We have, however, his translation of King David's war songs: *David's Kriegsgesänge, deutsch aus dem Grundtexte, dem Heere Josephs*, appeared in 1788 as an overture to the war against Turkey. Little David Dobrushka tried to emulate his big brother and also published some poems: a seemingly endless *Fragment of a Poem called Time* and a long-winded eulogy *Upon the death of Frederick the Great*.

They were not exactly great poets, the brothers Franz Thomas and Emanuel von Schoenfeld. The elder especially wallows in superlatives; his poems are either bombastic panegyrics or furious war songs, and even his lyrics or the "lyric monodrama" *Thusnelda in Banden Roms* (*Thusnelda in the Chains of Rome*) sound insipid and border on the ridiculous. As Heine may have said: "He felt the finest feelings."

Schoenfeld's muses are Germania and Siona, and his inspiration comes from "song-mighty David, this holy

THE MILITANT MESSIAH

bard of old," and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock who, to him, is a David Klopstock. The 22 pages of the preface to *David's War Songs* contain the following lines:

I come from cedar-girded mount Lebanon,
From tree-covered Bashan do I descend.
Klopstock, a shining meteor,
Kleist, Bodmer, Lavater—welcome!
Mendelssohn, Herder—

the last one being especially singled out because "in the garden of Engedi under the apple tree, the love-shudders of Shulamite, the bronze-tressed, await him." But next comes:

Germania! Gottes Blitz!
des deutschen Liedes Geschütz!
Verderben um sein Haupt,
wenn es Wut und Rache schnaubt.

Germania! God's lightning bolt,
the gun of German song!
Destruction rings her head,
foaming fury and revenge.

And in the battle song *The Victory of Foksan* (of Joseph II over the Turks) he is carried away:

Wenn Deutsche bekriegen,
müssen sie siegen.
Es horchet der Tod
der Deutschen Gebot.

When Germans go to war
they cannot but win.
Death heeds
German command.

Dobrushka-Schoenfeld-Frey

What did the world see in this kind of rubbish? After all, it was the time of *Sturm und Drang*, of young Schiller, Goethe was not court counselor yet. But the fledgling poetaster did not join the young generation; he turned instead to the Brahmins of the poetic establishment. Karl Friedrich Kretschmann, the bard from Zittau, became intoxicated with the poems of the Schoenfeld brothers and predicted that "they are destined to propagate and preserve the high dignity of German poetry." Johann Wilhelm Gleim, the nestor of the *Goettinger Dichterbund*, enjoyed their songs "in a sleepless night" and greeted them as the second pair of brothers in the Goettingen circle: "two Stolbergs, two Schoenfelds." Johann Heinrich Voss, the renowned scholar of classics, and Karl Wilhelm Ramler, the director of the Royal Berlin Theater, also befriended them (all of which caused the brothers to quietly drop their "aetheric" Wieland because he was not well viewed among the Goettingers).

Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld was a busy man. In the preface to *David's War Songs* he complains about the small amount of time he had for completing the translation of the psalms which took him eleven years, the *War Songs*, thirty in all, being only a part of them. (Another part, *The Seven Penitent Psalms*, is preserved among his papers in the French National Archives in Paris.) Not a line is known to exist of the remaining ones, if he ever translated them. The same applies, as we have seen, to other works he claims to have written. He seems to have been born in this respect under an unfavorable star. Even his first book, the Hebrew study mentioned earlier, is only one of fourteen chapters; the others, he says in the preface, had to remain unpublished because of the great expense.

What robbed the future prince of poets of his precious

time? Certainly not his employment in the Garelli Library. But he was also one of the founders of the freemasonic order of the "Knights of the True Light" or "Brethren of St. John the Evangelist of Asia in Europe" ("Asiatic Brothers," for short), whose lodges were scattered all over central Europe, with the impoverished barons Hans Carl and Hans Heinrich of Eckhoffen at the head. These two brothers tried it first with the Rosicrucians and alchemists, but since these did not yield any gold, they hit upon a better idea and founded the order of the "Asiatic Brothers," claiming to be in possession of all the secrets of the Cabbala. But here they needed a "Cabbalist," and they found him in the person of Schoenfeld-Dobrushka. He managed to sell them a bill of goods, a hodgepodge of Jewish-Christian symbols which turned the Cabbala into a secret science for the forecasting of eclipses of the sun or moon and other natural phenomena. Some gullible persons, fascinated by the mysterious spell of the Cabbala, actually fell for it and joined the order, among them the future king of Prussia, Frederick Wilhelm II. However, the "Asiatic Brothers" also had some less esoteric aims. As the only German freemasonic order to accept Jews, they eyed the money of Jewish *nouveaux riches* who wanted to buy their way into society. Failing in this, the latter stopped their contributions and the order went out of existence.

In addition to the mystically tainted "Asiatic Brothers," Schoenfeld also belonged to the Illuminates, a rationalistic sort of higher degree of freemasonry. How he managed to reconcile these different philosophies with each other is his business. In any case, they did not prevent him from making money as a purveyor of the Austrian army in the war against Turkey. He could ignore any scruples he may have had, because the

Illuminates, although antimonarchists, made an exception of the liberal, anticlerical Joseph II and actually supported him. And the fact that Schoenfeld enriched himself in his dealings with the army was a part of the game. Leopold II, the brother and successor of Joseph II, also made use of Schoenfeld's services as his banker and counselor; Schoenfeld accompanied him in August 1791 on his infamous journey to Pillnitz where the Austro-Prussian intervention against France was decided. From this time stem Schoenfeld's odes *Upon the Death of Maria Theresa* and *Royal Entry of Leopold II into Vienna*. (At Leopold II's coronation in Frankfurt, Jacob Frank, now Baron Jacob Joseph Frank-Dobrushki, was seated among the notables and caused a big sensation with his oriental splendor.) From Pillnitz, Schoenfeld traveled via Berlin and Hamburg to Strasbourg, supposedly as a secret agent of the Emperor, with orders to report about the situation in France. The Paris police accused him of espionage, and it was rumored among the "Asiatic Brothers" that "he had secret instructions from Vienna for Paris." In his eulogy for the brothers Schoenfeld, their friend, the above-mentioned Kretschmann, claims to know that they went to Paris "either with instructions or on their own" to rescue Marie Antoinette. A similar assumption is made by G. Lenôtre in his book *Le Baron de Batz*, in which they are presented as accomplices in the baron's unsuccessful attempt to abduct the queen. However, in their trial in Paris there was no talk of that sort. Leopold II died shortly after Schoenfeld's arrival in France and the conservative Franz II did away with the liberal reforms of his two predecessors, also refusing to pay their debts. Yet Schoenfeld was not only a confidant of Leopold, but also his creditor. In his deposition at the Paris trial he claim-

ed that the Emperor owed him 500,000 florins. And so Saul turned Paul and the zealous courtier Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld became Junius Brutus Frey, sworn enemy of all tyrants. There is more to it, as will be seen later.

20

The Messiah in Bruenn

In the month of March, 1773, "the neophyte and merchant" Jacob Joseph Frank and his daughter crossed the Prusso-Austrian border near Troppau on their way to Bruenn accompanied by 18 domestics: 2 chambermaids, 2 washerwomen, 1 secretary, 2 cooks, 1 boy in the kitchen, 1 horseman, 1 haiduk, 1 footman, 1 woodcutter and 4 coachmen, as they are faithfully listed by name and occupation in the "consignation" of the district commander. Frank's two sons remained in the care of the Warsaw Frankists. The Bruenn museum preserves the Russian, Austrian and Prussian travel permits, the latter reassuring whomever it may concern that "there is here [in Warsaw] a clean and invigorating air and, thank God, not a trace of contagious disease."

Frank bought a mansion in Bruenn and furnished it luxuriously from the lavish contributions of his followers. "Barrels of gold" were brought into town under the heavy military escort of his own men. There was also a splendid coach-and-six for himself, another for his daughter. He organized the growing number of his young adherents into a military force on horseback, ordering

them "to learn how to shoot from the saddle and fight with sabre and lance." He probably intended to offer this force of several hundred men to the Habsburgs in their war against Turkey, in return for permission to establish the vassal state he did not obtain in Poland. He ruled his army with an iron fist, and Moses Dobrushka alias Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld apparently knew it firsthand, as the following will show.

Frank seemed to have taken a special liking to his second cousin. His high-sounding title and his reputation as a confidant of the Emperor must have made a deep impression on the "prostak"—so much so that he is supposed to have envisioned him as his successor alongside his daughter, in place of his not so promising sons. However, nothing came of it. *The Chronicle of the Lord* reports that on October 20, 1782, "Peter Jakubowski and Paul Pawlikowski were punished, and the protest raised by a certain Schoenfeld caused the one-year imprisonment of the obstinate [fellow]." This is the only time the name Schoenfeld appears in Frankist writings and it can only refer to Franz Thomas, because the older Carl was no longer alive and the younger ones were serving in the Austrian army at the time away from Bruenn. It is not clear from the brief report whether the two events hang together: whether Schoenfeld was imprisoned in retribution of his protest against the jailing of the two. The Catholic freemason and theosophist Joseph Franz Molitor, in a memorandum of 1829, refers to an imprisonment of Schoenfeld in Bruenn in 1784. It is, however, improbable that as important a person as Schoenfeld would really have been jailed, and for a year at that. Perhaps the obstinate fellow of the *Chronicle* was not Schoenfeld, but somebody else, and Schoenfeld's protest caused the other person's arrest.

This would make Schoenfeld an informer. Molitor calls him "a highly gifted, but dissolute man" who "behaved in a most indecent manner" and therefore had to be removed from the order of the "Asiatic Brothers" after they had paid off all his debts. Be that as it may, a brilliant career had opened up before him, he was rich and respected, and had free access to the Emperor. So why should he submit to Frank's dictates and follow in his footsteps? He was playing for higher stakes.

So was Frank. He gained access to the Viennese court and on March 19, 1775, he and his daughter were received in audience by Joseph II, the next day by Empress Maria Theresa who, on that occasion, let him kiss her hand and introduced the members of her family to him, as *The Chronicle of the Lord* condescendingly acknowledged. The monarchs saw in Frank a willing helper in their attempts to solve the Jewish question—the Empress by way of baptism, her son and coregent by means of liberal reforms (such as his Edict of Tolerance). The young, already twice widowed Emperor, however, was much more impressed by sultry Eva's dark eyes, and her father knew how to take advantage of it. He rented a luxurious flat on the Graben in Vienna and showed himself frequently with his exotic entourage to the astonished Viennese who admired the mysterious man in Turkish dress, the apparent favorite of the Emperor. Frank felt so strong in the saddle that he applied for the title of count, but even Eva's passionate eyes could not secure it for him. So, on his own authority, he called himself Baron Jacob Joseph von Frank-Dobrushki, not entirely without justification, having been raised to the peerage at his baptism.

After a four-month stay in Vienna, father and daughter returned to Bruenn, without giving up the contact

with the imperial court. Frank had his daughter take French and piano lessons, and accompanied her on her frequent trips to Vienna and Laxenburg Castle, the Emperor's summer resort. He must indeed have been standing in high esteem, because accusations against him (like the one by the mentioned former rabbi Galinski) either remained unanswered or were rejected. When the Russian archduke, later Tsar Paul I, visited Vienna in 1783, the Emperor insisted upon taking his guest to Bruenn to be introduced to Eva Frank. Thirty years later, in 1813, Alexander I also paid a visit to Eva Frank, probably because of his mystical bent and his attempts at christianizing the Russian Jews and settling them as Judeo-Christians in the Crimea. When he departed, he left behind a generous amount of money. Eva was, at the time, in her late fifties, and it was her smallest sin that she passed herself off as being five years younger. From this time on, she signed her name "Eva Frank, E.R." or simply "Eva Romanovna," and had her tableware engraved with a crown and the monogram *E.R.*

Frank's health kept deteriorating. The earlier troubles were aggravated by a hernia and he complained about spells of weakness. He showed himself less frequently to the numerous pilgrims who came to see him and had to approach him on their knees and kiss his feet. While regularly attending church, he used to hold his own services outside of town in an open field. There he would throw himself on the ground, face down with arms outstretched, whispering a prayer or remaining silent. In his book about the Jewish sects, published in 1823, Peter Beer describes this service:

When he drove to his service, his carriage was drawn by magnificent horses and surrounded by some 10 to 12 horsemen, dressed the uhlan-way in

gold, green and red, their pikes surmounted by gilded eagles, stags or suns and moons. The coach was followed by a rider on a splendid horse, decorated with many tiny bells, who carried a kind of watering pot with which he sprinkled the ground where Frank had prayed. The purpose of this ceremony is unknown, as it does not exist in the Jewish, Christian or Mahometan religions.

(The purpose of this ceremony was much more prosaic than the puzzled reporter imagined. In another report the rider on the splendid horse is simply called "the waterman" who had to spray the dusty road.)

21

*The Messiah —
a Capitalist*

Frank's extravagant life and the maintenance of some thousand people absorbed enormous amounts of money, and as the "barrels of gold" did not always arrive in time, he was on the lookout for a steady income. And indeed, Frank was, with Hoenigsberg, Popper, Dobrushka et al., a tenant of the Austrian tobacco monopoly, to the tune of 100,000 florins, which yielded him a yearly dividend of some 80,000 florins. He invested also in the fez manufacture of his Bruenn neighbors, the brothers Koffler, which had, thanks to his connections, a huge market in Turkey. But when the lucrative tobacco monopoly was taken over by the government in 1783 and the fez factory folded during the war against the Turks,

Frank was left high and dry. He installed in his house an alchemist laboratory which did not produce gold, but a health elixir, the so-called Gold Drops, for which he charged exorbitant prices. But even this was not enough, and the Messiah had to ask for credit from the local butchers, bakers, and candlestickmakers, which was granted readily. Then a new shipment of money would arrive and keep him going a little longer. Only once, when he was at the end of the rope, did he decide on the spur of the moment to go with his daughter to Laxenburg Castle and ask the Emperor for help. Joseph II, in the meantime, had become tired of the oriental beauty, after all it was eleven years since he had seen her first; he no longer was the "cold fish" the court ladies used to smirk about, and Eva had passed her prime. They found the Emperor in excellent humor in the midst of his ladies. In response to Frank's plea he advised him to dissolve his household, sell everything, and pay his debts with the proceeds; any balance the Emperor would be ready to pay.

Deeply disappointed, the Franks returned home. Frank dismissed the governess who had taught his daughter good manners. The time had passed when the "holy virgin" used to ride at the head of her dashing uhlands and hussars. Frank longed for his sons in Warsaw, and childhood memories moved him to tears, especially on the Jewish holidays:

Today is Yom Kippur. Let us sing the old songs and honor the memory of our fathers, grandmothers and ancestors!

Hanukkah is coming. We will light the candles, every day one more, and look forward gladly to the coming of the Messiah! [He must have forgotten that he was the one.]

The gloomy mood had bad effects on the health of "the Lord." The *Chronicle* reports "bleedings," and several sisters were summoned from Warsaw "for his nourishment." But this did not improve his financial status. Frank sent distress signals in all directions, pawned his table silver and the equipment of his army—all that was not enough to still the creditors who beleaguered his house, demanding cash. In response, he ordered his secretary to tell them that he was going to leave town for good:

For several years my master has been living in this town. With your own eyes you saw how the town grew in population and buildings. . . Now, when my master goes away, this street where we live will become a desert, with no houses or people, no gardens or sidewalks. Grass will grow in the streets. . . nobody will live here and whoever drives by will spit and laugh at this place.

At the last minute, however, help arrived. The Prossnitz community came to the rescue with a considerable amount of money, with more to follow soon from Warsaw and Istambul. Frank was jubilant: "Rejoice, brothers! King Messiah is here, let us light candles!" he exclaimed, and barely standing on his feet, he tried a little dance, supported by two of his disciples.

The next morning notices appeared on the street corners of Bruenn, calling all creditors of "the court" to come and receive with interest what was due to them. They came and saw to their horror the servants busy packing: Frank had made his threat come true. Before he left, he demanded and received from the city council a certificate to the effect that he had fully satisfied his creditors and that he left town with his daughter and domestics by his own will and to the great regret of the

inhabitants whose benefactor he had been for the past thirteen years. As a farewell gift, he had a large sum distributed among the poor. He left town on February 10, 1786, and arrived in Vienna two days later. There he was joined by his two sons who had journeyed to Vienna from Warsaw where they had been cared for by the Warsaw Frankists. The young gentlemen had been given an exquisite education with coach and horses and had been introduced to Warsaw society at balls and other functions.

This time Frank stayed in Vienna for about two years. He was again wallowing in money and tried to gain access to the court, but he was no longer welcome there. So he looked for another place to live and found what he wanted in the town of Offenbach, near Frankfurt on the Main, Germany, where he purchased the castle of the impoverished Duke of Isemburg. He moved there in 1788, and here the last act of Frank's life is played out, though not the last in the history of Frankism.

22

*Frankists in Prague
and in America*

The amazing point about the ups and downs in Frank's life, which have been only briefly sketched here, is not so much his desperate struggle to keep his head above water, as the unshakable loyalty of his followers; with few exceptions, they stood by him, even after his death, whether baptized or not. Frank complained time and again that those of his supporters who remained

Jewish had deserted him and were responsible for his failures. "The work of my hands drowns into the sea, and it is your fault. Your heads ought to be torn off for it," he once let fly at some of them who had come to see him. Yet, the Jewish Frankists let nobody outdo them, especially when it came to money. Just as Christianity was a cloak for the baptized Frankists (and for the Marranos), so Judaism was for the Jewish followers of Frank. The former were practicing Catholics outwardly; the latter obeyed all Jewish customs and commandments. But just as the Christian Frankists (and the Marranos) aroused the wrath of the Church, so the Jewish Frankists aroused that of the Synagogue. (The Marranos were not even safe on the Jewish side; so great was the number of Jewish informers in the service of the Inquisition that the Hebrew word for informer, *malshin*, entered the Spanish language as *malsin* and *malsinar*.) While the baptized Frankists, like the Marranos, were pseudo-Christians, the non-baptized Frankists were pseudo-Jews.

Characteristic of the latter were the Prague Frankists, to whom the wealthiest and most respected families of that town belonged. Their leaders were the important merchants Jonas and Aaron Baer Wehle, in whose house the sectarians met daily for the study of the Cabbala, their learned discussions being a far cry from the wild gatherings of the Polish Frankists. Their esoteric theology is best presented in the last will of Gottlieb Wehle, Aaron Baer's son, who died in New York in 1881. According to this document, the Prague Frankists believed

that man, being image and masterpiece of God, will return to the perfect state, as he was when he left the Creator's hand; that he will be free from all

sickness of body, mind and soul; that he will be again innocent as before the Fall, free from vice and sin. . . Moreover, as God acts only indirectly, a chosen, consecrated Messiah is necessary as deputy of his highest Master. As now, according to the cabbalistic principles, man is only the tool of Providence through which it acts, therefore the smallest act of one chosen for this highest charge may be of greatest importance. Thus these ill-reputed gentle-folk [a reference to the hostility of the rabbis towards the Frankists] endeavoured to prepare and qualify for this great aim and purpose by the highest moral standards. They welcomed the misinterpretation of their belief as an opportunity for bringing a sacrifice for their high aspirations, and indeed did so on the altar of their creed.

Prominent among the Frankists of Bohemia and Moravia were the families Hoenigsberg, Dobrushka, Porges, Bondi, Brandeis, Mauthner, Goldmark, Dembitz, Schwabacher, and Lichtenberg. A number of them emigrated in 1848 to the United States, carrying the Frankist tradition of intermarriage with them. Their most famous descendant was the late Justice and leading Zionist, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, married to Alice Goldmark of another Frankist family. His mother was a sister of Gottlieb Wehle. Like other Americans of Frankist descent, Brandeis considered Eva Frank a saint and had her picture on his desk. Another member of the U.S. Supreme Court, Benjamin N. Cardozo, had among his ancestors one of the most prominent supporters of Sabatai Zevi. One of the Schwabachers was the eminent New York lawyer who won the billion dollar suit before the U.S. Supreme Court for the railroads against the American government after World War I. The atheist German philosopher Fritz Mauthner came from a Frank-

ist family in Moravia; his grandfather was an officer of Eva Frank's body guards.

Contrary to the Polish Frankists, who mainly came from the poor and uneducated, those of Prague belonged to the rich and highly educated, with several physicians among them. Yet they went on frequent pilgrimages to Frank, as did their fellow-Frankists in Poland, or as the Hassidim went to their tsaddik. Jonas Wehle once took his son-in-law Loew Hoenig von Hoenigsberg on such a pilgrimage and the latter returned all bewildered by the rituals and ceremonies of "the court." The pilgrims had to approach "divine Eva" on their knees and elbows ("like dogs did they crawl before her," in the words of Eva's lady-in-waiting, Paulina Pawlowska.) Shedding tears of joy, they deposited gifts and money at her feet, although the tears were not always pure joy, as the Franks, claiming divine command, did not hesitate to rob their visitors of their last pennies. Some Frankists testified before a rabbinical court at Fuerth, Germany, that one Mendel Yitshin had to give up "many thousands of florins." The same happened to Rosl Eger, Jonas Wehle's sister; although an admirer of Frank, she resisted at first, but then "was forced" to hand over her money. The Wehle family once was ordered to procure 3,000 florins within three days; Aaron Baer Wehle actually delivered the money to Eva Frank and prostrated himself before her, moved to tears for being blessed to see her with his own eyes. This elicited from her the affable words: "What does he cry about? I am a poor girl." Salomon Zerkowitz had his beard forcibly shaved off on the Sabbath and had to pay for this "privilege" 660 florins cash, a promissory note of 2,000 florins, and all the gold and silver he had with him. A student from Prague was relieved of his last twenty florins. And one

day, it is reported, fifty Jewish-Christian families arrived in the Austrian province of Bukovina. They said they belonged to a sect of so-called Abrahamites and "had in their credulity given all their money to the chieftain of the sect, a fanatic and cheat by the name of Frankl [sic] in Offenbach, and now that they had lost everything had come to the Bukovina to recover financially." In Prague, like everywhere else, Frank found his most eager supporters among women, a cause of marital conflicts and fistfights in the women's section of the Prague synagogue. On Yom Kippur, 1800, Frank's son Roch retired with three young women to his room "for the ceremonies." Three sentries, rifles cocked, guarded the door, while inside "all sort of lascivious and indescribably evil things went on." Afterwards one of the three women wrote to her father in Prague how extremely happy she was to have been chosen. The Prague Frankists also sent their sons to Offenbach, where they joined Frank's army. We owe this information to two of these young men, the brothers Moses and Leopold Porges; they became suspicious that "an unheard-of swindle" was going on there and ran away (see Appendix). The irate Prague rabbis set the ghetto mob against the Frankists, and the police had to quell the resulting riots.

The New Jerusalem

Frank's entry into Offenbach was spectacular. First came two armed heralds on horseback, followed by a

group of quick-stepping pages in green-gold livery. Two coaches and a convoy of vehicles carrying women and children followed. The rear was brought up by a detachment of Frank's mounted soldiers. From the first coach stepped "the baron" himself, a commanding figure, flanked by his two sons and wearing a long, red coat, a high fur cap on his head, and a huge diamond-studded star on his chest. From the second coach emerged Eva Frank, in a sky-blue, pearl-embroidered silk dress, surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting.

Frank had made his dream come true. He was a sovereign with a castle and army of his own. Some pint-size German rulers did not have much more. Yet, he was a king without a country. His empire extended over a bare two acres and consisted mainly of the army's parade grounds and the adjacent area. Over this realm he ruled with absolute authority, an oriental potentate in the midst of great luxury. Sentries stood at every door, barring all unauthorized persons. Frank received his special guests in an incense-filled room, seated cross-legged on an ottoman, smoking a hookah, surrounded by pages, and with an interpreter at his side. (Frank spoke only Ladino and Yiddish, with some Turkish and German.)

The public had only an occasional glimpse of Frank when he drove out on his way to mass or to his own service "with a splendor comparable only to the mighty of the Orient." In church "he did not bare his head and prayed neither kneeling nor standing nor sitting, but prostrate in the oriental way." Outwardly, the Frankists behaved like good Catholics "leading a quiet and peaceful life at the expense of their chief; they formed a small world of their own, none of them earning a livelihood. Sabbataian Jews bearing gifts came in great numbers on

pilgrimage to Offenbach, and the town profited from such visitors," as reported by a contemporary chronicler. The people of Offenbach left the "Polack prince" ("*Polackenfuert*") alone and granted him a kind of extraterritoriality. Frank seemingly had "jurisdiction and police power over his subjects and enjoyed the complete independence of a sovereign." (It should be noted, however, in this connection that Offenbach was a traditional refuge for all sorts of dissidents and persecuted people. The tolerant dukes of Isenburg had granted asylum to Huguenots, Anabaptists, and Jews, and the reigning duke was a Freemason and Illuminate.)

The German public was mystified by what was going on in their midst and wanted to know more about it. Contemporary newspapers occasionally published articles about the Offenbach court, but all they reported was what met the eye. What went on behind the walls of the castle, nobody knew. Thus in February, 1800, the *Weimar Journal des Luxus und der Moden* published two correspondences from Offenbach under the title "The continuous masquerade," which said in part:

Shortly after his arrival in Offenbach, Frank asked for permission to have some of his people join him. Before long, he had some 1,100 people with him, who lived together like a brotherhood and, it cannot be denied, distinguished themselves by their good and clean morals. . . . And now there started the most colorful and curious masquerade of Chinese, Turkish, Greek, Polish, Hungarian and who knows what other costumes with all the males participating, the females wearing ordinary German dress. Frank and his followers apparently belonged to the Catholic Church, but observed many other religious customs besides, such as men and women bathing daily in the river and attending prayer meetings after-

wards. . . . These people were never short of money which arrived, nobody knew where from, not in bills of exchange, but in cash transported under military escort. After Frank's death the shipments declined, causing some shortages to the extent that two hundred of his people had to be sent back to Poland at the expense of the Duke. Recently, however, Fräulein Frank resumed the old ways, the present masquerade being even more colorful and fantastic. In addition to the guards, she is always accompanied to Church by a beautiful little boy dressed as Amor in white silk with quiver and arrows, a man wearing a golden wolf's head, another with antlers and a third one with a golden crescent on his chest, as well as a group of young women dressed like Amazons with silver suns on their breasts. All of them, even her two so-called brothers, pay homage to her. Recently she ordered those employed in the local factories to quit work, which they dutifully did, preferring to suffer want at her court. This must be a religious sect, because they have invited the Jews to adopt their creed and join them. With this kind of living and more and more money shipments failing to arrive, the situation of the commune, as could be expected, has gone from bad to worse. People who are in the know estimate the debts of Fräulein Frank at 800,000 florins. Several merchants have gone bankrupt on this account and now live at the court, eating at her table. . . . This is all I could find out about this strange matter. It can be seen here by thousands of people, but I have not been able to get to the bottom of it.

A fantastic image of Frankist histrionics is mirrored in Bettina von Arnim's *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child*. Like most of this lady's letters, it is a product of her vivid imagination, though it contains a grain of truth:

Since you left, the life style of the town's population has playfully changed over into the miraculous, which has to be seen in order to be believed. . . . A mystic nation walks around among us in wonderfully colored costumes. Long-bearded men, young and old, in purple, green and yellow gowns, handsome youths in close-fitting, gold-trimmed clothes, one leg green, the other yellow or red, galloping on fiery steeds with silver bells around their necks or playing guitars and flutes as they stroll through the evening streets on their way to sweetheart's window. Imagine this with the mild summer sky arching over all and flowing around the edges of a blooming, dancing, music-making world. Imagine the silver-bearded prince of this people attired in white and seated in front of his palace on a pile of magnificent rugs and pillows, surrounded by his entourage. . . . Little boys bringing golden bowls, while music resounds through the open windows of the palace. . . . As children we used to stop in passing and listen to the singing and playing.

24

Goethe, Mickiewicz,
Casanova

Goethe knew of Frank. Goethe's papers include a notice about Frank with a postscript in Goethe's hand: "How easily helpless people let themselves be fooled by clever cheats." It never occurred to Goethe that he was listening to a Frankist when, in 1813, he attended a concert of the famous pianist Maria Szymanowska in Marienbad. She was the granddaughter of Frank's adjutant Shlomo Schorr, baptized Wolowski, and the wife of

the Frankist Joseph Szymanowski. Goethe was moved to tears and felt "like a clenched hand that unfolds." He had himself presented to the artist, went on walks with her and "fell in love with that person." Maria's sister, Kasimira Wolowska, also enchanted him (as well as Wilhelm von Humboldt) with her beauty, and Goethe wrote three short love poems in praise of the sisters.

Maria's daughter Celina was the wife of Poland's great son, the poet Adam Mickiewicz, himself of Frankist parentage. In his *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*), a mystical drama interwoven with Frankist motives, Mickiewicz makes veiled hints that he is the Messiah who, at the head of Poland and "her elder brother," the Jewish people, would lead mankind to freedom, an idea vividly reminiscent of Frank.

Frank was not an unusual phenomenon in his time. After all, the eighteenth century was not only the age of reason, but also of the mysticism of Saint-Martin and Swedenborg, the magnetism of Mesmer, the demonic occultism of the Marquis de Sade, and the blossoming of freemasonry; furthermore, adventurers like Cagliostro and Casanova had an easy field. Frank has been called "the Jewish Cagliostro." Although Cagliostro spent some time with the Offenbach Illuminates, there is no indication that the two ever met. But Casanova was in touch with Eva Frank and so perhaps with her father also. In the draft of a letter (which itself is not extant) he wrote on September 28, 1793, to the "divine virgin":

In your letters, dear lady, you talk of disclosing the mystery surrounding your existence. I feel duty-bound to inform you directly of the truth which will give you a better idea of myself than our old acquaintance so far has been able to do. I have for a long time been in the possession of the number Kab-

Eli which gives me, in arabic numerals, an answer to any question I put down in the same kind of numerals. I believe you know that the Kab-Eli (meaning divine secret) is not the Kab-Ala, which consists of more or less dark explanations. What I have, is a true oracle that always tells me the truth, although often in a veiled form. I would not dare give you a sample of it without having received permission to do so. I have asked my oracle for it in order to convince you that nothing concerning the deceased (your father) or yourself is unknown to me. This should not irritate you as it does not change my opinion about, nor my respect for you. Here are the answers I received several days after your second letter and the exact wording of the questions I asked the spirit, who is at my service and who answers only in numbers: Tell me when Eva Frank will be ready to divulge to me the secret she believes I do not know, and what are her intentions after having neglected me for so many years! Answer: I am well informed about her, but she will not admit it because divulging the secret would belie her dearest hopes. She also fools herself about the essential. Second question: Tell me exactly what this essential is! Answer: The unequivocal aim of one of her two advisers.

Here follows a vague explanation of Casanova's number-mysticism with the ambiguous assurance that Eva may safely challenge this person whose identity is not disclosed. The letter concludes:

Independently thereof and out of pure amity, dear lady, kindly notify me at what bank to deposit to your order three hundred florins. Be advised that I am guided solely by the wish to be of some assistance to you and by the pleasure it gives me to oblige myself to you at so low a cost. (The modesty of the amount relieves you from worrying about its repayment.)

The last sentence is crossed out, and whether Casanova ever made good on his promise is unknown. He seemed to have had the intention because, at about that time, he borrowed an equivalent amount from a Jewish moneylender in Prague, who later sued him for repayment.

The secret Casanova spoke about refers to the rumors Frank had been spreading that he was the dethroned Tsar Peter III who had been declared dead, and Eva was the daughter of the Tsarina Elizabeth.

Surrounded by a mysterious aura of fame, the Franks ruled unmolested and with relentless rigor over their realm. The brothers Porges testified during their interrogation in Fuerth about an incident that happened one day in Offenbach. For having dared to grumble, several people were chained and thrown into the dungeons of the castle, where they were beaten every day and given nothing to eat but bread and water. An eyewitness reports the following incident, typical of the despotic regime at the court of the "Polack prince": "One of the women came running out of the Polish house, her hair wildly streaming, the guards after her. Her desperate resistance in a public place almost caused a riot. The mob pushed towards the house where one could hear the unfortunate creature screaming, but kept a respectful distance as if glued to the ground." The witness was told by the police that "no policeman or judicial person was permitted to enter the house under any circumstance."

On the whole, however, the "Offenbach Poles" lived a quiet and peaceful life, partly in the castle, partly in the town and its environs. "They enjoyed the most blameless reputation and never caused any trouble with their neighbors." Frank's court gained fame by the presence of one of Poland's overlords, Martin Lubo-

mirski, who married one of Eva's ladies-in-waiting. Eva was "a true benefactor of the Catholic Church" and was popular because of her charity.

Frank was making fewer and fewer public appearances. He suffered a stroke in December, 1788, and three months later a second, but recovered and pulled himself together for new prophecies. The French Revolution had confirmed his predictions of the destruction of State and Church, and he saw a new chance for the conversion and settlement of the Jews. Yet, the end was near. One day he called his assistants to his bed and told them:

I am very weak. My time has come to taste death. The old has to step aside and make room for the new. But my strength will renew itself and rise into the air like an eagle.

Christ said he had come to free the world from the claws of Satan. But I say unto you, I have come to free the world from all laws and commandments. Everything has to be destroyed for the good God to show himself.

This was to be his legacy; a few days later, on December 10, 1791, a third stroke put an end to his stormy life.

The funeral took place on December 12. First everybody approached the deceased and, in Jewish fashion, touched his feet, asking forgiveness. Then the procession began. As he came, so he went—with pomp and circumstance:

First there were two hundred women of all ages, dressed in white, their hair braided with white ribbons, carrying burning candles. Next came the corpse dressed in an ermine-trimmed, red silk-gown,

in a coffin upholstered with white silk and decorated with golden tassels, carried by white-clad servants. They were followed by his two sons on foot and the "divine Eva" in a densely veiled equipage drawn by four horses and surrounded by twenty young women of Eva's Amazon guards. Finally seventy of Frank's body-guards and all the other male members of the brotherhood, carrying flaming torches and wearing white ribbons around their heads and white crepe on their arms. Arriving at the burial place, the whole assembly broke out in loud lament and finally everybody threw a handful of earth into the grave. All the bells of Offenbach were ringing that day, including the Lutherans, who also accompanied the funeral train with music.

No clergyman was in attendance.

Among the mourners was Frank's second cousin Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld.

25

Decline

With Frank's death began the decline of Frankism. Neither Eva nor her brothers had the magnetic power of their father to command faith and obedience. Still, the Offenbach center continued for another twenty years. Outwardly everything went on as before. Eva, a beautiful greyhound at her feet, continued to receive her visitors, and the "army" went through its daily routine; but the splendor was gone and the uniforms became threadbare. The student David Hofsinger who, together

Decline

with the Porges brothers, had escaped Eva's court, testified in Fuerth that once, after the arrival of some money from Prague, all male personnel received new trousers.

Poverty stalked the castle. The lady and her brothers still feasted on royal dishes, but ordinary people received a watery vegetable soup from the communal kitchen. In Poland, protests were raised against the great amounts of money shipped out of the country, and one day a shipment of 40,000 ducats was confiscated by the border guards. The "court" again took to living on credit. Convinced by the visit of Alexander I of Eva's royal extraction, the Offenbach merchants and the Mainz and Frankfurt bankers, among them old Rothschild, let themselves be put off and renewed the promissory notes time and again until the debt exceeded one million florins.

In their distress, the Franks took refuge in an old idea and, as their father had done, sent an appeal to the Jewish communities of Austria, Prussia, and Poland. The "army" was relieved from drilling to copy these letters, which, in order to avoid undesired attention, were mailed not in Offenbach but in neighboring towns. Most of them failed to reach their destination. Intercepted by the censors, they highly alarmed the authorities. The letters talked about abolishing all existing laws and about a conspiracy by the monarchs of Europe to kill the Jews, whose only salvation was in joining "our sect, called Edom." The letters were signed by the three elders of the sect: "Franz Wolowski, as Jew Shloime, son of Elisha Schorr of Rohatyn; Michael Wolowski, as Jew Nuta, son of Elisha Schorr of Rohatyn; and Andreas Dembowski, as Jew Yeruhem, son of Haim Lipman of Czarnokozenice." These letters just contained the old

Frankist slogans, but now they sounded like a call to revolution. Europe's mighty were haunted by the Jacobin phantom and saw in the name "Sect of Edom" a cover for the French Jacobin club, the name of the founder, Jacob Frank, being sufficient proof. Their fears were heightened by the red ink in which the letters were written and by a denunciation addressed to the Prague city commander, Count Vratislav, by an anonymous informer, in all probability Rabbi Elasar Flekeles, who tried in the following manner to connect the Frankists with the French Revolution:

At the outbreak of the pernicious French freedom when so many things fell apart and many detestable organizations and secret societies came to the surface, there appeared also to exist an understanding between the Frankist and some French societies. The name of *Franc* alone aroused suspicion as being a sign of their connection. . . . One of his strongest supporters, a Jewish native of Bruenn by the name of Moses Dobrushka, who was baptized twenty-two years ago under the name of Schoenfeld, went to Offenbach after the death of said *Franc*. He was supposed to take the place of the deceased among the followers he left behind, but went instead to France using the name of *Moses Frei*. He married his sister to a certain convent-secretary named Sabah [*sic*] and was along with his brother-in-law, guillotined [in the German original: *gilgotiniert*] during the regime of Robespierre. This should suffice to show the high probability of the notorious *Franc's* connections with the French societies. . . . The overthrow of the papal throne . . . [and] the conquests of General Bonaparte give fresh nourishment to the superstitious beliefs of these people. His conquests in the Orient, particularly of Palestine and Jerusalem, in addition to his appeal to the Jews, pour oil on their

fire, and it is this precisely that seems to be the tie-in between them and the French societies.

Count Trautmannsdorf, the governor of Galicia, reported to Vienna that "these Red Letters frighten the local Jews with all sorts of superstitious prophecies" and that the governors of the Russian and Prussian provinces had intercepted similar mail. The chief of the Austrian police, Count von Pergen, deemed it necessary to inform the Emperor that "these appeals create distrust and dissatisfaction with the highest authorities and increase the possibility of active resistance and rebellion." He received thereupon from "the highest authorities" an order to take speedy measures against this dangerous activity. The Prussian government, on its part, had its plenipotentiary in Frankfurt institute a thorough investigation:

Whereas in present-day circumstances anything referring to secret societies, organizations under unknown leaders and religious and political fanaticism deserves double attention;

whereas according to several sources the agitators of the Jacobin abominations and outrages continue to operate in darkest secrecy, taking advantage of any means that may serve their goals;

whereas they consider the dispersion of the Jews over so many countries a handy way of disseminating their dangerous ideas;

we order you herewith to investigate, in complete discretion and without causing the slightest sensation, anything concerning in the least the existence, principles and purposes of the so-called "Sect Edom" as well as the late Frank, his so-called daughter and sons; and immediately and fully report to our ministerial cabinet about the success of your efforts.

The anxiety of the authorities was well founded. Frankists and Jews had fought in the anti-Russian Polish revolution of 1793/95; the Polish freedom fighters had put their hope in Napoleon; quite a few Frankists belonged to the Polish Legion that fought under his banner; and Napoleon's promise to establish a Jewish state in Palestine had caused some excitement among the Jews. The Holy Alliance suspected the Frankist activities to be an outgrowth of the French Revolution or a continuation of the Polish one. The Prussian representative in Frankfurt tried to put the fears of his superiors to rest. He assured them he could not find a trace of Frankist revolutionary connections; even the proximity of the theater of war and the presence of the French in Offenbach were not sufficient grounds for such apprehensions. His report, like many documents quoted in this book, is published here for the first time. It contains some interesting facts about the life of the Frankists in Offenbach:

Shortly after Frank's arrival in Offenbach the number of his subjects rose to between 800 and 1,000. They lived together in form of a brotherhood, holding common prayer meetings and walking around in Polish clothes and partly armed, without however causing anger or complaints. The Frank family exhibited great wealth and showed off in gorgeous clothes and with magnificent parades. Their money arrived not via banks, but secretly in escorted wagons. The Baron managed to get abundant credit, and this caused many people to go bankrupt; among them the wealthy Catholic merchant and Frankfurt court-counselor Hestermann with wife and five children, and the rich Jew Kohlmann who, having advanced between them some 300,000 florins, were ruined and now have joined the sect, living at the court. Said Baron Frank passed away in 1792 leav-

ing behind a debt burden of 800,000 florins. After his death the daughter stepped into his place, outranking her brothers. She increased the display and had herself addressed *Princess*. However, because of declining income and obtrusive creditors, the Offenbach authorities began to look into the finances of this family. In order to avoid the brewing storm, the three Franks took to all sorts of excuse and subterfuge and finally, on January 18, 1800, submitted to the government a rather strange document. They declared therein that His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, would pay all their debts, for the reason of Eva Frank being his full sister, witness the mourning she wore at the death of Empress Catharina. Furthermore, that her brother Joseph, like Roch Frank a full son of the deceased Baron, would go to St. Petersburg and bring back the solemn recognition of the Princess and all the money to pay her debts. In the meantime, seemingly from some unexpected money shipments, the smallest and most urgent debts were paid off and some donations made to the Catholic Church and the poor in order to delude the public. The Isenburg lords had no idea of the royal lineage of this family, and their only incentive for the admission of this armed community, which formed so to say a state within the state, was the wish to enrich their residence-town with well-to-do settlers. The origin of this family and their followers, their true aims and sources of maintenance are veiled in deep darkness. Equally unclear is whether the background is personal profiteering or political aspirations. In any case, no connection with the Freemasons, Illuminates, Rosicrucians or Jacobins could be established. . . . As of late, the Franks appealed to a number of synagogues in Germany and abroad to band together in a sect called Edom which accepts Jews and Christians alike. They have, however, not been able to win over a single local Jew. It is also well known that, since their arrival, none of them got married, al-

though the newly-born are baptized by the reformed minister. The young receive no moral or religious instruction; they remain completely uneducated and do not learn any craft. Recently idleness became their ordered way of life. Still, some of them earn money by making music in the streets [the beautiful musicians of Bettina von Arnim?] so much so that they can pay for the purchase of their instruments.

Had the Prussian representative gone back a few years in the scope of his investigation, he might have discovered some "connections." On December 27, 1791, two weeks after Frank's death, Johann G. Forster, the leader of the German Jacobins, in a letter from Mainz, gave his father-in-law some information about Frank and his people. In spite of his repeated efforts, he wrote, he was unable to find out anything definite, but knew of the great amounts of money Frank received and of his uhlan-corps in Polish uniforms. "He is said to have experimented as an alchemist and daily drank great portions of Hoffmann's liquor, which his people believed was to keep him immortal. But now that he is dead, his immortality is explained as a Tibetan soul-migration; after forty-nine days his spirit will descend on his second cousin who will become the head of the sect in his stead." Considering the fact that the writer of these lines, several months later, proclaimed the republic in Mainz, the several hundred men of Frank's well-trained cavalry corps would have been a welcome assistance in the defense of the young republic against Prussian aggression.

The report of the Prussian representative apparently quieted his superiors, and the Prague Frankists succeeded in convincing the authorities of their loyalty by an in-

telligent reply from Loew Hoenig von Hoenigsberg, Jonas Wehle's son-in-law, to the anonymous denunciation. He addressed a "Letter from an enlightened Prague Jew" to the city governor, followed by an extensive memorandum, in the wake of which the heads of the Prague Jewish community and the rabbis Flekeles and Landau were taken into custody for several days.

After the failure of the Red Letters to bring in money, Eva took to other methods. Simultaneously with the "strange document" mentioned in the Prussian report, she had the following notice posted in the streets of Offenbach:

Upon the most high order of his Russian Majesty, our beloved brother will go this coming July 1st to St. Petersburg and return six months later under military protection with an amount of money sufficient to satisfy all our creditors. Those, however, who have stained our name, will be publicly punished after having received payment.

Hence, a one-year grace. But when the beloved brother returned empty-handed, there was nothing left for Eva but to dismiss everyone, including the remnants of the "army" and to exchange the castle for a smaller house, keeping only a few servants. Frank's son Joseph died in 1803, his brother Roch in 1813. Roch's belongings, consisting of "some clothing, linen, a writing-table, a chest of drawers and some small items," were seized by the authorities.

Eva held on for some time thanks to the windfall gift from Alexander I in 1813 and some small shipments, such as a sum of 600 florins from Warsaw in 1816. She tried to put off her creditors by reminding them of how her father had paid off his debts, and by

getting indignant when pressed for payment: "I cannot make money out of myself and have somehow to make ends meet until my capital arrives." Finally she offered to settle the debt of one million florins by a payment of one hundred florins and monthly installments of three florins each. The bankruptcy was evident. On request of the creditors, she was put under house arrest and remained so until her death in 1816.

The sect continued to exist for some time. In 1823 the Frankist Kaplinski tried to call a Frankist congress at Karlsbad, but few people showed up. The Polish Frankists maintained their identity into the second half of the nineteenth century. Baptism had opened the doors of society to them and, like their brothers in the West, they rose to high positions in the military, industry, banking, law, medicine, and science. Many renowned Polish families are of Frankist descent. They were, on the whole, liberal patriots, who held leading positions among the Warsaw Freemasons and who distinguished themselves in the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863. Only after the failure of the latter did they lose their group character. This did not protect them from the accusation of being pseudo-Christians, at a time when most of them already belonged to the conservative and even anti-Semitic classes of Polish society.

*Moses Dobrushka,
the Jacobin*

At Jacob Frank's funeral we met again Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld. His attendance gave rise to rumors that he was taking over the leadership of the sect. Whether it had been offered to him and he declined, or whether he had claimed it and was refused, or whether he simply had come to pay homage to his deceased kin—we don't know. Instead of starting a messianic career Schoenfeld went to France. And from here on, his story, including the tragic end, reads like a thriller, a web of fact and fiction, often impossible to disentangle.

Schoenfeld made a theatrical entrance onto the stage of the French Revolution. The first act was played in Strasbourg; he arrived there in the midst of a political affair which kept the town in an uproar. Charles Laveaux, the editor of the Jacobin *Courrier de Strasbourg*, had been jailed by the royalist mayor, and Schoenfeld came to his defense in an open letter to the *Courrier* in which he pledged 400 francs "as a sacrifice on the altar of freedom" in case of Laveaux' vindication. He said:

As to myself, it would be needless to tell you my name; may it suffice to say that I belong to that numerous army which, on the other side of the Rhine, stands ready to fight for your constitution, your principles, your freedom. The prevailing circumstances did not allow us to take the Jacobin

oath in your midst. It is, however, engraved in our hearts. Far away from you, in the majestic calm of the night, we stood up, eyes toward heaven, and vowed: LIBERTY OR DEATH. The heavens heard us, the tyrants trembled, mankind applauded.

More donations followed, all given in a most conspicuous way, such as a hundred francs to the family of the first French soldier "who will be lucky enough to give his blood for freedom's sake" in the war against Austro-Prussian aggression. Laveaux was freed, and on that occasion Schoenfeld had 20 memorial medals cast, 17 of silver, 3 of gold, at a value of 800 francs, as he did not forget to mention. The Jacobins admitted him into their ranks and at the reception ceremony he introduced himself as Sigismund Gottlob Junius Brutus Frey, presumably to hide his past. And here the first clouds gathered over the head of the new Jacobin. The teacher Chairoux, in the liberal-royalist *Feuille de Strasbourg*, raised the question of the identity of this foreigner, his country, fortune, occupation, and mission. Schoenfeld-Frey answered him in another open letter:

My country is the world, my occupation to do good, my mission that of all sensitive souls, and my fortune big enough to pay twenty sous (one franc) for every word of the stupidities Monsieur Chairoux has uttered about me without repeating himself. . . I have counted them, they are 131 in all; I deposit, however, not 131, but 200 francs on account of any further idiocy of Monsieur Chairoux, always at twenty sous the word, to be paid to the soldiers for a drink to the health of the Jacobins and the shame of Monsieur Chairoux. . . I live with Monsieur Caire, Under the Grand Arcades 30, and invite Monsieur Chairoux to come see me in order to show him, on the basis of many letters of recommendation, that I

am not unworthy of his hatred and that of all the aristocrats of the world.

He took an active part in Jacobin propaganda and organized several branches of the *Friends of the Constitution*, as the Jacobins called themselves. Thus he explained to 200 wine growers what the natural condition of man used to be, what civilization and despotism have done, and what freedom will make of him. This sounds like Rousseau, but also like Gottlieb Wehle's last will, and shows how close Frankist thinking had come to western European thought. All the while, Frey took care to remain in the public eye by mentioning his financial contributions to the cause of France and freedom. At the appointment ceremony of Prince Charles of Hesse to the rank of general of the French army, "le brave patriot Frey" presented him with a sword "worth twenty louis d'or," as the *Courrier* prominently reported.

If he had any secret instructions from Vienna, they were forgotten. As Balaam once came to curse and blessed instead, Schoenfeld-Frey became infatuated with the revolution and conveyed his feelings in a letter to Voss on April 8, 1792, "the 4th year of freedom":

Dearest, best brother Voss! It is now three weeks since I have been in Strasbourg, or better: in heaven; for to live in freedom is, I believe, a heavenly life here in the country of freedom, heaven on earth. I refrain from telling you of all the blessings the Frankish freedom gives us; our correspondence might inconvenience you with the despot. *I give you all I can, the rest you have to dream about*, to quote Abelard.

In another letter he tried to make Voss move to Strasbourg, telling him of a suitable house with garden

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he had found for him. He appointed himself umpire in a quarrel between two prominent Jacobins, the Alsatian H. Salzmann and the former Franciscan monk Eulogius Schneider who, after having been fired from his professorship in Bonn because of revolutionary tendencies, had gone to France and become public prosecutor and "the terror of Alsace"; on April 1, 1794, several days before the brothers Frey, Schneider was beheaded "for misuse of power and unbelievable cruelty against peaceful citizens." In an open letter, four pages long, Frey appealed to the two opponents to shake hands and give each other the brotherly kiss of peace; he continued:

The fatherland demands complete renunciation of all private wishes; all its children have to annihilate themselves as individuals and dissolve into one great new whole. Forget anything of no concern to the whole, forget yourselves for the sake of all, forget man for mankind's sake. The war against Austria has begun. Her young monarch, having hardly ascended the throne, is about to begin his royal career in a stream of blood, to dip the hem of his purple coat in the heart-blood of his subjects in order to show them that he can roar like the lion and kill better than any animal. His altar is still steaming from the blood of the hundreds of thousands Joseph II sacrificed to his ambition when he made war on the princely Osman people who had lived with him in a holy peace alliance. . . He knew but the law of his whimsy; the voice of humanity did not reach his despotic ear, open only to his desires, his blustering passions.

Is this the same man who had praised Joseph II, his patron and benefactor, to high heaven as the "personification of love and goodness combined with manly

Moses Dobrushka, the Jacobin

strength"? The same who had enriched himself in the war against Turkey? Franz II becomes for him God's scourge:

Blood-covered youth, begin your gruesome calling, muster the hordes of your slaves; maybe you have been chosen to accomplish the holy job of mankind's salvation, for the despots themselves have to fulfill the achievement of universal freedom.

Of himself he says in this "outpouring of the heart":

I am a stranger in your lands, my maternal sky is far from here, but my heart beats fast at freedom's call, the most beautiful of the 18th century. I followed the beloved of mankind, an infant at her bosom, and now wallow in her full breasts, greedily drinking her milk, eating of her honey and refreshing my soul in an abundance of delight.

Here the enigma begins, because this is too beautiful to be true. Schoenfeld's membership with the Illuminates, together with Laveaux, Schneider, and Voss, and his correspondence with the latter show him already sympathizing with the revolution before coming to France. Therefore, the first act probably was preceded by a prologue. As a matter of fact, Georges Avenel begins the second volume of his biography of Anacharsis Cloots, the leader of the ultra-leftists and earliest advocate of a "permanent revolution," with the following passage:

At the same time that Frederick Wilhelm of God's grace threatened to engulf the city of the revolution in blood, posters appeared behind his back in the streets of Berlin, carrying the date of the first year of hope and universal liberation. They called upon

the Prussians: "Awake! This is the war of nations against kings!" The best Berliners secretly named as the author of these calls to insurrection the young and wealthy Austrian Baron Eschine Portock who, having been banished from Vienna, had just returned from France and—what audacity!—was about to publish his impressions of this journey. In the very midst of Prussian monarchy he dared to decorate the frontispiece of his book with a beautiful laurel-covered bonnet and bravely sign the preface with his Jacobin name: Junius Frey—in other words, Brutus, a free man.

It will be remembered that Junius Frey was unexplainably named Eschine Portock in the executioner's list in Paris, although the personal data leave no doubt about his identity. Jules Clarétie, the biographer of Camille Desmoulins, believes that it should not be too difficult to identify this patriotic foreigner and learn something more about his sister Léopoldine, allegedly one of the 74 "natural" children of Emperor Leopold II. Actually, Frey testified at his trial that he was chased out of Berlin as a Jacobin agitator, after having been hanged in effigy in Vienna and deprived of his fortune.

As evidence of Frey's revolutionary activity in Prussia, Avenel quotes a letter Frey wrote in Strasbourg on January 21, 1792, made public in the *Intimate Letters about France*, published the same year in Berlin (see the bibliographical note at end of the book). We quote from page 97: "The National Guards are mostly patriotic and democratic, which unfortunately means the same here. They really do not seem to fear the exterior enemy and do want war; they are only afraid of the aristocrats they will leave behind and speak of driving them all ahead of themselves."

Frey's presence in Strasbourg in January contradicts

his letter to Voss, according to which he only arrived there about the middle of March. The fact, however, that Leopold II was still alive in January, may be the key to the puzzle. The letter of January 21 could then be considered as a report about the fighting spirit of the French forces; there are other pieces of this kind among the *Intimate Letters*. Frey followed the Emperor's instructions until the latter's death on March 1, but then felt released from them. If he were now to prove his revolutionary zeal, nourished by his hatred for Franz II, he had better hide his previous stay in France. This was the first snare in which he got entrangled.

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Junius Frey,
Grandseigneur

For the time being, however, he felt safe, and in the company of his brother Emanuel, his sister Leopoldine, his son Joseph Franz, and Laveaux he went to Paris. Here the second act took place. His wife and two daughters having been left behind in Vienna, he passed his 13-year-old son off as 16 and made him join the French army, while he himself, with brother and sister, became a few years younger. (We will soon see for what purpose.) The 21-year-old Leopoldine Schoenfeld thus became the 16-year-old Léopoldine Frey, and in order to make it more credible, his own age decreased from 40 to 35, that of his brother, from 28 to 26.

They arrived in Paris on June 10, 1792, and the

same evening were introduced by Laveaux to the Jacobin club. Junius Frey immediately played the *grandseigneur* and acquired an elegant mansion in the rue d'Anjou. The police inventory lists as furnishings in the hall a bust of Brutus, an aquarium (with no fish), and a cage with eight canaries; on the walls, engravings of the oath in the *Jeu de Paume* and of the tombs of Marat and Lepeletier; on the clothes tree a Jacobin bonnet decorated with four golden acorns. A broad staircase led to the upper floor. In the drawing room, a mantelpiece with a marble clock and a cupid of Sèvres porcelain, flanked by two chandeliers; a large mirror from floor to ceiling; a mahogany dressing table; a piano; a couch; eight chairs upholstered with green-and-white striped silk. In the bedroom, upholstered with golden damask, a fourposter bed with yellow and white patterned curtains; a huge cupboard with a relief portrait of Cicero on a blue marble plaque; two easy chairs, etc. In another bedroom was a fourposter bed and crimson-red curtains, lined with white taffeta. Two more rooms, one lined with green taffeta, the other with blue silk, and so on. "Here one may find our Junius, pen in hand, dreaming of the rights of man or immersed in the works of Plutarch or Rousseau. His severe exterior and revolutionary attire . . . the philosophical haircut and the red cap on his savant head are to vouch for the purity of his revolutionary sentiments." Thus Robespierre described him sarcastically.

The house of the brothers Frey became a Jacobin center. They fought in the storming of the Tuileries on August 10, 1792, in which Junius was slightly wounded; the solemn proclamation of the Republic took place "in the light of torches donated by the citizen Frey." Armed with a letter of recommendation from the Strasbourg

Jacobins, the brothers applied for French citizenship. On August 26, 1792, the National Convention bestowed honorary citizenship on a number of foreigners, among them Schiller and Klopstock, and the deputy Boussac moved to extend it also to Wieland, Voss, and the brothers Frey:

The famous Wieland of Weimar, Saxonia, the learned author of many German writings, has served mankind well, probably to the same extent for Germany as Voltaire for France. In his periodical *Mercury* he takes an energetic stand for the success of the Revolution, trying to spread this idea among his countrymen. The famous Voss of Eutin, Holstein, has likewise deserved well of both mankind and France. This important writer combines a thorough knowledge of the older literature with the purest philosophy; a friend of mankind, as well as of freedom and equality, he does not miss an occasion to praise the French Revolution in his classic-poetic hymns, published in Strasbourg. No less deserving for the cause of mankind are the brothers Frey, Junius and Emanuel, renowned German writers. Out of pure love for the French Revolution and selfless patriotism, they left house and home seven months ago to settle in France in these stormy times in order to share the sufferings of the true patriots and, upon the success of the Revolution, to rejoice with them at the destruction of kings and kingdoms. They have voluntarily renounced their aristocratic titles in order to live in France as good citizens and *sansculottes* and have not ceased recommending to their countrymen the advantages of our unforgettable Revolution. The two brothers, enjoying the reputation of eager patriots, have been gladly accepted as members by the Strasbourg Jacobin society. The older Frey established several patriotic clubs in the environs of Strasbourg and instructed the population about the advantages of the new constitution. The two gentlemen

refrain from publicizing their truly patriotic deeds, but could easily point to many proofs of their noble minds. They could submit their patriotic writings to rigorous scrutiny; they could call the attention of the friends of France to the many benefits they rendered to the Confederates; they could recall the great dangers they exposed themselves to on August 10.

The bill was drafted by Junius Frey; the draft is preserved among his papers in Paris and contains corrections by his hand. Compared with what he had to say about Wieland and Voss, his self-assessment is certainly not an exercise in understatement and modesty.

Originally the bill was to be introduced by the Alsatian Ruehl, and not the Provençal Boussac. Ruehl knew the Freys personally, but his name does not even appear among the supporters of the bill. Was there already something brewing against them? Whatever the reason, the bill did not come to a vote, and the brothers made another attempt. The day of the proclamation of the Republic, September 21, 1792, they adopted a war orphan and agreed to support a blind old woman whose husband had been killed in the storming of the Tuileries, and to pay her and several war veterans a pension of 200 francs each. Any of these acts of charity would have entitled them to citizenship, but only after a year's residence, and for this it was too soon.

In order to finance the war, the government sold the properties of the aristocratic refugees, and the brothers Frey acquired three of these "national estates" for 210,000 francs: the palaces of the Count de Montfermail and of Madame de Cavagnac in Paris and the monastery of Chelles (near Meaux) with church and park. They did not fail to mention these "patriotic deeds" at their

trial. Referring to his experience in supplying the Austrian army, Junius Frey offered the French war department his services as a broker for the shipment of arms and wheat via Venice and submitted a plan for drawing Turkey into the war against Austria. He bought up the cargoes of captured enemy vessels and, on the side, loaned money at high rates. A number of German emigrants lived in his house. The expensive household with frequent receptions and banquets ran up a monthly bill of 4,000 to 5,000 francs. Where did all that money come from?

Junius answered this question at the trial: "My wife is the adopted daughter of a wealthy man. She has two million at her disposal and sends me money on demand." This is not entirely correct, for we know that the "wealthy man" had disinherited his adopted daughter. It also contradicts Frey's assertion that his fortune had been confiscated and his family harassed by the Austrians. Frey's agent, Johann Friedrich Diedrichsen, testified that Frey's wife continued to live in grand style in Vienna and that her fortune had not been touched. Actually, Wilhelmine Schoenfeld lived unmolested in Vienna until her death in 1801; her two daughters married into the Austrian aristocracy. If she did send money to her husband, she could only have done so in a roundabout way. As a matter of fact, he received several remittances through a bank in Hamburg.

The above mentioned Diedrichsen (or Dietrichstein, as he is named in some German documents) was in charge of the Frey finances. He accompanied the brothers on their journey to Germany and joined them in Paris after a side trip to London. He became acquainted with them in Vienna and possibly earlier in Bruenn. (Among the Bruenn nobility there was a family Dietrich-

stein in whose house Joseph II was a frequent guest.) After having worked for seven years in a Viennese bank, he entered the service of the Frey family, living with and completely dependent on them. He had a sexual relationship with the younger brother, and Emanuel Frey played with the 50-year-old man like a capricious diva, shutting him out at night, withholding his salary, and engaging in similar torments. Diedrichsen once turned to the older brother for money because he "had nothing left to bite," asking him not to tell anybody, "least of all your brother." In a long letter, dated Berlin, February 17, 1792, he implored the latter to give him his freedom, and humiliated himself by begging for money "because it is so easy for you to get some; you only have to reach out with your slender arm for that universal metal of metals, and you enjoy being a spend-thrift anyhow."

The unfortunate man was taken out of the Swiss diligence and shared the fate of his masters for the sole reason that he was their employee.

28

*Junius Frey,
Philosopher
of the Revolution*

Throughout all these hectic dealings, Junius Frey found the time to write a 250-page social philosophy, *Philosophie sociale*, which he published in the summer of 1793 and dedicated to the French people. In the preface he

says he had worked on it for a year with no intention of publishing it—nothing being more hateful to him; but yielding to the pressure of some friends who read it, he changed his mind. The book carries as a motto Alexander Pope's much-quoted words "The proper study of mankind is man." It is a philosophic-political treatise on the defense of democracy through the seizure of power by a minority—in other words, a justification of minority rule. The starting point is Rousseau's statement that "every people has the right to change its laws, even the best ones, and if it hurts itself thereby—who is to stop it?" This makes Rousseau, the benefactor of mankind, its worst enemy. For the logical consequence of this idea, says Frey, is anarchy and permanent revolution (*un système désorganisateur et perpétuellement révolutionnaire*); and this would lead to the tyrannic rule of a mad majority, against which the common sense minority could only defend itself by seizing power.

The question arises now of how to defend democracy. Frey looks for the answer to the history of religion, every social order being some sort of religion, with its own theology. He directs his main criticism at Moses, whose laws live on in Christianity and Mohammedanism. Moses knew the truth, but instead of revealing it to his people, he burdened them with laws that still oppress mankind. (This recalls a saying of Frank in Offenbach on November 25, 1790: "The children of Israel were given only the Mosaic laws, which are a burden and mortify the people.") His knowledge of physics and chemistry should have enabled Moses to unmask and repeat the tricks of the Egyptian sorcerers. He should have told the children of Israel at Mount Sinai: "Approach! For the fire you see and the divine thunder you hear are nothing but the work of my own and my

helpers' hands. I am going to show you the natural causes of these phenomena. Let us work for the perfection of these tools of human happiness and not allow them to be abused by a small caste for their own selfish interests, lest some day man will get tired of culture and long for a return to his natural status." Had he told them the truth, what a people would he have made of them in the forty years he had for it! A masterpiece of art and culture, and not this mess of fact and fiction, of light and darkness, of superstition and stubborn clinging to false concepts, which still poison the culture of even the most enlightened nations. Christ and Mohammed are not to blame, for they built on the foundations laid by Moses. Christ assumed the separation of State and Church to be the prerequisite of freedom and equality; but his teachings degenerated in the hands of his successors, who made a farce of the gospel. Like Socrates, the first martyr to common sense, he was sentenced to death. Since then darkness has prevailed on earth, despite the revolutions of Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin, Spinoza, Hobbes, Leibniz, and Locke. The immortal Kant had to come and overthrow all existing systems. His metaphysical language is unintelligible to the ordinary reader, but protects him from the hemlock cup and the cross. No man ever wrote with such courage, never before has falsehood been better exposed, never before truth put into its rights with such determination. (This sounds like an allusion to Kant's sympathies for the French Revolution which he maintained even at the height of the Terror. Incidentally, Kant took up an idea of Rousseau's when he said that no government had the right to make their people happy against their will, without Frey branding him "an enemy of mankind.") Socrates, Christ and Kant are Frey's stars

in the sky of human bliss: "Turn to them, you sages of the world, make it your foremost task to overthrow and disorganize this system of falsehood, lead us back to nature and let us draw from the well of a new culture!"

Four-fifths of the book are devoted to showing the way to preserve freedom. Nothing easier than that! The people have only to watch their elected representatives not to stray from the principles of the constitution. Anyone voting three times against them automatically excludes himself from the people's representative bodies. Supreme law is the preservation of the individual in freedom and equality. Nobody may be deprived of this prerogative because this would nullify the social contract. The individual, in this case, would no longer owe anything to society and be entitled to rebellion and revenge. On the other hand, any violation of the constitution is punishable by death, even if it is done in the name of freedom of the press, freedom of speech, or political and religious tolerance.

It is needless to point out the weaknesses and contradictions of these "freedom guarantees" which open every door to arbitrariness and tyranny. In the Jacobin club all were jubilant. All but Robespierre. Did he feel threatened in his role as philosopher of the Revolution or did he have other misgivings? Chabot, the most powerful man after Robespierre, acclaimed the author as "the greatest thinker of Europe," equal to Socrates and Jesus, and commissioned him to write a pamphlet against the moderate Girondists. Frey delivered the 70-page booklet "within 24 hours". He called it *Les Aventures politiques du Père Nicaise ou l'anti-fédéraliste* (*The Political Adventures of Father Blockhead or the Anti-Federalist*), and it pleased the ruling Montagnards so much that they had 20,000 copies printed. It is a violent

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attack on the Girondists, these "anarchists and destructive elements" (*désorganiseurs*, a pet word of Frey which he scatters left and right, in praise and reproach). The pamphlet contributed to the condemnation and execution of the Girondist leaders.

The rabbinical candidate Moses Dobrushka had come a long way from Frankism, indeed. And the end was near.

29

The Last Act

At this point Léopoldine Frey entered upon the scene, marking the beginning of the third and last act. What had made her come to Paris? Love of the Revolution? Admiration of the great brother? He offered her in marriage to the former Capucin monk and "first revolutionary of Europe," François Chabot, with a yearly allowance of 4,000 francs, free room and board for five years, and a dowry of 200,000 francs payable within that time. As a member of the executive branch of the revolutionary regime, the all powerful Security Committee, Chabot was in control of the political police. He was an arch demagogue who appeared at the National Convention in frayed trousers, wooden clogs, and an open shirt which bared his hairy chest. Otherwise, however, he dressed like a dandy; the police found in his home twelve silk tailcoats and forty pairs of trousers of the finest English cloth—some wardrobe for a *sansculotte*! From father confessor to member of the

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National Convention, he was noted for his debauchery.

This individual was Frey's choice for a scheme of which we will soon learn more, and the bait was Léopoldine. In order to whet Chabot's appetite, he passed her off as a virgin of sixteen for whose hand several millionaires had asked. Chabot married her, but later tried to extricate himself from the affair by claiming that the brothers had forced her upon him at dagger point (*ils me tenaient l'épée dans les reins*); besides, Chabot claimed, the marriage contract was void because the bride was a minor. Frey did not hesitate to disown his wife by promising Chabot that the marriage to Léopoldine would make him the head of the Frey family "because I would remain a bachelor and my brother is only half a man incapable of having children" (*mon frère n'est qu'un demi-homme incapable de faire des enfants*). The newlyweds moved into the house in the rue d'Anjou after Chabot had paid off his housekeeper, Julie Berger, who was expecting his child; he paid her 1,200 francs—out of Frey's pocket. Whether Léopoldine became an accomplice to Frey's scheming of her own free will or out of obedience for her brother (Chabot said she trembled before him) was her secret; and what he had in mind, his. In a petition to the authorities, he claimed that all he wanted was "to continue my peaceful existence as a patriotic writer, helping to forge the weapons for the defense of the Republic." But was this really "all"?

Frey frequented the Café Corazza, the meeting place of German emigrants, and there met some people who knew more about him than he liked. There was the baron Frederick Trenck, the lover of the sister of Frederick the Great; having escaped the Prussian prison, he had come to Paris to try his luck. He knew Frey from

Vienna and asked him for some money and a recommendation for admission to the Jacobin club. Frey refused and managed to have him rejected by the Jacobins. Trenck complained about it to one Marguerie, who considered it his patriotic duty to report to the police what he had learned on that occasion; namely, that Frey used to be the protégé of Joseph II, had gained the favors of Leopold II by prostituting his two sisters and, rotten as he was, did not even blush about it. Very much upset, Marguerie hurried early in the morning to Chabot (he found him in bed with a friend). Chabot calmed him down: He knew Frey well, and if the latter were an Austrian spy, one could not imagine a worse one, for he had developed a plan to frustrate any plots of the Austrian court. Moreover, he had been banished from Vienna for pressing Leopold II to repay some millions he owed him. On the other hand, the story about his sisters may be true, Frey being unscrupulous in regard to women; in Vienna, however, such matters were considered irrelevant. Having reassured Marguerie, Chabot apparently got in touch with Frey because the next morning Trenck was arrested and later executed as a Prussian spy. While in jail, he made the following "Deposition about the cause of my imprisonment":

I used to know a certain Jew by the name of Dobrushka who came from Moravia to Vienna as a pimp for his two sisters, who infected and ruined the young cavaliers and were publicly chased out of town and country. Emperor Joseph used this Jew as a spy after he had acquired the honorable name of Schoenfeld. Like everybody, I knew him under this name. . . and learned of his having free access also to Emperor Leopold. Four months ago my wife wrote me from Vienna to be on my guard, this cunning Jew being in Paris, doubtless entertaining

some evil designs on behalf of the Emperor. . . . I tried to find him, but could not until some Viennese told me of his living in the rue d'Anjou, spending lots of money and playing an important role with the Jacobins. He had changed his name to Frey and married his sister, the famous virgin of Vienna[?], to the deputy Chabot. I went immediately to see him, and there he was, the same Jew Dobrushka, the Emperor's spy, who told me on that occasion that it was he who had prevented my admission to the Jacobins.

A friend of Georg Forster, the Mainz physician Georg Wedekind, who lived with the Freys, hastened to declare Trenck insane, but Frey found it nevertheless appropriate to insert the following notice in the Paris press:

The family of Léopoldine Frey-Minaires [?] has its origins in Bohemia and is of the Jewish faith and not, as has been alleged, of that of the Moravian Brethren. The old Frey made considerable transactions for the Queen of Hungary during the Seven Years' War, as a result of which the Viennese court owed him two million. . . . As the Empress was anxious to spread the Catholic faith in her domains, she moved Léopoldine's father to abandon the Jewish faith and adopt the Roman Catholic one. In lieu of payment, she granted him the fine manor of Found-Schomberg near Bruenn, valued at more than two million. It was there that the charming Léopoldine was born. Her father provided her and her two brothers with an excellent education. After the outbreak of the Revolution all three came to Paris to breathe the air of freedom, and here Chabot came to know the citizen Léopoldine.

This is a complete fabrication. "Old Frey" never was baptized, he carried the name of Salomon Dobrushka

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all his life, and the court did not owe him millions, if anything. Junius also spread the tale that Empress Maria Theresa was the godmother of Léopoldine and had traveled from Vienna to Bruenn for her baptism. Actually, Léopoldine was baptized in 1791 at the age of twenty, not in Bruenn, but in Vienna, at a time when Maria Theresa had been dead for eleven years. If Junius really cared for his beloved sister, the darling of the family, it would have occurred to him that he could only hurt her by this kind of falsehood. And if, as rumors went, she was indeed a daughter of Leopold II, that would have made her a niece of Marie Antoinette, and—*parbleu!*—Chabot would have married into the royal family! What did he intend by spreading such tales? Pure braggadocio? Chabot, meanwhile, beaming with joy, announced his betrothal in the Jacobin club, boasting of his dowry and pointing to the patriotism of his future in-laws who had helped him to uncover the Girondist plot. He invited everybody to the wedding, which was to take place before a notary at eight in the morning so that he could be on time for the opening of the Convention at nine. Icy silence followed the invitation. Outside they talked about "Chabot's Austrian."

With the outbreak of the hostilities, all foreigners had been put under police surveillance and later expelled from Paris. The government, of course, had its informers among the German emigrants, and one of them, Johann Baptist Wilhelm, found out the following about the brothers Frey:

There dwell two Austrians in the rue d'Anjou, number 19, who pretend to be arch-patriots. They do not mind spending in order to avoid suspicion, and they are clever enough to voice only patriotism in their writings. They call themselves the brothers

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Frey. . . and are Jews by birth. Tormented by the ambition to achieve the peerage, they had themselves baptized and Maria Theresa bestowed upon them the title of Nobles von Schoenfeld. They are very intelligent politicians and write and speak with extraordinary patriotism. They frequently entertain many deputies and Chabot, with his mistress, are often seen in their company. These fellows are extremely shrewd and understand how to worm anything out of their guests without arousing their suspicion (*Diese Pursche seynd aber so pfiffig, dass sie ihren Gästen die Würmer aus der Nase ziehen, ohne dass sich diese etwas vermuthen.*) . . . It is obvious that these immoral fellows are first-class spies in the pay of Prussia and/or Austria. They squandered all they had in Vienna, leaving nothing but debts. They belong to the Jacobin society, and not enough that they mingle with everybody in order to ferret out information, they have salaried Jews and Christians circulating about town and reporting to them all that happens. . . Wisdom requires that all measures made necessary by the political condition of France be adopted against these enigmatic people.

J. B. Wilhelm
Paris le 10. Brumaire 1793
in 8. rue d'Anjou n. 19
Auguste

(One does not have to be a graphologist to infer the character of this fine gentleman from the conceited flourish of his signature.)

More reports about the brothers Frey came pouring in. The representative of the Nuremberg Jacobins, G. Haussmann, reported the following data based on information gained from Diedrichsen (he calls him Dietrichstein):

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The Freys are born Jews by the name of Tropushka from Moravia, ennobled von Schoenfeld. The older Frey is married; his wife and two daughters live in Vienna. He enlisted his 16-year-old son into the revolutionary army, passing him off as his nephew. As to their fortune, it is only known that they have great debts in Germany. . . A short acquaintance makes one realize that these two fellows are the shrewdest schemers there are.

Now the storm broke in the Jacobin club. Following a heated debate, a resolution was passed declaring a counterrevolutionary anyone who, since 1789, had married a foreigner, in particular an Austrian, and who wore clothes of imported material. This was clearly all meant for Chabot, and he was immediately expelled from the club, followed shortly thereafter by his brothers-in-law. An official inquiry into the "Affair Chabot" was initiated which yielded disastrous information:

The brothers Frey have adopted this name in order to escape their creditors in Germany, to whom they owe great amounts of money. . . They are Jews by birth who were baptized and ennobled as von Schoenfeld. With the exception of one sister who did not want to abandon Judaism, the whole family embraced Christianity. Two of the brothers serve with the Austrian army in the war against the French Republic. The older Frey left his wife and children in Vienna where one of his sisters takes care of them; she, in turn, is being kept by a wealthy baron. Said Frey was used by Joseph II for the purpose of espionage, the children of Israel, as is well known, being superior to all other nations in this occupation. . . These gentlemen arrived 20 months ago in France, coming from Berlin. They started in Strasbourg and, with the help of some intriguers and money, smuggled themselves into the

Junius Frey, the Speculator

Jacobins, who knew nothing of their moral and political past. . . In one word, these Freys are immoral egoists, full of tricks and schemes, who, disguised as patriots, serve the enemies of the Republic and are paid by them. In the light of these facts, which are beyond any doubt, there is good cause to assume that the two scoundrels sought the connection with Chabot in order to avoid the attention of the police and the better to achieve their goal.

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Junius Frey, the Speculator

What was their goal? Neither this nor the preceding accusations tell us anything about it beyond allegations and malicious gossip. Chabot spilled it all. He was caught off guard and started retracting and contradicting himself, which caused the prosecutor to have the house in the rue d'Anjou searched. When the agents arrived there, they were greeted by Chabot and the brothers Frey; all papers were neatly placed in evidence. The agents found them to be of the purest patriotism, with true love for liberty and equality. This is, at least, what the protocol says, which evidently was composed by Junius Frey and bears his and his brother's signatures. No incriminating materials were found. Apparently it did not occur to the searchers that these could have been removed or destroyed.

Chabot knew well he would not get off the hook that easily. He hurried to Robespierre, the only one who could

save him now, and let him in on a conspiracy he had uncovered by lending a hand to it: With the help of bribed deputies and a forged resolution of the National Convention, the shares of the *Compagnie des Indes*, the French East-India Company, were to be made practically worthless and bought up by the conspirators—hence, a large-scale corruption affair as it has occurred many times without heads rolling. Robespierre remained silent. Chabot thereupon handed to the Security Committee the sum of 100,000 francs he claimed he had received for bribing the deputies. He did not say where the money came from, only where it was to go, naming the deputies who were to get it, and was arrested with them. Now, at last, Robespierre raised his voice against the foreign agents “who, in the guise of a glowing patriotism, have managed to infiltrate the revolutionary committees.” He did not mention names, but everybody could say for himself whom he meant by the following description:

Ever since the first days of the Revolution two scoundrels have been living in Paris whose art of dissimulation makes them perfect tools in the hands of the tyrants, the two biggest rogues Austria has ever thrown up among us (*les deux plus habiles scélérats que l'Autriche ait vomis parmi nous*). One of them has added to his assumed surname the name of the founder of freedom in Rome.

However, until November 23, 1793, the brothers Frey and their sister remained free. It was never established whether the bribe money came from them. Yet it may be assumed that Junius Frey was involved in the affair of the *Compagnie des Indes*, even to the extent of having contrived it. The war made money transfers from Vienna practically impossible and Junius was in

desperate need of cash. Some witnesses who had been frequent guests at his home testified that at first he displayed great wealth (*on y remarquait un air de dépense très imposant*), but recently was cutting a poor figure (*faisait figure assez mince*). In the course of 1793, matters must have deteriorated badly, because Junius had Diedrichsen pawn four watches, a golden box, a ring, and a set of table silver. Expecting some money from Vienna, he presented two drafts of 1,000 florins each for discount in Hamburg, committing thereby a felony as one of the notes was drawn on a nonexisting bank (all in the name of poor Diedrichsen).

Meanwhile, from his cell Chabot flooded the government with petitions, a last will, and a 60-page plea in his defense; he sent long letters to Robespierre, with the single result that Léopoldine (*ma chère Poldine*) was released from jail. However, she had to leave Paris and moved to nearby Boulogne. Chabot also came to the aid of her brothers, although in a rather peculiar way, writing to the Committee of Public Welfare:

I thank providence that you have at last made up your minds to jail my two brothers-in-law. I consider them as spotless as the sun; they are honest Jacobins who, better than any security committees, have helped me to unmask the agents of Austria and Prussia. Otherwise one would have to regard them as the biggest hypocrites there are.

A letter to Robespierre, however, sounds quite different:

My in-laws are spies? How am I to know? Am I a clairvoyant? I was not given the time to find out for myself whether they really were traitors. If they are innocent, set them free; if not, behead them and I would willingly lend a hand. But do not blame me for their crimes!

As for the brothers themselves, they could only profess their good faith, the act of accusation being presented to them only during the trial. In one of their petitions they claim:

We are Jacobins, truly dedicated to the principles of the indivisible Republic. When Sophocles was accused by his own children, he read to the Athenians some parts of his works and was declared innocent. Like that Athenian sage, I refer to my *Philosophie sociale* in which there is not a single line that would not conjure the rage of the tyrants upon my head. There is no refuge outside of France for the author of such a work.

This and another petition remaining unanswered, the brothers asked at least to be listened to, as they knew of many things of interest to the Convention. Junius pleaded by mentioning his rheumatism and his "only" sister, left behind sick and bedridden. When this plea was not acted upon either, the brothers apparently resigned themselves to their fate, while Chabot tried without success to commit suicide.

On April 3, 1794, they all appeared before the revolutionary tribunal together with Danton, who furiously objected to it. (Stalin adopted a similar practice during the Moscow trials of the 1930s, seating ordinary criminals and speculators among the political defendants.) The prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville had to separate the defendants into two groups, the Dantonists who were accused of the attempted overthrow of the Republic, and the group involved in the affair of the *Compagnie des Indes*, including the brothers Frey. The act of accusation calls them "ex-barons and agents of both England[?] and the Austrian cabinet, disguised as revolutionary patriots. In order to make people believe in their love of freedom, they pretended to have been hanged

in effigy in Vienna and their property confiscated." (One of the jurors, the young painter Topino-Lebrun, later himself a victim of the Terror, kept a notebook during the trial in which he wrote that Emanuel Frey, at that point, indignantly protested against ever having been hanged or persecuted: *J'ai ne point été ni pendu ni persécuté*). "Nevertheless," the act of accusation goes on, "they found the means to give their sister a dowry of 200,000 francs in order to induce Chabot to marry a foreign woman of the class proscribed under the reign of freedom [the aristocracy]. Never before have criminals spread their nets with greater baseness and impudence, never before have conspirators bared the true objectives of their machinations with less shame." The judgment, however, dropped the charge of espionage, but found the defendants guilty of a conspiracy to defame the National Convention by bribing some of its members and thus bring about its dissolution.

During the two-day trial the prosecutor mentioned the brothers only once, while inveighing against Chabot for having allied himself by marriage "to those Austrian Jews." Toward the end of the trial, with not much time left (the prosecutor had already set the time of the execution), they were briefly interrogated. As may be recalled, when asked where their money had come from, Junius said from his wife. And asked why he had come to France, Emanuel answered: "To enjoy the freedom promised by the French. I followed my brother like a son follows his father. [Topino-Lebrun noted here: *J'étais plutôt l'enfant que le frère*.] I do not regret having come and am ready to die with him."

This was all. On April 5 they were sentenced to death and, that same afternoon, together with Danton, Chabot, and the others, executed on the Place de la Révolution, today Place de la Concorde.

Alone on the empty stage remained, after six months of marriage, the young widow Léopoldine Chabot, née Frey, with her 14-year-old nephew Joseph. Still claiming to be sixteen, she implored the Convention to have pity on her youthful age and let "the lamentable remnants of an unfortunate family return to Paris." Helpless and destitute, she stands alone in the world, with no experience whatsoever. The little her brother left her went to his and Chabot's creditors. "What a dowry! Good heavens!" (*Quel dot! Juste ciel!*)

She received permission to go to Paris, but only for some clothing and utensils. Her last sign of life is a petition to the chairman of the Convention in which she asked for an answer to her previous petitions, concluding: "The light of justice shines for all! Relying solely on this claim, we beg for a prompt decision on our fate or at the least an assurance that we are damned forever to carry the guilt of our near ones. We bewail the misfortune of our birth and resign ourselves to the sentence of the Last Judgment!"

We do not know what became of her. She probably perished in the turmoil of the Revolution and is said to have died in 1795. According to a letter in the possession of the family Chabot, written in 1874, she returned to Vienna. According to another source she married the Prussian envoy to Paris, Count Sandoz-Rollin, in 1800. But the marriage license issued by the Prussian government does not give the name of the bride, who, therefore, may have been her sister Bluemele (that is, Theresa Maria Josepha Eleanora von Schoenfeld), who died in Paris in 1808. When and why she came to Paris, and whether she found her sister still alive, we do not know.

Epilogue

Thus the curtain falls on the triple life of Moses Dobrushka-Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld-Junius Brutus Frey, a person not deserving history's attention, in the words of J.-F. Robinet, the historian of the Dantonists. Posterity was of divided opinion. The French historians Mathiez, Boland and Lenôtre considered him an adventurer and spy, Lenôtre especially not holding back his anti-Semitic sentiments: "This German Jew was far from sticking out his head for an idea; all he wanted was money, and for that he had the nose of a track-hound. Hypocritical, servile, of pliant character, he played his part, whether subservient or arrogant, with undeniable talent, although somewhat clumsily." For Léon Kahn, Frey was an innocent bystander who got caught by the machinery of the Revolution; and for Avenel and Clarétie he was a true revolutionary patriot who fell victim to Chabot's machinations. This opinion is also shared by Kretschmann in his aforementioned eulogy on the brothers Frey. Robinet considers them innocent (*ils ne furent convaincus de rien*); they had allied themselves by marriage with Chabot, but this was no crime. He ranks them among the many speculators and adventurers who had come to Paris to enrich themselves. In the Danton trial they were assigned the parts of supporting actors to make the alleged conspiracy from

abroad more colorful and credible. Georg Büchner takes the same view in his play *Danton's Death*. Gershom Scholem considers Frey an unusual personality and true Frankist: half Jew and half Christian; half Cabbalist and half reformer; half Jacobin and half spy, who got entangled in his own ropes and took his secret with him to the grave. Egon Erwin Kisch, the prolific Prague reporter, calls him a most colorful and most disastrous adventurer "who jumped from the Talmud into German literature, from the ghetto into the Theresianum, from uncle Popper to brother-in-law Chabot, from Catholicism to atheism, who took Elke Joss with him into the world of Austrian aristocracy and his sister and brother into the world of the French Revolution, and there laid axe to the foundations of the masonry that fell on him and buried him."

Junius Frey was all this and more, and the secret he thought he took with him was "the misfortune of his birth." He wanted to escape from it, and this could only make for a sorry end, a typical Jewish destiny of his time. From the stuffiness of the ghetto he wanted to break out, that ghetto which, in 1822, made an appalling impression on Heine: "I shudder at the thought of the first sight of a Polish village near Mesritch, mostly inhabited by Jews. The weekly paper of W., cooked to a pulp, could not have a more nauseating effect on me than the sight of these tattered figures of filth. . . . The nausea, however, gave way to a feeling of pity as soon as I took a closer look at the living conditions of these people and saw the pigsty hovels in which they dwell, jabber, pray, haggle, and—decay miserably." That ghetto from which there was no escape—one could not even buy one's way out—except by way of make-

believe and feint. Within the ghetto walls the Jew had something to hold on to, some ground to stand on, tightly limited though it was. Money-lending and related businesses like tax-farming and army-purveying were practically the only occupations left to him. They gave him a position of power in the ghetto which compensated for the humiliations that awaited him outside, where he remained the despised pariah, no matter how rich. He employed a host of agents and buyers; and the ghetto, from the rabbi to the *schnorrer*, drew its livelihood from him. He ruled over it with an iron hand and made it a point to represent it before those in power. The ghetto people looked up to their "princes" with pride and awe as though they were real princes, equal to those on the outside.

There was something to it. Taking advantage of the close connections the Jewish communities maintained among themselves over and beyond national boundaries, the Jewish financiers disposed, long before the time of railroad and telegraph, of an international communications network, such as only the Church could command. Undoubtedly, the transition from feudal economy to capitalism would have come anyhow, but their prime importance for the development of the modern credit system cannot be denied. It was perhaps their position within the ghetto that made the Rothschilds and other Jewish financiers (like Frey's father-in-law, Joachim Popper) never abandon their faith and indignantly reject baptism as a preposterous idea. For the non-Jew—that is, the person belonging to no religious denomination—there was no place in this world. Holland was the only exception, but even there one had to be a Spinoza to dare it. The Spi-

nozt Lessing grasped the nature of the Jewish problem better than anybody else when he said (in a letter to Mendelssohn) that it could be solved only in a world with no Jews or Christians—a statement similar to that of the young Hegelian, Karl Marx: “when the Christians will cease to be Jews,” meaning never.

Under the given conditions, the ghetto runaway led a sham existence, doomed to failure even before he tried to succeed in a world which had made cheating mandatory for his survival and had taught him not to try being himself. Moses Dobrushka, the ghetto Jew, tried it as a Frankist, pseudo-Jew, pseudo-Christian, subservient courtier, amateurish poet, pseudo-Freemason, and revolutionary philosopher—only to remain “a twig on the withered branch of the tree of humanity.” In compulsive overcompensation for his Jewish inferiority feelings, he always had to be one step ahead of everybody, only to be thrown back to his Jewishness, even if he did not know of the malicious reports pointing to him as a Jew. And thus he remained, whether Catholic, Freemason, or Jacobin, the eternal renegade, driven to be holier than thou, better than the best.

The French Revolution, with one stroke, put an end to this nightmare. The Jews were given their political freedom, unconditionally, no questions asked, no baptism required for admission to European civilization; and the young Jews of Bayonne, in a symbolic act, stormed out of the ghetto, attacked the cathedral (it still bears the traces), and triumphantly named the ghetto *Quartier Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. True, freedom for Jews did not last, but for a moment in Europe's history, it looked as though it might be possible for a Jew to live the way he was, with no disguise or cheating. It was

Epilogue

perhaps this feeling that made Emanuel Frey say he came to France “to enjoy the freedom *promised* by the French.” For Junius it was too late, he had to go on, dragging his brother with him. With all his enthusiasm for the Revolution, and we have no reason to doubt it, he could not equal Robespierre, the incorruptible, and content himself with a scantily furnished room. Chained to the lead ball of his past, he was unable to rid himself of his second nature. All he could do was add one more to his roles and impress people with glamor and money, only to perish in the end as a speculator and charlatan. And therein lies his tragedy.

It would be idle to lose oneself in a guessing game as to what could have become of Frank and Frey in the twentieth century. Maybe another Emin Pasha, alias Isaac Schnitzer from Upper Silesia, the well-known explorer and champion of German colonialism in Africa, who was killed by slave traders; maybe another Trebitsch-Lincoln, alias Abraham Schwarz, Hungarian born, baptized member of the House of Commons, British spy, press-secretary to Wolfgang Kapp (leader of the German nationalist *putsch*, March 1920), Tibetan monk, and Japanese agent; maybe even a naturalized U.S. Secretary of State—there will always be finaglers making history. Besides, the flight from the ghetto has changed by now into a flight back to ghetto mentality by *Chabad* and other neo-Hassidic groups with their weird, guru-like appeal to American intellectuals, aided and abetted by the sentimental writings of Bashevis Singer and Elie Wiesel.

Never mind, in their time Frank and Frey had to become what they were. Today they would not have to. And this thought somehow reconciles us with them and brings them

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closer to being understood by Jews and non-Jews alike. For they were Jews, and their revolt against their fate and against the world was bound to fail, no matter what they did or did not do.

The Memories of Moses Porges about the Frankist Court in Offenbach

The writer of the following notes was the second of the three sons of Gabriel Porges of Prague: David (1770-1845), Moses (1781-1879) and Leopold (1785-1869). He apparently wrote the "Memories" during the last years of his life. I have tried to preserve the somewhat awkward style of the German original. My own comments are in square brackets.

A. M.

I was born on December 22, 1781. My father Morenu Raw [Hebrew honorary title meaning our teacher, master] Gabriel Porges, a very learned man in Jewish knowledge. A virtuous, righteous man. He was no stranger to the Christian sciences, little known to Jewish scholars at the time. He was a good-natured, fine man who never punished his children physically. My mother was a good-hearted woman who minded the business, the family's livelihood. Father did not pay much attention to his business. He studied and gave lectures. The business was a manufacture of Rossoli [a spiced Italian liqueur] and sale of spirits. As it was the custom at the time, I was instructed in Hebrew and Bible translation. From the age of seven I attended the Jewish-German school until I was eleven. Because of my lively disposition, I was not very conscientious about going to school. Instead, I spent my time bathing in the Moldau river in summer, playing on the ice in winter. After leaving school I wanted to study, but my brother, then a student of philosophy, was against it and prevailed upon my parents to refuse. So I was left without occupation or education. The kindness of my mother enabled me to buy some books of Lessing, Mendelssohn and Schiller, but also of Cramer, Spies, and the like [writers of

popular adventure stories], in addition to some works on history and geography, and I owe my little erudition to this self-instruction.

When I was past 14, my beloved father called me into his room and asked me whether I believed that the Torah, as revealed to us, contained all there was to know for our spiritual welfare and bliss here and yonder. I had been a faithful Jew up to that time, although I had some doubts and scruples. He said solemnly: "There exists, next to the Torah, a holy book, the *Zohar*, which reveals to us the mysteries that are only hinted at in the Torah; it summons us to spiritual perfection and shows us how to achieve it. There are many fine men devoted to the new teaching, with salvation from spiritual and political oppression being their purpose, their aim. God has shown himself in recent as well as in earlier times. You, my son, shall be instructed in it. Mister Noe Kassowitz, one of ours, will be your teacher." Shedding tears, I kissed my father's hand and left as if intoxicated, feeling elated at belonging to a higher, nobler class of men.

There is no need to go into detail about the instruction by K. The important thing is that he told me of a messenger of God by the name of Jacob Frank, also known as the Czenstochover, Polish by birth, who, after having spent some time in Turkey, revealed himself as the Messiah, gathering around himself many renowned Jewish scholars who believed in him and adored and worshipped him. He acquired a huge following, which he was able to captivate by prophesying and promising a spiritual and physical salvation and especially life eternal. The authorities, having learned thereof, sentenced him to be confined to a fortress, and he spent quite some time in the fortress of Czenstochau. Released at last, he converted to Christianity, his family and most of his followers with him, in order to liberate the Shekhina (the holy ghost) from Roman bondage. Some time later he appeared with pomp and circumstance under the name of Baron Frank in Prossnitz, Moravia, his own bodyguards surrounding him on his promenades. It is well known that Emperor Joseph II visited him there. From Prossnitz he went to Offenbach where he moved into a house of his own,

with a great number of followers, mostly Poles. Conversion to a different religion is an important step, with lasting influence for the life of the individual concerned. Taken out of conviction, this step should be regarded as respectable; taken out of the delusion of a passion which can be only satisfied this way, it must end in misfortune and bitter regret, once the passion is gone and replaced by calm reasoning. After his death his daughter, named Gevira [Hebrew for power], assumed the leadership of the believers; she was no longer young and had her two brothers, Roch and Joseph, at her side.

These revelations made an enormous impression upon me, a lively, truth-seeking youngster. I was seized by a strong longing for the holy encampment in Offenbach; I found no peace and had no other thought but to go there. But how manage it with no money, my good father being unable to give me any? During the general levy of 1798, when the young men were taken out of their beds at night, I went into hiding with friends (*Salom. Brandeis*); a few weeks later it was decided that, in order to escape the danger of being drafted, I was to go to Germany. As this could not be done legally, I was taken by a Teplitz merchant, called Katz, who waited for me at the Stratov gate, to an old Jew in Soboten. He guided me over the mountains into Saxonia, for two florins, one specie-thaler, which I gladly paid.

There I was on the top of the Geiersberg, a youth of 17, all alone; after having been used to living in the company of loving parents, brothers and sisters, nursed by a tender motherly hand, there I was in the forest all abandoned. I cried, but the thought of the goal of my journey, Offenbach, comforted me. Could it be that the sufferings and privations that awaited me had only to test my faith in the new teaching? I had received from my family 60 florins in gold and silver and some three florins small change. In the zeal of my faith, I took a vow to cover the trip to Offenbach with these three florins, even if I should go hungry and begging, in order to bring the 60 florins as an offering to the divine lady.

Firm in purpose, I started out and arrived towards evening at Fuerstenau, a Saxonian village. After a frugal meal at the inn, they prepared for me a straw pallet on which I lay down

and, tired out, soon fell asleep. About midnight a big noise awakened me and a man—in my imagination of giant size—entered the inn, a huge pack on his back and a mighty stave in his hand. He was followed by another like him and so on until the room was packed full. I was scared to death. An hour later, after some beer and brandy, they left, and I was told that they were smugglers.

In the morning I continued my journey, spent the following night in another village, and arrived in Dresden at noon. Immediately upon entering the town I went through something unpleasant and offensive. I had to pay the Jew toll. For the pleasure of being a Jew, you had to pay a tax almost all over Germany, just like for cattle. Searching my knapsack the customs man declared my nightcap to be new and unused, and in addition to the toll, I had to pay a penalty for not having declared it; this exhausted the little cash I had on me. I was directed to a Mister Jonathan Eibenschuetz, one of ours. This was a nice young man, but almost deaf and stammering, hard to understand. [This could not have been the rabbi mentioned earlier in this book, who died in 1764, nor his son Jonas who was no longer a young man at the time; possibly a younger, otherwise unknown member of the same family.] He read the letter and greeted me kindly with kiss and handshake. He gave me room and board during my stay in Dresden and procured for me a Saxonian passport to get rid of the obnoxious Jew toll. When I left Eibenschuetz, the good-hearted man gave me two imperial thalers.

I left Dresden in the most beautiful spring weather and started out for Offenbach on foot, intoxicated and exalted at the thought of the goal I was heading towards. At first everything went well. Singing with joy, despite the heavy rucksack I was carrying, I arrived in the evening at Meissen. After having eaten, I slept on a layer of straw into the late morning. When I got up, my feet were hurting, I could not walk nor put on my shoes, a sorry situation, especially when you are in a hurry to reach your goal. There was nothing to do but take the road to Leipzig barefoot, on swollen, aching feet. I arrived there three days later, having spent the two previous nights in Oschatz and Wurzen. They did not let me pass through Leipzig, and a

policeman led me around the town to the Weimar road. I walked with great effort, tortured by pain and hunger and, at last, lay down on the roadside, weak and disheartened.

An hour had passed when a coach approached from the direction of Leipzig. I pulled myself together and seeing that it was empty, I asked the coachman where he was going. "To Weimar," he said. "That's where I am going. Would you not take me with you?" He said yes. "What shall I pay you? I am poor and cannot give you much." "Get in, we will settle that later." I put my bag into the coach, got in and the wagon rolled on. What a wonderful feeling, after all that pain, to sit in a comfortable coach, looking forward to making more than 12 miles in this agreeable way! It was night when we arrived in Weissenfels. The coachman went to a hotel. Two waiters with lanterns in their hands came to help the newly arrived guests out of the coach. When they noticed me, they said I belonged to the inn, not here. My good coachman took me there and promised to call for me in the morning. For supper I had a slice of bread and a glass of beer. I slept on my straw bed through the night without interruption and got up well refreshed. I did not have to wait long for my transportation to arrive. I shoved my bag into the coach, and on we went, all day long, except for lunch and feeding time. The night was spent in a village, the next morning we were on the way again. Shortly before Weimar, at about 10 o'clock, the coachman asked me to get out. I took my baggage and left hesitantly. How much was he going to charge me? Frightfully I asked what I owed him, and to my surprise, the good-hearted fellow demanded only 20 Kreuzer, remarking he wanted only what he had to lay out for me.

I passed through Weimar without stopping and reached Gotha that evening, before reaching Erfurt. I put up at some inn and ordered beer and bread. In the adjoining room there was a table decked out for many people, looking very festive: various meats, pies, fruit and other dishes. They celebrated a child's baptism. I had had no meat since Dresden and the smell of the dishes attracted me. The lady of the house came out and said, "I see he is a child of decent folks," and put before me a plate of roast, eggs, and pastry.

The following afternoon I reached the gate of Erfurt. There was an Austrian garrison in town at the time. I was stopped to pay the head tax, about 2 florins. No use arguing, not even my offer to bypass the town was accepted. They confiscated my luggage, but in the end the collector gave in to my request to see the commander, and a soldier led me to him. He was not in, but was with some baroness. I asked to be taken there and was admitted. Asked what I wanted, I remonstrated with him, saying how wrong it was to demand a toll of two florins from a poor traveling craftsman. He said this was the law of the land, but I answered: "The collector may talk that way, but he, an illustrious high official, will agree that this tax was imposed on Jews engaged in trade and commerce, and not on poor traveling artisans." And more of the sort. The commander hesitated, but the baroness said in French: "The young man is right, it would be cruel to exact such an exorbitant duty, and intolerant at that." So the commander gave me a certificate exempting me from all such taxes.

The same evening I reached Eisenach and without further adventure Hanau, where I arrived at noon. Hoping to make Offenbach the same day, I accelerated my pace, in what mood and excitement I cannot describe! The gathering of the believers in Offenbach was called Makhane, encampment, after the encampment of the children of Israel under Moses. And this Makhane I was to join that same day.

It was already dark when I reached Offenbach, an open town. It was raining. I asked for the Polish court and was told it was on the other end of town. A stately mansion. Crying with religious fervor at the thought of entering the holy house, I ascended some steps and rang the bell. The door opened, a young man in Turkish dress greeted me with embrace and kiss, called me brother, and said I was expected. Several ma-aminim [Hebrew for believers] assembled, among them an old man looking very distinguished with his snow-white hair and colonel's uniform: his name was Czynski. He took me to his room on the upper floor, assured me that he would assist me any time with fatherly advice, and instructed me how to behave at my forthcoming audience with the holy mother.

I was then taken to a room where three long-bearded men in Polish dress were sitting, deeply absorbed in heavy volumes. I noticed, to my surprise, various emblems of the Catholic church on the walls, a picture of the Gevira made up like the holy virgin, portraits of several men, and all sorts of human figures covered with Hebrew letters. On a board there were the ten names I knew from the holiday prayers: Keter, Hokhma, Bina, Gedula, Gevura, Tiferet, Nezach, Hod, Yessod, Malhut [the ten Sephirot or divine emanations of the Cabbala: Crown, Wisdom, Reason, Greatness, Strength, Beauty, Eternity, Splendor, Foundation, Kingdom], fused into the word Ejn-Sof [Infinite]. One of the three addressed me thus: "My son, the Shekhina is in trouble, held captive by Edom and Ishmael [Christianity and Islam]. Her children have to deliver her by sharing in her trouble. As soon as three Sephirot unite in trinity, salvation will come. Two of them have already appeared in human form, we wait for the third one. Hail the man chosen to unite with Tiferet [Eva Frank?], for he will bring forth the savior of the world. As for you, serve well in order to be one of the chosen." Thereupon, I was given a scrap of paper showing the board with the ten names.

That same evening, many ma-aminim, old and young, came to see me. The next day I was called to the Gevira. She lived on the upper floor. A chambermaid received me in the entrance hall where I had to wait a while. How moved I was, how my heart was beating! At last the door opened and I entered the room. I did not dare to look into the Gevira's face, knelt down and kissed her feet, the way I had been ordered to do. She said a few friendly words, had some praise for my father, and approved of my decision to come there. On leaving, I put the purse with the 60 florins in gold and silver on a table and walked out backwards. The impression she made on me was sublime and favorable. The lovely face expressed kindness, mildness and gentleness, the eyes holy enthusiasm. She was no longer young but of lovely appearance. Hands and feet, charming. As I was later to learn, I found favor in her eyes.

Afterwards I was taken to the guardroom where I met a great number of young and old men in military dress and armed. I was outfitted the same way and assigned quarters. My training

started the next day. The food was not bad and our duty was to stand guard in the castle and all around on the walls. As no attack or other disturbance occurred, it was very easy. The detachment which was off duty assembled in the evening to listen to lectures by the three elders. But only a few of us understood anything except for the names of the Sephirot, of Shabtai Melekh Mashiah [Sabbatai, King Messiah] and most biblical figures. There was always talk of one called Malhut, but nobody ever saw him.

On high order, I was assigned to the Liberia, a unit of young men serving the lady and her brothers at table and during their daily promenades. Also Sunday in church. We had our own room. I had frequent opportunity to observe the lady and her brothers at very close range. I received a hunter's uniform and, instead of a hat, a green leather cap with metal mountings. I served frequently at table, standing behind the Gevira. The meals were taken in a spacious room, with three of us as attendants. We ate the leftovers. This extra food tasted good indeed as the inhabitants of the castle and many who lived outside got their food from the community kitchen, usually soup with poor quality vegetables. On Sunday there was church parade with those of us wearing uniforms participating.

My only contacts were with fellow believers. I was very fond of the older men, among them some highly venerable ones such as Wolowski, Dembitski, Matuszewski, Czerwinski. The younger ones, especially my roommates, although respectful in their talk, were frivolous, as it is with young people. There was, in general, a moral tone, but they did not take it too seriously. Sexual intercourse or marriage was strictly forbidden. One morning, it was announced that, according to a vision, anyone desiring a female was to be given ten strokes with a rod, and, lo and behold, almost all the young men submitted to it. I have to remark on this occasion that such visions by the lady or one of her brothers were announced almost daily; they were afterwards written down in a book, and copies were made. We young people were drilled by a Polish drill master; however, all rifles and sabres were hidden away when the French entered Offenbach in 1799.

In the summer of 1798 the three sons of Jonas Wehle came

to Offenbach and with them my younger brother Leopold. The Wehles were well educated young men, Abraham, Jontef, and Ekiba by name; they were renamed Joseph, Ludwig, and Max. My brother was renamed Karl Junior [in distinction to the writer of the *Memories* who, as will be seen later, was called Karl]. He was 14 years old, could not think for himself, and was assigned to be a barber. In autumn of the same year, my dear father arrived in the company of the brothers Jonas and Aaron Baer Wehle. I was overwhelmed with joy to see my beloved father. The three learned gentlemen were respectfully received and next morning presented to the holy lady, depositing sacrificial gifts at her feet. The Wehles gave gold, which was acknowledged with pleasure; they were both quite rich. My good father, not being so well-to-do, brought a piece of cambric linen, which was the cause of my beginning to weaken in my faith, until I became convinced that everything here was a swindle with several hundred honest people being attracted from hundreds of miles away, only to be exploited, impoverished, and made miserable.

That year, Mr. Salomon Zerkowitz came to Offenbach also. He used to be very rich and brought with him all that remained of his wealth, which he was ordered to give up. His wealth consisted of Austrian government securities which I took to Frankfurt to be turned into cash by the old Rothschild. Zerkowitz was a fine, honest man and cried when forced to give up his last belongings.

Next to the dining room there was the sanctuary with the bed and clothing of the holy father (so they called Jacob Frank, the father of the Gevira and her brothers). The room was dark, the curtains drawn, and here the believers prayed, kneeling at bedside in ardent prayer. The room was accessible all day. At the entrance to the dining room some young, mostly beautiful women in Amazon dress stood guard, armed with rifles and sabres.

As I alluded to above, I was offended by a sarcastic remark the holy Joseph made at the table in my presence about the inexpensive gift of my father. I realized that here the gift meant more than the giver. From this time on, I became pensive and started observing. First I suppressed the negative thoughts and

considered it a sin to doubt what so many distinguished and learned men believed in. I went to the holy room to repent. Yet, another event soon made me relapse. One of my room-mates, a young man from Dresden, Jonas Hofsinger, had been drawing closer to me for some time and, after sounding me out, confided in me that he did not agree with the things going on here. Realizing, at last, that I would not betray him, he spoke out freely: after long consideration and examination, he had come to the conclusion that an unheard-of swindle was being perpetrated here. The believers, having made great sacrifices, could not allow themselves the thought that they had been cheated, the more so as they had been deprived of all means to return to their distant homes.

After frequent consultations we decided to escape. In view of our lack of cash, Hofsinger suggested certain methods incompatible with the honesty and good reputation of our family. Instead I wrote to my brother, Dr. Porges, and told him of my decision to leave Offenbach, asking him for an address in Frankfurt where we could go and receive the means for our journey. The answer did not fail to arrive; the family agreed and indicated a Mr. Neustadt in Frankfurt where we would find money and a friendly reception. Now matters became serious. I told my brother of our intentions and showed him the letter of our brother; he immediately declared himself ready to join me in every way. So we figured out how to leave. As a Polish member of the community had recently been caught and punished, we decided to flee early in the morning by way of the garden. We often stood guard at night and I managed to have the night watch assigned to myself and Hofsinger. The few belongings we had were put into one pack.

The eve of our flight I was called by a parlormaid to the Gevira. It was getting dark; entering the room, I was attacked by her favorite dog, a greyhound, who knew me and never before had barked at me. The unusual hour of the appointment and the unusual behavior of the dog scared me—I thought we had been discovered and betrayed, and fell on my knees. The Gevira calmed the dog, saying: "What's the matter with you today, don't you recognize our dear Karl?" and she continued to me in Polish: "I have noticed that your uniform is worn out.

You may go to Frankfurt tomorrow and order a new one." She asked me whether I had any other wishes. I was deeply moved by such grace and benevolence and almost confessed everything. She let me kiss her hand and dismissed me. I left in tears, because I adored and loved this woman; I was then 19 years old.

At midnight I was relieved from my duty and went to sleep. Up at 2:00 in the morning, we packed our clothing and underwear into a blanket, taking only what I had brought with me; Hofsinger and my brother did the same. At 4:00 it was again my and Hofsinger's turn to stand guard. We took the package with us and stored it in the hallway next to the quarters of the holy Bernhard [?] and Joseph, when my brother came down the stairs. We put our rifles into a corner and, our hearts beating with great excitement, we made for the courtyard, every moment in danger of being stopped by the coachmen or stableboys. From there into the garden and over the wooden fence into the open.

We ran to the nearby forrest, reached Oberrad and at about 6:00, Frankfurt. We found Mr. Neustadt before long; he received and treated us well, gave us shelter and handed us the money he had received from our family. We bought some clothing for me and my brother that day.

Next morning we set out by coach for Seeligenhof and through the Spessart forest to Esselbach, where we spent the night. Somewhat earlier we were almost robbed by several men who came out of the forest. Our coachman stopped and pointed fearfully to the men who had lined up across the road, when we heard behind us the approaching sound of a postilion. The men withdrew into the woods and we reached Esselbach in company of the diligence. We had been advised from home to go to Fuerth and wait there for further instructions. We made the trip from Esselbach to Fuerth via Wuerzburg by foot. Somewhere between Esselbach and Wuerzburg I suddenly was overcome by a gnawing hunger and, too weak to go on, had to lie down. Fortunately some passing peasant women gave me a piece of bread. Later I was told by physicians that, had it not been for that food, I would not have been able to rise and would have perished.

In Fuerth, we put up at an inn. Hofsinger being destitute, we supported him with the money we had received in Frankfurt. I have to add here that Hofsinger did a dishonest thing the night before our escape. He got hold of the key to the chest of Joseph Wehle and Johann Klarenberg [this is the same person: Joseph Wehle adopted, after his baptism, the name of Johann Klarenberg] which was kept under his pillow, and took the Book of Visions and a jacket with him. I took the book from him lest he misuse it. He repeated this in Fuerth; one night he took the book from under my pillow and never showed up again. He sold it to a son-in-law of Zerkowitz who happened to live in Fuerth, but the latter did not use it in a detrimental way. [The interrogation of the three escapees by a Fuerth rabbinical court is not mentioned here.]

We had letters of recommendation to several people in Fuerth, among them Mr. Moses Gosdorf, one of the most prominent. He received us well and invited us to his table. We had been instructed by our relatives to stay in Fuerth until receiving order to continue our journey back home. We remained there over Whitsuntide, when we were called to the police station and told to leave Fuerth within 48 hours. This was done on behalf of the head of the Jewish community, and Mr. Gosdorf told me that we were expelled because I let myself be shaved with a razor [which is forbidden by Jewish law]. We had to leave Fuerth, no use arguing. We went to a Nuremberg suburb, Jews not being allowed to stay in town, and called for the letters from home in Fuerth. At last we were directed to proceed, which we did immediately. In Weilhaus, the last Bavarian border town, I was handed a letter telling us not to cross into Austria, as this would expose us to being recruited. Instead we were to return to Bavaria; enclosed was a letter of recommendation to a Mr. Engel.

I have to report here a certain incident which happened in the Nuremberg suburb of Gerstenhof where we had a lunch of beer, bread and butter. A guest, easily recognizable as Jewish, asked us whether we were Jews. Thereupon, he took to abusing us, wishing us a *misse meshine* (an ignominious death) because we were eating butter with the knife of a goy. I called the innkeeper and told him that the Jew was insulting us for

using his knife and asked him whether he did not keep things clean; whereupon the innkeeper grabbed the Jew and threw him out.

We took the road to Bayreuth and arrived there the next forenoon. Mr. Engel, a portly, handsome man, received us in a friendly manner and, after reading the letter, invited us to stay with him. We were given two nicely furnished rooms and the generous man gave us breakfast, lunch, and supper. He expressed regret at not being able to serve us at his table, as he was in mourning for his beautiful and beloved wife whom he had loved dearly and over whose loss he was disconsolate. We felt very good with Mr. Engel and the stay in Bayreuth was quite pleasant. Mr. Engel, whom we seldom saw, summoned us after four weeks and said that leisurely life and idleness were not good for young men; he had therefore inquired with a friend of his in Hamburg and found me a job which I was to start immediately. Thanking him for his good intention, I said I would have to get my parents' permission. Such did not arrive; instead we were given some hope of an early return home. When I informed Mr. Engel thereof, he told us to leave his home since we had not accepted his well meant offer. He promised us a letter of recommendation to his friend, Baron N., proprietor of the Emet estate near Burgkundstadt, who would receive us well.

We started out in the month of August, on a very warm day. We passed Burgkundstadt at noon. Somewhat earlier I had taken off my jacket and put it on my rucksack. In the pocket there was a little purse with 40 florins. The road from Burgkundstadt to Emet goes over a steep mountain. At the midpoint I asked my brother Leopold who was walking behind me: "Is the jacket there?" "No, you lost it." This hit me like a thunder-clap. The money in the jacket was all we had. Unable to stand on my feet, I threw myself down. Leopold ran downhill to Burgkundstadt, asking everybody he met for information, without success. He passed the gate when somebody asked him what he was looking for, and when he told him, he led him to a tanner who had found the jacket. First he denied it, but upon Leopold's insistence and his telling him of our misfortune and misery, he brought the jacket; the purse was in the pocket.

He had to give the finder a few florins. Who could describe my delight at the sight of my brother running uphill and holding the jacket high!

In the afternoon we reached Emet, a little hamlet. I went to the castle with my letter and was shown to the garden where I found two gentlemen, one well dressed and bemedaled, the other in his houserobe. The latter asked me what I wanted. "I have a letter for the baron." He took it and broke the seal, while the other man came closer and, looking into the letter, asked: "Who is this writer who calls you dear friend?" "A certain Mr. Engel." "What, a Jew dares to call you friend?" Somewhat embarrassed, the baron said: "This Engel is a friend of Minister Hardenberg" and told me to come back the next day. When I did, he reproached me for having given him the letter in the presence of his brother, an imperial court counselor. He spoke in the Jewish idiom and continued: "My friend Engel recommending you so well, I am going to admit you here. You build a house, engage in commerce, and I will arrange for a Jewish Bes-Hayim [house of life, a Hebrew euphemism for graveyard] where you may bury yourself." We felt all abandoned in this miserable place. There were some poor Jewish families there, among them a man from Bohemia who took pity on us. We told him we were expecting mail which would tell us when to come home, and he advised us to have ourselves certified as destitute travelers and go begging in the nearby Jewish communities. After some persuasion we agreed to try it. Our adviser wrote down the places with Jewish communities, and we began our tour. An oppressive, shameful feeling seized us at the first attempt. In . . . one had to look . . . for the host [lacunae in the manuscript]. They are mostly cattle-traders away from home during the week. One is received by the lady of the house and given bread and soup in the evening, a night's lodging, and in the morning, soup again and a few pennies. We were soon tired of it and gave it up.

At last a letter from home telling us to go to Bamberg and present ourselves to the local Jewish elder, Mr. Abraham Neuzedlitz; enclosed was a letter of recommendation. We immediately were on our way; it was September, 1800. We were approaching the theatre of war. The French had passed through

Regensburg, the Austrians were in Bamberg. The villages we passed were all occupied by Austrian soldiers. We wanted to put up at some inn, but were refused; the same at the next. When the third innkeeper, an old man, turned us down, we told him of doing us wrong by abandoning us to the night and bad weather. He hesitated a while and said we were French spies, not believing our assuring him we were Austrians. But when we told him we were Jews, he said: "So show me the ten commandments." We could not because we did not have any. [Unintelligible. Maybe the phylacteries were meant.] Then he brought out a loaf of bread and asked: "What is this called in Hebrew?" And when we said lekhem, he was satisfied at last, and we satisfied our hunger with lekhem, butter, and beer. Next day at noon we arrived at Bamberg and immediately went to Mr. Abraham Neuzedlitz to deliver our letter of recommendation. He read it and received us in a friendly way, inviting us to stay with him. Mr. Neuzedlitz was an old, simple man, all Jewish in talk and dress, but also hospitable and charitable. He invited us to his table on Saturdays and holidays; he was a decent, pious man. Coming home from the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, he asked us to go up with him to the roof to *mekadesh the levone*, that is, to bless the moon with a prayer, a thing we had never done before. We could hardly keep from laughing, hearing him pray in ashkenasic Hebrew, and when he started jumping and hopping at the Sholem Alekhem [peace be with you; a prayer greeting the new moon] we could not hold on anymore and burst into loud laughter. The good man stopped dumbfounded and left, and next morning we were told to get out of his house.

We received a letter from home telling us to go to Leipzig where the fair was being held, and from there, if possible, home; if not, to Frankfurt on the Oder where we had relatives. We started early next morning for we wanted to be in Bayreuth that night. An innkeeper, standing in front of his house, tried to dissuade us from continuing, because a storm was approaching. We thanked him for his good advice, which we thought was to make us put up at his inn, and moved on. An hour and a half later the storm broke with great violence. It was pitch dark, we lost our way and found ourselves in a forest where many

trees had been dug up. We fell into the holes up to our hips and got all wet from the pelting rain above and the water below.

After some wandering back and forth, we saw a light in the distance and hurried towards it. It turned out to be an inn, loud with music. The proprietress met us in the entrance hall and refused to accommodate us for lack of space; anyhow, we would find no peace, a wedding being celebrated all night. She told us to go on until we should reach the Fantasie, and there we would have a quiet night.

The Fantasie is an amusement place near Bayreuth. We found the host all alone, his family gone to town and no guests. We were, as I said, soaking wet. I asked the host to heat the stove, which he did, and ordered, for want of anything else, bread, butter, and a glass of beer. Brother Leopold did not want to eat and preferred to warm himself. Hardly had I taken a bite when I heard a heavy clap. Turning around, I saw him on the floor, unconscious. I asked the host to call a doctor, but he said there was none nearby. We carried the unconscious lad to the upper floor, undressed him, and had to cut open his boots. . . .

This is as far as the manuscript goes. The brothers made it to Prague, apparently without any further difficulties. Later they became pioneers of the industrialization of Bohemia and were raised to peerage as Nobles of Porges von Portheim.

On the Intimate Letters about France

Avenel and Clarétie attribute the *Intimate Letters about France* to Junius Frey (see chapter 26 of this book), and Max von Portheim lists the following item in his materials for a bibliography on the Austrian Jews (*Jüdisches Archiv*, 1929, Nr. 8-9, p. 66): Frey, I., *Vertraute Briefe über Frankreich*. Berlin 1792-1793, 1. Band, pp. 21-23. Professor Scholem quotes this listing, but does not know the book; he assumes that pages 21-23 deal with Junius Frey (*Zion*, 1970, p. 167). As a matter of fact, the book does not mention Frey. The pages indicated contain a description of the Frankist court in Offenbach, apparently not by Frey, as the Frankists are considered to be aristocratic Polish refugees, waiting only for an opportunity to return home.

With the help of the librarian of the Berlin *Staatsbibliothek*, I was able, after a long search, to locate a copy of the book in the British Museum. It was easy now to locate other copies, one of them, so to say, under my nose, in the Music Library of the University of California at Berkeley, my place of residence.

The full title of the book is *Vertraute Briefe über Frankreich: Auf einer Reise im Jahre 1792 geschrieben. Erster Teil. Berlin, bei Johann Friedrich Unger, 1792*. The second part appeared in 1793. The frontispiece corresponds to Avenel's description: Jacobin bonnet, etc. The editor's preface is signed by J. (not I.) Frey, and the anonymous author is assumed to be the composer, writer, and orchestra conductor at the court of Frederick the Great, Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1751-1814). With the exception of the two above-mentioned French historians, no one ever refers to Frey as the author. Reichardt's authorship, on the other hand, has not been established defini-

tively. The following arguments speak for Reichardt: (1) he actually was in France in the spring of 1792; (2) two of Reichardt's works have similar titles: *Vertraute Briefe aus Paris, 1802/3* and *Vertraute Briefe geschrieben auf einer Reise nach Wien, 1808/9*; (3) A. Laquiente, the translator of the abridged French version, *Un Prussien en France en 1792. Lettres intimes de J. F. Reichardt*, as can be seen, names Reichardt as the author and also believes that he was hiding under the pen name J. Frey; (4) Reichardt frequently used pen names such as Trahcier or J. F., and J. Frey could be an acronym of J(ohann) F(riedrich) Rei(chardt) [cf. Sieber, *J. F. Reichardt als Musikästhetiker*, p. 116]; (5) Reichardt occasionally defended himself against having anonymous works attributed to him; in this case, however, he listed the book among his works. Several arguments speak against Reichardt's authorship: (1) various biographers (e.g. Eitner, Schletterer) do not mention the book among his works; (2) some works attributed to him were not his, and he did not raise any objections [Sieber, 115 f.]; (3) the first volume is not concerned with music, but exclusively with political, military, and social matters.

The arguments for Reichardt outweigh those against. Nevertheless, there is reason to assume that Junius Frey had a hand in writing, at least, the letters from Strasbourg. This assumption is based on the following grounds (we are only concerned with the first volume; the second was written in Paris between March 4 and April 2, 1792, hence before Frey arrived): Volume I contains 22 letters, two of them from Frankfurt, dated January 6 and 10, and nine from Strasbourg, written between January 15 and January 31. The preface is dated "W., August 15, 1792" and signed "J. Frey"; it reads:

A free German who made the journey to France solely for the purpose of acquainting himself with the true condition of the important French problem [elsewhere it says: to inform himself by all possible means of the French people's mood and opinion and the present political situation of the country] wrote these letters to his most intimate friend, leaving her at liberty to show parts to her closest friends. . . . As for himself, he will perhaps live a long time

away from his country and as the publication of the letters does not inconvenience him in any way, he has nothing against their being made public. . . . However, the editor asks anybody who, with the excerpts, may have learned the author's name, not to divulge it, lest he be compromised needlessly.

There is a contradiction here. Reichardt had no intention of remaining in France; he returned to Prussia in April, 1792, and fell temporarily into disgrace because of his republican ideas. Frey, however, could say of himself that "he will perhaps live a long time away from his country." Reichardt and Frey (or Schoenfeld, as his name was at the time) must have known each other. Both belonged to the Goettinger circle, both were friends and frequent house guests of Voss. Their chance meeting in Strasbourg seems to have given them the idea of writing the letters together, perhaps at the suggestion of Frey, who saw here an excellent opportunity for sending his reports across the border (at the risk of misusing Reichardt's trust?).

The relevant parts of pp. 21-23 from the *Intimate Letters* of January 10, 1792 (missing in the French edition) read as follows:

"One more word about Offenbach. We saw there many of that strange sect whose patriarch was buried last year with royal pomp and exotic ceremonies. They form a separate community, about a thousand of them I was told, in part armed. The patriarch apparently is their leader and regent and provides them with all necessary food and even many a thing of luxury and extravagance. All payments are made in ready money which they receive frequently, with none of them carrying on a trade. The most reasonable of the many contradictory assumptions seems to be that these are some wealthy families of Polish nobility who have left Poland on account of the internal disorders of recent years. In order to wait undisturbed for the time of their safe and profitable return to their motherland, they have adopted the form of a religious sect. The prince of Ysenburg is obviously quite satisfied with these people spending considerable amounts of money in his country and grants them all possible freedom so long as they do not commit any excesses. That such a rapid increase of well-to-do, unproductive elements also raises the food prices for the inhabitants—is the latter's concern. Let them cope with it as best they can!"

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The libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University, California.

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A.M.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AF — Archives de France
BH — Martin Buber, *Origin and Meaning of Hassidism*
BL — Mayer Balaban, *On the History of the Frankist Movement* (Hebrew), 2 vols.
BS — the same, *Studien und Quellen zur frankistischen Bewegung*, *Livre d'hommage à la mémoire du Dr. Poznanski*.
DG — Simon Dubnow, *Geschichte des Chassidismus*. 2 vols.
DH — the same, *History of the Jews*, 10 volumes (in 6).

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GH — the same, *History of the Jews*. 12 vols.
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GT — Gustav Trautenberger, *Chronik der Landeshauptstadt Brünn*.
HS — Heinrich Schnee, *Die Hoffinanz und der moderne Staat*, 6 vols.
KF — Alexander Kraushaar, *Frank i Frankisci Polscy*, 2 vols.
LK — Léon Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris pendant la Révolution*
LR — Leon Ruzicka, *Die oesterreichischen Dichter jüdischer Abstammung Moyses und David Dobruschka, Jüdische Familienforschung*, 1930, No. 3
MG — *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
PB — Peter Beer, *Geschichte, Lehren und Meinungen aller bestanden und noch bestehenden religiösen Sekten der Juden*, 2 vols.
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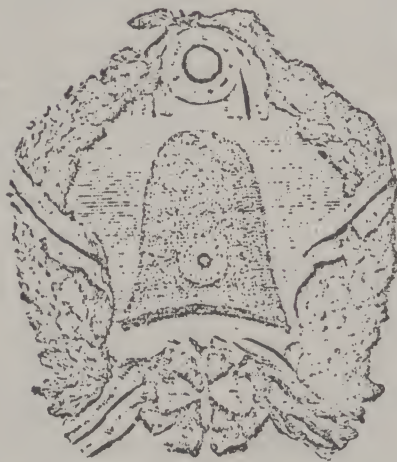
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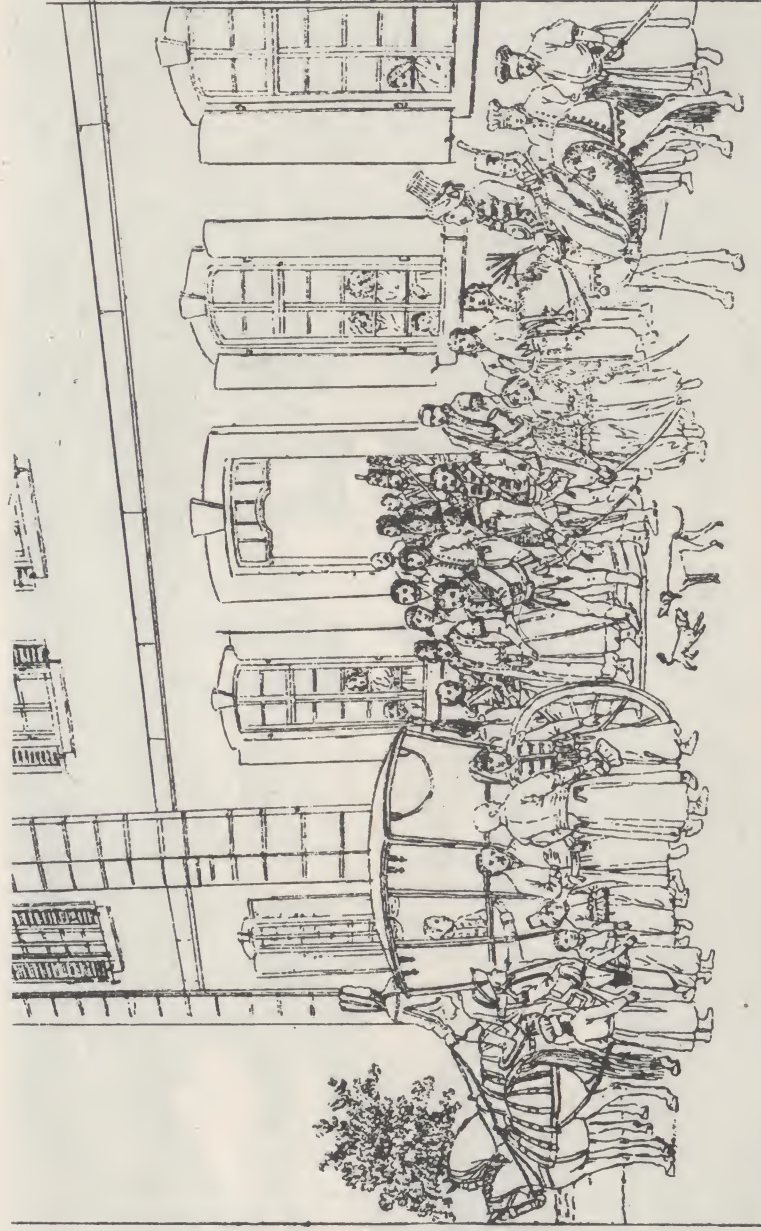


FRANÇOIS CHABOT.

*Mé à St Genès d'Olle Député de l'événement
Député de Lou et Cher à la Législature.
et à la Convention Nat. l'an 1. de la Rep.
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Eva Frank's house in Offenbach
 during the visit of Tsar Alexander I, November 1813
 Offenbach Stadtarchiv



Frank on the way to his prayer service
 at right, on horseback, the "waterman"



Jacob Frank on his death bed
with his bodyguards