

**JEWISH DISABILITIES IN THE BALKAN
STATES; AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS
TOWARD THEIR REMOVAL, WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE
CONGRESS OF BERLIN**

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Jewish disabilities in the Balkan states; American contributions toward their removal, with particular reference to the Congress of Berlin by Max J. Kohler & Simon Wolf

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MAX J. KOHLER & SIMON WOLF

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PREFACE.

The present work arose out of a paper prepared by Max J. Kohler and Hon. Simon Wolf, bearing the title "American Contributions Toward the Removal of Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States." It was presented by Mr. Kohler at the twenty-fourth annual meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society held at Philadelphia, Pa., on February 20, 1916. Since that date he has considerably recast it and somewhat widened the scope of its inquiry so as to conform it to the new title under which it is now submitted to the public.

The subject-matter of this volume has practical importance as well as historical interest. It shows that the disabilities in some of the Balkan States which prevailed prior to the Berlin Congress of 1878 were removed; that the United States more than forty years ago, when its power and importance were much less than at present, was nevertheless willing to make strenuous exertions on the grounds of humanity in the interest of oppressed Jews in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately the efforts made on behalf of the largest population of Jews settled in any Balkan country, namely, Roumania, were without result, and the conditions in Roumania are still much as they were before Roumania obtained independence. The present volume may perhaps assist in bringing the unfortunate condition of the Jews of Roumania to the attention of the statesmen and thinkers of the world, and will furnish to those who are engaged in the struggle for full rights for the Jews the needed information wherewith to conduct their fight for justice.

The publication committee charged with the issuance of this volume consists of Albert M. Friedenberg, chairman; Prof. Alexander Marx and Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach. Because of the present-day value of the subject, the chairman has bent his efforts to secure a prompt publication of the book. An extra

printing of it has been made for the use and at the charge of the American Jewish Committee. The next volume of our *Publications*, No. 25, to comprise the usual papers, notes and necrologies, is now in course of preparation and may be expected to appear with all convenient speed.

CYRUS ADLER,
President.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *June 12, 1916.*

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JEWISH DISABILITIES IN THE BALKAN STATES.
AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD THEIR REMOVAL,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE
CONGRESS OF BERLIN.¹

BY MAX J. KOHLER AND SIMON WOLF.²

American aid towards Jewish emancipation in the Balkan States has been much more important and continuous than is generally recognized, and it constitutes an important chapter in the history of international endeavor to establish religious liberty all over the world. Moreover, a study of these contributions is singularly timely, and fraught with special significance for our own day, for, as Bolingbroke so well said, "History is philosophy teaching by examples." For convenience, we may group these contributions around four incidents: (a) Benjamin F. Peixotto's mission to Roumania as U. S. Consul at Bucharest; (b) three International Jewish Conferences held abroad between 1872 and 1878, largely at Peixotto's instance, and at all of which American Jews were represented; (c) provision on behalf of the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe at the Berlin Congress of 1878, which was in turn largely pro-

¹A paper presented at the twenty-fourth annual meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society, Philadelphia, February 20, 1916.

²To avoid misunderstanding, Mr. Kohler assumes sole responsibility for this study, Mr. Wolf's share having been to place valuable unpublished correspondence at Mr. Kohler's disposal, and to give him other useful information, and both he and Mr. Kohler, independently, selected this subject. Valuable unpublished material was also secured from Dr. Cyrus Adler, Lewis M. Isaacs, Louis Marshall, Jacob H. Schiff, Hon. Oscar S. Straus, and through the courtesy of Assistant Secretary Alvey A. Adee, of our Department of State.

moted by these Jewish conferences and to which our own government directly contributed; and (d) Secretary Hay's Roumanian Note of August 11, 1902, and subsequent events, including the Peace Conference of Bucharest of 1913. All four of these incidents relate chiefly to Roumania, though other Balkan States, particularly Serbia and Bulgaria, are also involved.

I.

BENJAMIN F. PEIXOTTO'S MISSION TO ROUMANIA.

Peixotto's mission to Roumania is unique in diplomatic history, for he was appointed U. S. Consul at the Roumanian capital for the express purpose, and accepted the post avowedly, in order to secure an amelioration of the condition of the Jews of Roumania. The year 1870 was signalized by shocking Roumanian Jewish persecutions, which stirred the whole civilized world. These demonstrated how little had been accomplished, after all, by the illusory promises that had been made by Prince Charles of Roumania during the preceding decade to the two great Jewish philanthropists, Adolphe Crémieux and Sir Moses Montefiore. As one of the founders of that noble international Jewish charitable organization, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, Crémieux had personally visited Roumania some years before this, in 1866 and again in 1869, and investigated conditions on the spot. In 1867 the venerable Sir Moses Montefiore had personally appealed to the Roumanian Government, on behalf of his coreligionists, at the risk of imminent mob violence, as was then freely reported. The English and French Governments had made strong representations to Roumania, England largely at the instance of Sir Francis Goldsmid, France on Crémieux's special appeal. Napoleon III, in 1867, had even telegraphed to Prince Charles:

I must not leave your Highness in ignorance of the public feeling created here by the persecutions of which the Jews of Moldavia are said to be the victims. I cannot believe that the enlightened