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**JEWISH THEME IN GEORGIAN CULTURE,
LITERATURE AND ART
ACCORDING TO 19TH-
CENTURY GEORGIAN PRESS**

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ABSTRACT

Among the Georgian periodicals of the second half of the 19th century, the issue of the Jews was one of the most important topics on pages of the newspaper Droeba. It exposed the anti-Jewish policies of Tsarism, campaigned against the political, social, and other restrictions imposed on the Jews, and generally brought to light the nationalistic, autocratic, and colonial policy of Tsarism against small and oppressed nations within the Russian Empire.

The democratic ideas of Droeba, its selfless struggle for the better future of the Georgian people, its courageous protests supporting brotherhood and unity among the peoples, infuriated the Tsarist government and its bureaucratic apparatus. A newspaper under constant persecution and censorship closed in 1885. The newspaper closure was declared the national day of mourning among the Georgian people. The grief was sincerely shared by the Jewish population of Georgia along with the Georgian people. By losing Droeba they lost one of their best friends, a faithful guardian guiding them through their troubles and joy.

Throughout the entire 19th century, unlike the Jewish population of Western Europe and even Russia, the Jews of Georgia were still following the medieval routine and were utterly underdeveloped.

From the 1850s, the Jewish and Georgian intelligentsia, who were well aware of the importance of education for children, requested guberniya officials to establish Jewish schools, to teach Talmud Torah along with the core subjects.

A small number of Jews were actively involved in the public life of the city, participating in the representative bodies of the city. For example, at different times, M. Rizhinashvili (1875), E. Kakitelashvili, M. Rizhinashvili, and Sh. Rizhinashvili (1888) were elected to the Kutaisi City Council.

The relations between Georgians and Jews continue to this day.

Keywords: Georgian Jews, Georgian-Jewish relations, Sergey Meskhi, Georgian press.