

Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882

Anti-Jewish pogroms rocked the Russian Empire in 1881–2, plunging both the Jewish community and the imperial authorities into crisis. Focusing on a wide range of responses to the pogroms, this book offers the most comprehensive, balanced, and complex study of the crisis to date. It presents a nuanced account of the diversity of Jewish political reactions and introduces a wealth of new sources covering Russian and other non-Jewish reactions to these events. Seeking to answer the question of what caused the pogroms' outbreak and spread, the book provides a fuller picture of how officials at every level responded to the national emergency and irrevocably lays to rest the myth that the authorities instigated or tolerated the pogroms. This is essential reading not only for Russian and Jewish historians but also for those interested in the study of ethnic violence more generally.

JOHN DOYLE KLIER (1944–2007) was the Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Professor of Modern Jewish History in the Hebrew and Jewish Studies Department at University College London. His earlier books, *Russia Gathers Her Jews* (1985) and *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question* (Cambridge, 1995), are standard works in modern Russian-Jewish history, along with *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (coeditor, Cambridge, 1992).



Frontispiece "Chase a fly out of the door, and it returns through the window. Save us, Lord, from hunger, plagues, floods, fire, and the invasion of foreign tribes" (*Evreiskii vopros v kartinakh*, 1884).

IVAN: What trouble these Jews are! You haven't finished building a hut and a fence, setting up a garden and a patch, you look around, and these Jews sneak in and grow heavy like bugs, and neither yourself nor your kids have anywhere to stay. Now, will you leave the hut!

GERSHKO (from behind): Hello, Ivan, how do you do?

IVAN: What do you want here? Get away! I have enough work without you!

GERSHKO: But we do so well in your house; and we won't interfere with your work, we just set up our small shops, bring in our family, we will lend you money – whereas you will have a walk and a drink, as the working man needs strengthening; with us, you don't even need money . . . you just bring a small measure of oats and a quarter of wheat, we will accept all."

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John Doyle Klier



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Editors' preface

John Doyle Klier died on 23 September 2007. At the age of only sixty-two, he was at the height of his powers as a scholar. This book was the last major project that John completed. Our task has been far from onerous. At the time of his death, John had completed the manuscript for this book and responded to the readers' reports. We undertook the revisions he proposed, especially those regarding the reorganization of the material. While the first part sets the stage, the second focuses predominantly on non-Jewish and the third predominantly on Jewish responses to the pogroms. The manuscript has obviously been copy-edited, but we have barely changed the actual text. We are grateful to the colleagues who helped us with queries that arose along the way.

The selection of the illustrations has ultimately been ours. In some cases it was quite clear from the manuscript which illustrations John had in mind; in others we have chosen from John's files the images that seemed most suitable. Presumably he would have wanted to comment on the nature and provenance of these illustrations, something we are in no position to do in his place.¹

Clearly, John did not have the chance to step back and take one last careful look at the revised version as it now stands. He would doubtless have wanted to make further changes at this stage to round off the book in its final form.

As an appendix to this book, the reader will find a chronological list of anti-Jewish violence and related developments in Imperial Russia in the years 1881–2 that John was able to document on the basis of his archival research. By no means all of the cited material has been used for this book. Based on John's notebooks we have been able to link each entry in the list directly to an archival reference, which makes this a valuable resource for further research in the field of Russian Jewish history. The map on

¹ Cf. John D. Klier, "Iskusstvo i pogromy. Khudozhestvennoe otobrazhenie antievreiskogo nasiliia v imperskoi Rossii (1871–1903 gody)," in O. V. Budnitskii, *et al.*, eds., *Russko-evreiskaia kultura* (Moscow, 2006), 437–52.

pp. xxii–xxiv records all those sites of anti-Jewish violence mentioned in this list for the period between 15 April and 10 May 1881 whose location could be clearly identified. We are grateful to Cath D'Alton (UCL) for the realization of Map 2 and thank Tim Aspden who produced Map 1 on p. xxi for John's previous book, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996). Finally our thanks go to all the colleagues at Cambridge University Press who have helped bring this project to fruition.

John wanted to dedicate this book to “three scholars who have done much to direct and inspire me as a scholar of Russia and Russian Jewish history,” Ralph T. Fisher, Hans Rogger, and Jonathan Frankel. Under the circumstances it would have seemed strange to simply dedicate the book to these three colleagues in the usual way, and we have instead decided to use this opportunity to do so on John's behalf.

From 1960 to 1987, Ralph T. Fisher was the director of the Russian and East European Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where John took his doctorate in 1975. John felt deeply indebted to Fisher for accepting him on the program and for nurturing his achievements. Fisher's personal generosity of spirit and energy made the center a home and a springboard for John and many other graduates of the program.

John regarded Hans Rogger as an inspirational pioneer in Russian Jewish history. He frequently acknowledged the role that Rogger had played in inspiring scholarly debate beyond the conspiracy theory approach to Russian Jewish history in general and the pogroms in particular. John concluded his obituary for Rogger on a personal note, explaining that,

To embark upon research on the history of Russian Jewry in the 1970s, as I did, meant, inevitably, becoming a “revisionist” . . . Any young scholar, therefore, was “working without a net,” making hypotheses that seemed to go against a century-old scholarly consensus. The appearance of Rogger's articles and his demand for a re-examination of assumptions and beliefs were of enormous psychological encouragement and support.²

For scholars of Jewish history in Eastern Europe, the academic year 2007–8 was unusually bleak: having begun with John's death it ended with the death of Jonathan Frankel on 7 May 2008. Their longstanding professional relationship was characterized by warm collegiality, mutual appreciation, and friendship. John greatly admired and respected Frankel's work and, in response to the readers' reports for this book,

² John D. Klier, “Hans Rogger, 1923–2002,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 32, 1 (2002), 152.

John wrote that he considered "Frankel's to be the definitive description of the rise of the so-called New Jewish Politics."

LARS FISCHER
FRANÇOIS GUESNET
HELEN KLIER

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Foreword

The anti-Jewish riots, or pogroms, which broke out in the Russian Empire in mid-April 1881, are seen as a decisive moment in modern Jewish history. Devout Jewish contemporaries found an analogy in the “southern storms” invoked by the prophet Isaiah. The more secular were quick to label them “a sharp turning point in the historical life of the Jewish people.”¹ Many of the responses engendered within the Russian Jewish community, such as greater national self-awareness and skepticism toward liberal panaceas of emancipation, were already present in Jewish society in embryo. The events of 1881–2 speeded up their gestation. The result was the rapid development of a modern, international Jewish politics.

Yet it must be understood that the pogroms represented a crisis for the Russian Empire as well. For the better part of two years rioting was endemic across a wide swath of a strategic region of the empire. Major cities, such as Kiev and Elisavetgrad, fell under mob control. The countryside was unsettled by pogroms and rumors of pogroms. The urban proletariat and the rural peasantry, the two groups feared most by the security-minded government, threatened to slip from state control. The ability of the imperial authorities to maintain stability, law, and order was called into question. Matters were in no way improved when the authorities had to rely on deadly force in order to reclaim control of the streets, and found themselves cast in the uncomfortable guise of protectors of an unpopular minority. Control was wrested from the rioters, the *pogromshchiki*, only through stationing large contingents of troops throughout the troubled areas, thus undermining the army’s effectiveness in the defense of the realm. The pogroms threatened to have a ruinous impact on the national economy.

¹ *Rassvet* (20:16/V/1882).

The pogroms also exacted a price in foreign relations. The frontiers with Austria-Hungary and Germany were compromised by the uncontrolled flight of thousands of Jewish refugees across the border. Russia became the target of protest campaigns and was threatened with diplomatic intervention. Negotiations for a strategic foreign loan collapsed, and the value of Russian bonds plummeted on international stock exchanges.

The pogroms also called into question a century of social engineering designed to resolve the so-called Jewish Question in Russia. Critics declared that established policies had signally failed in their goal of integrating the Jews into imperial Russian society. Faced with a national emergency, Russian lawmakers were forced to act rapidly to develop new policies, in a way that was the antithesis of the Russian bureaucracy's customarily cautious approach to change.

Contemporary research has dispelled the myth that Russian officials were responsible for instigating, permitting, or approving the pogroms. But if instigation is ruled out, another question looms: What was the cause of the outbreak and spread of the pogroms? This study seeks to answer that question, in particular by making use of the substantial information provided by the opening of archives in Eastern Europe in the post-Soviet period. This documentation provides a fuller picture of how officials at every level responded to the pogroms, not just during their initial outbreak in 1881, but also upon their reappearance in 1882.

There is a particular need to integrate the history of the Russian pogroms into the emergent study of ethnic and nationalist conflict and collective violence. As two leading specialists define the task, "we should seek to identify, analyse, and explain the heterogeneous processes and mechanisms involved in generating the varied instances of what we all too casually lump together . . . as 'ethnic violence.' This can be accomplished only through a research strategy firmly committed to disaggregation in both data collection and theory building."² An enhanced study of the pogroms has a special role to play in this regard. Researchers of ethnic conflict and collective violence have tended to exclude the case of pogroms,³ or to view them as a subcategory.⁴ When attention is directed to pogroms for comparative purposes, examples are drawn almost entirely from the twentieth century, and these events are then read back into the earlier period of 1881–2.⁵

² Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), 447.

³ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 20.

⁵ See, for example, Paul R. Brass, ed., *Riots and Pogroms* (Basingstoke, 1996), in which the Odessa pogrom of 1905 is treated as an archetype for comparative purposes, 1–55.

This study seeks to redress this imbalance. As Donald L. Horowitz defines the general task, "if there is ever to be a single, coherent theory of collective violence, it will be created after there are a substantial body of theory and some reliable findings about the specific varieties of collective violence: about revolutions, about terrorism, about coups, about riots. That day has still not arrived, and the fact that it has not arrived argues for a strategy of proceeding from the bottom up, rather than from the top down."⁶ From the theoretical perspective, therefore, this study has a double task. The first is to provide an accurate picture, at the micro-level, of the diverse incidents that comprised the pogroms of 1881–2. It will follow Heinz-Dietrich Löwe's call for "detailed studies of individual pogroms at different times and in different places."⁷ Once this objective has been achieved, the second is to use the recent scholarly literature devoted to ethnic conflict and collective violence to gain deeper perspectives into the pogrom phenomenon.

This study builds on contemporary scholarship devoted to the crisis of 1881–2. The starting point is Hans Rogger's classic critique of the widely presumed "pogrom policy" in the Russian Empire. Rogger's lead was followed by I. Michael Aronson, who provided a definitive rejection of the myth that the pogroms of 1881 were organized, instigated, and spread by officials of the imperial government or by "dark forces" close to them. One of the tasks of the present study is to explore how this widely accepted legend came about, and why it has endured so persistently in the secondary literature.

Jonathan Frankel's magisterial *Prophecy and Politics* provides the classic study of Jewish responses to the pogroms, especially the emergence of a so-called New Jewish Politics, expressed variously in proto-Zionism or a specifically Jewish brand of socialism. These innovations contained an explicit rejection of the "old politics" conducted by the established Jewish communal leadership. The new, self-proclaimed leaders legitimized their claims and activities by emphasizing what they decried as the incompetence and failure of the old leadership. The present work offers a more balanced view of the activities of the "elite secular Jewish leadership," clustered around the group I call the "Gintsburg Circle." This study is thus in dialogue with Frankel's work, as indicated by the title of Chapter 10, "Politics without prophecy," a study of events stripped of their mythical character.

⁶ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 41–2.

⁷ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Pogroms in Russia: Explanations, Comparisons, Suggestions," *Jewish Social Studies*, 11, 1 (2004), 23.

This study records other responses, such as the rise of reformist religious movements, which have been dismissed as unimportant by scholars, yet which attracted a good deal of attention at the time. The study will also explore the attitude of Russian officials to the gamut of Jewish activities, such as emigration or internal reform. This narrative is absent from the scholarly literature, which has tacitly assumed that the state opposed *any* Jewish initiatives.

It is an underlying assumption of this book that the status of Jews in the Russian Empire was fated to change with or without the crisis of 1881–2. For example, in 1880 officials within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) were questioning the efficacy of the Pale of Settlement, even as the conservative press was launching a campaign to limit the admission of Jews to state schools. The pogroms ensured that debates concerning the Jews were accelerated, while the development of new policies took place in an atmosphere of emergency and crisis.

Acknowledgements

If thanks were given to all those who assisted this study, there would be no one left to review it. I do wish to thank those who have read one or more of its many drafts, especially Jonathan Frankel, who has been a friendly critic throughout. Much of the manuscript's final draft was completed while I was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. I particularly appreciate the criticisms and suggestions of Moshe Rosman, Marcos Silber, Gerald Surh, and François Guesnet. I wish especially to thank Viktor Efimovich Kel'ner, my good friend and colleague, for his invaluable bibliographical assistance. For technical and bibliographical help I would like to acknowledge Dmitrii Eliashevich, Victoria Khiterer, Anatolii Khaesh, Aleksandr Lokshin, Kati Vörös, and Tsila Ratner. I am especially grateful to all the librarians and archivists who have assisted me at the institutions cited in the bibliography.

Support for my research has been provided by the British Academy, the US National Endowment for the Humanities, the Dean's Fund, the Graduate Research Fund, and the Institute of Jewish Studies at University College London, and the University of London Central Research Fund.

Note on dates and transliteration

All Russian dates are according to the Julian calendar (Old Style, OS), twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar (New Style, NS) in the nineteenth century. All western dates are New Style, while Polish dates are double-numbered, as was the practice in the Kingdom of Poland.

In transliterating from Russian, I follow the Library of Congress system. I have generally retained hard and soft signs in the footnotes, but have omitted them in the main text for familiar or oft-used names. Thus: Ignatiev (not Ignat'ev), Drenteln (not Drentel'n), Bilbasov (not Bil'basov); for place names, Kharkov (not Khar'kov), Vilna (not Vil'na), Orel (not Orel'). I employ modern Russian orthography.

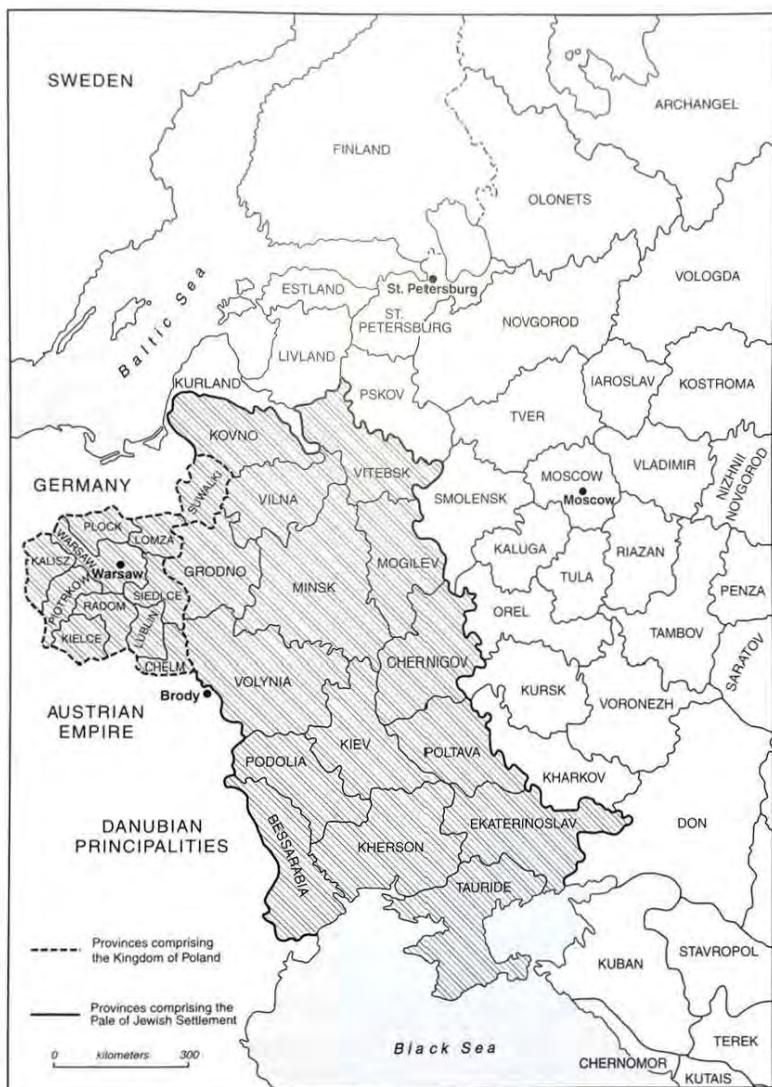
Yiddish transliteration follows the system employed by YIVO; Hebrew the system of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. In both cases, diacritical marks and silent letters are omitted.

Foreign terms are generally italicized, at least in the first instance. Commonly used terms (and acronyms) unlikely to be familiar to all readers are found in the glossary.

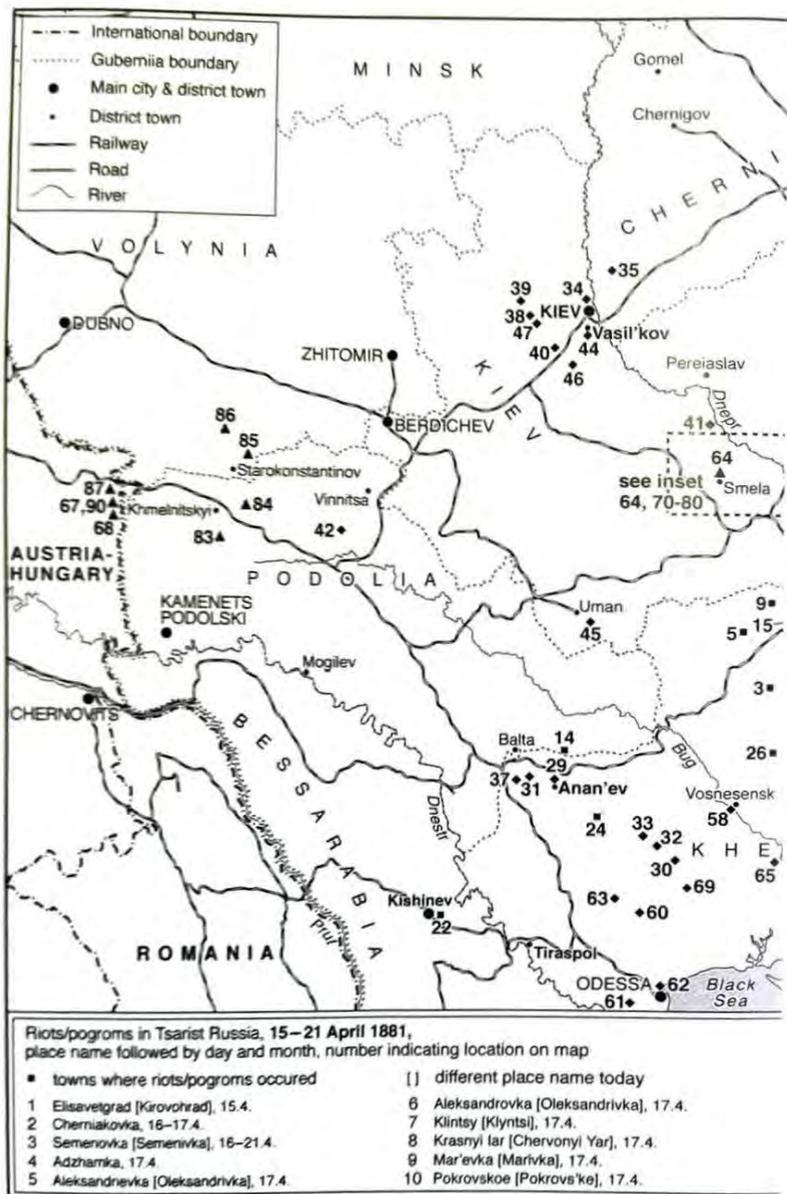
I have used the letter R in front of sums to designate Russian rubles.

Acronyms

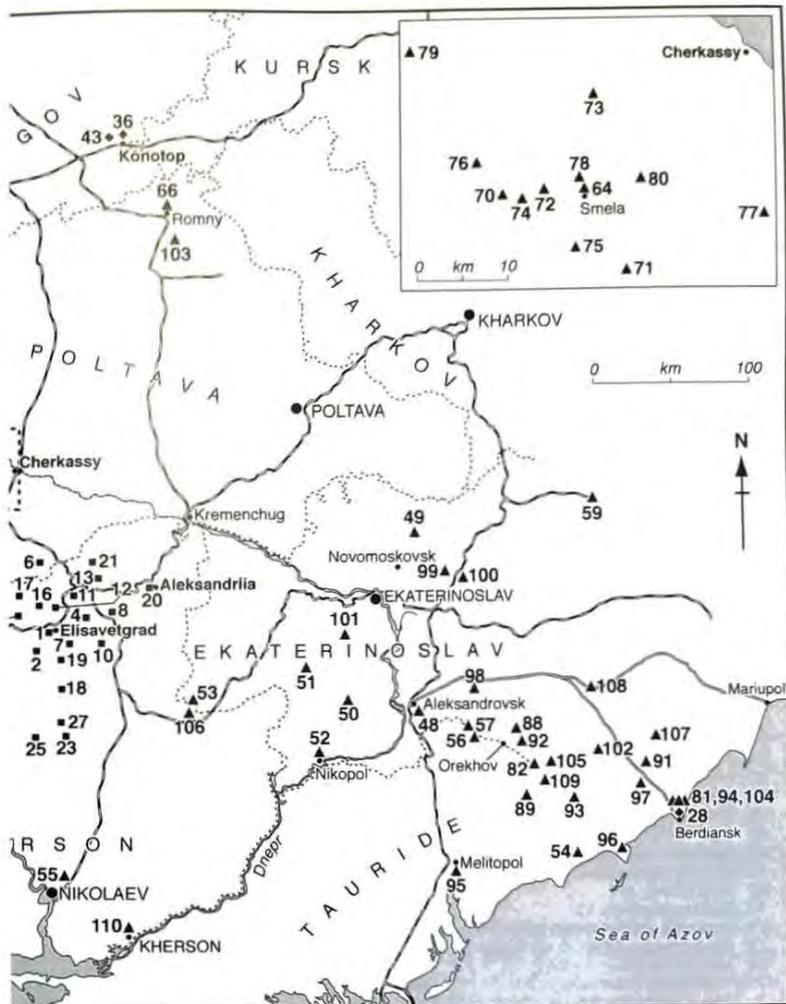
| | |
|--------|--|
| AIU | Alliance Israélite Universelle |
| AVPRI | Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi imperii |
| GARF | Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi federatsii |
| GU DP | Chief Administration for Press Affairs |
| HEAS | Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society |
| IAGM | Istoricheskii arkhiv goroda Moskvy |
| IRŷQ | John D. Klier, <i>Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881</i> (Cambridge, 1996) |
| IuRRS | Southern Russian Workers Union |
| ŷC | <i>Jewish Chronicle</i> |
| JNL | Jewish National Library |
| JP | Justice of the Peace |
| K-A | G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, ed., <i>Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii</i> , vol. II, <i>Vos'midesiatye gody (15 aprelia 1881 g.–29 fevralia 1882 g.)</i> Moscow and Petrograd, 1923 |
| LVIA | Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas |
| MHC | Mansion House Committee |
| MID | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MVD | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| NKhV | <i>Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda</i> |
| OPE | Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia |
| ORT | Society for the Spread of Productive Work Among the Jews |
| PD | <i>Parliamentary Debates</i> |
| RERC | Russian Emigrant Relief Committee |
| RGIA | Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv |
| RJC | Russo-Jewish Committee |
| RNB | Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka |
| RVIA | Rossiiskii voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv |
| SPb | St. Petersburg |
| TsDIAK | Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukraïny |



1 Areas reserved for Jewish residence within the Russian Empire in 1855 (Pale of Settlement)



2 Sites of anti-Jewish violence, 15 April to 10 May 1881



- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 11 Subbotts [Subotts], 17.4. | 20 Aleksandriia [Oleksandriia], 19.4. |
| 12 Vysokie Bueraki [Vysoki Balraky], 17.4. | 21 Plosskoe [Ploske], 19.4. |
| 13 Znamenka [Znamiaanka], 17.4. | 22 Kishinev [Chisinau], 20.4. |
| 14 Gol'ta [Hol'ta], 17.4. | 23 Mirolubovka [Myrolubivka], 20.4. |
| 15 Gruzskoe [Hruz'ke], 17.4. | 24 Romanovka [Romanivka], 21.4. |
| 16 Lelekovka [Lelekivka], 17.4. | 25 Antonopol [Antonopil], 21.4. |
| 17 Poklitarovka, 17.4. | 26 Kamenovodka [Kamiatuvatka], 21.4. |
| 18 Sasovka [Sasivka], 17.4. | 27 Vitlazevka [Vytlazivka], 21.4. |
| 19 Gubovka [Hubivka], 18.4. | |

Riots/pogroms in Tsarist Russia, **25–30 April 1881**,
place name followed by day and month, number indicating location on map

| ◆ towns where riots/pogroms occurred | [] different place name today |
|---|---|
| 28 Berdiansk [Berdians'k], 25.4. | 38 Fasovka/Fasova [Fasvochka], 27.4. |
| 29 Anan'ev [Anan'iv], 26.4. | 39 Makarov [Makariv], 27.4. |
| 30 Berezovka [Berezivka], 26.4. | 40 Fastov (station) [Fastiv], 27.4. |
| 31 Gandrabury [Handrabury], 26.4. + *27–28.4. | 41 Kanev [Kaniv], 27.4. |
| 32 Bernardovka [Chyzhove], 26–27.4. | 42 Zhmerinka (station) [Zhmerynka], 27.4. |
| 33 Demidovo [Demydove], 26–27.4. | 43 Konotop, 27–28.4. |
| 34 Kiev, 26.4. | 44 Vasil'kov [Vasyf'kiv], 27–28.4. |
| 35 Brovary, 27.4. | 45 Peregonovka [Perehonivka], 29.4. |
| 36 Konotop, 27.4. | 46 Vasil'evo [Vasyliv], 29.4. |
| 37 Gandrabury [Handrabury], 27.4. | 47 Liudvinovka [Liudvynivka], 30.4. |

* plus four villages: Zavadovka, Sirorinka, Strukovo, Tefrulovo, 27–28.4.

Riots/pogroms in Tsarist Russia, **1–10 May 1881**,
place name followed by day and month, number indicating location on map

| ▲ towns where riots/pogroms occurred | [] different place name today |
|---|---|
| 48 Aleksandrovsk, 1.5. | 80 Zalevki [Zalevky], 4.5. |
| 49 Andreevka [Andriivka], 1.5. | 81 villages near Berdiansk, 4.5. |
| 50 Grigor'evka [Hryhorovka], 1.5. | 82 Malye Tokmachi [Mala Tokmacha], 4.5. + *4.5. |
| 51 Natal'evka [Natal'yevka], 1.5. | 83 Golokhvasta [Golokhavasty], 4.5. |
| 52 Nikopol, 1.5. | 84 Kopachevka, 4.5. |
| 53 Petrovsk [Petrovskoye], 1.5. | 85 Nemirovets [Nemirovka], 4.5. |
| 54 Manuilovka [Manuilivka], 1.5. | 86 Poliana [Polyana], 4.5. |
| 55 Nikolaev [Nikolayev], 1.5. | 87 Volchkovets [Vochkvc'i], 4.5. |
| 56 Orekhov [Orikhiv], 1–4.5. | 88 Imenie Vasinovka [Vasynivka], 4–5.5. |
| 57 Kamyshevka [Komyshuvakha], 3.5. | 89 Konskie Razdory [Rozdory], 4–5.5. |
| 58 Voznesensk, 3.5. | 90 Volochisk (station), 4–5.5. |
| 59 Lozova [Lozova], 3–5.5. | 91 Gaigula [Gaichul], 5.5. |
| 60 Ivanovka [Ivanivka], 3–10.5. | 92 Preobrazhenka, 5.5. |
| 61 Maiaki [Mayaki], 3.5. | 93 Voskresensk [Voskresenivka], 5.5. |
| 62 Odessa, 3.5. | 94 villages near Berdiansk, 5.5. |
| 63 Varvarovka, 3–10.5. | 95 villages near Melitopol, 5.5. |
| 64 Smela [Smila], 3.5. | 96 Alekseeva [Oleksivka], 6.5. |
| 65 Kovalevka [Kovalivka], 3.5. | 97 Belomanka [Bil'manka], 6.5. |
| 66 Romny, 3.5. | 98 Blagoveshchensk, 6.5. |
| 67 Volochisk (station) [Volochys'k], 3–5.5. | 99 Mezherich (col), 6.5. |
| 68 Fridrikhovka, 3–4.5. | 100 Novoselovka, 6.5. |
| 69 Shpaier, 4.5. | 101 Sofievka, 6.5. |
| 70 Balakleia [Balaklija], 4.5. | 102 Tsarekonstantinovka [Kostjantynivka], 6.5. |
| 71 Berezniaki [Bereznjaky], 4.5. | 103 Bobrik, 6.5. |
| 72 Budki [Budky], 4.5. | 104 villages near Berdiansk, 6.5. |
| 73 Dubievka [Dubivka], 4.5. | 105 Imenie Belogor'e [Bilohiria], 6.5. |
| 74 Konstantinovka [Konstantynivka], 4.5. | 106 Trudoliubovka, 6–7.5. |
| 75 Malaia Smelianka [Mala Smiljanka], 4.5. | 107 Sladkovodnyi, 7.5. |
| 76 Malo-Starosel' [Male Starosilja], 4.5. | 108 Pokrovskoe, 8.5. |
| 77 Pleskachevka [Pleskacivka], 4.5. | 109 Verbovo [Berbovo], 8.5. |
| 78 Pleskal'ko [Ploskel], 4.5. | 110 Kherson, 10.5. |
| 79 Starosefe [Starosilja], 4.5. | |

* plus nearby villages: Orekhov, Volost, 4.5.

Introduction: the Russian Empire and its Jews

I'll tell you something that I don't like to tell everybody. Do you want to know what comprises the grounds for the secret organization of the Nihilists? It's the Poles and the Jews.

Count N. P. Ignatiev (12/24 August 1881)¹

On 19 February 1880, Emperor Alexander II celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the Russian throne. It was a fete held under a cloud, since only a fortnight earlier a terrorist explosion in the Winter Palace had narrowly missed killing the tsar. What were conscientious policemen doing as the empire faced a terrorist offensive? P. A. Cherevin, the chief of gendarmes and acting head of the Third Section, the security police, expended time and resources in pursuit of an imaginary international Jewish conspiracy. On 6 April 1880, he wrote to the governors-general of the provinces comprising the Pale of Jewish Settlement to urge them to search out a "universal Jewish kahal," a body with objectives which were "inimical to the Christian population." This kahal, said to rely upon the support of all Jews, capitalists and proletarians alike, was described as an important source of material support for the revolutionary movement.²

Cherevin's Judeophobe obsession was fully shared by General N. P. Ignatiev, soon to be his chief as the newly appointed minister for internal affairs. In 1880 Ignatiev declared that

There is in St. Petersburg a very powerful Polish-Yid group, under whose direct control are banks, the stock exchange, the Bar, a large part of the press and other public activities. By many ways and means, legal and illegal, they have enormous influence upon the bureaucracy, and the whole course of affairs. In its individual parts this group is linked to the plunder of the Exchequer and to sedition. . . . While propagating blind imitation of Europe, people of this group deftly maintain a

¹ P. A. Zainochkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhaviiia na rubezhe 1870-1880-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964), 380.

² TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 830, d. 4 (1881), l. 60. After conducting the requisite investigation, the Kiev provincial authorities reported that, far from being an underground conspiracy, the kahal was an officially approved Jewish benevolent organization, raising funds for projects to commemorate the imperial anniversary: *ibid.*, d. 141 (1880), ll. 1-13ob.

neutral position, and easily use extreme manifestations of sedition and embezzlement in order to recommend their own prescription for treatment: the broadest rights for Poles and Jews, and representative institutions on the Western model. Any honest voice of the Russian land is drowned out by Polish–Yid cries, which assert that only the “intellectual” class should serve, and that Russian demands should be rejected as backward and unenlightened.³

Ministerial office made Ignatiev no less reticent in voicing such opinions. In August 1881, he confided to the Austrian ambassador that Poles and Jews were “the grounds for the secret organization of the Nihilists,” as quoted above.

The reorganization of the secret police, which transformed the old Third Section into the new Okhrana did not put an end to this idiosyncratic use of police resources. In the summer of 1881, the Okhrana made an extensive investigation of a phantom “International Jewish Convention,” which was reportedly holding meetings on the frontiers of Russia, filled with sinister intent. The Vilna division of the Okhrana sent a special agent to shadow an elderly rabbi around the streets of Königsberg, in the hope of uncovering the conspirators and blocking their presumed plans to import revolutionary contraband into Russia.⁴

At first glance, such sentiments in the mouths of the foremost defenders of law and order in the empire augured ill for the fate of the Jewish population. They were symptomatic of the concern, unease, and ambivalence that now characterized official attitudes toward the Jews. Jewish settlement in the Russian Empire was slightly more than a century old, dating from the first partition of Poland in 1772 when newly annexed Jewish communities were given the legal status of a tolerated religious minority. What came to be known as the Jewish Question in Russia was an amalgam of Western enlightenment suppositions about the Jews, mediated through the realities of the declining Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Very real, but less important in actually shaping policies, was a matrix of homegrown Russian beliefs and prejudices about the Jews. Such prejudices were overridden by the practical need to deal with a compact, culturally distinct Jewish population. By the end of the nineteenth century, this population exceeded five million people, concentrated in the strategically sensitive Russian–Polish borderlands.

Two fundamental assumptions underlay Russia’s Jewish Question: The first was that the conditions of Jewish social and economic life in the empire constituted a set of problems that required resolution. The second

³ P. A. Zaionchkovskii, “Popytka sozyva zemskogo sobora i padenie ministerstva N. P. Ignat’eva,” *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 5 (1960), 127.

⁴ GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1483 (1881), ll. 1–9.

was that these problems were resolvable through a program of targeted reforms. The shortcomings of the Jews were encapsulated in two slogans, "religious fanaticism" and "economic exploitation," the latter usually seen as deriving from the former. The Russian concept of Jewish "religious fanaticism" mirrored certain obvious features of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, such as their persistent difference in dress, language, and religious and communal organization. Russians assumed that the Jews considered themselves to be not only a chosen people, but also endowed with a God-given superiority over the despised non-Jews. They were a people apart, devoid of loyalty to the state or any commitment to a proper civic relationship with the non-Jewish population. A recurrent theme in the Russian discussion of the Jewish Question was their assumed arrogance, reinforced by a system of male education that was thought to inculcate anti-Christian interpretations of the Talmud. These would furthermore encourage and justify unreserved economic exploitation based on cheating and exploiting the non-Jews. It was believed that such anti-social activities were collective in nature and were justified and directed by the leaders of the Jewish community. Another recurrent theme in Russian discussions was the supposed continuation of this formal communal leadership, the *kahal*, abolished in 1844, as an illegal underground structure. Judeophobe commentators claimed that Jews raised petty trade, middleman activity, usury and tavern-keeping, seen as quintessentially parasitic forms of living at the expense of others, to art forms. In this perspective, it was the mutual support provided by the *kahal* that ensured that Jews were more than a match for any competitor, even the arch-exploiter of the Russian village, the *kulak*. Commentators differed as to whether Jewish faults were innate, deriving from the very nature of Jewish religious belief, or constituted a response by the Jews to centuries of religious persecution. In either case, state and society shared a consensus that Jews could be – must be – reformed, and transformed into good subjects of the realm.⁵

A reform agenda dominated Russia's Jewish policy until the eve of the pogroms, although each monarch pursued the general objective in his or her own way. Under Emperor Alexander I (1801–25), the state codified the legal status of the Jews. A comprehensive statute in 1804 sought to regulate all aspects of Jewish life. The statute employed both coercion and concessions to encourage Jews to pursue more "productive" economic activities. Especially targeted were Jewish distillers and tavern-keepers whom the government sought to drive out of peasant villages and to resettle in

⁵ These themes are explored in my book *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996; hereafter *IRJQ*).

agricultural colonies or factory settlements.⁶ The embeddedness of the Jews in the economic and social life of the imperial borderlands ensured that, despite legislative initiatives, Jewish economic life remained largely unchanged until the peasant emancipation of 1861. The most substantial transformation in the life of the empire's Jews in the nineteenth century – a demographic explosion accompanied by widespread pauperization – derived from forces largely outside the direct control of the Russian state.⁷

The policies of Emperor Nicholas I (1825–55) reflected his ambition to standardize all aspects of Russian life along military-bureaucratic lines. Thus, the Jews were made eligible for military service on equal terms with other Russian subjects of the equivalent social estate. As noted above, the kahal system of autonomous local Jewish self-government was abolished. Jews who were perceived to be engaged in productive undertakings were granted a moderate extension of civil rights. Greater effort was expended on devising restrictions for unproductive, “useless” elements of the Jewish population. Nicholas’ most remarkable initiative was the creation of a state-sponsored Jewish school system, extending from primary schools to institutes designed to train progressive teachers and rabbis. This educational system produced a cadre of Russianized Jewish intellectuals who played a significant leadership role in the secular life of Russian Jewry.⁸

The reign of Emperor Alexander II (1855–81) was dominated by the “Great Reforms,” initiated by the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and accompanied by extensive efforts to promote the economic, social, and political modernization of the empire. The rights and prerogatives of “productive” Jews, such as urban artisans, large-scale merchants, and those with specialized skills or high levels of secular education, were extended.⁹ Parallel initiatives sought to control or restrict the activities of “unproductive” elements such as tavern-keepers.

⁶ John D. Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the Jewish Question in Russia* (DeKalb, 1986), 136–43.

⁷ See B. Mironov’s efforts, using the UN Human Development Index, which measures longevity, literacy, and gross income, to evaluate the situation of Russian Jewry. Despite a Jewish lag in income and physical development, Mironov concludes that “on the Index of Human Development, Jews ranked higher than Russians”: “122 goda vroz,” *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2002), 582–3.

⁸ For the most important examination of these trends and initiatives, see Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews: The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia, 1825–1855* (Philadelphia, 1983). For the concept of the “Russian Jewish intelligentsia,” see John D. Klier, “The Russian Jewish Intelligentsia and the Concept of *Sliianie*,” *Ethnic Studies*, 10 (1993), 157–74.

⁹ These policies have been described as “selective integration” by Benjamin Nathans in *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002) and less sympathetically as “homeopathic” medicine in S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, II (Philadelphia, 1918), 157.

As a general rule, when the various components of the Great Reforms were first put in place they included no special provisions for Jews. The major exception was a ban on Jews acquiring peasant land. Education was fully open to Jews, making possible careers in the liberal professions and, to a limited degree, in the civil service. Jews could sit on the juries of the new Russian courts, and a number of Jews attained prominence at the Bar. The rules that created local rural and urban self-government (the *zemstvo* system) contained no ban on Jewish participation, although the *zemstvo* system was not introduced into many of the provinces of the Pale of Settlement due to fears that it would be dominated by Polish landowners. The first version of the military reform of 1874, which introduced the principle of universal military service for all social estates, made no special provision for the way in which Jews were to be drafted. Jews were, for a brief time after the abolition of serfdom, allowed freely to buy and lease agricultural land.¹⁰ The restrictions governing Jewish settlement and mobility within the Pale were relaxed. In the early Reform Era, Jews even became the subject of sympathetic concern for the leaders of public opinion. Proposals for the complete emancipation of the Jews were widely mooted in the press.

In retrospect it is easy to see the deep residue of suspicion toward the Jews which accompanied these well-intentioned reforms and which led to their almost immediate attenuation. The nationalist revolt of the Poles in 1863 focused Russian attention on the Russian-Polish borderlands, where the Jews were an integral part of the rural economy. A series of anti-Polish measures, collectively known as Russification, were extended to include Jews, who were seen as economic allies of the Poles.¹¹ The Russian government retained a paternalistic concern for the newly emancipated peasantry, and feared that the Jews were exploiting the unsophisticated and ignorant rural inhabitants, thus reducing them to a "Jewish serfdom." Restrictions on landownership and rural tavern-keeping followed. A widely held perception that Jews avoided military service led to more stringent recruitment procedures specifically for Jews.¹²

¹⁰ This did not, however, extend to peasant properties sold at auction for tax arrears. As part of the official response to the Polish January Uprising of 1863, though after some hesitation, the government also restricted Jewish purchases of gentry land in much of the Pale. See Klier, *IRJQ*, 301, 484, nn. 1, 2.

¹¹ John D. Klier, "The Polish Revolt of 1863 and the Birth of Russification: Bad for the Jews?," *Polin*, 1 (1986), 91-106; Theodore Weeks, "Russification: Word and Practice, 1863-1914," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 148, 4 (2004), 471-89; Darius Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region After the Uprising of 1863-1864?," *Kritika*, 5, 2 (2004), 273-89.

¹² Klier, *IRJQ*, 342.

The brief vogue of Judeophilia in the early Reform Era gave way to an articulate strain of hostility to Jews, known in Russia as "Judeophobia."¹³ Judeophobia encompassed a diverse range of opinions. Some adepts based their criticism of the Jews on objective realities, such as the concentration of the Jews in tavern-keeping and petty trade, or their apparent reluctance to fulfill their military service obligations. At the other extreme were those who went far beyond the observed realities of Jewish life to promulgate the Blood Libel (the claim that Jews ritually murdered Christian children) or belief in a vast Jewish conspiracy against Christian civilization, led by the "international kahal."¹⁴ The Jews were not without their defenders, and the Judeophobe publicists were challenged by Jews and non-Jews – "Judeophiles" – who asserted the necessity of continued reform in order to solve the Jewish Question.

By the end of Alexander II's reign, debates within the government made it apparent that there would be changes in the existing legal situation of the Jews, but the exact direction was impossible to foresee. This situation derived from the fact that suggestions for the resolution of the Jewish Question did not follow neat ideological fault lines. A number of conservative Judeophobe newspapers advocated the abolition of the Pale of Settlement, on the grounds that it was only just that the burden of Jewish exploitation should be borne by all regions of the empire. Some liberal newspapers, in contrast, fearing for the welfare of the peasantry, opposed the release of the wily and industrious Jews from the Pale at a time when the cultural level of the peasantry made them an easy target for exploitation. Some Russifiers equated the Jews with the Poles, while others argued that the Jews, who could always be relied upon to favor the strong, would support Russian imperial interests.¹⁵

Most of these viewpoints merely recapitulated longstanding debates. One new theme, which had important repercussions for the future, could also be detected. Throughout the Reform Era, Judeophobes and Judeophiles alike had differentiated the Jewish population. On the one hand were the Jewish masses, generally perceived as being religiously fanatical, dirty, and obscurantist, isolated from non-Jewish culture, ready to employ any expedient in the mundane struggle for existence. Changing their status was the key to resolving the Jewish Question. Juxtaposed to them was the Jewish intelligentsia, educated

¹³ I use the term "Judeophobia" throughout this study to characterize negative Russian attitudes toward the Jews. For the relationship of Russian Judeophobia and Western antisemitism, see John D. Klier, "Russian Judeophobes and German Antisemites: Strangers and Brothers," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 37, 4 (1989), 524–40.

¹⁴ Klier, *IRJQ*, 417–49.

¹⁵ See my article "Why Were Russian Jews Not *Kaisertreu*?" *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2003), 41–58.

and acculturated, and free from the worst faults of their "little brothers." Indeed, aware of the shortcomings of the Jewish masses, educated Jews could be counted upon to act as allies in the struggle of the Russian state against Jewish ignorance, superstition, and exploitation, just as the Russian intelligentsia fought to raise the level of their own "dark masses."

On the eve of the new era ushered in by Alexander II's assassination, this demarcation was breaking down. While acculturated Jews had been willing publicly to criticize the shortcomings of the Jewish masses, they were unable to accept the discoveries of the more extreme Judeophobes, such as the ritual murder charge, the alleged existence of an international kahal, or the reality of an organized collective of Jewish exploiters, led by a group of emergent Jewish capitalists. The rise of an articulate Judeophobe press increasingly forced Jewish intellectuals into the role of defenders of the Jewish masses against the more extreme changes made against them. As a consequence, Judeophobes began to taunt Russian Jewish intellectuals with the claim that they themselves were part of the vast Jewish conspiracy to undermine Russian state and society.¹⁶

The Judeophobe discovery of the treachery of the Jewish intelligentsia was exacerbated by another phenomenon, the increased entry of Jews into the public educational institutions of the empire. In areas of concentrated Jewish settlement, such as the dynamic port city of Odessa, Judeophobes claimed that Jews were "driving Christians from the school benches" and "filling up the schools." The exceptional statistics for a few Odessa school districts were extrapolated for the empire as a whole. In 1880, an editorial in the Judeophobe St. Petersburg newspaper *Novoe vremia* gave a name to this campaign: "Zhid idet!" – "The Yid is coming!" For *Novoe vremia* and its allies, education had become just another weapon for Jewish exploitation. A perusal of the annual reports of the governors of the Pale of Settlement reveals that this campaign was having its desired effect, as governors called for a limitation on the admission of Jews to state schools.¹⁷

It was hard for contemporaries to gauge the impact on public policy of polemics for and against the Jews. Signs emanating from official spheres offered little guidance. In 1879, for example, on the occasion of a rare meeting of the government's Rabbinic Commission, some Jewish communal leaders became convinced that the state was about to announce the total legal emancipation of the Jews. On the basis of discussions with the director of the Office for Foreign Cults in the Ministry of Internal

¹⁶ Klier, *IRJQ*, 350–69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 403–7. See examples from around the Pale in A. I. Georgievskii, *Po voprosu o merakh otnositel'no obrazovaniia evreev* (SPb, 1886), 205–22.

Affairs, the veteran writer, publicist, and civil servant L. O. Levanda predicted imminent emancipation in the Lyck-based Hebrew newspaper *Ha-Maggid*.¹⁸ The latter's chief Russian rival, the St. Petersburg *Ha-Melits*, went so far as to claim that a specific emancipatory decision had already been made.¹⁹

Out of the public eye, a special commission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs also considered the future status of the Jews. A memorandum submitted to the commission by two officials, N. A. Nekliudov of the Ministry of Justice and V. D. Karpov from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, argued for the outright abolition of the Pale of Settlement.²⁰ These sentiments appeared to be bearing fruit. Early in 1880, a routine query to the governors about the number of Jews residing outside the Pale had resulted in the hasty expulsion of illegally settled Jews by officials who wished to be seen as fulfilling their duties. The minister of internal affairs, L. S. Makov, intervened with a directive that became known as the "Makov Circular" of 3 April 1880. All Jews who were illegally settled outside the Pale prior to 3 April, he ordered, were allowed to remain in place.²¹

Yet not all was sweetness and light. The recommendations of Nekliudov and Karpov for abolition of the Pale were not accepted by the tsar. In symbolic balance with the Makov Circular, the government announced in 1880 that the territory in southern Russia known as the Don Cossack Host was to be closed to further Jewish settlement. Officials feared that Jews were exploiting and corrupting the Cossacks, the local peasant-military caste.²² The liberal sentiments of Karpov were not shared inside his own ministry, where the police chief Cherevin was in search of Jewish conspiracies. A number of bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education rallied around the call for percentage norms for the entry of Jews into state schools. Public education, of course, had heretofore been seen as a useful vehicle for the attainment of Jewish acculturation and integration. Increasingly, even those Jews who had passed through the *cursus honorum* of higher education were being viewed with a critical eye. The commander of the Warsaw Military District recommended the exclusion of Jewish doctors from the forces, albeit without a public announcement. A year later the commander of the Vilna Military District made a similar request, but saw no need for secrecy – it should be openly announced that Jewish doctors evaded their service responsibilities.²³

¹⁸ *Ha-Maggid*, 8:19/II/1879, 61. ¹⁹ *Ha-Melits*, 4:23/I/1879.

²⁰ Iu. I. Gessen, *Zakon i zhizn'* (SPb, 1911), 148–51.

²¹ *Russkii evrei*, 22:28/V/1880; *Rassvet*, 19:8/V/1880. ²² Gessen, *Zakon*, 151–2.

²³ RGIA, f. 400, op. 5, d. 1650, ll. 70, 6–10ob.

If change was in the offing, it seems reasonable to assume that it would have been slow and modulated. After all, it had taken the full twenty-five years of Alexander's reign just to extend civil rights to elite categories of Jews. Moreover, even as these concessions came under attack, the state showed itself reluctant to rescind rights once given. This was all the more remarkable since Judeophobe prejudices were widespread at the highest levels of government, although occasionally challenged by a contingent of the tsar's liberal reformers. The crisis which broke over the empire in 1881–2 gave free rein to pent-up prejudices. In a climate of national emergency, the customary, glacial pace of Russian reform reached abnormal speeds. The ongoing Jewish Question proved no exception.

Documenting the pogroms

A broad range of material, official, semi-official, public, and private, is available for the task of describing and evaluating the pogroms of 1881–2.

Archival materials from Europe, Israel and the United States constitute an integral component of this study. Particularly helpful have been the collections of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi federatsii [GARF]) in Moscow, the Russian State Historical Archive (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv [RGIA]) in St. Petersburg, and the Historical Archive of Ukraine in Kiev (Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukraïny, Kyiv [TsDIAK]).²⁴

GARF houses the police archives of the tsarist empire and much of the material I cite draws on fond 102 of this collection. There were various police departments, the most common of which was the Second; unless designated otherwise, all citations from fond 102 refer to this department. GARF also holds the material from the archive of the Sixth Police Department, which provided the basis for the most significant publication of pogrom-related documents, edited by S. M. Dubnow and Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, in the period following the Revolution of 1917.²⁵ I have read these materials in both their published and archival guises in order to verify the text of the published version. For ease of reference, I provide citations from the material published by Krasnyi-Admoni, which is

²⁴ When referring to material from these archives, I follow the "Soviet" method of archival citation (see Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Trophies of War and Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), xv–xvi): fond (f.) (record group), opis' (op.) (inventory), delo (d.) (file) (which I also use in place of edinitsa khraneniia (storage unit), used in some archives), chast' (ch.) (part), list (l.) (page), and obverse (ob). I have also included the date of individual documents within a file, where possible.

²⁵ The material in question is in GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 2; 681, chs. 1–3.

designated *K-A*. Typescripts of the original archival documents, including some unpublished materials, are located at the Institute of Jewish Research (YIVO) in New York.²⁶

Besides archival material, this study relies upon a comprehensive reading of the contemporary press in a variety of languages. The existing scholarship has universally emphasized the shortcomings of the press because of its subordination to the Russian censorship. As this study will demonstrate, official efforts notwithstanding, the censorship never succeeded in effectively imposing its will on the press. There was no consistency of purpose in this regard. Indeed, an important aspect of this period is the extent to which the government tried to use the press, at home and abroad, to serve its own ends. The problem of using the press as a source is not that it was censored and thus conveyed too little of events, but that it carried too much: Accounts were often hopelessly in conflict, with rumor reported as fact. Moreover, the greater the physical remove of a periodical from the scene of events, the less reliable or more contradictory its accounts tended to be. As a consequence it was often the uncensored foreign press that proved least reliable in its pogrom coverage. It may also be taken as a general rule that the ideology of a particular publication, rather than the influence of the censor, colored its reports.

Memoir literature has served as the major source for the master narrative of the events of 1881–2. Yet much of it was written long after the fact, and often with an ideological cast. I have tried to confirm specific details found in the memoir literature, even apparently minor ones, in order to provide a criterion for assessing the reliability of a particular account as a whole.

To what extent does this broad range of sources allow for a reconstruction of the events of 1881–2? The voluminous archival evidence documents the actions taken by the imperial administration before, during, and after the pogroms. Much of this material, such as encoded telegraphic reports from the scene of pogroms and urgent requests for information from the center, were generated in the very heat of events. There are duty orders and direct, handwritten commands from provincial authorities to subordinates involved in the repression of pogroms, as well as copies of their printed announcements and orders to the general public. Official reports exist for almost every pogrom, written both in the immediate aftermath and at some distance from the events they describe. There are secret denunciations of officials and private individuals, sent anonymously to provincial and national authorities,

²⁶ Tcherikower Collection, RG 81, pp. 74, 142–74, 381. Citations from archives outside the former Soviet Union, such as YIVO, the London Metropolitan Archives, or the archive of Alliance Israélite Universelle, follow the practice of the individual archive.

as well as formal reports prepared by Jewish communities for submission to government investigators. There are primitive, handwritten sheets, calling on the population to attack the Jews. Contemporary accounts are contained in diaries and letters. Transcripts of court cases detail the charges made against individual *pogromshchiki*, their identities, and their fate. Copious reportage is to be found in the press of both the capitals and the provinces, as well as archival documentation about the workings of the censorship.

What does not exist, ironically, is a detailed, centralized, contemporary report on the pogroms as a whole, or even a standard working definition of what a pogrom was. Consequently, all figures of the total number of pogroms, of *pogromshchiki* and victims, of total losses, are only estimates, some clearly better than others. This leaves the modern investigator with much the same task as faced contemporaries of the pogroms: to reconstruct the overall picture from a mass of individual details. That must be the first task in trying to understand the events of 1881–2, a task that inevitably raises various issues regarding the reliability of the sources, some of which I have already mentioned.

Any study that relies extensively upon official reports faces the task of affirming their veracity. It may be assumed that, in their reports to their superiors, local officials sought to justify their actions – or lack thereof – and certainly to cover up any collusion in the disorders. Against their desire to hide and obfuscate must be balanced the incessant demand for information from the authorities at the center, intent on judging the performance of local officials and dispensing reward and punishment. For officials with telegraphic links to the capital, these demands were almost instantaneous with events.²⁷ Clearly it made sense for locals to disguise the true scale of the violence: The greater the scope, the more the negative reflection on the performance of their duties. Yet the very extent of the violence – and the willingness of Jewish victims to complain about a job badly done – worked against any attempt at a massive cover-up. Indeed, when officials were caught out disguising the facts, they were disciplined. Reports in the press were monitored by the central authorities, and local officials were frequently called upon to confirm or explain specific events or details.

The problems entailed in assembling an accurate account of the pogroms are well illustrated by the contentious issue of rape. Rape, even more than murder and looting, generated particular outrage abroad and prompted investigations by both foreign and domestic officials. The

²⁷ The Kiev archives contain telegrams from V. K. Pleve, demanding information about the situation in Kiev on an almost hourly basis: TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (26–7/IV/1881), ll. 60b–10.

Jewish intermediaries who were channeling pogrom reports abroad were well aware of the impact of reports of rape, and it featured prominently in their accounts. This results in a troublesome contradiction: Rape accounts are largely absent from official reports and from the reports of Jewish communities submitted to the official investigator, Count P. I. Kutaisov. They do appear in newspaper accounts published within the empire, but never on a large scale.²⁸

There are a number of possible explanations for the apparent invisibility of rape. The most obvious is that victims and their families were reluctant to report the crime, which compromised the marriage prospects of young women and brought shame on the family. Yet even while asserting that “the modesty of our Jewish maidens” explained the absence of charges, correspondents complained that the authorities were not bringing rapists to trial.²⁹ It is also possible, as suggested by a feminist analysis of rape, that officials considered it a minor detail amidst the general pogrom violence. The reported involvement of policemen suggests that it might have been viewed as a sort of “*droit de seigneur*” of a local authority figure. One Balta rapist, brought to trial, expressed his chagrin that he might be exiled to Siberia “for this trifle.”³⁰ These must remain hypotheses, however, and are not supported by documentary evidence.

There is one consideration that may help to resolve this issue. The accounts of rape, as publicized by Jewish activists, never stood alone. Invariably, they were accompanied by accounts of horrific violence. The victims were not only violated, but they were invariably beaten, tortured, and sometimes killed. A persistent image was the alleged rape of a mother who sought to protect the honor of her daughter.³¹ A recurrent claim was that victims had been raped to death or that they had gone mad. There were frequent descriptions of the mutilation of victims.³² Susan Brownmiller, in her pathbreaking work, *Against Our Will*, has noted the frequent conjunction of rape and mutilation in order to buttress her

²⁸ A rare exception was an account in *Russkii evrei* reporting from Berezhovka that women were raped, beaten, and driven into a nearby river. Significantly, the paper made a special point of noting that “the veracity of the report is the responsibility of the correspondent” (23:4/VI/1881). This is the version that reappeared in foreign accounts. The trial of a Balta rapist in 1882 was very widely reported (see the transcript in *Rassvet*, 26:27/VI/1882), perhaps because it had drawn international attention. There were no guidelines from the censor in the archival record regarding the reporting of rape.

²⁹ *The Times*, 30,444:2/III/1882.

[*The source of this quotation could not be verified – the editors.*]

³⁰ After this claim was made abroad in reporting of the Balta pogrom, local officials were ordered to conduct an investigation: A. Zel'tser, “Pogrom v Balte,” *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 13 (1996), 61.

³² See the accounts in *The Times* of London in February 1882, reprinted in *The Persecution of the Jews in Russia 1881* (London, 1882).

contention that rape is an act of violence and aggression, rather than a sexual crime.³³ If true, the rape-murders of the Russian pogroms had many historical precedents. Indeed, it was the precedents of legend – as far back as the Khmel'nitsky massacres of 1648 or even the medieval Crusades – that helped to lend atrocity reports an air of credibility. How then can one account for the lack of concrete contemporary evidence in the archival record of widespread abuse of women in the course of the pogroms? The feminist discourse on rape offers the explanation that male authorities are often slow to take charges of rape very seriously. Did Russian authorities, perhaps distracted by the wider concerns of restoring public order, in their official reports simply “overlook” the widespread phenomenon of rape, as was widely claimed at the time?

The consideration of this problem must begin with the recognition that rape in Russia was a serious crime, punishable by years of hard labor.³⁴ Moreover, it seems improbable in the extreme that local officials, however hostile they might be to the Jews, could ignore cases of torture and murder of the most vicious kind, which would certainly be reported, given that less serious crimes were dutifully enumerated. Some of the reputed crimes involved more than just the welfare of Jews: Arson threatened the safety of the entire settlement. It is difficult to imagine that they would have been totally ignored by the authorities. In confirmation, in those cases where arson was proved or threatened, a criminal investigation was launched. One can therefore assume that gross acts of violence and serious atrocities would be reported to the responsible authorities. These considerations lead to a further possibility – nowhere considered in the historical literature – that rape was not a common crime in the context of the pogroms of 1881–2. A strong case can be made that the rape narrative that appeared in the West was, in fact, more legendary than factual. This problem will be addressed in the course of this study.

It is the working assumption of this investigation that official, internal reports, when crosschecked with alternative versions, as well as press reports in Russia and abroad, make it possible to assemble an account of the pogroms that carries a high degree of reliability. If the resultant picture is not *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, it nonetheless provides insight into how contemporaries viewed and understood the pogroms.

³³ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York, 1975), 14–15. For examples of torture and mutilation accompanying rape, see *ibid.*, 194–7.

³⁴ Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca and London, 1992), 75–84.

Part I

1 The pogroms of 1881–1882

The anti-Jewish outbreaks have now attained the character of an epidemic. *Golos*, 115:2/V/1882

The assassination of Alexander II plunged official Russia into panic, even as the regicides were arrested and interrogated.¹ Their trial and subsequent execution did nothing to calm fears. Provincial gendarmes reported rumors that criminal elements would use the passing of sentence on the assassins as a signal to launch a “small revolution” simultaneously in St. Petersburg and Kiev.² The day following the opening of the trial of the conspirators by the Governing Senate on 26 March, the new emperor, Alexander III, fled to one of his suburban palaces, making himself the “prisoner of Gatchina.”

The minister of internal affairs, M. T. Loris-Melikov, sought to calm the situation by instructing the governors to combat rumors energetically, especially claims that the nobles had killed the tsar because he wished to give more land to the peasants.³ The security forces were shaken up and a new man, V. K. Pleve, was brought in to supervise the Department of Police. Against this background there was general trepidation at what might be the response of the revolutionaries to the execution of the regicides on 3 April 1881.

Loris-Melikov, appointed minister of internal affairs on 15 November 1880, and virtually prime minister in the last months of Alexander II's reign, was fighting for his political life. A group of reactionary advisors around Alexander III, led by his former tutor and confidante, the ober-procurator (director-general) of the Holy Synod, K. P. Pobedonostsev, blamed Loris-Melikov's liberal policies for the catastrophe of 1 March. Loris-Melikov sought to consolidate his position by securing the new tsar's ratification of a project to convoke a consultative representative assembly, which was part of his ongoing campaign to win the support of Russian society against the revolutionary movement. Pobedonostsev and his allies warned that

¹ P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhavii na rubezhe 1870–1880-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964), 304–11.

² TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), ll. 1–2. ³ Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, 313.

this would be a step on the road to a constitution, and the demise of the tsars' autocratic power. According to the doyen of Soviet historians of this period, P. A. Zaionchkovskii, only Alexander's fear of a mass uprising kept him from an early dismissal of his liberal advisors and prevented a firm assertion of his autocratic prejudices. He ultimately took this step by issuing a Pobedonostsev-authored manifesto on 29 April 1881. Prior to this decisive moment, which prompted Loris-Melikov's resignation, it was vital for the latter to demonstrate that he had the situation under control.⁴

Matters were not helped by the impending celebration on Sunday, 12 April, of Russian Orthodox Easter, the central event of the liturgical calendar. Coming at the end of the long Lenten fast, the period following Easter, "Bright Week," was celebrated with a holiday fair, the *balagan*, marked by riotous carousing. As a mark of respect for the late emperor, the traditional revels were curtailed, but the regime had no hopes of totally repressing popular enthusiasm. In provinces within the Pale of Settlement, there was an additional security consideration. The Paschal season was a traditional time for fights and skirmishes between Christians and Jews, especially in larger towns. Christian high spirits, the public nature of the Orthodox religious service which drew crowds of curious Jewish onlookers, and the customary squabbles and rock throwing by Christian and Jewish urchins were annual phenomena. On a number of occasions, most particularly in the Black Sea port of Odessa, fights had escalated into full-scale riots, involving extensive property damage and forcing the deployment of troops. Clearly, much would depend at this juncture on the ability of the police and security apparatus to contain any potential unrest. Yet imperial Russia, though often thought of as the "Gendarme of Europe," could perhaps more accurately be described as a "mal-ordered police state."

The mal-ordered police state

To be sure, a significant percentage of the state's resources was committed to the safeguarding of Russia's great power status abroad and to the imposition of stability and order at home. Russia was a police state, both in the popular sense of the word, implying a society in which there was a strong and intrusive police presence, and in line with the more scholarly definition of a cameralist state that sought to organize productivity, discipline society, and codify law.⁵ Yet the "well-ordered police state"

⁴ Loris-Melikov was replaced by N. P. Ignat'ev, who served until 30 May 1882, when he was succeeded by D. Tolstoi, whose tenure lasted until his death in 1889.

⁵ See Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven and London, 1983).

described by Marc Raeff was only an idealized model for Russians, and in reality the Russian Empire deviated considerably from its own *pia desideria*. In part this was an inevitable consequence of governing an immense territory, with a large, scattered, and ethnically diverse population. But a lack of adequate organization and resources, compounded by bureaucratic in-fighting, also conspired against the maintenance of order.

A Russian proverb warns against the dangers of having two masters in the field. The imperial government was never able to resolve where it wished to locate the ultimate responsibility for law and order, a dilemma illustrated by periodic reorganizations of the police. Besides continued rivalry between military and civilian authorities, there was conflict aplenty between different elements of the civil administration.

The evolution of the modern Russian state was accompanied by the rise of political dissidence and the creation of professionalized institutions to deal with it. From 1826 to 1880, the central weapon in the government's political arsenal was a special chancellery that reported directly to the emperor, the so-called Third Section. The executive agency of the Third Section was a military unit, the Corps of Gendarmes, famous for its sky-blue uniforms. The Third Section's first responsibility was the investigation of political cases and the monitoring of public opinion. It was also saddled with duties encompassing the supervision of religious sectarians, running prisons, surveillance of foreign agents and counterintelligence, and overseeing peasant affairs, including reporting on fires and banditry. For a period after 1842, the Third Section was charged with censorship of the press. Only under exceptional circumstances was the gendarmerie to investigate ordinary criminal cases. Individual branches of the Third Section existed in many provinces and in a number of large cities, from where they reported directly to their supervisors in St. Petersburg. The MVD, the governors-general, and the governors all yearned to bring these autonomous units under their direct control.

The inability of the Third Section to cope with the rising revolutionary movement in the 1870s led to its disappearance in a bureaucratic reorganization led by Loris-Melikov, who had been appointed minister of internal affairs by Alexander II to combat the revolutionary terror campaign. The last head of the Third Section, General A. R. Drenteln, was moved to Kiev to become governor-general of Kiev, Podolia, and Volynia provinces. On 6 August 1880, the Third Section was replaced by two departments, the State Police and the Executive Police (merged in 1883), under the control of the minister of internal affairs, who was given the additional title of chief of gendarmes. Under Loris-Melikov's administration, provincial units were subordinated to the governors, but after May 1881, they again reported directly to the MVD. Daily oversight of the

new body, soon nicknamed “the Okhrana” (Guard or Protection) lay with a deputy within the MVD who received the title of director of police. From April 1881 to July 1884, this position was held by V. K. Pleve.

Given the importance of its duties, the Okhrana was seriously understaffed. Throughout its existence, it never had more than a few thousand active agents. Despite the reorganization of 1880, the Corps of Gendarmes continued to be considered a military unit, but was never satisfactorily integrated into the military command structure. To muddle matters still more, two additional police bodies, the Frontier Guard and the Customs Guard, were under the control of the Finance Ministry.

When events passed beyond the control of local officials, there was one final expedient – the army. Time and again in the nineteenth century the army was called upon to deal with rebellious peasants, mutinous workers, and discontented national minorities, most often the Poles. While they recognized the grim necessity of such responsibilities, the military high command thoroughly detested this duty, which had a destructive effect on the army itself. Troops who were guarding civilian institutions, patrolling city streets, or overawing the population of rebellious villages could not participate in the military maneuvers that were deemed so essential a part of military training. The repression of civil disturbances made the army hated in the eyes of civilians and damaged morale. One should not forget that the revolution that finally overthrew the monarchy grew out of a mutinous refusal of troops to fire on civilians. Moreover, regulations governing the suppression of civil disorder often placed military units under direct or indirect civilian command, and the conduct of these presumed amateurs seldom drew the approbation of military professionals.

Yet there was no realistic option other than the use of troops, since even a dramatic increase in the number of police, as attempted in 1903, was swallowed up in the vastness of rural Russia. Against the backdrop of the growing revolutionary movement in the 1870s, an elaborate code of procedures evolved to regulate the deployment of troops against civilians, the exercise of deadly force against them, and the use of military courts against civilian malefactors. The major hallmarks of this campaign were the laws of 3 October 1877 (“Rules Determining the Method for the Call of Troops to Aid the Civil Power”) and 14 August 1881 (“Ordinance on Measures for the Preservation of the State Order and Public Tranquility”).⁶

⁶ Historians have debated the extent to which this latter statute was implemented in part for use against the pogroms. See Jonathan Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege: Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1866–1905* (DeKalb, 1998), 37–8. Certainly there were calls for it to be used in this way (*Rassvet*, 47:1882) and on at least one occasion, in Chernigov province, it was (RGLA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1243 [1882], l. 12ob).

The regular police were also called upon to do far too much in pre-revolutionary Russia. After the peasant emancipation of 1861, local police functionaries were not only obliged to maintain order and investigate crimes, but also to collect taxes, oversee the internal passport system, enforce various laws and regulations, such as the complex legislation governing the liquor trade, help with the recruitment of soldiers, ensure order and hygiene at fairs and marketplaces, and much else besides. The regulations they were expected to enforce emanated from a variety of offices and jurisdictions, so it was not always obvious to whom they should be reporting.⁷ Little training was given, and few qualifications were expected for the local police. This was reflected in a derisory salary or even none at all, since the peasant community was expected to provide local policemen who served without compensation. Small wonder that the caprice and arbitrary conduct of the police (*proizvol*) were curbed only by their notorious venality.

The local police – of whom so much was asked – were technically under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Russian Empire was divided into large individual units each known as a province (*guberniia*).⁸ The governor of each province was appointed by the tsar on the recommendation of the minister of internal affairs. The governor normally reported to the MVD, although this was a *de facto* arrangement rather than one based in law.⁹ As Richard Robbins has observed, the governors enjoyed a strange sort of dual status, as viceroys of the tsar (to whom they were empowered to report directly, as appropriate) and as agents of the MVD.¹⁰ This hierarchical structure was complicated by the existence of extra-provincial officials, governors-general, who were charged with oversight of a group of contiguous provinces. Governors-general usually oversaw non-Russian provinces and those located on the borderlands. Most of the empire's provinces were not included within a governor-generalship. A number of governor-generalships, such as those of the Northwest (Vilna, Kovno, and Grodno) and the Southwest (Kiev, Volynia, and Podolia), comprised areas of Jewish settlement, and Jewish matters frequently appeared in official reports. Since the governors remained responsible for

⁷ Daniel T. Orlovsky, *The Limits of Reform: The Ministry of Internal Affairs in Imperial Russia, 1802–1881* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), 136.

⁸ Jewish settlement in the Russian Empire was restricted to fifteen provinces on the western frontier of the empire, known as the Pale of Jewish Settlement, as well as the provinces constituting the Kingdom of Poland, which were under different regulations from the Pale proper. Certain categories of Jews had residence rights outside the Pale.

⁹ Orlovsky, *Limits*, 144.

¹⁰ Richard G. Robbins, Jr., *The Tsar's Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca and London, 1987), 14.

much of the day-to-day administration of their province, and since the governor-general often had additional military duties, the office was in many ways superfluous. An element of civilian–military rivalry was fostered by the tendency to appoint, as governors-general, commanders of the corresponding provincial military districts.¹¹ On 5 April 1879, in response to the ongoing terrorist offensive, three temporary governor-generalships were created for St. Petersburg, Kharkov, and Odessa. At first, the government was not even able to decide which provinces to include in the new governor-generalships, before making them coterminous with the military district. Even then the government included the rubric “and other places, as the need arises.” An important prerogative of these new officials was the right to transfer civilian cases to courts-martial, a right which was frequently used in the course of the pogroms.¹²

Each province in the Pale was subdivided into between six and fifteen districts (*uezd*), police functions in each of which were overseen by a police colonel (*ispravnik*) and a deputy (*pomoshchnik*), appointed by the governor. Provincial districts were divided into four or five police districts (*stan*). Each *stan* was further subdivided into police stations (the *uchastok*). The police districts in the three most pogrom-ridden provinces of the Pale (Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, and Kherson) each had between 30,000 and 60,000 inhabitants. In rural areas of the *stan*, police functions were the responsibility of a rural sergeant (*stanovoi pristav*), assisted by two constables (the *uriadniki*). The rural sergeant was usually chosen from the local gentry. A rural police district might contain both peasant villages and “urban” settlements over which the sergeant had supervisory functions.

There was no uniform definition of an urban center in the Pale of Settlement, much of which had been annexed from the Polish–Lithuanian state and preserved abundant traces of the past. These included the phenomenon of private towns that were the personal property of the Polish nobility. There was no standard pattern of police administration for these towns, which might be administered as part of a *stan* or with their own local police force. Local government throughout the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland was complicated by the fact that the administrative reforms of the Russian Empire, including the *zemstvo* system of local self-government, had not been extended to all of the provinces of the Russian–Polish borderlands, including all of the Kingdom of Poland and the majority of the fifteen provinces located in the Pale of Settlement.

¹¹ William C. Fuller, *Civil–Military Conflict in Imperial Russia, 1881–1914* (Princeton, 1985), xxii, 45.

¹² For legislation on the temporary governors-general, see *Pravitel'stvoennyi vestnik*, 76:6/IV/1879 and 98 [the date of this issue could not be established – the editors].

The governance of the western empire was concentrated in the larger cities, which served as provincial and district capitals. Such centers were usually under the authority of an appointed municipal police colonel (*politseimeister*). Cities and towns were subdivided into police precincts (*chasti*) and wards (*kvartaly*), which were overseen by a police hierarchy ranging from sergeants (*pristavy*) and constables (*uriadniki*) to police officers (*nadzirately*) and patrolmen (*gorodovoi*). Smaller towns, with fewer professional police resources, often organized a night watch composed of civilian volunteers. Jews organized such night patrols in a number of towns following the outbreak of the pogroms in 1881. In larger cities where military units were stationed, soldiers might be employed for patrol or guard duty, an activity always resisted by their commanding officers.

A survey of the police forces of towns and cities throughout the Pale of Settlement will give some idea of the lack of police resources when faced with the threat of holiday violence. Elisavetgrad, which suffered the first pogrom, had a police force numbering no more than 87 for a population of 45,000. Pereiaslav, also the site of a pogrom, employed 16 policemen for a town of 16,000. Poltava had 76 patrolmen for a city of 40,000. Kremenchug's 50 policemen oversaw a population of 35,000. Kiev, with a population approaching 200,000, served as the residence for the governor-general of the Southwest, who was also the head of the military district. In addition, it served as headquarters of the governor of Kiev province.¹³ Despite this apparent wealth of resources, the city was under-policed, and when the pogroms erupted, there was confusion between the various chains of command, police and military.¹⁴

Clearly there could not be a police functionary in every rural location. Police functions were also provided by the institutions of peasant self-government created after emancipation in 1861. The basic administrative element was the village community (*obshchina*), whose members chose one of their member as village elder (*starosta*). To help him perform his functions, the village assembly also selected two peasant policemen, known as the "hundreder" (*sotskii*) and "tenner" (*desiatskii*), names referring to the number of households which had once elected them.

¹³ *K-A*, 50, 488–9.

¹⁴ For information on the relative strength of police forces elsewhere, see Herbert Reinke, "Armed as for a War": The State, the Military and the Professionalisation of the Prussian Police in Imperial Germany," in Clive Emsley and Barbara Weinberger, eds., *Policing Western Europe: Politics, Professionalism, and Public Order, 1850–1940* (New York, Westport, CT, and London, 1991), 63, and Rob Sindall, *Street Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (Leicester, London, and New York, 1990), 118.

These were unpaid positions, and were considered an onerous burden best to be avoided. The peasants elected delegates to a regional assembly, the canton (*volost*), whose elected head, the headman (*starshina*), was also expected to help in the maintenance of local order. Both the village and the *volost* had peasant courts, which operated under a system of customary law. Meetings of individual peasant communities, the *skhod*, were convened on an *ad hoc* basis to deal with various emergencies.

A typical *stan* had no more than 40 appointed policemen, making an approximate ratio of 1 policeman to 1,250 civilians. At the turn of the century, by Neil Weissman's figures, there were 8,456 rural policemen (1,582 sergeants and 6,874 constables) to control a rural population approaching ninety million people.¹⁵ More than one contemporary used terms such as "worthless" or "the dregs of Russian society" to describe these provincial policemen.¹⁶ There is ample archival evidence to confirm Weissman's assertion that, "lacking in training and character, and given to handling the populace in a rough and arbitrary fashion, the tsarist policeman appears to have done much to instill in the peasantry a deep disrespect for all laws and authority."¹⁷ Complaints about the quantity and quality of the provincial police were a recurrent theme in high government circles long before their shortcomings were demonstrated by the pogroms. Indeed, pogrom-style violence was at times directed against the police themselves, as in Rostov-on-Don in 1879.¹⁸ Understandably, the Russian police were a recurrent target for reform and reorganization.¹⁹

These were the forces available as Easter approached in 1881. Well in advance the police collected rumors of an impending attack upon the Jews. Some of these rumors were reported by the press, especially in Odessa. In response to these threats, Jews in a number of communities, such as Berdiansk, Tauride province, turned to the local authorities with a request for special protection.²⁰ Some action was taken. On 4 April the police chief of Rostov-on-Don reported rumors of a threatened attack at Eastertime on Jews and students at the Rostov *Realschule*, in revenge for their alleged involvement in the assassination of Alexander II. As a

¹⁵ Neil B. Weissman, *Reform in Tsarist Russia: The State Bureaucracy and Local Government, 1900–1914* (New Brunswick, 1984), 11.

¹⁶ Orlovsky, *Limits*, 96, 142.

¹⁷ Neil B. Weissman, "Rural Crime in Tsarist Russia: The Question of Hooliganism, 1905–1914," *Slavic Review*, 37, 2 (1978), 236.

¹⁸ See p. 75, n. 60.

¹⁹ A Loris-Melikov reform of 15 November 1880 sought to bring all police under the authority of the new Department of State Police, and to divest them of various economic and administrative functions: Orlovsky, *Limits*, 186.

²⁰ K-A, 12 (7/IV/1881).

precaution, the police subjected migrant workers to special surveillance, and troops were used to reinforce police patrols.²¹

In light of the Odessa traditions of Paschal violence, the governor-general of the Odessa Region, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, implemented a series of preventative measures in advance of Easter. He was especially concerned at the "tactless and untimely agitation" of local newspapers against Jewish economic activity, as well as popular resentment against Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement. At the start of Holy Week, the period immediately before Easter, Dondukov-Korsakov issued a proclamation to the Odessa population, which emphasized the obligation of every loyal subject to maintain public order. He threatened military tribunals for those who ignored this advice. At the same time he ordered the Odessa censorship office to forbid publication in the local press of any stories which suggested the possibility of disorders, as well as polemical articles on the Jewish Question. The military garrison in Odessa was placed on full alert.²² These precautions appeared to bear fruit. On 15 April, Dondukov-Korsakov telegraphed Loris-Melikov to boast that, thanks to his efforts, the first days of Easter had passed in Odessa without incident.²³

It was in another major center of the Southwest, Elisavetgrad, that the first pogrom erupted, with disorders spreading to the surrounding countryside. In this and subsequent disorders, disturbances spread out from the pogrom epicenter in what Michael Aronson has characterized as "waves." This is a useful concept, for smaller disturbances radiated out from larger, urban pogrom epicenters along means of communication, such as railways, main roads, and rivers.²⁴ In the course of 1881, the period examined by Aronson, there were three waves: 15–21 April; 26 April–10 May; and 30 June–16 August. In addition three major urban pogroms subsequently took place in Warsaw (December 1881), Balta (March 1882), and Ekaterinoslav (July 1883). None of these pogroms produced a wave effect. The Warsaw and Balta pogroms displayed a number of unique features, to be examined below, as did random acts of pogrom violence that occurred sporadically in the course of 1882.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 452–6 (4/IV/1881 and 10/IV/1881).

²² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 1–3ob. Loris-Melikov replied to Dondukov-Korsakov on 3 April to applaud his initiative: *ibid.*, l. 9.

²³ *K-A*, 1.

²⁴ This was a phenomenon noted by many contemporary observers, including Count P. I. Kutaisov, who assembled the first official report on the pogroms (*K-A*, 249), and British consuls in the area (*Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia. Russia No. 1 (1882). State Papers*, vol. LXXXI [London, 1882], 120, 25).

The first wave: 15–21 April 1881, Elisavetgrad and Kherson province

Before Easter the police in Elisavetgrad, Kherson province, detected rumors of an impending Odessa-style attack.²⁵ Their reports prompted the governor of Kherson province, A. S. Erdeli, on 10 April, to order the Elisavetgrad police chief, I. P. Bogdanovich, to take preventative measures. Bogdanovich, in turn, requested the local military commander, Lt.-General A. Kosich, of the 7th Hussars of the Belorussian Regiment, to reinforce the police with a detachment of his troops. In addition, Bogdanovich ordered all shops, taverns, and inns to close for the first three days of Bright Week.²⁶ Bogdanovich also made concerted efforts to explain to the populace that the customary Easter celebrations were curtailed as a mark of respect for the dead emperor, and not because, as rumor had it, “the Jews have bought the holiday.”²⁷ The first three days of Bright Week passed without incident. On 15 April, therefore, Bogdanovich authorized Kosich to withdraw his troops, weary from their patrol duties, from the city.

This proved a fatal miscalculation. In the late afternoon of 15 April, a fight broke out in the tavern of the Jew Shulim Grichevskii. One account claimed that a local “holy fool,” Ivanushka, was manhandled for breaking a glass worth three kopeks, another that the pretext was the simpleton’s noisy singing of the Easter anthem “*Khristos Voskres*” (“Christ Is Risen”).²⁸ In any event, his cries attracted a large crowd. A police sergeant arrived and urged the crowd to disperse. Instead, they shouted “The Yids are beating our people!” and began to attack Jews.²⁹

The mob proceeded to Bazaar Square, breaking shop windows and throwing goods into the street. Jewish shopkeepers defended themselves with crowbars and axes. The rioting moved on to nearby Jewish homes, and surrounding streets filled up with broken furniture. The contents of ripped featherbeds created the illusion of a sudden snowfall.³⁰ Bogdanovich, having sent Kosich a request for two squadrons to assist the police, went to Bazaar Square and vainly urged the rioters to disperse. The police and troops then charged the mob and arrested twenty rioters. This hardly

²⁵ *Elisavetgradskii vestnik*, 42:19/IV/1881. The leaders of the Elisavetgrad Jewish community also reported these rumors to the authorities, who assured them that the situation was under control: *K-A*, 227 (11/VII/1881).

²⁶ *K-A*, 20 (29/IV/1881). ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20 (Dondukov-Korsakov); 243 (Kutaisov).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20, 243. *Rassvet*, 16:16/IV/1881, reported the curious, and unsubstantiated, story of a near-pogrom, triggered by the discovery of a jar of anatomical remains, being sent for an autopsy, which a crowd attributed to a Jewish ritual murder.

³⁰ *K-A*, 243.

remedied the situation. The arrested *pogromshchiki* protested that the Jews had begun the affray by attacking Christians. When they had threatened to retaliate, Jews had taunted them with threats that "They'll string you up like dogs!"³¹

The main body of *pogromshchiki* fled to back streets and outlying areas, where they continued to wreck and plunder. Looting was especially the preserve of peasant women, youths, and the local rabble, the so-called barefoot brigade, who played a prominent role in almost every urban pogrom. The arrival of military reinforcements was delayed, since Kosich's forces were already on the march back to camp. When troops did arrive, some were sent to the suburbs to deal with looting there, while the rest were assigned to patrol the town.

In the evening an army patrol dealt with an incident at the main Elisavetgrad synagogue. The building, filled with Jews, was surrounded by a large crowd which was stoning the windows. Members of the crowd complained to the officer in charge that Jews had been shooting at Christians from the windows of the building. The patrol leader secured the perimeter of the synagogue and sent for civilian authorities. When these officials arrived and demonstrated that the synagogue windows were too high to accommodate snipers, the crowd dispersed.³²

At this juncture, authority was still in the hands of Bogdanovich, who issued no precise orders to the police or to the military, although he did telegraph news of the outbreak to his superior, Kherson governor Erdeli. Erdeli notified both the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg and Governor-General Dondukov-Korsakov. He then set off from Kherson to Elisavetgrad, together with a detachment of troops. Although sporadic disorders continued throughout the night in Elisavetgrad, Bogdanovich took no action to anticipate disorders on the following day. At dawn violence resumed on a massive scale, as local rioters were joined by peasants from nearby villages.

At six in the morning, Kosich received Dondukov-Korsakov's telegraphed order to take command of the city until the arrival of Erdeli and to implement all measures necessary to suppress the disorders.³³ Kosich at once sent for more troops and passed field command to a subordinate, with explicit instructions to use deadly force if necessary. He ordered cordons to be thrown up around municipal buildings. After this vigorous action, Kosich contented himself with sending detachments of troops to areas of the city where violence was reported. At no time did he issue more detailed instructions to the troops. The police, meanwhile, largely disappeared from the streets.

³¹ *Ibid.* ³² *Ibid.*, 282. ³³ *Ibid.*, 2 (16/IV/1881).

Only at nightfall did Kosich follow the usual procedures in such situations and divide the city into districts, each garrisoned with a detachment of troops. Pickets were posted on the main roads into town in order to keep out the crowds of peasants, who had begun to arrive in order to loot. Hundreds were turned back the following day.³⁴

The military had mixed success against the rioters in the course of 16 April. When large crowds gathered, as was the case of a thousand rioters in Bazaar Square, they were quickly dispersed. In this case, a squadron of hussars fired over the heads of the mob, which broke and ran.³⁵ The troops were able to disperse small groups of ten to twenty people without much trouble, but they encountered violent resistance when they attempted to make arrests. On one occasion, rioters threw rocks and paving stones at the troops; on another, they prodded the horses with pikes and knocked an officer to the ground.³⁶ In general, the troops were wary of too energetic action because of the large crowds of curious onlookers, including many women and children.³⁷

Kosich was later criticized by his superiors for lacking an overall plan to deal with the pogrom and for dividing his forces into units that were so small that practical action against even small bands of rioters was impossible.³⁸ His defenders noted that a sizeable number of his men were tending prisoners or guarding public buildings. The behavior of the rest of the troops, who were often outnumbered and operating without clear instructions, prompted criticism from the Elisavetgrad citizenry, who accused them of apathy in suppressing the disorders. This lackadaisical conduct, some observers claimed, convinced rioters that their actions were permitted. When officers tried to reason with the *pogromshchiki*, they were met with cries of “It’s the Yids – it’s allowed!”³⁹

On 17 April, three corpses were discovered in the city. One was a Jew, Zolotarev, who had been beaten to death by a mob in the courtyard of his residence. The other two were *pogromshchiki* who had died of alcohol poisoning. A number of Jews had been beaten and one Christian suffered gunshot wounds, apparent confirmation of the rumor that some Jews were armed. Despite the claim, widely advanced in 1881, that rioters avoided physical violence, there were several episodes of extreme brutality, as when Jews were reportedly thrown from the upper stories of houses.⁴⁰ There were, however, no reports of rapes.

A total of 418 Jewish homes were attacked, and 290 shops and stalls were wrecked. The damage done by the pogrom was estimated by the Jews

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 282–3 (21/IV/1881); 22 (29/IV/1881). ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 293. ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 246.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 283; 21 (29/IV/1881). ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 (29/VI/1881). ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 266; 244–5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.

at R2 million. The provincial authorities complained, as they would do after every pogrom, that the Jews wildly exaggerated their losses.⁴¹

In the course of the pogrom, 601 people were arrested, most of them local townspeople, together with a few peasants from outlying villages. Not a single "anarchist" was found among them. One episode from the pogrom, while apparently pointing in this direction, demonstrates instead how pogrom episodes became urban legends. It was alleged that, in the course of the pogrom, a piano was thrown into the street. A young man sat down and skillfully played an air on it – some said from the opera "Faust" – a sure sign, it was reckoned, of an "intellectual."⁴² An identical version of this event was ascribed to the Kiev pogrom. Of those arrested, most were freed after a brief detention, while a total of 480 were subsequently brought to trial.⁴³

On the morning of 17 April, Governor Erdeli arrived in the city and took command from General Kosich. He dispatched troops to quell unrest in the surrounding countryside. Erdeli issued an announcement, which was pasted up all over the town, urging people to return looted goods or risk prosecution for handling stolen property. This announcement enjoyed some success, and the authorities had to procure a warehouse to store returned goods. The governor convoked a meeting of the Elisavetgrad Municipal Duma (the city commission) to deal with the immediate aftermath of the pogrom. At his urging the Duma created a citizens' committee to help the police identify and arrest those who had taken part in the disorders. The Duma also appointed a commission to examine the extent of property losses during the pogrom. For the short term, the Duma voted an allocation of R1,000 to help the victims of the pogrom. The Duma also petitioned the governor-general to dispatch Cossacks to reinforce the municipal police force. The deputies sought the postponement of the annual fair held on the feast day of St. George.⁴⁴ On 22 April, in a move that later drew criticism from his superiors, Erdeli authorized the creation of a committee to collect and dispense funds to the indigent families of those *pogromshchiki* who were still under arrest.⁴⁵

Erdeli was the first governor to confront a disconcerting aspect of the disorders of 1881. A pogrom would begin in an urban center, usually a

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 248. For this reason, the Nikolaev branch of the State Bank was reluctant to provide emergency credits to the Elisavetgrad Municipal Bank: *K-A*, 248.

⁴² For Elisavetgrad, see V. P. Ribins'kii, ed., "Shchodennik O. I. Mikhalevicha," *Zbirnik prats' evreis'koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1928–9), II, 176. One of the officers in charge of suppressing the Elisavetgrad pogrom contended that, if this episode happened at all, it was the work of an itinerant "ball-room pianist," not a Nihilist: RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (19/VI/1881), ll. 495–500ob. For the Kiev version of the incident, see *Russkii evrei*, 23:4/VI/1881. The story appeared in accounts published in *Golos and Jewish World*.

⁴³ *K-A*, 247. ⁴⁴ *Elisavetgradskii vestnik*, 42:19/IV/1881. ⁴⁵ *K-A*, 281; 264.

provincial or district capital, and then spread, wavelike, to surrounding villages. A pogrom wave tended to die out spontaneously, rather than in response to police action, since intervention was often delayed and sporadic. The wave created by the Elisavetgrad pogrom was restricted to Kherson province, progressing through rural districts and ending with a convulsive shudder in the Anan'ev pogrom of 26 April, just as disorders were beginning in Kiev province.

Contemporaries were well aware that a pogrom wave traveled along means of communication such as highways, rivers and canals, and especially rail lines. Official warnings and pronouncements were also, unintentionally, an effective agency for the spread of pogrom news and rumors. As a general rule, a pogrom wave was confined to a district, or at most a province, although there were instances of a wave jumping to areas lying in close proximity, or well connected by transport, to a pogrom center. Pogroms were always accompanied by the most fantastic rumors and also gave unlimited scope to those characterized in official reports as "the lovers of other people's property".

One of Erdeli's first acts upon his arrival in Elisavetgrad, on the morning of 17 April, was to dispatch troops to peasant villages close to the city. Disorders had already begun in the night of 16/17 April, in two villages, Cherniakovka and Malaia Mamaika, within easy walking distance of Elisavetgrad. The instigators were peasants bearing looted goods from Elisavetgrad, who assured their neighbors that Jewish goods could be seized with impunity. In Cherniakovka the local peasant police official, the hundreder, was absent, and the crowd ignored the urgings of the communal leader, the elder, that they disperse. In other places, such as the small town of Vitiazevka, the hundreder and the elder were themselves beaten up by the mob when they tried to stop a pogrom. Some officials disregarded their duties altogether. The Grudsk headman, Loginov, told the rioters to "do what you want," and fled the village. In the village of Mar'evka, disorders were instigated by peasant commune officials, the *volost* scribe, Sevast'ian Leshchenko, and the *volost* elder, Egor Fabriko, who assured their fellows that the local authorities had authorized an attack on local Jewish taverns. In the midst of the disorders Fabriko shouted, "Drink! Beat! I'll answer for everything!"⁴⁶

Those who opposed the pogroms were accused of being in the pay of the Jews. Troops on patrol in the district capital of Aleksandriia were mocked by a crowd as "hirelings of the Yids." When the elder of

⁴⁶ As indeed he did, for he was one of the officials who were relieved of their posts, charged either with dereliction of duty or participation in pogroms: GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 1368ob. See the section "Nemesis" in Chapter 3.

Gernadovka intervened in a pogrom, he was threatened for "taking the side of the Jews." With one exception, the pogroms of the first five days occurred only in the adjoining districts of Elisavetgrad and Aleksandriia, which were close to the pogrom epicenter. Significantly, the exception was a serious pogrom in the town of Golta, several hours from Elisavetgrad but with a direct rail link. The pogrom here was staged by railway workers, whose pogrom-mongering was a recurrent problem throughout 1881-2.⁴⁷

There were abundant rumors of a charter, or ukase, from the tsar, authorizing attacks on the Jews. A number of peasant officials were roughed up on the pretext that they were hiding this document. The pogrom in Anan'ev on 26 April was triggered by claims of a local man, Ignat Leshchenko, that the authorities had suppressed a tsarist order to beat the Jews, supposedly issued in retaliation for their murder of Alexander II.⁴⁸ The myth of an anti-Jewish charter gave scope to firebrands such as the peasant Saveli Tatarchuk, a participant in disorders in the village of Vitiazevka on 21 April. In a tavern in the village of Antonovka he bought a round of drinks and confided to his listeners that he was a tsarist emissary with a special mandate authorizing the peasants to despoil all the Jewish property in the area. Having prepared the ground, he told the local peasant officials the same tale, shouting them down when they asked to see his documents. He led his followers to a number of Jewish taverns where they vandalized the furnishings and demanded free vodka. In the village of Gavrilovka he destroyed the tavern-keeper's license and held an impromptu auction of the tavern furnishings. When he was challenged by the hundreder in the village of Ol'shanka, Tatarchuk ordered his followers to arrest him. Only when he arrived at the small town of Bratskoe was he apprehended by the hundreder and a group of peasant volunteers.⁴⁹

Tatarchuk's rampage was only the first of many similar incidents which bedeviled officials throughout the pogrom period. This episode also casts light on an important feature of rural pogroms. They almost invariably involved, as their central feature, the vandalizing of taverns and the theft of vodka. Jewish property was more often stolen than destroyed. Jews were seldom physically harmed, even though they were extremely vulnerable because of their isolation.⁵⁰ Village pogroms often took place under cover of darkness.

⁴⁷ *K-A*, 480-1. ⁴⁸ *GARF*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 1368ob.

⁴⁹ *K-A*, 476-7.

⁵⁰ For one of many examples of criminal attacks on Jews, rather than pogroms, see *Rassvet*, 25:20/VI/1882, for the village of Lapa.

The use of peasant volunteers – the only device available to rural officials before the arrival of troops – was always fraught with danger. The recruitment of eighty peasants as an auxiliary police force failed to prevent the Anan'ev pogrom. In response to recurrent rumors of a pogrom in the market town of Berezovka, the police sergeant arranged for policemen from surrounding villages to come with 100 reliable peasants to help preserve order on market day, 26 April. The peasant volunteers were carefully organized and were issued with special badges. A fight in the bazaar escalated into a pogrom, during which the *pogromshchiki* shouted “Beat the Jews, the killers of our tsar,” and “The police are in the pay of the Yids, and have hidden the order to attack them.” Many of the peasant volunteers doffed their badges and joined the pogrom, which lasted until the following day. In contrast, the Golta pogrom of 17 April was suppressed with the help of local volunteers.⁵¹

As disturbances spread through Kherson province, troops were dispatched to explain to the peasants that attacks on the Jews were not permissible. A number of these units employed a more traditional, if technically illegal, method of overawing the peasantry: the *ekzekutsiia* or mass flogging.

Although sporadic pogroms persisted in Kherson province until the autumn, the main wave exhausted itself by the end of April. An official accounting, submitted by the deputy-governor Pashchenko in September 1881, listed pogroms in three cities, one railway station, two small towns, and forty villages. A total of 832 Jewish homes were attacked, and damage was sustained by 434 commercial buildings, including taverns. The total losses were set at R2,517,074. At least 992 people were arrested, and an additional 173 brought to trial without arrest. No other fatalities were recorded beyond the three sustained in the Elisavetgrad pogrom. The deputy-governor's report provides eloquent testimony of the administration's keen awareness of the deficiencies in the system of law and order, such as the shortage of troops and their ineffectiveness in suppressing urban rioting, as well as the impossible task facing peasant officials charged with preserving order in the countryside.⁵²

The capital was gravely concerned that the violence might spread from Elisavetgrad. The greatest danger was thought to be in Odessa, given its reputation as a pogrom-ridden city and the fact that it was located in the same province as Elisavetgrad. On 17 April the Ministry of Internal

⁵¹ For Anan'ev, see *K-A*, 481; for Berezovka, GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 18; *K-A*, 263; for Golta, *K-A*, 480.

⁵² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), ll. 1385ob–7.

Affairs telegraphed Dondukov-Korsakov to take every measure to prevent the outbreak of pogroms. He was advised to maintain a close liaison with Governor-General A. R. Drenteln in Kiev. On the following day, 18 April, identical instructions were issued to the governors-general of Kharkov and the Northwest. All governors-general were urged to report more frequently on the situation.⁵³ Significantly, at this point nothing was said about the possibility of socialist involvement. Only several days later did the MVD ask the governors-general to order the secret police to explore the possibility of "malevolent instigation."⁵⁴

The performance of the local authorities also came under close scrutiny. On 17 April, Dondukov-Korsakov reported to the MVD that he had sent a staff officer to Elisavetgrad to examine the performance of the military commander. In return, the MVD asked that the civil authorities also be investigated, to determine "whether the disorders might have been anticipated in a more timely fashion or not, and the possibility of inaction or disorganization."⁵⁵

The governors-general of provinces within the Pale reacted energetically to exhortations from the capital. Dondukov-Korsakov negotiated a special arrangement with the ataman (commander) of the Don Cossack Host to provide emergency military reinforcements should they prove necessary. Troops were sent to towns, such as Berdiansk in Tauride province, where pogrom rumors were especially strong.⁵⁶ After pogroms broke out in Chernigov province, the governor-general of Kharkov, K. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, transferred his headquarters to a railway carriage, so as to maintain better communications with his governors. This sense of urgency was communicated to personnel further down the chain of command. The governor of Bessarabia province personally intervened when a fight in the Kishinev bazaar on 20 April threatened to escalate into something more serious. He ordered all taverns to close and reinforced the police with soldiers.⁵⁷ Also on 20 April, the governor of Poltava province, P. A. Bilbasov, sent troops to reinforce the police in Kremenchug, in the light of pogrom rumors, even as he lectured the Kremenchug police chief on the need to act cautiously in order not to stir up unrest between the two communities.⁵⁸ On 28 April, after the outbreak of the Kiev pogrom, Bilbasov ordered 3,000 posters to be printed and disseminated to assure the population that Jews were under the full protection of the laws of the empire and that any attack on them would be treated as though it were an attack on Orthodox Christians.⁵⁹

⁵³ *K-A*, 3-4 (17/IV/1881).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 (19/IV/1881).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3 (17/IV/1881).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6 (18/IV/1881).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 (20/IV/1881).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8-9 (20/IV/1881).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-9 (28/IV/1881).

The second wave: 26 April–10 May 1881, Kiev, Tauride, and Ekaterinoslav provinces

Precautions in the Governor-Generalship of Kiev, Podolia, and Volynia were especially energetic. Even before the Elisavetgrad pogrom the city of Kiev was divided into five military districts, each with a responsible commanding officer.⁶⁰ A number of factors led the authorities to expect trouble. There was a large Jewish population in the city of Kiev itself and in the surrounding province. Kiev was troubled by a large and active revolutionary movement, most notably the Southern Russian Workers Union (IuRRS), whose members might use the disorders to make mischief. Indeed, it was the Kiev pogrom that encouraged the authorities actively to search for socialist involvement. When the head of the Kiev Provincial Gendarmerie asked the district police to report to him on the mood in the countryside on 21 April, he received disquieting news. The police described the populace as unsettled, with disorders universally expected. Rumors circulated that there would be a reckoning with the Jews and the Poles, especially the Polish landowners. As a precaution, troops were dispatched to Smela and Korsun, central locations from which smaller units might be sent to threatened areas. Kiev's own garrison was strengthened.

In Kiev itself, fights broke out between Jewish and Christian children in the two districts where the settlement of Jews without special privileges was tolerated, the Podol and Ploskaia. The police closed taverns and dispersed gatherings of people on the street. Jews were advised not to venture out. By the evening of 23 April, twenty people had been injured in street fights.⁶¹ In the light of this, Governor-General Drenteln issued a stern warning to the populace to desist from further disorders.

A quiet Kiev was vitally important for Drenteln. It was generally assumed that he had been kicked upstairs to his position in Kiev from his previous post as chief of gendarmes in St. Petersburg. His tenure in the capital was judged a failure, given his inability to protect his own person, to say nothing of that of the tsar.⁶² Although direct responsibility for the city was in the hands of the civil governor, N. P. Gesse, Drenteln's service record would be marred should he fail to maintain order in his own administrative capital or in the strategically important border provinces of Podolia and Volynia. The exhortations which he received from both

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 76 (16/V/1881). ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 12; TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), l. 5ob.

⁶² *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, VII (SPb, 1905), 684–5. Drenteln himself had nearly fallen victim to an assassination attempt launched by a (Jewish) terrorist.

the minister of internal affairs and the director of police left him in no doubt on this matter.⁶³

Nonetheless, a pogrom erupted in Kiev at noon on 26 April. The day itself, a Sunday, was warm and pleasant, and crowds were strolling on the streets. A fight broke out between a Christian and a Jew in the Podol and spread to the nearby bazaar, where Jewish shops were attacked and looted. The appearance of Drenteln and chief of gendarmes V. D. Novitskii, who exhorted the crowd to desist, proved ineffective.⁶⁴ Instead, amidst cries of "Beat the Jews who killed our tsar," and "Hooray!" the crowd moved into the adjoining Ploskaia neighborhood, and then dispersed more widely throughout the city. Many contemporary reports asserted that the crowd only destroyed property and respected the persons of Jews. On the other hand, a number of authoritative accounts asserted that Jews who remained in their homes, or who offered any resistance to the destruction of their property, were assaulted. The Christian servants of one Jewish family were saved from a beating only because they were able to recite the Christian prayer "Our Father." Many Jews fled to the homes of Christian neighbors for protection. Christians identified their premises by placing crosses and icons in their windows.⁶⁵

Troops were deployed in force in the more exclusive neighborhoods of the Khreschatik and Vladimir, and they were unscathed. The *pogromshchiki* subsequently targeted the homes of one of the most prosperous Jewish families, the Brodskii. Premises belonging to all three brothers, Zel'man, Isaac, and Iosif Markov Brodskii, were sacked.⁶⁶ The disorders continued until three in the morning, and outbreaks of arson, directed against Jewish prayer houses, were reported. A total of 500 people were arrested. Early on the morning of 27 April, Novitskii telegraphed to St. Petersburg that he could not guarantee tranquility on the morrow.

⁶³ This is a point worth making, because Drentel'n was widely accused of dereliction of duty in suppressing the Kiev pogrom, or perhaps even welcoming it. According to V. D. Novitskii, the head of the Kiev district gendarmerie, the pogroms in Kiev and Kiev province occurred "thanks to A. R. Drentel'n, who hated Jews to the depths of his soul, who gave complete freedom to the activities of the unrestrained mob of 'hooligans' and the Dnepr 'barefoot brigade', who openly despoiled Jewish property, shops, stalls, and the bazaar, even before his eyes and in the presence of troops": Novitskii, *Iz vospominanii zhandarma* (Moscow, 1991; reprint of 1929 edn.), 156. This is not the picture conveyed by the reports which Novitskii provided to his St. Petersburg superiors at the time, although he later noted in justification that "he was a colonel and Drentel'n was a general." His chronology of the pogrom in his memoirs does not correspond to the documented course of events. Drentel'n's reputation was further sullied by his handling of the aftermath of the Balta pogrom.

⁶⁴ TsDIAK, f. 1423, op. 1, d. 28 (1881), l. 2ob. Novitskii, in his memoirs, provided a graphic account of his rescuing Drentel'n from the mob: *Iz vospominanii*, 159–60.

⁶⁵ K-A, 397–9. ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 398.

At daybreak on 27 April, the *pogromshchiki* renewed their attacks in the Podol. The troops responded with greater force, using whips and pikes to disperse crowds, and by two in the afternoon the Podol was quiet. As *pogromshchiki* and onlookers crowded the streets, they passed copies of an announcement from the governor-general which had been pasted up all over the city. It was addressed to polite society, rather than the mob. Drenteln called on society to exercise a quieting influence on the common people, and he urged them to clear the streets in order to permit more effective riot control. Drenteln advised that spectators would be subject to arrest and courts-martial. More ominously, he warned that the army and police were authorized to use deadly force.

This was not an idle warning. At three in the afternoon a large crowd attacked the brewery of Iosif Markov Brodskii. Troops in attendance came under attack from a hail of stones. The commanding officer ordered them to fire into the crowd. One woman was killed and three men wounded. Novitskii later reported that seventy-seven cartridges had been expended. The identity of the victims did not figure in any official account, but popular report had it that they were bystanders rather than *pogromshchiki*.⁶⁷ As this news spread through the city, the pogrom died down. By the end of the second day, more than 1,000 people had been arrested.

The pogrom was hardly over before widespread criticism was voiced at the conduct of the authorities, accompanied by rumor-mongering over the identity of the *pogromshchiki*. A letter in the name of "All the Students at St. Vladimir University, without exception," demanded a public apology from Drenteln for his handling of the pogrom.⁶⁸ An anonymous complaint sent to the Department of Police on 28 April, complained of the inactivity of the forces of law and order. The author described witnessing the sacking of a Jewish prayer house while police and soldiers stood by watching. When he complained to the officer in command, he was told that he could do nothing without the authorization of the police, which he had not received. When a policeman was queried, he explained, "What can I do by myself?"⁶⁹ Other eyewitnesses reported the hopelessness of attempts by the police or army to arrest individual rioters, who were promptly rescued by the crowd. The Kiev academic N. I. Petrov was only one of numerous eyewitnesses who suggested that many in the crowd were Great Russians from Moscow.⁷⁰ In response to such rumors,

⁶⁷ TsDIAK, f. 1423, op. 1, d. 28, (1881), l. 3ob.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), l. 19. ⁶⁹ *K-A*, 41–2 (28/IV/1881).

⁷⁰ Such reports gave rise to the claim that these "Muscovites," who all witnesses claim were itinerant factory workers, were part of a conspiracy to stage pogroms. See Drentel'n's detailed report in *K-A*, 79 (16/V/1881); and further reports on a pogrom in Demievka, Kiev district, on 24 August 1881 in TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), l. 17ob.

gendarmier officers sought to identify, unsuccessfully, pogrom instigators from outside the region or ringleaders bearing special identifying signs.⁷¹

While the Kiev pogrom had ended by 28 April, the travails of the authorities were far from over. Secret police agents reported rumors that renewed outbreaks would occur on the first or second of May. Workers were overheard planning an attack on the prison in order to free arrested *pogrom-shchiki*.⁷² More alarming still, the specter of revolution reared its head. Late on the night of 27/28 April, the police raided an underground printing press, apprehending two revolutionaries in the middle of a print run. A stack of proclamations, urging the people to attack the authorities rather than the Jews, was seized, with the ink not yet dry. It was this discovery that prompted investigators to look more closely for a revolutionary link to the pogroms.⁷³

The Kiev pogrom witnessed the phenomenon already mentioned above: “copycat” pogroms, which erupted as news of the Kiev disorders spread to the rural districts of the province, carried by bystanders and participants. The rural police colonel of Vasil’kov, for example, reported on 28 April that a gang had arrived in the town from Kiev, and had begun a pogrom. Kiev gendarmier chief Novitskii was very concerned at the spread of disorders to the Ukrainian hinterlands, describing the population there as “of a riotous nature, due to their descent from [Cossack] freebooters, and consequently the disorders in these districts may have a sharp character with consequences of an extreme nature.”⁷⁴

Their fears of the offspring of Cossacks notwithstanding, the authorities quickly recognized the need to concentrate on another target – railway workers. Indeed, the period beginning with the Kiev pogrom might well be characterized as the period of “railway pogroms,” because of the way they spread along rail lines. Stations and workshops were the focus of the worst violence.⁷⁵ Only after these outbreaks did disturbances spread to surrounding rural districts. On 27 April, the second day of the Kiev pogrom, disorders broke out in the rail depots of Zhmerinka (Podolia province) and Konotop (Chernigov province), at some distance

⁷¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), l. 25ob. ⁷² *Ibid.*, ll. 10–11.

⁷³ *K-A*, 80. This circular, and the response of the revolutionary movement to the pogroms, is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ *K-A*, 15 (30/IV/1881).

⁷⁵ For an overview of the social composition of the railway workforce, see Henry Reichman, *Railwaymen and Revolution: Russia, 1905* (Berkeley, 1987), 41–70. Gerald Surh has noted the need to differentiate between “professional” workers, such as clerks, telegraphers, etc., and the casual labor employed around the depots (communication with the author, April 2005). For a more general discussion of important distinctions between different groups of workers in this way, see Gerald D. Surh, “Ekaterinoslav City in 1905: Workers, Jews, and Violence,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 64 (2003), 139–66.

(approximately 200 km and 240 km respectively) from Kiev. The *only* serious pogroms in the provinces of Podolia (Zhmerinka) and Volynia (Volochnisk) were in railway towns. An official report on the Zhmerinka pogrom specified that it had been triggered by the arrival of news from Kiev. As the pogroms spread from Kiev to other provinces, the flashpoint was invariably a railway town (Aleksandrovsk and Lozova in Ekaterinoslav, Orekhov and Berdiansk in Tauride, Romny in Poltava). In each of these cases, railway workers were identified as the chief component in the rioting crowds.⁷⁶

The authorities took special precautions. In early May, for example, the Kharkov-based administration of the Kursk–Kharkov–Azov railroad extracted signed pledges from foremen and workers in the firm's workshops promising to refrain from pogroms.⁷⁷ The commander of the Railway Gendarmerie in Minsk personally visited workshops in the city and assured workers that pogroms not only were forbidden, but also were the work of enemies of Tsar and Fatherland. The workers crossed themselves and offered a solemn promise to avoid disorders.⁷⁸

The second pogrom wave witnessed a number of unsettling innovations. On 6–7 May, peasants attacked Jewish agricultural colonies in the districts of Aleksandrovsk and Mariupol', Ekaterinoslav province. All livestock were driven off and agricultural implements destroyed. These events were much remarked upon at the time, because they appeared to counter the claim that the pogroms were directed against "Jewish exploitation." How could hardworking Jewish peasants, it was asked, living in isolated settlements and often defended by other foreign colonists, be placed in the category of exploiters? One official felt constrained to answer these questions, asserting that the Jews worked the land with hired labor and that they had received generous land allotments in contrast to the neighboring state peasants. Thus was the motif of exploitation preserved.⁷⁹

The renewed pogroms also saw an increased level of violence, and more fatalities resulting from the increasing role of mobs of workers as well as occasional acts of Jewish self-defense and retaliation.⁸⁰ In Smela, for

⁷⁶ For Volochnisk, see RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (27/V/1881), ll. 241–4; Zhmerinka, *K-A*, 292; Aleksandrovsk and surroundings, *K-A*, 57–8, 430; Lozova, *K-A*, 434; Romny, *K-A*, 56. A Minsk police report claimed that pogroms were not anticipated from the peaceful Belorussian population, but from the troublesome railway workers: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 13 (26/VIII/1882), l. 31ob.

⁷⁷ *K-A*, 295–6. ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 56 (7/V/1881).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 447–9. These conclusions were based on the claims of one Tikheev, an inspector from the Ministry of State Domains.

⁸⁰ A number of reports, such as those cited in n. 76, emphasized the role of railway workers in raising the level of violence. Jews were reported to have beaten a peasant to death in Zhmerinka: *K-A*, 418. When, on 13 May, a stonemason died from injuries sustained in a

example, on 3 May, two *pogromshchiki* were killed when troops fired into a crowd of rioters. Here four Jews were killed outright or fatally wounded by the mob. Looting was much more in evidence. Such events made it harder to romanticize the pogroms. Poltava governor Bilbasov ridiculed the claim of some newspapers that the pogroms were an act of "selfless daring."⁸¹

Unease was reinforced by rumors targeting other potential victims. Rumors circulated before and after the Smela pogrom that Polish landowners would be victims after the Jews had been dealt with.⁸² In the ethnically mixed province of Tauride, in the midst of the suppression of the Orekhov and Berdiansk pogroms, there were persistent rumors that Russian merchants and those who protected the Jews would suffer.⁸³

There was the added danger that violence might spill out of the Pale of Settlement. On 9 May the vice-governor of Kursk province informed the Kharkov governor-general that attacks were being planned "not just against the Jews."⁸⁴ A Polish landowner, aghast at the light punishments he believed were being handed out to *pogromshchiki*, wrote to the authorities on 19 May to warn that "today they plunder the Yids, tomorrow they will plunder the merchants and the nobility; and in the end they will rise up against the government."⁸⁵ The situation was neatly summarized in a proclamation of the Kharkov governor-general to the population on 6 May: "Only thieves and looters expect to profit from street disorders."⁸⁶

The third wave: 30 June–16 August 1881, Poltava and Chernigov provinces

By mid-May, the authorities appeared to have both town and country under control. Local officials convoked village assemblies (*skhody*) to lecture the peasants on the unacceptability of attacks on Jews.⁸⁷ Tavern hours were restricted in advance of a number of religious holidays and important regional fairs.⁸⁸ The clergy, Marshals of the Nobility, and members of polite society were instructed to exercise a quieting influence. Committees were created in a number of towns to explore the reasons for Christian–Jewish enmity. The Kiev authorities sought to resolve the problem by resorting to their traditional tactic of expelling non-native Jews

fight with a Jew in Kishinev, the Jewish community donated R500 to his family: *ibid.*, 86–7 (16/V/1881). According to one report, the Smela pogrom was sparked off by Jews attacking Christians: TsDIAR, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (4/V/1881), ll. 14–15.

⁸¹ *K-A*, 50 (7/V/1881). ⁸² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (12/V/1881).

⁸³ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (15/V/1881), ll. 217–21, 224–9, 98ob.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 821, op. 9, d. 125 (9/V/1881), ll. 33–4ob. ⁸⁵ *K-A*, 86 (19/V/1881).

⁸⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128 (6/V/1881), l. 74. ⁸⁷ *K-A*, 260, 72–5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 72 (14/V/1881); GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (5/VI/1881), l. 73ob (31/V/1881), l. 1ob.

from the city. Pogrom trials were hurried along in order to serve as object lessons.⁸⁹ Perhaps most comforting of all, on 3 June 1881, Ignatiev authorized the governors to keep troops on standby instead of sending them to summer quarters for training.⁹⁰

But there were warning signals as well, especially where the foes of the Jews followed the advice of the authorities to act only in legal ways. A number of peasant communities and class-based representative institutions in the towns drew up petitions (*prigovory*) asking the authorities to expel all resident Jews. The form and the procedure were correct, but the request itself was not legal. This placed the authorities in a quandary: They could not legally satisfy these requests, but to reject them formally might exacerbate the situation. Events soon demonstrated that delay also had its dangers.

On 7 June, 423 citizens of the town of Pereiaslav, Poltava province, drew up a formal petition in which they complained of the flood of non-local Jews, most of them pogrom refugees or expellees from Kiev, into the town. They were swamping the local bazaar and driving down the profits of all market traders. The petition sought the expulsion of all Jews not formally registered in the town. The city head took no action on the petition, which he assessed to be illegal, except to forward it to the governor. After two weeks, the governor's office ordered the city authorities to announce that the request was illegal, and could not be acted upon. Given the restive mood of the population, the city administration withheld this information. In the interim, relations between Pereiaslav's Christian and Jewish communities worsened, giving rise to street fights. On 30 June, one such altercation in the bazaar square erupted into a general brawl and attacks on Jewish shops. When shots were fired at rioters from the home of a Jewish merchant, the crowd went wild and began the general destruction of all Jewish property. Troops succeeded in quelling the disorders, with the arrest of twenty-six persons. Many of them were released the following day, 1 July, as officials sought to quiet emotions.

On the evening of 1 July, Governor P. A. Bilbasov arrived in the town and summoned citizens to meet with him on the morrow. In the morning, against the advice of all the municipal authorities, he plunged, without an escort, into the midst of a crowd of 4,000 people that had gathered. He lectured them on the lawlessness of violence and demanded a general pledge that they would keep the peace. He explained that their petition was illegal, but that it had been sent on to the minister of internal affairs, who would consider a change in the law. Responding to specific complaints,

⁸⁹ *K-A*, 62 (17/V/1881). ⁹⁰ *GARF*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (3/VI/1881), ll. 5–7.

he ordered the arrest of a number of Jews accused of rumor-mongering or provocative behavior, but refused to free the arrested *pogromshchiki*. Later in the evening, a crowd of people appeared outside the governor's quarters, dropped to their knees, and asked mercy for the *pogromshchiki*. This ceremony was interrupted by a sudden cry that "The Jews are beating Christians," and the crowd rushed off, leaving Bilbasov to follow in his carriage. For the rest of the night he was occupied with investigating, and dismissing, rumors that Jews were using firearms against Christians. By 1 p.m. on 2 July, the pogrom was finally ended. A total of 51 Christians and 30 Jews were arrested for public order offenses, and 166 homes sustained some damage. There were only a few Jews injured in the pogrom, and one Christian suffered gunshot wounds.⁹¹

These events did nothing to calm tensions between Christians and Jews. A committee which the governor created to explore Christian-Jewish relations in Pereiaslav turned into a forum for the two communities to assault each other verbally. Pereiaslav townspeople expressed no remorse for the pogrom, petitioning rather for the release of all those who had been arrested.⁹²

Throughout July, pogroms spread to rural settlements in the districts around Pereiaslav. Typically, they began with attacks on Jewish taverns, followed by looting and destruction of property. In Borispol, a peasant *skhod* called to deter peasants from a pogrom was completely mismanaged by a visiting rural police colonel, and degenerated into a pogrom during which a drunken mob attacked Cossacks who were patrolling the bazaar. The troops were forced to use firearms and sabers in self-defense, and five people were killed. Newspaper descriptions of this pogrom claimed that it was accompanied by a large number of horrific rapes, but none of these were confirmed by the official investigation.⁹³

This was the negative side of heightened efforts by the authorities to anticipate pogroms. If previously disorders occurred in the absence of troops, they now increasingly broke out even in areas where military units had been stationed. These detachments were too small to prevent pogroms from getting underway, and often found themselves compelled to use deadly force.

The extreme case of this phenomenon, exacting the highest human toll of any pogrom in 1881-2, was the Nezhin pogrom in Chernigov province on 20 July. The Jewish population had long been unsettled by pogroms in

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), ll. 160b-180b; *K-A*, 186-94. ⁹² *K-A*, 46-51; 322.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 195-201. Count Kutaisov examined this pogrom in detail because of the high incidence of fatalities. See the discussion of rape in Borispol in the Epilogue.

neighboring Kiev and Poltava provinces, and had importuned the local authorities with reports of anonymous threats and the governor-general with requests for troops. Two companies of the 66th Battalion were stationed in the town. On the afternoon of 20 July a fight between a Christian and a Jewish tavern-keeper was broken up by the police, who arrested the former. Faced with a large crowd demanding his release, the police concurred, in the hope of pacifying the crowd. Instead, the crowd marched to the bazaar, where they started to attack Jewish shops. Troops were called out and dispersed the mob. Some of the rioters retreated to a neighborhood on the outskirts of town, Magerka, and began to attack taverns. By this time, the police had entirely disappeared from the streets, and no one could be found to guide the troops to the area. A whole company of troops – half of those available in the town – were dispatched although there were only three Jewish taverns to safeguard. The troops were further divided in order to patrol Magerka. A patrol under the command of a young lieutenant, Semenov, came upon rioters in the process of sacking a Jewish tavern. Almost uniquely during all the disorders of 1881–2 he tried to stop the attack and drive off the rioters. The fate of this effort demonstrated what might happen in such circumstances. Semenov and his men were surrounded by a mob which pelted them with stones and staves. Lt. Semenov gave a threefold warning, and ordered his men to fire over the heads of the crowd. The rioters shouted “Hooray” and resumed their bombardment of the troops who, in fear of their lives, fired into the crowd, killing four people and wounding one. They then withdrew. The crowd gathered up the bodies and carried them through the streets shouting “They are shedding Christian blood for the Yids.”

The following day a crowd gathered to demand the freeing of those arrested in the preceding day’s disorders. When they were refused, they headed for the bazaar, armed with crowbars and pintles and shouting “Beat the Yids!” Arriving in the bazaar, the crowd systematically destroyed all Jewish property and looted drinking houses. When troops tried to intervene, they were met with a shower of rocks and bottles. When the commanding officer, Colonel Nelidov, warned that the troops would fire, members of the mob shouted “They won’t dare to shoot,” and “You’ll slaughter us all for the Yids,” and continued their bombardment. When a number of his men were wounded by bottles, Nelidov ordered them to fire. Instead of breaking, the crowd shouted “They’re beating us, they’re shedding Christian blood, beat the Yids!” and continued their destruction. When bottles again began to rain down on his troops, Nelidov ordered a second volley. At last the *pogromshchiki* broke and ran, leaving behind five people killed outright and four wounded, two of them mortally. A local priest, Father Petr Ogievskii, rushed up to the troops and berated them for

the killing. The police were still nowhere to be seen, and the bodies and wounded were left in the bazaar square for four hours.⁹⁴

The Chernigov governor, A. L. Shostak, arrived on the evening of 21 July, along with additional troops. Efforts to continue the pogrom were stopped by troops on the morning of 22 July. The death toll of eleven, all *pogromshchiki*, was the highest for any pogrom in 1881. Jewish material losses were estimated at R150,000. No Jews were killed or injured. There were a few disorders in the villages around Nezhin, chiefly attacks on taverns incited by peasants returning from the town. By 16 August, all significant pogrom activity in the Pale of Settlement had come to an end. On 14 August, Alexander III confirmed the "Ordinance on Measures for the Preservation of the State Order and Public Tranquility." On 4 September it was imposed on most of the regions where pogroms had occurred or were threatened.

The urban pogroms of Warsaw and Balta

There were minor attacks upon Jews in the Russian Empire throughout 1882, usually in rural districts. They tended to be one-off events, usually attacks on taverns or minor vandalism, and required little intervention by the authorities. On the other hand, there were two significant urban pogroms, on 13 December 1881 and 29–30 March 1882. Neither was part of a pogrom wave, and each became highly symbolic.

Warsaw, 13/25 December 1881

The Old Style date of the Warsaw pogrom disguises the fact that it occurred on the Catholic feast of Christmas. Heretofore, as disorders erupted in neighboring provinces, the governors and the central government were pleased at the tranquility of the Kingdom of Poland, so often a turbulent arena for Russian administrators. There was the added complication of the large Jewish population of the Polish provinces. Poles had also been quick to remark upon this, and to contrast Poles and Poland favorably with the "barbarous" Russians. Thus, the pogrom of 13/25 December had additional implications.

On the morning of December 25 NS Christmas services were underway in the Church of the Holy Cross, one of the largest churches of the Polish capital. A shout of "Fire!" was reportedly heard, and a wild stampede out of the church took place, in which 28 people were killed, and more than 100 injured. In the late afternoon a rumor circulated that

⁹⁴ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (1881), ll. 201–4; *K-A*, 348–56.

the Jews were to blame. It was claimed that when a Jewish pickpocket was apprehended in the church, he shouted out the fatal word in order to escape in the confusion. In the evening, gangs of youths began to attack Jewish taverns and homes, and disorders continued until 15/27 December, when they were finally put down by troops. Consular reports indicated that many Jews defended their property.⁹⁵ Fights put twenty-four Christians and twenty-two Jews in Warsaw hospitals, one of the latter dying from his injuries. Total Jewish losses were estimated as between R767,399 and R1,199,142.⁹⁶ A grateful emperor commended the Warsaw governor-general for suppressing the pogrom without resorting to deadly force, since violence would only “enliven the dreamy aspirations of the Poles.”⁹⁷

There were minor incidents throughout the Kingdom of Poland over the next year, but none of them was of a serious nature, although they did display a number of distinctive features that should be cited.⁹⁸ The most notable was the appearance of overt religious antipathy: Pogroms were sparked by peasants coming out of services to find Jews hawking their wares in the marketplace, or Jewish work-gangs “desecrating” the Christian Sabbath. There were cases of vandalism directed against the Jewish *eruv*, the ritual boundary that circled some settlements.⁹⁹ None of these elements was present in the pogroms in the Ukrainian provinces.

The chief casualty of the Warsaw pogrom, it was widely agreed, was the moral superiority of the Poles. As *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti* mockingly observed, “Whither has flown all their civilization and progress, the absence of which they imputed to us?”¹⁰⁰ The ease with which the pogrom was used to discredit both the alleged tolerance of the Poles and the moderate Jewish emancipation that had been implemented in the Kingdom in 1862 led some observers, such as Emanuel Levin, to claim that the pogrom had been stage-managed by Russian agitators, as will be discussed in the Epilogue.

Balta, 29–30 March 1882

In the weeks before Orthodox Easter in 1882, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was understandably alert to the danger of pogroms. Ignatiev sent a

⁹⁵ *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews*, 1, 20, 25.

⁹⁶ *Golos*, 6/1/1882 [the issue number for this reference could not be verified – the editors].

⁹⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (22/1/1882), l. 1468ob.

⁹⁸ For a broader survey, see Michael Ochs, “Tsarist Officialdom and Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Poland,” in John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992), 164–89.

⁹⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 5ob, 23ob; *ibid.*, ch. 16 (29/IV/1882), ll. 1ob, 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ 317:18/XII/1881. For Polish press reaction to the Warsaw pogrom, see Theodore R. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism* (DeKalb, 2006), 71–86.

circular letter to all the governors in the Pale on 23 March 1882, reviewing measures which the government was taking to resolve the Jewish Question. He asked the authorities "to anticipate, in a timely fashion, any clashes between Christians and Jews."¹⁰¹ In the light of rumors and a few minor clashes, Ignatiev wrote again on 26 March setting forth a list of measures that had been found useful in the past in controlling pogroms.¹⁰²

A number of circumstances made Balta the most notorious symbol of all the pogroms of 1881–2, although it was neither the largest, most lethal, nor most destructive. Moreover, it occurred in a province, Podolia, which suffered from very few pogroms. On the other hand, it was one of the first significant pogroms of the 1882 series, destroying Jewish hopes that the pogrom era was over. It acquired symbolism abroad as a prototypical pogrom, not least because atrocities and rapes were associated with it. The response of the provincial authorities to Jewish complaints after Balta created a national scandal.

Balta, an important link on the branch line of the Odessa–Kiev railroad, had a population of approximately 20,000, of whom well over half were Jews. The town had only sixty-three soldiers available for riot duty and a small police contingent of thirty-six men.¹⁰³ Pogrom rumors had often pointed to Balta, and the Jewish communal leadership had approached both local and national authorities for help. There had been discussions with the municipal administration about the possibility of hiring extra policemen at Jewish expense. Jews were authorized to form night patrols in anticipation of the Easter holidays.¹⁰⁴

The exact details of the outbreak of the pogrom are contested. All sources report fights and stone throwing between Christians and Jews. The official governmental version, published in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, claimed that the disorders "were generated in large part by the Jews themselves, persisting in a brawl which grew out of a fight sparked off when some Christian youths insulted a Jew."¹⁰⁵ Jewish versions accused the local authorities of apathy in advance of the pogroms or, in the case of the Marshal of the Nobility Bialogorodetskiĭ, of actively stirring up passions, and of threatening to "sit and smoke a cigarette while he watched the pogrom."¹⁰⁶ On Sunday, 29 March, a fight broke out between Christians and Jews on the square in front of the main Balta church. Jews far

¹⁰¹ GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 25–26.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, ll. 27–31ob; *ibid.*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 4–8; *ibid.*, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 1–9ob.

¹⁰³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (1881–2), ll. 42ob–4.

¹⁰⁴ In response to the appearance of pogrom-mongering "manifestoes," Balta Jews had been permitted to form a patrol of nightwatchmen in 1881: *Russkii evrei*, 21:21/V/1881.

¹⁰⁵ Reprinted in *Golos*, 102:19/IV/1882.

¹⁰⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (1882), ll. 17–18ob.

outnumbered their Christian adversaries and were in control of the situation. The civil and military authorities arrived, led by the local commander Krapukhin, and dispersed the crowd, arresting both Christians and Jews.¹⁰⁷

The Christian detainees were soon released, and rumors spread through the city that Jews had attacked and vandalized the Orthodox Church. The authorities accepted this version, and used it to explain the outbreak in the official announcement of the pogrom. Instead of dispersing his troops throughout the city to act against the rioters, Krapukhin kept them concentrated on the church square, “to protect the church.” By thus passing responsibility for the disorders to the Jews and forbidding them any organized self-defense, the authorities placed the town at the mercy of a relatively small crowd of *pogromshchiki*.¹⁰⁸ On the following day, 30 March, they compounded these mistakes. The authorities ordered nearby peasant communities to send volunteers armed with cudgels to help repress the disorders. Lacking precise instructions, and improperly led, the 500 peasant volunteers joined the rioters and dramatically increased the scale of the pogrom. By midday, most Jewish property was looted or destroyed. The Jews set their losses at almost R400,000.¹⁰⁹

Estimates differed widely as to the human and material costs. The Jewish press put the death toll at twelve killed, while other reports listed four people by name. *Golos* claimed that an infant had been murdered.¹¹⁰ Although there may have been two Jewish fatalities, the official tally listed only one.¹¹¹ An alarming feature of the Balta pogrom, which brought it international notoriety, was the widespread accusation of rape. The number of alleged incidents ranged from a rumored twenty-eight to the three victims who actually pressed charges. They included a particularly notorious case, widely reported in the international press, of the alleged rape of a mother and her daughter.¹¹² An anonymous denunciation, which was the basis for accounts in the Jewish press, painted a lurid account of numerous deaths, of savage beatings, and of victims who had

¹⁰⁷ Another version claimed that the authorities forcibly drove off the Jews with pikes and swords, while allowing the Christians to disperse to another quarter and begin a pogrom. This seems less likely, since all accounts attest that Christians as well as Jews were arrested: *ibid.*, ll. 13–16ob.

¹⁰⁸ This claim was made in a *Golos* account reprinted in *Rassvet*, 15:11/IV/1882.

¹⁰⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (1882), ll. 35–8ob. ¹¹⁰ *Golos*, 110:27/IV/1882.

¹¹¹ Two *pogromshchiki* were sentenced to death for this murder of the Jew Kulinar. These sentences were later commuted: *Rassvet*, 28:11/VII/1882.

¹¹² This case, which became the symbol of the Balta pogrom, was the subject of a special report prepared for Director of Police Pleve. The account was largely confirmed with the exception that the would-be rapist of the mother, a city policeman, had been too drunk to complete the deed: Arkady Zel'tser, “Pogrom v Balte,” *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 13 (1996), 63.

gone mad.¹¹³ This account merits particular attention because the archival records relating to the pogrom in Balta do contain claims of rape. It is virtually the only pogrom, though, where this is actually the case. And yet the high incidence of rape was widely reported in Western accounts of the pogroms, especially those provided by Jewish groups.

The *Golos* report noted above also claimed that a special effort had been made by the *pogromshchiki* to attack synagogues and to profane Torah scrolls, as had reportedly happened in Kiev too. Press accounts of the Balta pogrom were particularly sensationalist. *Golos* led the way with an account of an enraged mob pouring through the streets shouting "Vodka . . . and blood!" for which it received a warning from the censorship authorities.¹¹⁴ Whatever the veracity of such accounts, credence was lent to them by the government's clumsy efforts to control reporting of the events.

Denunciations of the conduct of the Balta authorities, especially of their negligence and inactivity, flooded into the center, and appeared in both the national and foreign press. Seeking to explain how a crowd estimated at no more than 150 on the first day could so thoroughly despoil the large Jewish population, Jewish spokesmen complained that the police had disarmed and restrained Jews engaged in self-defense, even as they looked on passively at vandalism and looting by Christians.¹¹⁵ Communal leaders in Balta openly expressed doubts about the ability of the authorities to defend them and sent telegrams to the capital begging for protection.¹¹⁶ Later they dispatched a delegation to petition Ignatiev himself.¹¹⁷ It was these complaints that triggered a foul-tempered outburst by Governor-General Drenteln when he visited the town on 6 August 1882. He accused the Jews of the city of making themselves everywhere detested by their economic activities and denounced the Jewish communal leadership for defaming the Russian government. He was so verbally abusive in his treatment of members of the delegation who had been received by Ignatiev that one of his Jewish auditors collapsed.¹¹⁸

Drenteln's tirade may have been the consequence of a guilty conscience. He was probably aware of the official report prepared for the Department of Police which contained scathing criticism of the actions of the military command, and faulted the police for their inactivity and cowardice.¹¹⁹ By the end of the year, most of the civilian authorities in

¹¹³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (1882), l. 2ob.

¹¹⁴ *Golos*, 119:1/V/1881; GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1509 (V/1882), l. 3ob.

¹¹⁵ *NKhV*, 17:23/IV/1882. ¹¹⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (7/VII/1882), ll. 152-5.

¹¹⁷ The Balta delegation to Ignat'ev was reported in *NKhV*, 34:21/VIII/1882.

¹¹⁸ For a report on Drentel'n's visit to Balta on 6 August, see *Rassvet*, 34:22/VIII/1882.

¹¹⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (5/VI/1882), ll. 77-88.

Balta had “retired” or been transferred.¹²⁰ Yet the central government was no more sophisticated in its public comments on Balta. In response to widespread criticism of the inactivity and ineptness of the local authorities, the MVD announced, on 30 March 1882, that the responsibility for the outbreak of violence in Balta rested on the Jews themselves, who had commenced demonstrations in resentment at an insult offered by a Christian child.¹²¹

A few disorders broke out in the countryside around Balta, but there was no true pogrom wave. The approximately forty incidents that were reported as “pogroms” which occurred between 1 April and 3 August 1882 were scattered and random, typified by bazaar brawls, petty vandalism, or tavern-related violence. There were cases of rape and fatalities, generally as the result of beatings or fights. There were no casualties from military action, since almost all of these events took place in areas too small to merit the stationing of troops. Indeed, few of them would have come to the attention of the national authorities or the general public were it not for the increased sensitivity to the dangers of anti-Jewish rioting.¹²²

Who were the *pogromshchiki*?

Given the assumptions about the motivations and identities of the rioters that have dominated much of the literature, it is essential to undertake a detailed examination of who the *pogromshchiki* were. The literature devoted to intercommunal riots in general suggests that the participants should have been overwhelmingly young, male, and “lower-class.” The existing statistics conform to these predictions. The vast majority of those detained for rioting in 1881 were male, and most of them were young. Of the 4,052 whose gender is recorded, only 222 were women. Only the city of Pereiaslav noted the age of those who were convicted of

¹²⁰ See *ibid.* (9/VII/1882), l. 160ob, for Drentel’n’s report of the retirement of Marshal Bialogorodetskii. This same message carries Drentel’n’s advice to the provincial authorities not to rely upon peasant volunteers to suppress pogroms. The much-criticized military authorities, on the other hand, were absolved from charges of dereliction of duty: *ibid.* (21/VI/1882), l. 141ob.

¹²¹ *The Times*, 30,495:1/V/1882.

¹²² See the Appendix for a fuller list of pogroms in 1882. There were serious, one-off pogroms over the next two years that did not feature an accompanying wave. The pogrom that took place in Ekaterinoslav on 20–1 July 1883 had the highest mortality rate of any pogrom to date. Troops fired on crowds on three separate occasions, killing a total of twenty people: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4 (1883), ll. 1–86. The only pogrom of 1884 took place outside the Pale of Settlement, in Nizhnii Novgorod, and involved the brutal murder of a number of Jews. It is of special interest because it grew out of a ritual murder accusation. For details, see John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 433.

crimes: Nineteen were aged 14–30; seventeen were aged 31–69.¹²³ It is a sound generalization that, as with most collective violence, pogroms were a young man's game.

At first glance, Russian *pogromshchiki* appear to deviate from the pattern established by relevant studies, which suggest that participants in riots are usually local and "rooted." A lengthy report from Drenteln to the center apparently confirms the arguments made by Aronson and Rogger, among others, regarding the identity of the *pogromshchiki* as homeless. According to Drenteln,

Many of those under arrest were persons only recently arrived in Kiev from the Great Russian provinces for contract labor, and some of them didn't even have a regular place of residence, and are in the nature of a transient element with no links to the local population – constituting nothing more than a homeless crowd, which is always prone to excess and disgraceful activity – as has been confirmed by investigation since many of them were distinguished by their direct participation in the plundering, and even resisting the troops. No less dangerous for the public order are the rioting workers of the arsenal and the railway master-craftsmen – more than others disposed to the influence of plotters with goals of a social-revolutionary character.¹²⁴

In other words, they were "the usual suspects" – peasants and industrial workers – who so much concerned the security-conscious governor-general of the turbulent southern provinces. But do the statistics bear out Drenteln's generalizations, especially when it is noted that he made them before any investigation had been completed?

There are, in fact, some global statistics for the participants in the pogroms of 1881. They were first assembled by the government to establish whether or not the disorders contained a political element. They were then used as part of its diplomatic campaign to demonstrate that the local authorities had taken vigorous measures against the pogroms. The government claimed that 3,675 people were arrested for participation in pogroms in 1881, of whom 2,359 were tried. Over 1,000 people were subjected to administrative exile by *etap*. For some defendants information was collected as to their social estate and place of residence.¹²⁵ Less detailed, but still useful, information can be extracted from reports on individual incidents that were submitted by the local authorities throughout 1882.

The largest number of arrestees were peasants, both in the cities, in the market towns, and in the countryside. Judging from charges brought

¹²³ [The source could not be verified – the editors.] ¹²⁴ K-A, 44 (3/V/1881).

¹²⁵ This information is gleaned from *ibid.*, 531–41; GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (28/I/1882), ll. 1469–73; *ibid.*, d. 680 (1881). For 1882, see RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248 (1882), ll. 1–86.

against them in urban riots, they were most often followers rather than ringleaders or instigators. Looting was very much a peasant activity. A typical indictment levied against peasants was for smashing doors and windows, and throwing goods into the street. The most serious charge against peasants was of physically opposing the police and the army after a pogrom had started. In the market towns, the *pogromshchiki* were overwhelmingly peasants from the surrounding area, with a core of townspeople, almost always local residents. In the countryside, the rioters were also local peasants, occasionally goaded on by an outside agitator, usually a vagrant or a lowlife from outside the village, or a local peasant who had witnessed an urban riot. A common technique of incitement was to point out that pogroms were occurring elsewhere and that the village should not miss the opportunity. It is significant that on one occasion *pogromshchiki* were exhorted by an instigator to "act like they do in Kiev" (*po-kievskii*).¹²⁶ It was on the village level that talk of an ukase to beat the Jews was especially prevalent. More than one peasant official was beaten up for refusing to produce the requisite document or to agree to a pogrom. Violence in the village was almost always less extreme than in urban areas and was usually directed at the village tavern. In some areas, the category of "peasants" was replaced by that of "Cossacks," the soldier-farmers of the southern steppes, but not those on active service, who were more likely to appear as the force repressing pogroms. For 1882, the profile is substantially the same: in the urban riots, a core of local townspeople, who tended to be the instigators, and a crowd of peasants who served to swell the mob.¹²⁷

A closer examination of the data for the Kiev pogrom reveals that Drenteln spoke prematurely in claiming that many were contract laborers from the Great Russian provinces. Of the 202 peasants arrested in Kiev, 81 were from Kiev province and 36 from neighboring Chernigov. The largest number of peasants from the Great Russian provinces was from Kaluga (twenty-six) and Smolensk (fourteen). Interestingly, only three arrestees were from Moscow province. Drenteln later explained the presence of this trio as the source of the rumor that the pogrom had been instigated by "Muscovites."¹²⁸

The data for the city of Elisavetgrad, scene of the first pogrom, is equally revealing. A total of 607 people were arrested for pogrom offenses, of whom 181 were townspeople (not all of whom were identified, but 69

¹²⁶ [The source of this quotation could not be verified – the editors.]

¹²⁷ There were a number of occasions, most notoriously in Balta, when peasants who were brought in to urban areas to assist the police instead joined the *pogromshchiki*.

¹²⁸ K-A, 80 (16/V/1881).

were from the city) and 177 peasants (not all identified, but 77 from the province). These statistics suggest that the instigation of the pogroms cannot be attributed to a “hungry, hopeless” mass of peasants on *otkhod*. Rather, most *pogromshchiki* were from the Pale, and the majority were probably local people.¹²⁹

There is an additional category of *pogromshchiki* that has been noted by investigators only in passing: soldiers recently mustered out of the military in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War. They constituted a classic example of a “transient” group: former peasant-recruits, freed after a long term of service under military discipline, veterans of recent combat, not yet returned to their native village or reintegrated into civilian society. They were a notable element in almost every pogrom. In Elisavetgrad, they constituted no less than 130 of the 607 people arrested for the pogrom. They comprised 312 of those detained in Odessa. In Kiev, they numbered 66, and several of them were among the ringleaders and received some of the most substantial sentences handed down by the courts.¹³⁰ In all, at least 600 furloughed soldiers were arrested during the 1881 pogroms, and they were present in numbers during some of the worst pogroms of that period, in Smela (15), Zhmerinka (14), Anan’ev (20), and Nezhin (17).¹³¹ The role of furloughed soldiers is an important variable, but it does not invalidate the claim that most *pogromshchiki* were locals.

There are obvious omissions from the pogrom rogues’ gallery. The totals include very few members from the “upper classes,” although the authorities were specifically instructed to be on the lookout for them, since socialist agitators were assumed to be educated people. Moreover, they were expected to set a good example to their social inferiors and not to riot in the streets. Most of those who were arrested were accused of instigation or of spreading rumors. In all, thirty-five members of the noble estate (swelled by eighteen arrests in Odessa) were detained and twelve members of the clerical estate, but only three Honored Citizens (members of the non-noble urban elite).

Yet “polite society” was not absent from the pogroms. Quite to the contrary, in the cities they constituted the audience who crowded in their

¹²⁹ While there was no full-scale pogrom in Odessa, the authorities detained 1,581 people, mostly as a result of a sweep through the city’s night shelters and flophouses. A total of 558 were found to have unsatisfactory documents, and were conveyed to their place of registration by *etap*. Unfortunately, the authorities did not provide the place of residence for members of this large group.

¹³⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (22/V/1881), ll. 11–12ob.

¹³¹ The sources almost always note that soldiers were furloughed, rather than on active service. Only three soldiers in the latter category were arrested, although one, Aleksei Sheikevich, was a ringleader in Kiev.

carriages and jammed the pavements to observe this unique holiday entertainment. They were so numerous that the authorities were forced to issue proclamations aimed directly at them, warning that they put themselves in danger if the military were forced to open fire.¹³² The authorities in both Elisavetgrad and Kiev pointed to the presence of these crowds as a major factor obstructing the suppression of the violence.¹³³ These well-born witnesses clearly did not consider themselves at risk from the mob, and in their own passive way urged them on. This reveals another aspect of the pogroms that appears in comparative studies of collective violence: While the “lower orders” do the rioting, they count on the approbation of the wider society. As Donald Horowitz observes, the fact “that ordinary people, rather than deviants, engage in deadly riots is probably related to the deindividuation that occurs in crowds, but it also suggests that the violence has legitimacy and social support . . . The ordinariness of the mob is testimony to its reflection of the norms and feelings of the group from which it springs.”¹³⁴

Nothing in the scenes noted above would lead the *pogromshchiki* to doubt that they had the support of the larger community, including its more respected members. Drenteln rejected a claim that the Balta intelligentsia could have helped to stop the pogrom there. They had looked on, he noted, and sympathized with the riot.¹³⁵ Both Drenteln and Kharkov governor-general Sviatopolk-Mirskii were reluctant to permit pogrom prosecutions to go to jury trials. According to the former, “the acquittal of the majority would be the inescapable consequence of a jury verdict.”¹³⁶ There was ample evidence that these were not idle fears. A Christian resident of Pereiaslav found that his local community had raised his tax assessment from R3 to R25 in retaliation for his court testimony that led to the conviction of local *pogromshchiki*.¹³⁷ A *volost* elder in Aleksandrovsk district attempted to shield the perpetrators of a pogrom in his village by charging a peasant who had protected Jewish goods. Another village elder allowed the community members to draft a formal resolution approving an attack on the Jews. The peasants raided the home of a priest who was

¹³² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (6/V/1881), ll. 139–40. See also *ibid.*, ll. 170–7, for a discussion of the danger to innocent bystanders of firing into crowds.

¹³³ The officers in Elisavetgrad complained of a “huge crowd of onlookers, even from the well-bred and educated classes, women, ladies with babes at the breast, and tiny children, against whom the officers could not bring themselves to use force”: *K-A*, 21 (29/IV/1881). The interference of the crowds of curious onlookers was noted during the Kiev pogrom trials. See *Russkii evrei*, 23:4/VI/1881.

¹³⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 266.

¹³⁵ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (11/VI/1882), ll. 1160b–17.

¹³⁶ *K-A*, 42–3 (3/V/1881); GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (29/VII/1881), l. 44.

¹³⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 12 (23/IX/1882), ll. 17–180b.

hiding Jewish goods and destroyed them.¹³⁸ When troops arrived in Orekhov, Tauride province, the mayor complained to them of threats to attack not the Jews, but those who had protected them during the recent pogrom.¹³⁹ The new police chief of Balta, appointed after the pogrom there, received threats against his life when he announced his intention to protect the Jews from new disorders.¹⁴⁰ Small wonder that peasants, under arrest for a pogrom in a small town in Anan'ev district, Kherson province, "have no sense that they should be punished for their crimes."¹⁴¹

This lack of contrition on the part of *pogromshchiki* is the most revealing aspect of the pogroms. It manifested itself after a year of anti-pogrom measures that included preliminary admonitions, preventative action involving the police and military, violent repression, and collective punishments. The literate could read anti-pogrom proclamations posted on city walls; the illiterate masses heard them read from church pulpits. How could the government's intentions be so widely misunderstood? How was it possible, in Ignatiev's words, that "people, loyal to Throne and Fatherland, can fall into caprice and self-indulgence, acting in ways they themselves do not understand, in conformity with the plans of the seditionists"?¹⁴²

Establishing the ethnicity of *pogromshchiki* is problematical, not least because all efforts to identify them had serious implications, as noted by both contemporaries and later historians. If the rioters were primarily local Ukrainians,¹⁴³ the cause of the pogroms could more easily be attributed to either "Jewish exploitation" or the rioters' "descent from [Cossack] freebooters." If they were migrant laborers from the Russian heartland, the claim of "Jewish exploitation" was less credible and might be replaced, for example, by conspiracy theories,¹⁴⁴ or by Hans Rogger's more modern hypothesis that migrant workers were outraged at seeing Jews in unaccustomed positions of economic power.¹⁴⁵ Alternatively, the *pogromshchiki* could be presented, as does Michael Aronson, as a rootless mob of the "unemployed and discontented," ready for adventure and looted vodka.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁸ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (1881), ll. 54-60. ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 224-9.

¹⁴⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (5/VI/1882), ll. 87ob-8.

¹⁴¹ RGIA, f. 1404, op. 534, d. 1249 (26/III/1882).

¹⁴² *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, 6/V/1881 [the number of this issue could not be verified - the editors].

¹⁴³ Omelian Pritsak's efforts to establish the "Russian" identity of the Kiev *pogromshchiki* has the specific objective of defending Ukrainians from the charge of being inveterate pogrom-mongers. See his "The Pogroms of 1881," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 11, 1-2 (1987), 8-43.

¹⁴⁴ I. Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1990), 61-4.

¹⁴⁵ Hans Rogger, "Conclusion and Overview," in Klier and Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms*, 334-9.

¹⁴⁶ Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 232.

An examination of the criminal records that are available for the pogroms suggests that no ethnic group had a monopoly on pogrom-mongering. In the Ukrainian countryside, the typical *pogromshchik* was a Ukrainian; on the southern steppes he might be a Cossack. In Warsaw, the rioters were ethnic Poles, despite efforts to blame Russian instigators. Disorders in rural Lithuania, while few, involved Lithuanians. *Pogromshchiki* in urban areas reflected the mixed ethnic nature that was typical of the empire's borderlands.¹⁴⁷ Typically, the accused in the Kiev pogrom were a mixture of Russian townsmen and Ukrainian peasants.

In short, participation in pogroms appears to be largely situational – if the opportunity presented itself, diverse groups could give in to temptation and engage in rioting. The simplest division between the *pogromshchiki* and their victims appears to be between Christians of all denominations on one side and Jews on the other, with the latter precisely targeted. Economic factors were unquestionably present, but there is the underlying fact, discussed in the following chapter, that the conduct of crowds was shaped by the status of the Jews as an “ethnic other.”

Arson

There were no major pogroms in the provinces that comprised the territories of Lithuania and Belorussia (the Governor-Generalship of the Northwest [Grodno, Kovno, and Vilna provinces] and the surrounding provinces of Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk). All commentators have noted this fact, and generally attributed it to the firm stand of the governor-general of the Northwest, E. I. Totleben.¹⁴⁸ In fact, Totleben's instructions to his subordinates, and the region's precautions against pogroms, in no way differed from the tactics employed in regions most severely wracked by disorders. On the other hand, there was an outbreak of severe fires that consumed a number of Jewish centers, and this was widely attributed to arson, “the Red Rooster.” According to Dubnow, “the cowardly rioters, deprived of the opportunity of plundering the Jews with impunity, began to set fire to Jewish neighborhoods,” especially in the northwestern provinces, where the authorities did not permit pogroms.¹⁴⁹ There were indeed serious fires in Jewish centers such as Slonim, Novogruda, Bobruisk, and

¹⁴⁷ See Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917* (Princeton, 1993), and Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1986).

¹⁴⁸ But see Darius Staliunas, “Anti-Jewish Disturbances in the North-Western Provinces in the Early 1880s,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 34, 2 (2004), 119–38.

¹⁴⁹ S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1918), 267. See also *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, 2 vols. (Cologne and Leipzig, 1910), I, 24. According to *The Early Jewish Labor Movement in the United States* (transl. and abridged

Minsk. A letter describing the fire in Minsk noted that "the state of minds here is extremely troubled: Many see in the fires a variant of the south-Russian pogrom; all Christian homes have icons placed in their windows; the Jews are all packing up, and await new fires from day to day."¹⁵⁰

Contemporary scholarship has drawn attention to the issue of arson as a form of social control. Cathy Frierson has shown that the provinces of the Pale were among the most fire-prone – and arson-prone – in the Russian Empire.¹⁵¹ She suggests that multi-ethnic areas, with their resultant tensions, provided fertile grounds for arson. She further points out that rural arson was frequently used against gentry and merchant neighbors as a punishment for violations of the "moral economy."¹⁵² Such attitudes would mesh neatly with the oft-heard claim that the pogroms represented a popular protest against "Jewish exploitation." Indeed, Frierson proposes that "we might also want to consider arson within village communities as an antecedent to pogroms against Jewish villages."¹⁵³

The extent to which arson was indeed a targeted anti-Jewish measure is harder to judge. The wooden structures and highly inflammable roofs that characterized Eastern European settlements, as well as the general lack of any organized fire-fighting practices, made them a continual prey to fire. As noted, it was the fire season, and the Jewish assumption that arson was responsible may have been an illustration of the Russian proverb that "fear makes the eyes widen." There were additional considerations. While there were settlements with large Jewish populations, even majorities, it is misleading to speak of "Jewish villages," except in the specific case of Jewish agricultural colonies (where there were pogroms but no arson attacks). Jews and non-Jews lived side by side in all settlements. In such situations, arson was an extremely blunt instrument. A raging fire in a built-up area was very likely to spread. As Frierson demonstrates, most arson attacks were limited in their goals and targets – characterized by limited attacks on outbuildings, sheds, and haystacks. Arson attacks on Jewish property that set entire sections of the town ablaze put the entire settlement at risk. It is doubtful that such pyrotechnics would have been lightly tolerated by the non-Jewish population. Few arsonists were actually arrested during the unsettled months of 1881–2.¹⁵⁴

by A. Antonovsky; New York, 1961), 21, "fires were indeed a pogrom-substitute in these towns." This is an abridged English version of a larger Yiddish work edited by Elias Tchenikower and published in 1943.

¹⁵⁰ *Russkii evrei*, 27:2/VII/1881.

¹⁵¹ See the maps in Cathy A. Frierson, *All Russia Is Burning* (Seattle, 2002), 76–7, 112–13.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 287. ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 116–17.

¹⁵⁴ There were a few threats of arson that led to arrests. Ironically, both Jews and non-Jews were implicated in making such threats. See GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512 (22/V/1882),

The claim that the “Red Rooster” was part of a coordinated attack upon the Jews thus remains to be proven. As the liberal paper *Poriadok* summarized the situation in the summer of 1881, “though some suppose that the anti-Jewish movement, appreciating the impossibility of repeating the Kiev violence [*izbieniia*] in the cities of the southwest region, almost solidly inhabited by Jews, have decided to destroy them by fire, there are still no facts to support such a supposition. Arson still has not been proven, and, in general, there is no evidence.”¹⁵⁵

Expulsions

The pogroms did inspire one tactic by the Russian authorities that was widely viewed as discriminatory and provocative in the midst of the pogroms: the eviction of Jews who were settled in areas without the proper permission, the infamous *pravozhítel'stvo* (residence permit). There were two especially vulnerable categories: Jews dwelling outside the Pale of Settlement and Jews residing in Kiev. Jews were allowed to live outside the Pale, but subject to a wide variety of conditions. The reality was that large numbers of Jewish craftsmen and traders plied their work illegally, relying upon luck or bribery. They were able to do this because of the demand for their skills and the venality of the police. Periodically the local authorities would display their vigilance by rounding up illegally settled Jews and dispatching them back to the Pale. It was as a result of the chaos during such a round-up in 1880 that the Makov Circular of 3 April 1880 mentioned in the Introduction was issued, instructing local authorities that Jews who were illegally settled prior to 3 April should be allowed to remain undisturbed.

Now these same authorities settled on the crudest way of preventing disorders: eliminate the presence of the Jews. Faced with the threat of pogroms – there were numerous rumors that they would also take place in areas outside the Pale – the authorities decided to take the simple preventative measure of expulsion. There were a number of such expulsions, the most notorious of which was from Orel. The city of Kiev constituted a special case. Although located in the very center of the Pale, the city itself functioned under special regulations regarding the Jews. In principle,

for Pskov and op. 38, d. 680 (19/VII/1881), ll. 33–5ob, for Kriuliana, Bessarabia province. For the conviction of an arsonist in Valegotsulovo, see *Russkii evrei*, 21:26/V/1882. An accompanying editorial lamented that “the pogrom season has been followed by the arson season.”

¹⁵⁵ It might be noted that acts of arson were reported during the Kiev pogrom. See TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (26/IV/1881), l. 6ob. [*This quotation comes from the same article as the one cited in n. 126 which could not be identified – the editors.*]

Jews were not allowed to live in the city at all, but there were certain categories of privileged Jews, not least the millionaire Brodskii family, who had permits to live anywhere. Less privileged Jews were allowed to reside in only two districts, the Podol and Ploskaia, near the port facilities of the Dnepr. In reality, Jews were to be found all over the city. Periodically the authorities would launch *oblavy* or "hunts" in order to round up illegally settled Jews. The authorities used the pretext of the pogrom to launch just such a round-up/expulsion. These expulsions were widely reported abroad, contributing to the perception that the Russian authorities were intent on completing the ruination of the Jews left unfinished by the pogroms. Protesting Jews within the empire warned that such public acts of discrimination were more likely to trigger than to prevent pogroms.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, between 10 October 1881 and 23 December 1882, *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* reported, 4,389 Jewish families had been moved out of Kiev.¹⁵⁷ The example provided by the higher authorities had an impact at the grass roots. Both town councils (as in Pereiaslav) and numerous meetings of peasant *skhody* proposed to expel the Jews from their midst. As noted above, these attempts were ruled illegal, and did much to further poison Jewish/non-Jewish relations, and may even have provoked pogroms.

¹⁵⁶ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1246 (4/IV/1881), ll. 1-6. ¹⁵⁷ 284:23/XII/1882.

2 What was a pogrom?

Muyaga – the wind, something that comes you know not whence, and goes you know not whither.

A Hutu description of ethnic violence in Rwanda (1959)¹

As whirlwinds
Sweeping over the Negev,
Come from a desert, from a land of horror
– a harsh vision has been shown me –
the plunderer plunders
the destroyer destroys

Isaiah 21:1

By the twentieth century, the word “pogrom” had become a generic term in English for all forms of collective violence directed against Jews.² The term was especially associated with Eastern Europe and the Russian Empire, the scene of the most serious outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence before the Holocaust. Yet when applied indiscriminately to events in Eastern Europe, the term can be misleading, the more so when it implies that “pogroms” were regular events in the region and that they always shared common features. In fact, outbreaks of mass violence against Jews were extraordinary events, not a regular feature of East European life. Differentiating the various episodes of anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Europe reveals that the pogroms of 1881–2 differed in important respects from events that both preceded and followed them.

What then made 1881–2 unique? Several factors justify a description of the events of 1881–2 as Russia’s first *modern* pogroms. First, they were essentially an urban phenomenon, despite many minor rural episodes, and can be usefully compared with other outbreaks of rioting in a Russian

¹ Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 522.

² The *Oxford English Dictionary*, dating its first English use to 1882, defines pogrom as “an organized massacre in Russia for the destruction or annihilation of any body or class; originally and especially applied to those directed against the Jews”: 2nd edn., XI (Oxford, 1989), 1122.

state undergoing urbanization. Second, unlike earlier events in Odessa, which might be considered “proto-pogroms,” they were a mass phenomenon that spread in waves through modern means of communication: the railroads, the telegraph, and – most of all – the printing press. The latter provided the newspapers, official broadsides, and printed decrees that expedited the spread of the misinformation and rumor that played such an important role in sparking pogroms. Most importantly, these factors established the *idea* of the anti-Jewish pogrom in the popular mind, creating a precedent, and a model, for future riots.

To determine what pogroms *were*, it is essential to consider what they *were not*. The following events have all been characterized as “pogroms” by historians: the Kiev “pogrom” of 1113; the Cossack uprising under Bohdan Khmelnytsky in 1648; the *Koliivshchyna* of 1768; riotous attacks on Jews in Odessa in 1821, 1859, and 1871, and in Akkerman, Bessarabia province, in 1865; the waves of violence in 1881–2; the Kishinev and Gomel riots of 1903; the anti-Jewish violence during the revolutionary years 1905–6; the “military pogroms” in 1914–16; the attacks on Jews by military units and irregulars during the Russian Civil War of 1919–21; and attacks on Jews amidst the national struggles between Poles and Ukrainians in 1920.³

Virtually the only common feature of these events was that Jews were among the victims, although they were not always the primary target. To begin with the earliest events, Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath has advanced a strong argument against considering the Kiev riots of 1113 an anti-Jewish pogrom.⁴ During the Cossack Uprising of 1648 and the *Koliivshchyna* of the following century, which loom so prominently in the Jewish collective memory, Jews were neither the initial nor the principal targets. Rather, they fell victim because of their economic links to the main target, the Polish feudal system, which created an antagonism exacerbated in 1768 by religious antipathy between Catholics and Greek Orthodox Christians.⁵ The loyalist violence of 1905–6 occurred within the context

³ S. M. Dubnow was especially influential in linking episodes of anti-Jewish violence into a coherent narrative, spanning most of Russian history. See the overt analogy he draws between the events of 1881–2 and 1905 and the massacres of 1648 and 1768: S. Mstislavskii [Dubnow], “Bedstviia evreev na Ukraine v 1648–1652 g.,” *Rassvet*, 24:13/VI/1882, and “Uroky strashnykh dnei,” *Voskhod*, 47–8 (I/XII/1905). See David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), for the modern construction of a “coherent literature of destruction”, 12ff.

⁴ Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath, *A Grin Without a Cat*, vol. II, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Russia* (Lund, 2002), 106–13.

⁵ For historiography and interpretations, see Joel Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial* (Boulder, 1995). For the *Koliivshchyna*, see Barbara Skinner, “Borderlands of Faith: Reconsidering the Origins of a Ukrainian Tragedy,” *Slavic Review*, 64, 1 (2005), 88–117.

of a much broader social and political movement, and featured attacks against other “revolutionary” elements, such as students and teachers, in addition to the Jews. Amidst the chaos of revolution, moreover, the presence of organized Jewish self-defense, sponsored by revolutionary parties, complicated the picture, since some self-defense activities were intentionally provocative.⁶ The “military pogroms” of 1914–16 have the dubious distinction of being the first events in which agents of the Russian state – in this case military commanders in the field who were unaccountable to the civilian government – designated the Jews as a target and directed violence against them.⁷ In 1919–21, the suffering of East European Jews occurred amidst a complete breakdown of public order. The widespread atrocities carried out by all combatants fell upon many different segments of the population.⁸ Even events such as the notorious Kishinev pogrom of 1903 displayed a number of features that were not encountered in 1881–2. This is particularly important, since many of the events associated with Kishinev were read back and attributed to the pogroms of 1881–2.⁹ The Kishinev pogrom itself lacked one of the main features of 1881–2: It did not provoke a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms.

Comparative perspectives

One of the reasons that pogroms are so closely associated with Eastern Europe is that anti-Jewish violence, with a few important but rare exceptions, was not a common event in the history of modern Western Europe. Mass violence and affray, on the other hand, were plentiful. Historians view this violence as a transitional stage between the subsistence riots and *jacqueries* of an earlier period, which arose from genuine fears about physical survival, and the democratic protests of the late nineteenth

⁶ Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, 2 vols. (Stanford, 1988–92); Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917* (Princeton, 1993); Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa: Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington, 1993).

⁷ Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2003); John D. Klier, “Kazaki i pogromy. Chem otlichalis’ ‘voennye’ pogromy,” in Oleg Budnitskii, et al., eds., *Mirovoi krizis 1914–1920 i sud’ba vostochnoevropetskogo evreistva* (Moscow, 2005), 47–70.

⁸ Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1999); Alexander V. Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2005).

⁹ I have in mind the assumptions that the pogrom was actively planned by the central government, and that pogroms were inevitably accompanied by murder, rape, and atrocities. On Kishinev, see Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York and London, 1992); Ia. M. Kopanskii, ed., *Kishinevskii pogrom 1903 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kishinev, 2000).

century, which acquired a stable social-ideological content.¹⁰ Even riots in the West that were ostensibly directed against Jews – the Hep! Hep! Riots of 1819 being the most notable example – had an underlying political motivation.¹¹

Scholars have seen many analogies between the Exclusionary Riots in nineteenth-century Germany and the Russian pogroms.¹² They had a common target in the Jews, and in 1881 the rioting in Germany took place roughly at the same time as the events in Russia. One of the incidents that preceded the most notorious riot, in the Pomeranian town of Neustettin, was the burning of the town's synagogue on 18 February 1881 NS. It was widely attributed to arson and thought to indicate the ongoing tensions between Jews and non-Jews in the region. The German riots spread in the same wave pattern witnessed in Russia, although they were neither as widespread, as destructive, nor as lethal. In the aftermath of the riots, the local authorities excused their dereliction of duty with the familiar complaints that the Jews were at fault because of their exploitation. The defenders of the Jews pointed to the incitement of the local antisemitic press. Thus, contemporaries sought a direct connection between the events in Russia and Germany.¹³

Richard S. Levy has identified three crucial elements that were present to some degree in all instances of anti-Jewish violence in Germany: "social-economic distress associated with the Jews, organized antisemitic agitation, and the opaque attitude of the official forces of order."¹⁴ The antisemitic movement in Germany was articulate and well organized, in contrast to Russia, where Judeophobia at this time could hardly be called

¹⁰ George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848* (London, 1995), 5, 234.

¹¹ Jacob Katz placed the Hep! Hep! Riots in the context of hostility to Jewish emancipation. See Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 92–104. Katz noted the similarity of these outbreaks to the later Russian pogroms (*ibid.*, 100).

¹² The editors of a major study of the German violence have used the terms as synonyms: "exclusionary ethnic riots (pogroms) [are] defined as a *one-sided, non-governmental* form of collective violence against an ethnic group that occurs when one ethnic group (usually the majority) no longer expects to receive redress from the state for the (perceived) threat caused by another ethnic group (usually the minority). Sometimes this violence can be a form of perceived 'self-help' by a majority punishing a minority for an alleged violation of norms." See Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith, eds., *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 12.

¹³ For arguments against such a link, see John D. Klier, "Russian Judeophobes and German Antisemites: Strangers and Brothers," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 37, 4 (1989), 524–40.

¹⁴ Richard S. Levy, "Continuities and Discontinuities of Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Germany, 1819–1938," in Hoffman, Bergmann, and Walser Smith (eds.), *Exclusionary Violence*, 188.

a "movement" at all. The ideological underpinning for German *Judenhass* has usually been sought in the process of Jewish emancipation, fully achieved between 1866 and 1871, and the rush of Jewish enterprise that it released. Legal emancipation was accompanied by the movement of Jews into the German middle classes and by their achievements during the era of financial speculation known as the *Gründerzeit* in the early 1870s.¹⁵ This created a climate in which frustration and envy could erupt into violence. If not the actual cause of the Pomeranian riots, these changes created a situation in which they could more easily take place. The Russian situation was not identical, since the process that might be called Jewish emancipation was much more uneven.¹⁶ Yet even in the absence of full legal emancipation, the rapid social and economic changes taking place in Russia, of which the Jews were an integral part, have been highlighted by many scholars as a contributory factor.

Economic interpretations of the pogroms usually appear in one of two forms. The first is that of "displaced social protest" (initially introduced by Eleonore Sterling), or the scapegoat theory, whereby Jews are held responsible either for generalized social discontent or for a specific economic crisis. The Jews may or may not be closely connected to the crisis itself. An example would be the tendency to blame Jews for the evils of capitalism, for the distress of the agrarian classes in either Russia or Germany, or for the Russian revolutionary movement. The second is "relative deprivation theory" (developed by Walter Korpi, among others), which emphasizes the resentment that one group expresses for the success and prosperity of another. It is linked to specific grievances, real or imagined, such as the depredations of Jewish usurers and tavern-keepers, or the success of Jews in the marketplace. These are seldom stand-alone theories, since the conditions they describe are often found in combination. One example is the Judeophobe claim that Jewish economic malfeasance was only one part of a wider attack by Jews against the non-Jewish world. How have these theories been applied to the pogroms of 1881–2?

Socioeconomic causes of the pogroms of 1881–1882

The work of Hans Rogger, Michael Aronson, and Heinz-Dietrich Löwe has played a preeminent role in producing a scholarly interpretation of anti-Jewish violence. Their research has been particularly important for

¹⁵ Peter G. J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York, 1964), 88–107.

¹⁶ See John D. Klier, "The Concept of 'Jewish Emancipation' in a Russian Context," in Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson, eds., *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), 121–44.

stressing the dynamic element in pogrom-mongering by placing outbreaks against the background of the changing conditions of Jewish life and Jewish/non-Jewish relations in the empire after the peasant emancipation of 1861. Aronson focuses on a unique conjunction of phenomena in 1881, while Rogger and Löwe point to stresses engendered by the ongoing economic transformation of the Russian Empire. All avoid simplistic chains of causation.

For Aronson, “the events were part of an intricate web woven from many dynamic strands . . . The pogroms of 1881 took place in a context of general cultural primitiveness, social tensions, economic dislocations, and political disarray.”¹⁷ The year 1881 was unique because of the “supercharged atmosphere all over the Empire,” arising from uncertainty and fear of the future which followed the assassination of Alexander II. Within the Pale of Settlement itself, there were additional factors, such as an antisemitic press campaign that had been going on for years, the uncertain response of the authorities before and after pogroms broke out, and the firm conviction of crowds that they were acting with the approbation of a higher authority, expressed in an anti-Jewish ukase. The similarity between Levy’s explanation of the Pomeranian violence and Aronson’s analysis is obvious. Aronson points to specific economic factors, such as crop failures in 1880 and 1881, and an industrial depression from 1880 to 1882. “A main vehicle for the dissemination of anti-Jewish rumors and the spread of anti-Jewish violence was the mass of unemployed laborers roving all over the region struck by the pogroms. They were joined by the rough, rowdy, and mobile railroad workers . . . Thus the ranks of the unemployed and discontented swelled, and a roving and prolific source of anti-Jewish activities emerged.”¹⁸ This interpretation conforms to the model of displaced social protest.

Rogger noted the demographic explosion of the empire’s Jewish population, which saw it expand at least fivefold in the nineteenth century. The backward economic conditions of Russia meant an increase both in the number of poor Jews and in economic competition. On the other hand, incipient economic modernization, accompanied by a “mini-emancipation” (Rogger’s term for the steady improvement in the legal position of the Jews in the reign of Alexander II), enabled a growing number of Jews to secure wealth and status as the empire’s old corporatist social framework crumbled. Simply put, there were more Jews around, and a visible minority of them were rich and powerful. Even their less prosperous brethren were

¹⁷ I. Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1990), 235.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 231–2.

engaged in an assault on entrenched prerogatives. The local non-Jewish population was disoriented and alarmed at these changes. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, they attacked the Jews, with wealthy and high-status Jews constituting a special target. This dynamic has strong parallels to the contemporaneous German violence, which, as already noted, has been widely interpreted as an attack against the ongoing process of Jewish emancipation. Rogger, like Aronson, stresses the movement of peasants and *meshchane* (townspeople) from the interior provinces into the expanding cities of the Pale of Settlement. Here they encountered Jews at unaccustomed levels of economic power and in high-status positions.¹⁹

Löwe offers a broad, general hypothesis to explain the origin of pogroms. Pointing to the concentration of pogroms in the eras 1881–2 and 1905–6, he looks for phenomena at work in these specific periods that were absent in less troubled times. He emphasizes the importance of periods when the national government was perceived as weak, as was the case after the assassination of Alexander II, or during the collapse of central authority in the revolutionary years 1905–6.²⁰ Within the Pale, Löwe cites factors that generated high pogrom potential in 1881, such as the popular memory of Cossack and Haidamak violence in Ukraine. Like Aronson and Rogger, he points to massive in-migration occasioned by rapid economic change.²¹

Löwe locates the root cause of the pogrom phenomenon in the integration of the empire's Ukrainian provinces into the international economic system. Peasants and townspeople alike became more vulnerable to the vagaries of a market economy, exemplified by the agricultural depression of 1878–9. While the population as a whole suffered, some Jews proved adept at adapting to innovations such as the monetization of the economy and the development of broader trade links. Wealthy individuals, such as members of the Brodskii family of "sugar barons" in Kiev, became visible symbols of this disorienting change. The local population was alarmed at these developments. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, as during periods of governmental weakness, they attacked the Jews. As with Rogger, Löwe sees wealthy and high-status Jews as constituting a special target.

These are all valuable insights, which are essential for the construction of a pogrom model. Yet several caveats must be raised. The concept of an "economic crisis" is a poor predictor of anti-Jewish violence. Aronson

¹⁹ Hans Rogger, "Conclusion and Overview," in John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992), 333–36.

²⁰ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Pogroms in Russia: Explanations, Comparisons, Suggestions," *Jewish Social Studies*, 11, 1 (2004), 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

sees the grounds for the pogroms of 1881 in crop failures in 1880 and 1881 and the industrial depression of 1880–2,²² while Löwe points to the “agricultural depression” in 1878–9.²³ Yet such economic “crises” were recurrent throughout the late nineteenth century in the territory of the Pale and rarely produced pogroms. No attempt has been made by scholars to claim that the pogroms in Kishinev and Gomel in 1903 were the result of economic causes.

The identity of the *pogromshchiki*, as explored in the previous chapter, does not suggest that they were purely a distressed mob – “hungry, homeless, and embittered” – comprising local riffraff, unemployed vagrants from depressed industrial centers, and frustrated peasants on *otkhod*. Jeffrey Burds has shown how closely the peasant *volost* maintained a hold – and supervision – over those of its members who were *otkhodniki*.²⁴ The criminal indictments of *pogromshchiki* contain few traces of unemployed factory hands from St. Petersburg and Moscow, said to be the hopeless victims of the industrial depression. Moreover, the mob was joined by more solid elements, local people who were “rooted” individuals. Consequently, all the historians discussed above have supplemented the concept of a generalized socioeconomic crisis with recourse to specific phenomena which either precipitated pogroms or created conditions in which “only a small seed, like a quarrel in a tavern or the marketplace, was needed to precipitate a storm.”²⁵

Löwe has also pointed to the symbolic role of the Jews as the “outriders of capitalism” to account for the dramatic rise of Judeophobia in Russia.²⁶ Both he and Rogger have emphasized how Jewish capitalists were a target for the mob. But it is important to emphasize that *all* Jews were targets, and that rich Jews were neither the initial nor the primary target of the rioters. The cry, “To Brodskiis’,” was heard in Kiev only after the *pogromshchiki* had plundered the immediate – and poor – neighborhood of the Podol. In every urban pogrom, the Jewish trade quarter suffered first and most thoroughly. Much pogrom activity, such as looting, was opportunistic.

The socioeconomic factors invoked to explain anti-Jewish pogroms could easily be used to explain riots, looting, and vandalism directed against other groups. It will suffice to recall the widespread rumors in 1881 – taken very seriously by the police – that predicted attacks on

²² Aronson (*Troubled Waters*, 234) sees the violence in 1882, 1883, and 1884 as “merely an echo of 1881.”

²³ Löwe, “Pogroms,” 21.

²⁴ See Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams and Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village* (Pittsburgh, 1998).

²⁵ Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 232.

²⁶ Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus und reaktionäre Utopie* (Hamburg, 1978), 11, 23, 29.

landlords.²⁷ Simultaneously with the Elisavetgrad pogrom a riot took place in the Caucasian oil town of Baku beginning on 14 April 1881. The disturbance began with a fight in the street that grew into a massive brawl, which carried over into the next day. The disorders pitted Russian and Armenian Christians against Tatars and the local Azeri Muslim population. The riot left one person dead, shot when the military was deployed to suppress the disorders. The authorities explained the riot by noting the proximity of Easter, when religious tensions were presumably high.²⁸ Yet this remained an isolated incident and the question still stands: Why, in 1881, was widespread violence targeted specifically against the Jews?

The *cultural turn* in the social sciences, which assumes that violence is filled with meaning, “culturally constructed, discursively mediated, symbolically saturated, and ritually regulated,” works well as a framework within which to explore pogrom violence.²⁹ The violence associated with holidays – and with fights involving Jews – often displayed ritualized forms. The atmosphere surrounding pogroms bore a strong resemblance to a carnival, with holiday crowds enjoying the excitement. Many spectators remarked on the high, even joyous spirits of the crowd and the atmosphere of celebration. The extent to which the *pogromshchiki* were not seen as threatening is demonstrated by the widespread presence of polite society, men, women, and children, who viewed the disorders in tranquil fashion from their carriages or from the sidewalks, a feature previously encountered in the Odessa pogrom of 1871 (see Figure 1).³⁰ Their presence was a major hindrance to the forcible repression of the disorders. Numerous well-born commentators testified that they walked undisturbed among the crowd of *pogromshchiki*, observing their actions, and interviewing policemen and soldiers on the periphery.³¹

Apparent rules can also be discerned amidst the numerous variations that marked the pogroms. The most important rule was that property

²⁷ In his study of the Kiev pogrom of 1881, V. P. Ribins’kii notes the copious rumors reported to the authorities about the desire of the peasants to seize noble harvests and estates: “Protievreis’kii rukh r. 1881-go na Ukraini,” in *Zbirnik prats’ evreis’koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, 2 vols, (Kiev, 1928–9), II, 169.

²⁸ *Bakinskiiia izvestiia*, 32:23/IV/1881. The editor of *Elizavetgradskii vestnik* clearly saw the parallels and reprinted a detailed description of the Baku riots (1:13/V/1881). Despite their absence in the police reports, ethnic factors should not be ignored in this incident.

²⁹ Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), 441.

³⁰ See Robert Weinberg, “Visualizing Pogroms in Russian History,” *Jewish History*, 12, 2 (1998), 76.

³¹ For one of many, see the account of Kiev Academician N. I. Petrov, TsDIAK, f. 1423, op. 1, d. 28 (1881), ll. 1–8. I discuss this account in “S. M. Dubnov and the Kiev Pogrom of 1881,” in Kristi Groberg and Avraham Greenbaum, eds., *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnov* (Minneapolis, 1998), 65–71.



Figure 1. Well-to-do bystanders observing the pogrom of 1871 in Odessa. Drawing by Vasilii V. Vakhrenov.

could be looted or destroyed, but the persons of Jews were not to be touched. When physical violence was threatened during the Orekhov pogrom, the crowd is supposed to have shouted, “Don’t beat! This isn’t permitted!”³² Jews were individually allowed to resist or to flee, as long as they stayed within the unwritten rules of the game. What Jews were *not* allowed to do was to use deadly force, in the form of firearms. Every pogrom where there was serious loss of life was marked either by the use of firearms by Jews or by the rumor that they were shooting into crowds. This explains the indignation with which the crowd in Elisavetgrad complained to the army that Jews were shooting at them from the synagogue windows. A typical pogrom report relates that “once firing began, the crowd went wild.”³³ Organized Jewish defense, as occurred at Balta, was viewed by authorities and populace alike as provocative and as likely to raise the level of violence.

But given that pogrom violence was presumably “filled with meaning,” what were mobs trying to say when they attacked Jews? Although not

³² RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (10/V/1881), l. 209.

³³ In this case, during the Pereiaslav pogrom (30 June–2 July 1881). See GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), l. 173.

usually directly discussed by modern scholars of the pogroms, religious hostility must at least be considered, especially since it was often invoked by contemporaries. They noted the proximity of pogroms to major Christian feast days, especially Easter. The eves of major Russian Orthodox feast days were invariably viewed with foreboding in the Jewish press. It has not been difficult to fit the pogroms into the context of Russian religious prejudice and fanaticism, the much-invoked "traditional Russian religious antisemitism." This was a common assessment by Jewish publicists who could decry the pogroms as a medieval atavism, destined to soon disappear as human progress advanced in Russia.³⁴

Available evidence suggests that religious considerations did not figure prominently as a trigger for pogroms. In particular, the model of peasants emerging from the Russian Orthodox Paschal service intent on settling scores with the "Christ-killing Jews" is nowhere to be found in any pogrom report. There was no such thing as an "Easter Sunday" pogrom in Orthodox communities. The service itself, with its night-long vigil, followed by a communal celebration, did not lend itself to the marshaling of crowds of fanatical *pogromshchiki*, the anti-Jewish elements of the Orthodox Easter liturgy notwithstanding. The congregation was more likely to hear official injunctions against public disorder read from the pulpit than inflammatory exhortations against Jews.³⁵ Almost without exception, Russian Orthodox clergy intervened to defuse pogrom situations, sometimes at risk to their own person.³⁶ The clergy were ordered by the Holy Synod to preach anti-pogrom sermons, and a number of Russian Orthodox clergy were given medals and commendations for their efforts to prevent pogroms.³⁷

When violence flared up, it was invariably within the alcohol-fueled, carnivalesque atmosphere of Bright Week, far removed from the pious religiosity that was the Paschal ideal. The scale of drunkenness and disorder at Eastertime had long been considered a serious scandal by the Church. However, it was one that the authorities were powerless to oppose, so deeply was the use of alcohol for celebratory purposes entrenched in Russian culture (see Figure 2). The concentration of Jews in the alcohol

³⁴ An editorial in *Russkii evrei*, 18:1/V/1881, observed that "the fog clings to the ground just before the dawn."

³⁵ See *ibid.*, 23:4/VI/1881, for an appreciative report of anti-pogrom sermons given by senior clergy at St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

³⁶ See a discussion in *Kievskie gubernskie vedomosti*, 18:6/V/1881, on the difficulties and dangers involved in dissuading the peasants from anti-Jewish violence.

³⁷ See the letter of N. G. Gintsburg to Platon, the Metropolitan of Kiev, thanking him for the help of the Orthodox clergy during the Kiev pogrom: TsDIAK, f. 1423, op. 1, d. 28 (1881).



Figure 2. "Before the Justice of the Peace" (*Maiak*, 1882).

"The Justice of the Peace: For rioting in a completely drunken state and the shattering of glass, you are sentenced to a fine of three rubles and five days' arrest.

The defendant (turns to the recording clerk): You see, your honor, the evils of drink!"

trade placed them squarely in the middle of this perilous environment.³⁸ Thus, religious celebrations provided not so much the cause as the occasion for anti-Jewish violence.

Yet the religious element cannot be totally ignored, for there were a number of incidents where *pogromshchiki* attacked symbols of Jewish

³⁸ Contemporaneous with the pogroms were a number of grisly murders of tavern-keepers and their families. It is revealing that these tragedies were so common as not to be considered in the category of pogrom violence. The scale of the problem can be gleaned from reports in *Rassvet*, 5:15/I/1882 (Pruzhan, Grodno province); 10:5/III/1882 (Kiev province); 13:26/III/1882 (Lubny, Poltava province); 25:20/VI/1882 (Lapa).

religious life, such as synagogues and study houses, and vandalized prayer books and Torah scrolls, as in Pereiaslav and Borispol.³⁹ Official reports noted the arson of the synagogue in the district of Demievka.⁴⁰ Berezovka Jews held a special burial service for scrolls that had been vandalized in the pogrom, and the Warsaw pogrom trials convicted participants for desecrating Torah scrolls.⁴¹ More dramatic events, such as the reported stoning to death of the beadle (Yiddish: *shammes*) of the Moldavanka synagogue in Odessa, apparently belong to the realm of legend.⁴² The vandalizing of Jewish ritual boundaries, the *crav* – largely confined to the Kingdom of Poland – was also a reported feature of disturbances.⁴³ Sacrilege was not an inevitable phenomenon, however. In Orekhov, Tauride province, the synagogue was virtually the only Jewish building that survived the pogrom untouched.⁴⁴

There were additional reasons why pogroms tended to occur during religious festival periods: They were coterminous with fairs, market days, and hiring fairs which brought large crowds of Jews and non-Jews together and provided ample occasion for fights and squabbles. In the charged, post-regicide conditions of 1881–2, fights possessed a higher potential to escalate into more serious forms of violence. I have characterized the quotidian interactions of Jews and non-Jews in Eastern Europe as a “dialogue of violence,” where a resort to physical action was a routine response to insult or injury. Jews, despite their stereotype as passive cowards, were regular participants in such exchanges, most notably in the marketplace.⁴⁵ Periods of religious festivals for either group were especially charged. This helps to explain why the authorities were initially inclined to describe the pogroms as “clashes between Christians and Jews.” As was so often the case at Eastertide, drunken excess provoked quarrels, which escalated into a brawl and, in the conditions of under-policed Elisavetgrad, a riot.

³⁹ *K-A*, 198. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴¹ *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, IV, 218; *Rassvet*, 5:1/II/1882.

⁴² *JC*, 675:3/III/1882. For its part, *Jewish World* (469:3/II/1882) claimed that, during the Warsaw pogrom, a Jew, Kadischsohn, was killed in the synagogue on Gesia Street, trying to protect the scrolls in the Ark. These reports are especially interesting because they prefigure the legend of the murder of the Kishinev *shammes*, Moyshe-Tsvi Kigl, said to have been murdered in front of the Ark. See Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, 84.

⁴³ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 16 (29/IV/1882), in Plonsk.

⁴⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (10/V/1881), l. 207ob.

⁴⁵ For a fuller treatment, see my “Christians and Jews and the ‘Dialogue of Violence’ in Late Imperial Russia,” in Anna Sapir Abulafia, ed., *Religious Violence Between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives* (Houndsmills, 2002), 157–70. See David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996), for the role of violence in stabilizing relations between minority communities in medieval Spain; see pp. 206–8 for overt contrasts of Iberian events to modern pogroms.

"Ethnicizing" the Jewish/non-Jewish relationship

Jews in Eastern Europe are often described as a religious minority, and Judaism is assumed to constitute the predominant feature of their "otherness" vis-à-vis the majority population. Yet religion was only one element of a complex matrix of visible and assumed differences that divided Jews from their non-Jewish neighbors, and which was evolving in the nineteenth century into a conscious ethnic identity.⁴⁶ This was the further evolution of a process by which a distinct Ashkenaz ethnoreligious culture developed in Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ As a consequence, despite their ubiquitous presence in the Pale, Jews never ceased to be "ethnic strangers" to their non-Jewish neighbors.⁴⁸ The ethnic factor can usefully be added to the socioeconomic factors identified above and permits the inclusion of the 1881 pogroms within the wider context of interethnic violence, to which it has been only peripherally linked in the scholarly literature.

Various features, practices, and regulations tended to set Jews and non-Jews visibly apart. There were contrasts in beards and hairstyles: Jewish males usually wore sidelocks, Jewish matrons customarily wore wigs or covered their hair. Headgear, especially that worn by the hasidim, was distinct, as was the practice of doffing or retaining hats as a mark of respect. Fights occurred when Jews refused to remove their hats in the presence of Christian religious processions.⁴⁹ Jews spoke Yiddish among themselves and stereotypically spoke other languages with a pronounced accent.

A number of occupations would be considered "Jewish" within the Pale of Settlement, such as tavern-keeping and trading in livestock and timber, as well as many crafts, particularly tailoring, to say nothing of petty trade. On the other hand, there were virtually no Jewish peasants, except for a few thousand Jewish agricultural colonists. There were a few Jewish landowners – the Gintsburg dynasty owned estates in the Pale – and many more Jewish estate managers and land agents. Jews were also active in supplying contract labor within the Pale.

⁴⁶ It is not necessary here to discuss differences between Jews, as it will be in discussing non-Jews, since virtually all Jews were visibly different from their neighbors. The differences between Jews and Karaites were sufficiently great to place the latter in a different ethnic category in the eyes of non-Jews. For a few examples of attempts to demarcate internal differences, see Vital Zajka, "The Self-Perception of Lithuanian-Belarusian Jewry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Polin*, 14 (2001), 19–30.

⁴⁷ See Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881* (Philadelphia, 2005), 14–22.

⁴⁸ For an overview of theories about ethnicity, and the applicability of this concept to modern Jews, see John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford, 1996), 35–98, and especially 189–202. For the folk image of the Jews in Eastern Europe, see Alina Cala, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem, 1995), and O. V. Belova, *Etmokul'turnye stereotipy v slavianskoi narodnoi traditsii* (Moscow, 2005).

⁴⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 14 (1882–3), l. 6ob.

The animals of the stereotypical shtetl – the Jewish goat, the non-Jewish pig – were indicators of differences in dietary practice, exemplified by the Jewish rules of *kashrut*. While both Jews and peasants traded in livestock with one another, traffic in slaughtered animals was entirely one-sided. Non-Jews were aware that Jewish butchers sold them meat that was considered ritually unfit for Jews. Although Jews were the principal suppliers of vodka for both peasants and townsmen within the Pale, Jewish culture frowned on the drinking rituals that were very much a part of Slavic culture. For this reason, the joyful Jewish feast of Purim was specifically noted by non-Jews as the one day when one could see Jews drunk on the street. Other cultural norms also contrasted: While peasants stereotypically saw no particular value in literacy or learning, and townspeople viewed both in utilitarian terms, the study of religious texts and the skills it required were essential to Jewish culture.

Jews and non-Jews followed different ritual calendars for both the week and the year. The Christian town and village was regulated by the sound of church bells, and bells provided the aural highlight of Easter.⁵⁰ Trade and commerce came to a complete halt on the Jewish Sabbath and religious festivals. The Christian Sunday, by contrast, was commonly a market day in the Pale, while major Christian feast days were often associated with regional markets and fairs, as well as the return to their villages of peasants on *otkhod*, and the time of the major hiring fairs for migrant agricultural workers.

The ritual buildings of Christians and Jews were physically different, by both law and tradition. While Jews and Christians might both frequent a *banya*, or bathhouse, there was no Christian equivalent of the Jewish *mikva*, or ritual bath. Burial practices also differed: Christians rested in graveyards close to the church, while Jews were interred far away, on the outskirts of town. Even grave markers were different, and there is evidence that peasants were puzzled by the images (animals and body parts) that appeared on Jewish tombstones.

The Jewish community was endogamous. “Marrying out,” which necessitated the religious conversion of the Jewish partner, was a major violation of societal norms. There is evidence that Christians celebrated conversions as a loss of face and status for the collective Jewish community.⁵¹ Jews had no qualms in seeking marriage partners from outside the

⁵⁰ Edward V. Williams, “Aural Icons of Orthodoxy: The Sonic Typology of Russian Bells,” in W. C. Brumfield and M. M. Velimirovich, eds., *Christianity and the Arts in Russia* (Cambridge, 1991), 6.

⁵¹ This may explain the extreme hostility of Jews to converts to Christianity. See two incidents in Warsaw reported in *Rassvet*, 50:12/XII/1882, and GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1 (1882), l. 13ob.

local community. For peasants, the introduction of a bride from outside the village, and even more so from the big city, was seen as fraught with future problems.⁵² Even the marriage ceremony – for Christians in church, for Jews in the open air – was a visible expression of difference.

An important variable to keep in mind when discussing the ethnic otherness of the Jews is the difference between rural and urban in the Russian Empire. In a policy marked by wishful thinking, the Russian state assigned urban status to settlements that differed significantly in size and character, the *mestechko* (small town). An allegedly urban *mestechko* could in fact range in size from a hundred households in an agricultural setting, to towns with a population approaching 10,000 inhabitants. Different relationships existed between Jews and non-Jews in rural and urban settings. In the latter, the Jews often competed directly with non-Jewish craftsmen and merchants. In rural settings, Jews provided service functions that were not undertaken by the peasants themselves.⁵³ These activities were an inseparable meld of the beneficial and the exploitative, not unlike those of the kulak. As J. Burds has pointed out for the so-called Central Industrial Provinces of the Russian heartland, the kulak, widely condemned in literature as a *miroed* ("community cannibal"), was accorded the respectful accolade of *blagodetel* ("benefactor") by the peasants. Without the service of the kulak, even if he took advantage of times of great need to provide credit at usurious rates, the community could not survive.⁵⁴

Despite recurrent proposals to subordinate village Jews to the juridical peasant communal administration, the *volost*, they remained separate, enrolled in the nearest urban settlement. All Jews, whether physically resident in urban areas or merely registered there, paid their taxes and provided recruits through the system of collective responsibility (*krugovaia porukha*) as a separate, self-contained fiscal unit. After the military reforms of 1874, Jews were selected for service from separate lists. In the towns Jews constituted a separate electoral curia for the selection of members of the municipal council (*duma*) and the courts. Jews often had separate guilds (the *tsekh*), and most artisans belonged to a traditional brotherhood (*hevrah*), which often maintained a synagogue or prayer house for their use.

Whether in the *volost* or in the small town, Jews could never fully conform to community standards that encompassed participation in the

⁵² Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 73–4.

⁵³ For recent research, see Gennady Estraiikh and Mikhail Krutikov, eds., *The Shtetl: Image and Reality* (Oxford, 2000), and Polin, 17 (2004).

⁵⁴ Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 94–5. For the association of Jews and kulaks, see John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 320–8 (hereafter IRJQ).

ritual life of the Christian Church.⁵⁵ This was symbolized even in the daily greetings of community members. While peasants declared “*zdravstvui, Bog pomoshch*” (“Hello, may God help you”) or “*niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus*” (“Praise be to Jesus Christ”), the Jews said “*shalom aleikhem*” (“peace be with you”).⁵⁶

Both Jews and non-Jews, in rural and urban settlements alike, lived in the shadow of the Russian state and its intrusive economic demands. In one respect, Jews were less intimidated by state institutions. Because of their higher level of literacy, and mercantile practices that relied upon written or oral contracts, Jews were more willing to resort to the court system, something the largely illiterate peasantry were loath to do.

Yet there was another side to the relationship of Jews to the state. Non-Jewish residents of the Pale were aware that the Jews were subject to restrictions within the Pale that did not apply to them. Peasants, with a passport from the appropriate communal officials, could travel freely throughout the entire empire. Jews were barred from areas outside the Pale. Jews faced residence restrictions within the city of Kiev, as well as periodic enforcement of a limit on new settlement within 50 versts of the empire’s frontiers. These were not merely theoretical considerations. Residents of Kiev witnessed periodic “hunts” (*oblavy*) conducted by the authorities for unregistered Jews. As noted in the previous chapter, in response to the pogroms there were expulsions of Jews from Kiev, Orel, and a number of other cities in 1881. Even peasants who never left the village could see Jews expelled from Kiev or the Russian heartland being returned to their place of registration under military escort, the so-called *etap*. This was the standard practice for the return of peasant miscreants to their villages, and it was looked upon as especially shameful and degrading.⁵⁷ This point was made to the government by Jewish spokesmen who argued that in the eyes of the peasantry the restrictions of the Pale placed Jews outside the law. On the other hand, there was a widespread complaint by peasants that “the Jew can get around any law.”⁵⁸

Jews and non-Jews differentiated themselves from one another in the rough and tumble of daily life, in ways that often gave offense.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 200–1.

⁵⁶ Mikhail Dolbilov, “Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire’s Northwestern Region in the 1860s,” *Kritika*, 5, 2 (2004), 248.

⁵⁷ Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 75. ⁵⁸ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 832, d. 67 (1881), ll. 1ob–2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 442, op. 534, d. 282 (1881); GARF, 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2 (May 1882), l. 5. The Jews folded the corners of their caftans to resemble pigs’ ears. For an analogous scene, where peasants make this gesture to insult Jews, see the first chapter of Mendele Moykher Sforim’s *Fishke the Lame*, in Marvin Zuckerman, Gerald Stillman, and Marion Herbst, eds., *Selected Works of Mendele Moykher Sforim* [Sh. Y. Abramovich] (Malibu, CA,

This "dialogue of violence" might prompt brawls in the countryside, but had more dangerous implications when transferred to Russia's growing and underpoliced metropolitan areas.⁶⁰ As Rogger has pointed out, the Jewish population expanded dramatically in the nineteenth century. Jews also became highly urbanized within the Pale of Settlement. Kiev, the scene of one of the worst pogroms, was also a city that had witnessed a dramatic rise in its Jewish population, both legal and illegal. On the eve of the pogroms, an official report complained of the "Judaization" of the city, with the Jewish population rising from 1,500 in 1827 to 13,957 in 1880, comprising 11 percent of the total. The author, M. I. Chertkov, complained that "soon will come a time when 'our Russian city,' so dear to the Russian people for its sanctity, religiosity, and antiquity, will become a Jewish city, like the other towns of the western region."⁶¹

Jews were firmly embedded in the traditional economy of the countryside, especially before peasant emancipation. Their economic role was recognized and welcomed. In the urban settings, Jews were visibly agents of the emergent capitalist economy. They were not only the rich industrial entrepreneurs such as the Brodskiis, but also grain traders in the marketplace, merchants of newly available consumer goods, or even purveyors of new leisure activities, such as photographic studios, circuses, and vaudevilles. With the mercantile skills they had honed over centuries, they adapted readily to the new urban economy.

Non-Jewish townspeople, who were in the same social estate as the Jews, were concerned not only by competition, but also over matters of status vis-à-vis these ethnic others. A telling example of these sentiments is found in a petition submitted to a committee established to investigate the pogrom in Pereiaslav, Poltava province, by the corporation (*soslovie*) of the city's Christian townsmen. The petition included complaints about Jewish exploitation and the power of the kahal, but matters of communal status were equally prominent. The Christian townsmen complained of the "pride and arrogance" of Jews who occupied positions of importance within the municipal government, although they lacked civil standing (*grazhdanskaia chestnost*). Jewish women, for their part, were condemned for wearing ostentatious dress on the Sabbath and on Jewish festivals, which was considered inappropriate to their rank, upbringing, or status in

1991), 179. Compare with a petition to the tsar by eight members of the Bar Jewish community in 1823, complaining that, among other abuses, the local police chief had called them "dogs": RGIA, f. 35, op. 5, d. 1367 (18/X/1823), ll. 10–11.

⁶⁰ For riots in Kharkov (1872) and Rostov-on-Don (1879), identical in every respect to anti-Jewish violence except for their targets – in this case, the police – see N. D. Gradovskii, *Otmoshenie k evreiam v drevnei i sovremennoi Rusi* (SPb, 1891), 497, and *Pravitel'svennyi vestnik*, 77:7/IV/1879.

⁶¹ Ts'DIAK, f. 442, op. 532, d. 304 (25/I/1880), l. 48ob.

society. The townsmen petitioned that Jews be ordered to stop calling Christian townsmen "drunkards, scum, and rascals." On this occasion it was even suggested that Jews should respect Christian sensibilities by not trading during church services and not working on Christian feast days.⁶² The burghers of Borzno, Chernigov province, complained that the Jews dealt with them "arrogantly, even impertinently."⁶³

The popular conviction of non-Jews that Jews, whatever their wealth, social status, or power over non-Jews might be, were somehow inferior to them offers a key to decipher the psychology underlying the pogroms. They were, in important respects, about status in village and town.⁶⁴ Throughout the pogrom period, this motif reoccurs. It was self-evident to their Christian neighbors that the Jews were undeserving of special favors or the special protection of the authorities. These resentments appeared when troops were called in as an anti-pogrom measure, and townspeople were obliged to quarter troops or pay for them. One of the issues that provoked the pogrom in Berdiansk, Tauride province, was the dispatch of troops to the town at Easter, at the request of the Jews, which the non-Jewish townsmen considered an insult.⁶⁵ Russian officials themselves were uncomfortable in the guise of defenders of the Jews, and repeatedly complained that the Jews were taking advantage of this protection. Governor-General Drenteln, before the Kiev pogrom, famously declared his reluctance to "trouble himself for a pack of Jews."⁶⁶ Officials frequently complained that Jews were "lording it over Christians," "putting on airs," or acting in an arrogant or provocative fashion.⁶⁷ As Count Kutaisov summarized the situation, "the people . . . could not get used to the idea of having to acknowledge the Jews as their 'masters.'"⁶⁸ The notorious Narodnaia volia proclamation welcoming the pogroms observed that "when the *pan* lords it over you, it is still not as shameful as when it's the *zhid*."⁶⁹ Studies of the peasantry have revealed the importance of having "a good name" in the village and the resentment that peasants displayed toward verbal

⁶² *K-A*, 326-7; GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (1881), l. 290a. As noted above, a number of pogroms broke out because Christians resented exactly these Jewish practices.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ll. 246-7.

⁶⁴ The question of status as a background factor in the pogroms has been raised by Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews* (Chur, 1993), 58-9; by Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 108-24; and especially by Hans Rogger, "Conclusion."

⁶⁵ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (15/V/1881), ll. 219ob-20ob.

⁶⁶ See *Jewish World*, 440:15/VII/1881. The substance, if not the exact wording, of Drentel's remark is confirmed by Kutaisov: *K-A*, 413.

⁶⁷ *K-A*, 461-2. ⁶⁸ Cited in Rogger, "Conclusion," 334-5.

⁶⁹ Cited in S. Valk, "G. G. Romanenko (iz istorii 'Narodnoi Voli')," *Katorga i ssylka* (1928), 50-2. On this proclamation, see the beginning of the section on the Narodnovoltsy in Chapter 4.

insults.⁷⁰ The pogroms, once they erupted, could provide an opportunity for inarticulate peasants and jealous townsmen to seek revenge for the insults of everyday life.

In a whole variety of ways, then, Jews were not part of the wider community, be it the peasant *volost* or the urban municipality. The concept of a civil society was weakly developed among the mass of the population of post-emancipation Russia. The loyalty of peasants and of the worker-peasants who crowded into towns and cities was first and foremost to their extended family or clan, and then to their village community. Sophisticated conceptions of law as an abstract force, equally and universally binding on all, or the ideal of a common citizenship were not features of the peasant mentality. Their world was very bipolar, divided into *nash* and *chuzhoi* (us and the other). Obedience and respect were owed to *nash*, but not to those outside the circle of obligation. The Jews, alien to village life in so many ways, seem never to have fallen within the category of *nash*, or were at best placed in a subcategory of "our Jews." However long they might have lived in a village, however deeply integrated into the local economy or daily life, Jews remained outsiders in peasant eyes. This bipolarity was reflected in the shout that commonly went up when a pogrom broke out: "Evrei *nashikh* b'iut" ("The Jews are beating up our people").⁷¹

There were others in the village and town who might be seen as alien: the Polish *pan* (nobleman) or Russian estate-owner, the police, the *ksiadz* (Catholic priest) in Orthodox communities, *pop* (Orthodox priest) among Catholics, to say nothing of assorted religious "others" including Christian sectarians and diverse Muslim groups. As Horowitz observes, one of the characteristics of the ethnic stranger is the connotation of "the absence of ties resulting from deference and esteem, on the one hand, and fear of sanctions, on the other."⁷² As a rule, nobles, clergy and officials, and all members of the privileged classes merited a respectful greeting.⁷³ Jews were more likely to be a target for, and source of, jokes and badinage.⁷⁴ Even the

⁷⁰ Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 213, 201. Peasant complaints against Jews to the authorities often emphasized their "bad reputation."

⁷¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (9/V/1881), l. 14. ⁷² Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 146.

⁷³ Mixter notes the efforts of peasant laborers to demand respect from their employers as an integral part of their commercial relationship. See Timothy Mixter, "The Hiring Market as Workers' Turf: Migrant Agricultural Laborers and the Mobilization of Collective Action in the Steppe Grainbelt of European Russia, 1853-1913," in Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixter, eds., *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921* (Princeton, 1991), 301, 326.

⁷⁴ See the example of such an exchange from the work of M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, as cited by B. Gorev, "Russian Literature and the Jews," in V. Lvov-Rogachevsky, *A History of Russian Jewish Literature*, A. Levin, ed. and transl. (Ann Arbor, 1979), 23. The exchange comes complete with the stereotypical "Jewish" accent. Jewish jokes were a recognized genre in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia.

law spelled out a different status for Jews by placing them in the special legal category of *inorodtsy* (aliens), imperial subjects for whom special legislation was required.⁷⁵ Jews complained that this status effectively placed them outside the law in peasant eyes.⁷⁶ This seems to have been an accurate assessment. Crowds of *pogromshchiki* cried out in anger, dismay, and disgust when troops were brought in to protect the “Yids,” and even more so when Christians (*nashi*) were killed by the army in defense of the “Yids.” As the crowd reportedly shouted when troops opened fire during the Smela pogrom, “They’re shedding Christian blood for the Jews.”⁷⁷

The shouts alleged to have emanated from pogrom mobs were redolent of status concerns. The murder of “our [*nash*] Orthodox tsar” was the greatest insult perpetrated by the Jews. Popular rumors that sought to justify the pogroms offered other instances of insulting behavior by Jews toward the tsar. One rumor-monger claimed that a Jew had insulted Emperor Alexander III during a military parade, and this was the cause of official permission to beat the Jews.⁷⁸ Another agitator related how a Petersburg Jew had doffed his hat to the new emperor, but refused to remove his skullcap. Enraged by this insult, Alexander ordered the skullcap to be nailed to his head.⁷⁹ The diverse sentiments underlying popular violence were perhaps best illustrated in the shouts emanating from the mob of Balta *pogromshchiki*, when troops urged them to desist and go home. The troops were told that “the crowd had to punish the Jews because they had insulted the temple of God [*khram Bozhii*] by throwing stones at it, that they were bloodsuckers of the Christians, that they had tortured Christ the Savior, and that they were guilty of killing our beloved Sovereign.”⁸⁰ However muddled and inconsistent these complaints might have been, they did reflect status insecurities. Of special interest was concern for the sacred space of Christians vis-à-vis the Jews, reflected in recurrent assertions that Jews were planning to undermine or blow up churches.⁸¹ The

⁷⁵ See Klier, “Jewish Emancipation,” 131–3.

⁷⁶ In a petition to the Ministry of Justice, a group of Jewish merchants complained that expulsions from Kiev had the effect of degrading them in the eyes of the rabble who had carried out the pogroms: RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1246 (4/IV/1882), ll. 1–6.

⁷⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (11/V/1881), l. 37.

⁷⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (19/VII/1881), ll. 33–5ob.

⁷⁹ *K-A*, 9. Curiously, this was a motif that can be traced to the sixteenth-century Russian manuscript tradition, in stories about the Wallachian ruler, Vlad the Impaler. See Ia. S. Lu’e, ed., *Povest’ o Drakule* (Leningrad, 1964), 117ff.

⁸⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (11/VI/1882), l. 112ob.

⁸¹ See the claim that Jews in Anan’ev were planning to blow up the church during the Easter services in RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249 (18/III/1882), ll. 14–15, and an identical claim in Grodno in 1881, in Darius Staliunas, “Anti-Jewish Disturbances in the North-Western Provinces in the Early 1880s,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, 34, 2 (2004), 121. For Balta, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (3/IV/1882), ll. 19–25ob.

vandalizing of the *eruv*, which was reported on several occasions, could be seen as contesting a rival sacred space or as a protest against Jewish "mastery" of the settlements they inhabited.

The pogrom as ethnic riot

What advantages are gained by placing anti-Jewish pogroms within the general model of an ethnic riot, defined as mass civilian intergroup violence in which the victims are chosen by their group membership?⁸² In itself, the model does not explain *why* a particular episode of violence occurs. It does allow us to construct a model environment that is conducive to a riot, within which precipitants play their role. Placing the pogroms of 1881–2 in the category of an ethnic riot permits a useful comparison of these events with ethnic riots that occur in regions and cultures far removed from one another, yet display striking affinities.⁸³ While the model of a "pogrom environment," of which ethnic tensions are an important ingredient, does not itself explain a particular outbreak, it does have a high predictive quality as to the course that a riot will follow. According to Horowitz, an ethnic riot

is an event with a structure, a process and a character. It has overall rhythms . . . There is no single course taken by every riot as it develops, but there is a rough sequence in many riots that characterizes the transition from peace to mass violence and back. The riot is preceded by a chain of identifiable precipitants, events that persuade people that violence is necessary and appropriate.⁸⁴

As we have seen, an ethnic identity creates boundaries and divisions between "us" and "the other," which sociologists describe as social polarization. Transgressions of these boundaries can generate resentments which escalate over time, strengthening what Senechal terms a "conflict structure."⁸⁵ The important factor, overriding all others, is the phenomenon of

⁸² This section draws on the concept of the "deadly ethnic riot," employed by Donald Horowitz. See also the characterization of Roberta Senechal de la Roche, "Collective Violence as Social Control," *Sociological Forum*, 11, 1 (1996), 97: "Collective violence is personal injury by a group. Most is social control: a process by which people define or respond to behavior as deviant."

⁸³ See Paul R. Brass, ed., *Riots and Pogroms* (Basingstoke, 1996), 154–76, 177–200, and 201–20. In the contributions by Peter van der Veer and Joyati and Gyaneshwar Chaturvedi, devoted to intercommunal violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, and in Virginia van Dyke's exploration of the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 in Delhi, there are striking parallels to anti-Jewish pogroms. Especially noteworthy are issues of status and the manner in which rumors and violence spread among semi-literate populations.

⁸⁴ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 71.

⁸⁵ Senechal ("Collective Violence," 97) argues that these structures are characterized by "a high degree of relational distance, cultural distance, functional independence, and inequality between adversaries." These are all factors applicable to Jewish/non-Jewish relations in the Russian Empire.

change, and the fear and insecurity that it produces. In the case of the ethnic stranger, the fear of the majority community is that these strangers are gaining domination or pursuing deviant behavior with impunity.⁸⁶

I have noted above the disorienting change that was a consistent feature of imperial society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Defenders of the Jews blamed Judeophobe publicists for instigating anti-Jewish hostility in the 1870s. It would be more accurate to claim that the latter were voicing, in ideological terms, the inchoate resentments of the masses in the face of these changes. An important facet of the growing antipathy toward the Jews was the tendency to view them as a collective, attributing the deviant behavior of individual Jews to all Jews. This can be seen in the propaganda of the Judeophobes, exemplified by the concept of the "Jewish kahal," which joined all Jews together in an anti-gentile conspiracy.⁸⁷ The situation was not aided by the ambivalent attitude of the Russian state toward the Jews. On the one hand there was the "mini-emancipation" identified by Hans Rogger. On the other was the continued introduction of restrictive legislation, especially as part of the anti-Polish Russification campaign, and the retention of the Pale.⁸⁸ All of this was necessary, the government continually declared, in order to protect the peasantry from Jewish exploitation. These attitudes and policies correspond to the four elements that Horowitz sees as stimulants of ethnic hatred:

(1) a growing focus on the hated group, to the neglect of others; (2) a belief that the hated group possesses fixed characteristics and dispositions to action; (3) a compression of intragroup differences attributed to members of the hated group; and (4) a sense of repulsion toward the group and its members.⁸⁹

In outbreaks of ethnic violence, actions which serve to precipitate violence (fights, insults, etc.) are not attributed to individuals, but to the entire ethnic group.⁹⁰ In 1881, the bipolarity that had always existed between Jew and non-Jew was accentuated, so that an outbreak of violence focused on *all* Jews as the target. Within the pogrom environment, violence could gestate, erupt, and develop. Precipitants of violence increased during periods of political uncertainty, especially at times of popular excess, such as the Eastertide of 1881. The much-rumored "murder of the tsar

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 97–8, 101–2. ⁸⁷ Klier, *IRJQ*, 263–83.

⁸⁸ See Theodore R. Weeks, "Russification: Word and Practice, 1863–1914," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 148, 4 (2004), 471–89; John D. Klier, "Russification and the Jews Reconsidered," in Jurgita Siauciunaite-Verbickiene and Larisa Lempertiene, eds., *Central and East European Jews at the Crossroads of Tradition and Modernity* (Vilnius, 2006), 11–32.

⁸⁹ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 543. ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

by the Jews," was the ultimate transgressive act, which was "a blatant display of what ethnic strangers are not allowed to do with impunity."⁹¹

How do the pogroms of 1881–2 conform to the patterns characteristic of interethnic rioting? Literature on riots has emphasized the essential role of rumor, often triggered by an act of violence, in the riot process. Rumor both channels violence and justifies it. Rumors about the harmful actions and malevolent plans of target groups direct popular anger and help to overcome societal restraints. Rumors frequently exhibit strong elements of projection and anxiety-laden perceptions.⁹² Russia, in the aftermath of the assassination of Alexander II, was a maelstrom of rumor, directed against groups as diverse as students and landlords. In the Pale, the developing antipathy toward the Jews, and their tenuous links to the assassination via Gessia Gel'fman, helped to establish them as a target. "The Jews have killed the tsar" was a recurrent claim of pogrom mobs, buttressed by rumors of an additional insult to the new emperor. Even then societal restraints were often sufficiently strong to require the additional rumor of a tsarist ukase, permitting or requiring violence against the Jews. Caution was especially noted in the countryside, where Jews were most vulnerable to the caprice of their neighbors. The paucity of serious rural attacks suggests that in areas where traditional norms still held sway, overt hostility toward Jews was not yet an overwhelming sentiment. Unlike their counterparts in the cities, where crowds permitted anonymity and deindividualization, peasant officials were able to use their authority to resist attacks, especially in their home villages.⁹³

Insights gained from the comparative study of ethnic riots offer a solution to one of the most vexing questions regarding the pogroms: Why did they exclusively target the Jews, when other targets were close to hand? Why, as feared by high government officials and hoped for by revolutionaries, did violence against Jews not spread to landlords and other "exploiters"? Studies suggest that it is typical in riot situations for violence to be restricted to the group that has supposedly precipitated the incident, especially if they represent the group against which there is a preexisting belief that defensive action must be taken.⁹⁴ In Elisavetgrad in 1881, that incident was a tavern brawl that sparked the shout that "The Jews are beating up our people [*nashi*]." As the event throws up the spontaneous leadership from among the rioters, such leaders find it easier to focus group anger on a single class of targets by emphasizing the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 268. ⁹² *Ibid.*, 79–84.

⁹³ The vulnerability of rural Jews has been emphasized in the reports, noted above (see n. 38), of frequent robbery and murder of rural Jewish tavern-keepers.

⁹⁴ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 195.

significance of a set of grievances or cues associated with those targets, rather than to point anger at multiple targets, each requiring different symbols and cues.⁹⁵

The inactivity or inability of the authorities to act effectively – however threatening their rhetoric – had important consequences. It encouraged participation because the risks of detection and punishment were so demonstratively low. They promoted the belief that the violence must in some sense be permitted. Far from being the “homeless and dispossessed,” the leaders often were local people, who assumed the support of the larger community. After all, members of polite society gathered to watch, apparently unperturbed. The sanction of the wider society is always an important imperative in the outbreak and continuation of mass violence.

The extent to which ethnic antipathy underlay the pogroms is demonstrated by the justifications provided by the *pogromshchiki*. Here status issues are clearly to be seen. Not only were the Jews to be collectively punished for killing “our Orthodox tsar,” but their perceived arrogance and domination had to be overcome. Horowitz has observed that, “before some of the most serious episodes of violence, a strikingly similar idiom is employed. Members of the group that will do the attacking assert that members of the target group are ‘swallowing’ them.” He notes that

much work on aggression points to explanations that rest on the use of violence in the quest for a dominant position, for control of territory, and for the restoration of a threatened self-esteem. Swallowing suggests domination . . . Others relate the fear of being swallowed to the fear of being eaten into, robbed, and emptied. [Elias] Canetti, noting the strong connections of eating to power, suggests that whoever wants to rule seeks “to incorporate [others] into himself and to suck the substance out of them.”⁹⁶

The *pogromshchiki* of Elisavetgrad were reportedly enraged when Jews taunted them with the claim that “We’ve bought you up” (*my vas kupili*).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 120–1. Note the rhetoric used in the memoirs of a labor activist, Vasili Gerasimov, recalling a strike in 1872: “I would often ponder these facts, drawing a line between the conditions that surrounded us and the conditions that obtained for our employers – the manufacturers who drank our blood, who devoured our lives in the literal sense of the word” (Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, 182). A rioting mob, attacking doctors in the revolutionary year 1905, shouted that “all of them have sucked our blood”: Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford, 2001), 70. Such examples demonstrate that this was not a charge directed only against Jews, but might better be seen as an expression of collective insecurity vis-à-vis contending groups.

⁹⁷ V. P. Ribins’kii, ed., “Shchodennik O. I. Mikhalevicha,” in *Zbirk prats’ evreis’koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, II 173. This was linked to the claim that the Jews had “bought” the canceled holiday for 4,000 rubles.

We have seen how issues of status and self-respect dominated the complaints against Jews of townspeople in Pereiaslav, Kiev, and Kishinev. Images of swallowing and sucking resound in shouts attributed to the mobs of *pogromshchiki* in 1881–2: “The Jews drink our blood” and “The Jews are sucking out our vital juices.” In advance of the first pogroms, rumors circulated in Grodno province that the Jews were preparing to “slaughter” (*pererezat*) the Christian population on the eve of Easter or at the time of the Jewish Passover festival.⁹⁸ Nor are these complaints restricted to 1881–2. An official report on the Odessa pogrom of 1871 claimed that the crowds shouted “The Jews have offended our Christ, they grow rich, and they suck our blood.”⁹⁹ The image hovers in the background of the event that is said to have triggered the lethal Nizhni Novgorod pogrom of 1884, a mother’s hysterical claim that Jews had kidnapped her daughter in order to drink her blood.¹⁰⁰ The Russian examples conform to the consumption metaphors encountered when violence is used as a weapon of social control. It seeks to prevent the target group, viewed collectively, from crossing boundaries, from exercising power, or from claiming an unwarranted status which signified a dominant position in power relationships.

In one important respect the Russian pogroms of 1881–2 do not conform to the most common riot model, which invariably includes violence against persons, atrocities, and mutilations. This point has been overlooked by scholars, who have usually taken at face value the atrocity stories surrounding 1881–2, especially the prevalence of rape. As suggested in the Introduction, while rapes undoubtedly did occur, they were not a widespread phenomenon. In particular they were not accompanied by murder and mutilation. This is not to claim that the empire’s population was incapable of such brutalities: The murder of innkeepers, their families, and their Christian servants testifies to this melancholy fact. The peasant exercise of *samosud*, with which pogrom violence is at times compared, could be accompanied by gruesome torture and mutilation.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ LVIA, f. 378, op. 172, d. 43 (6/IV/1881), ll. 1–4ob.

⁹⁹ Cited in John D. Klier, “The Pogrom Paradigm in Russian History,” in Klier and Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms*, 21. Note the use of the possessive “our” Christ.

¹⁰⁰ Another variant has the mother telling her child not to play with Jews lest they steal her blood: GARF, f. 102, op. 1884, d. 280, ch. 31 (8/VI/1884), ll. 1–45. A ritual murder claim in Dubossary is alleged to have created the environment for the Kishinev pogrom of 1903: Judge, *Easter*, 39–44.

¹⁰¹ Cathy Frierson, “Crime and Punishment in the Russian Village: Rural Concepts of Criminality at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *Slavic Review*, 46, 1 (1987), 55–69. Frierson notes that peasants played down crimes committed against a village “outsider” (*ibid.*, 62).

Nor is this to deny the trauma, rough handling, and economic ruin meted out to Jews.

Most of the 25-odd Jewish fatalities of 1881–2 were victims who had been battered to death in the time-honored tradition of Russian street violence. There are no confirmed reports of rape-murders or of the mutilation of corpses. In particular, despite unreliable foreign claims, there is no evidence of the cutting off of women's breasts, one of the stereotypical atrocities associated with ethnic riots.¹⁰²

The pogroms did become increasingly brutal and the violence of each major pogrom tended to exceed that of the one preceding it. This may have been a response to the increased level of repression, as the authorities were quicker to resort to deadly force, and *pogromshchik* casualties grew. Yet the isolated pogroms of 1883 (Ekaterinoslav) and 1884 (Nizhnii Novgorod) were more savage still. Victims of the latter pogrom were thrown from rooftops and murdered with axes.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, as a point of comparison, as many Jews died in the three-day Kishinev pogrom of 1903 (forty-five) as in all the incidents of 1881–4.¹⁰⁴

How can this increase in brutality be explained? It can be surmised that the resentments and hostility developing toward the Jews had not yet reached critical levels throughout the Pale, and that the Jews were not seen as a disloyal political threat, as they would come to be with the growing involvement of Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement. This would also account for the minimal violence in the northwestern provinces (Lithuania and Belorussia), where the socioeconomic changes noted in the Southwest had not yet taken hold.

Another answer may be found in the pathology of riots. The riot model suggests that each outbreak of violence lessens social constraints and taboos against this form of violence in the future.¹⁰⁵ Earlier incidents also provide a model for future outbreaks and produce remarkably similar phenomena. Christian householders hastened to place crosses and icons in the windows of their residences at the outbreak of violence in 1881, just as had been done in the Odessa pogrom a decade earlier (see Figure 3).¹⁰⁶

With precedents established in the popular memory, a pogrom could pass rapidly through its stages, moving quickly from attacks on the Jews'

¹⁰² See Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 111–15, for a discussion of stereotypical atrocities.

¹⁰³ For the pogrom in Ekaterinoslav (20–1 July 1883), in which at least twenty *pogromshchiki* were killed, see GARF, f. 102, op. 40, d. 280, ch. 4 (1883), l. 86. For Nizhnii Novgorod (7–8 June 1884), in which ten Jews perished, see *ibid.*, op. 41, d. 280, ch. 31 (1884), l. 46.

¹⁰⁴ For an official list, naming forty-nine fatalities, see Kopanskii, *Kishinevskii pogrom*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 60.

¹⁰⁶ Horowitz notes that rioters devise a variety of techniques to differentiate targets from their own people: *ibid.*, 128–30.



Figure 3. A woman and her children displaying Christian religious artefacts during the pogrom of 1871 in Odessa. Drawing by Vasilii V. Vakhrenov.

property to assaults on their bodies, as happened in Kishinev in 1903. Jews too learned lessons from the past and began to gear up for organized self-defense. Especially when it was given a political coloration, this activity was seen as violating the “rules” of the pogrom and produced a rapid escalation of violence. A striking feature of the pogroms of 1905, which followed in the wake of the announcement of the Manifesto of 17 October and represented the ostensible victory of the revolution, was that very many of them occurred in towns that had suffered earlier outbreaks of violence. The main pogrom cities, towns, and even rail depots of 1881–2 – Elisavetgrad, Kiev, Balta, Smela, Pereiaslav, Nezhin, Konotop, Zhmerinka – suffered again in 1905. To these may be added Odessa, Kishinev (1903), and Iuzovka (1892).¹⁰⁷

The role of popular memory should not be underestimated. In his report from Odessa, Count Kutaisov emphasized the many features of the Odessa pogrom of 1871 that he had encountered in the events of

¹⁰⁷ This was a phenomenon noted by the compilers of *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, vol. I (Berlin, 1910), 189–91.

1881.¹⁰⁸ To give one more example: A minor disturbance in the small town of Sharaevo on 10 June 1891 was instigated by an outsider who had been arrested during the Balta pogrom of 1882. The memory of this event was still strong enough for him to use the example as an agitational tool.¹⁰⁹ The pogrom was being established as another aspect of the Jewish-gentile "dialogue of violence." Horowitz's summation aptly fits the post-pogrom initiatives of Ignatiev discussed in Chapters 3, 5, and 6:

Although the outcomes are unpredictable, the violence often does counter pre-existing policy immobility and makes action possible that seemed impossible previously. Everywhere the riot gives way to a struggle to interpret the event ... Sometimes ... a dominant interpretation of the violent event takes hold, and that makes bold policy initiatives possible.¹¹⁰

One of the principal arguments in this book will be that the Russian government and its agents did not consciously engage in pogrom-mongering. But in the end, a large share of the responsibility for the violence must rest with Russian officials. As Horowitz notes, "perhaps the most significant facilitator of rioting is authoritative social support for group violence." To be authoritative, this support needs to flow from the "conduct emanating from political authorities or social superiors." Yet this conduct is defined by "words as well as deeds, omission as well as commission," and it "*need only be interpreted as lending approval; it need not be so intended*" to facilitate rioting and group violence.¹¹¹

Neither the Russian governing elite nor society *wanted* pogroms, but they believed that they *understood* them and they certainly *empathized* with them. This led to sympathy, whether it was intended or not. The message which Ignatiev's government sent to the masses was: We sympathize with your ends, but not your means. The acts of the government discussed in the second part of this book, such as the mass expulsions from Kiev and Orel, the charge to the Ignatiev commissions, the well-publicized planing of the May Laws, and rhetoric about the open western border, constantly reinforced this theme. This accompanied the daily differentiation of the Jews as a legal "other," the *inorodets*, of Russian law. It was not a great leap for the popular mind to assume that there might indeed be an "ukase to beat the Jews," or that peasant communities had a legal right to expel Jews from their midst. Nothing the government did in 1881-2 made it less likely that pogroms would reappear in the future.

¹⁰⁸ *K-A*, 394-5.

¹⁰⁹ *Archives de l'AIU*, URSS IC 1-2, "Documents sur papier velure," 1-18.

¹¹⁰ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 455-6. For the struggle to interpret the event, see also Brass, *Riots*, 45-6.

¹¹¹ Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 343-4 (my emphasis).



Figure 4. Onlookers observing the pogrom of 1871 in Odessa. Drawing by Vasilii V. Vakhrenov.

Nor did the representatives of polite society do anything to suggest to the rioters that anything they were doing deserved opprobrium. Quite the contrary: They sat in their carriages and enjoyed this unique form of holiday entertainment. Gentlemen passed among the rioters, interviewing them, themselves unthreatened and unconcerned (see Figures 4 and 5). As Gerald Surh has pointed out in the context of 1905, the conduct of polite society was analogous to the role of prominent members of the white community in the southern United States, who looked on curiously, without comment or intervention, while black men were lynched by white mobs.¹¹² What further indication did rioters require that their conduct fell within acceptable social norms? Many official reports observed that the *pogromshchiki* had no sense that they were committing a crime and were angered or mystified when brought to trial.

The empathy, merging into sympathy, with which the governing elite consistently viewed pogroms encouraged a significant reconceptualization of anti-Jewish violence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Initially,

¹¹² Personal communication, 10 May 2006, and Gerald D. Surh, "The Russian Pogroms of October 1905," unpublished paper presented to the British Association of Slavonic and East European Studies (Cambridge, April 2005), 19.



Figure 5. Onlookers observing the pogrom of 1871 in Odessa. Drawing by Vasilii V. Vakhrenov.

in 1881, pogroms were seen as misguided and undesirable, but nonetheless understandable acts directed *against* Jewish exploitation. In the early twentieth century, as Jews were collectively viewed as an unreliable political element, pogroms came to be viewed as action *in support of* the government. Thus, Nicholas II interpreted the pogroms embedded in the revolutionary disorders of 1905 as a form of political mobilization in support of the autocracy. “A whole mass of loyal people suddenly made their power felt,” he declared. “And because nine-tenths of the troublemakers are Jews, the People’s whole anger turned against them. That’s how the pogroms happened.”¹¹³ The desire for popular support in any guise blinded Russian statesmen, intent on restoring order, to the dangers inherent in the slogan “beat the Jews and save Russia.” Empathy became an excuse for toleration, a symptom of the political blindness that complicated imperial Russia’s Jewish Question until the very end of the imperial regime.

¹¹³ E. J. Bing, ed., *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar* (New York, 1938), 190–1.

Part II

3 Confronting the pogroms

All this is shameful [*preskverno*] and shows that we must finish with the Jewish Question as soon as possible. Emperor Alexander III¹

By the time of the Kiev pogrom, toward the end of April 1881, it was apparent to the government that pogroms were not casual events which could be dealt with by the forces at hand. Rather, they were an endemic problem that required, in the first instance, the careful targeting of all the resources of the state to contain the violence and punish those involved. In the second instance the regime needed an explanation for the pogroms and a strategy allowing it to address their underlying causes in order to avoid their recurrence, an issue that will be discussed in the second half of this chapter. The Russian state's immediate response to the pogroms of 1881–2 was arguably organized under a triune formula: admonition, repression, and nemesis. Before analyzing each of these elements in turn, it is worth reviewing how the imperial government envisaged the role and interaction of the various institutions discussed in Chapter 1 in maintaining law, order, and civil tranquility.

In the first instance it was the responsibility of the gendarmerie to be on the alert for any trouble, especially of a political nature. One of the chief responsibilities of the provincial gendarmerie was to monitor loose talk and rumor-mongering (which was a criminal offense). Informational bulletins, reports, and advisory warnings traveled up and down the chain of command, sometimes with an order for the arrest of a particular malefactor. In the countryside, peasant officials were to investigate criminal behavior, to break up fights, and to monitor the movement of suspicious individuals. In urban areas this was the responsibility of the police. In anticipation of violations of public order, the civilian authorities might request military personnel to reinforce civilian policing. The lowest official authorized to call for military intervention was the rural police colonel

¹ Cited in R. M. Kantor, "Aleksandr III o evreiskikh pogromakh 1881–1883 gg.," *Evreiskaia letopis'*, 1 (1923), 153.

(*ispravnik*) in a district, or the municipal police colonel (*politseimeistr*) of a large city. Clearly, requests for military assistance from lower officials would have to come up the chain of command. Troops could be requested in writing only, and appeals had to be directed to a very high level – the head of a military district or, in his absence, the head of a provincial military command. Civil functionaries did not themselves command troops, but relayed orders through military personnel. Clearly, close coordination and cooperation were necessary for this system to work smoothly. The law sought to ensure that deadly force was used only in extreme circumstances and that military resources were not wasted. Only an officer could give the command to fire, and only after the crowd had been thrice warned, by trumpet or drumbeat. An exception was to be made when troops needed to defend themselves from attack or to protect the lives of others. The former was invariably the case when deadly force was employed during the pogroms of 1881–2.

Rules existed to prevent the dispatch of military units that would be too small to be effective or to avoid their subdivision once deployed. This nonetheless happened on a regular basis during the pogroms of 1881–2, in large part because troops found themselves in situations that neither lawmakers nor their own training had anticipated. The archetypal mass disturbance in Russia took place in the countryside, where troops, mounted or on foot, enjoyed every advantage against disorganized crowds of peasants. As William Fuller notes, apropos of the rules of engagement of 1877: “the only role foreseen for the army in popular disturbances was that of crowd control and forcible crowd dispersion – a role which suited the condition of rural, not urban Russia . . . The rules contained no prescription for dealing with snipers or with instances of looting and vandalism spread over scores of city blocks” – exactly the actions that typified a pogrom.²

The conscientious administrator was aware that certain times of the year necessitated heightened precautions. These included market days, regional fairs, and major religious holidays, in particular Easter, which brought to a close a long religious fast and was usually celebrated with riotous, drunken overindulgence. In times of unrest, the authorities were empowered to order the closure of taverns and to change the date of fairs.

Small rural disturbances, typically fights and brawls, were best dealt with by the local *starosta* and *starshina*, sometimes with the aid of the police constable. It was expected that the local Christian clergy, Orthodox or Catholic, would help to deter peasants from illegal or riotous activity.

² William C. Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict in Imperial Russia, 1881–1914* (Princeton, 1985), 90.

Indeed, any individual with an official position, no matter what his regular responsibilities were, was expected to rise to the occasion. Since few local officials actually had the authority to summon troops, they frequently resorted to the one option open to police and peasant officials, the summoning of assistance from neighboring villages, whose officials could be asked to appear with reliable peasant volunteers. This was a common practice during 1881–2, on occasion with the unfortunate outcome that the volunteers joined the rioters.

If major disorders threatened, and even more so if they broke out, responsible officials were expected to hasten to the location and to bring all their powers of persuasion to bear. Their eloquence would be reinforced by the troops that they brought with them. If the appropriate official was not available, his immediate subordinate would take up the task. In the event of multiple outbreaks, the governor-general or governor would himself go to the principal center of unrest and dispatch subordinates to less serious outbreaks.

Particularly in the case of peasant disorders, certain conventions surrounding guilt, repentance, and punishment had evolved, bearing all the hallmarks of the patriarchal relationship between the authorities and the peasantry. Once a high official and his military escort arrived, peasants were normally aware that they would not have their immediate demands met and that they risked severe repression. They therefore followed a set pattern in dealing with an authority figure, even to the extent of welcoming him with the traditional gifts of bread and salt. Peasants would listen respectfully to the inevitable speech of reproach for their disobedience, with bowed, uncovered heads and often on their knees. In turn they would humbly explain that they were simple people, who had been grievously misled by ignorance or by some instigator, often one who claimed to be speaking in the tsar's name. They would give an undertaking, often confirmed by an oath, not to repeat their actions. In this way, their collective guilt could be remitted and their collective punishment mitigated, especially if a few ringleaders or scapegoats could be identified for punishment.³

Nemesis awaited rebels in the guise of the court system of the empire. As a result of the reforms of 20 November 1864, a modern legal system operated in the empire, featuring an independent judiciary and confrontational trials heard before juries. There was only minimal change, though, at the lowest level of Russian life, the peasant village, where the system of customary law was left in place. Minor crimes and suits were heard in

³ Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston, 1989), 208–15.

courts presided over by Justices of the Peace, whose judges were elected for three-year terms by local organs of self-government. Verdicts handed down by Justices of the Peace could be appealed to a District Session of Justices of the Peace, with the Governing Senate serving as the ultimate court of appeal.

More serious criminal and civil cases were heard by the Circuit Court, whose writ ran over several districts. Judges were chosen by the Ministry of Justice to serve for life and were supported by a large investigative and clerical staff. Most court cases were held before citizen juries, while the judge decided the punishment for convicted malefactors. For Circuit Court trials that were held without juries, the appellate court was the Judicial Chamber, composed of appointed judges who sat with or without juries, augmented by representatives of the different social estates. They also served as courts of the first instance for certain cases, such as those involving the press, state property, or official malfeasance. In May 1878, disturbed by the apparent readiness of Circuit Court juries to acquit those accused of political crimes, the state transferred to Judicial Chambers sitting without juries the cases of those who were accused of "clear rebellion against the authorities." The typical pogrom indictment in 1881–2 fell under Article 38 of the Criminal Code (*Ustav o nakazaniakh*), "rioting in a public place," which was punishable only by a brief imprisonment or a fine. Only in 1891, in response to the problems of prosecuting *pogromshchiki*, did the government introduce the new offense of "attacks of one part of the population on another," punishment for which included exile to Siberia.⁴

The growth of the revolutionary movement and of civil disorder led to a number of extraordinary measures, most notably the aforementioned law of 14 August 1881, which permitted provincial governors to declare states of emergency under which the higher authorities could order the transfer of any criminal case to a military court. Despite the introduction of a civil court system, a number of administrative officials, most notably the governors (and, at the other extreme, village *skhody*), had the right to subject malefactors to banishment or administrative exile. This often proved the most expeditious, if crude, manner of administering justice.

Police, soldiers, bureaucrats, and judges were the instruments upon which the imperial state relied to maintain law, order, and civil tranquility. A familiar Russian proverb may claim that "God is in heaven, and the tsar is far away." Yet in the spring and summer of 1881, these sentiments became more of a wish than a reality for Russia's provincial administration.

⁴ "Napadenie odnoi chasti naseleniya na drugoi," *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 40, 530.

Admonition

The emperor and his ministers displayed a voracious appetite for news and information about the pogroms. Telegrams rained down upon the higher administration demanding up-to-the-minute details.⁵ Fully fledged investigations were conducted of local officials who were thought to have been remiss in reporting the first sign of trouble to their superiors.⁶ This information was perused and annotated, not least by the emperor himself. The first news of the Elisavetgrad pogrom was communicated on 16 April by M. T. Loris-Melikov to Alexander III, who scribbled "very shameful" in the margin of the report.⁷ The tsar continued to receive updated information about the events unfolding in the South, for a time receiving reports several times a day. These reports inevitably elicited a critical response.⁸

If words had possessed a prophylactic effect, the pogroms would soon have been over. With St. Petersburg taking the lead, the population was warned of the dire consequences of pogrom-mongering. The new minister of internal affairs, N. P. Ignatiev, was especially fond of grand, sweeping gestures. One of his first acts upon assuming office was to publish in the official *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, on 6 May 1881, a circular letter to the governors, in which he set forth his views on the current political situation. He noted that "the movement against the Jews which has recently appeared in the South has offered a sad example of how people, loyal to Throne and Fatherland, can fall into caprice and self-indulgence, acting in ways they themselves do not understand, in conformity with the plans of the seditionists." In an order to the governors on 23 May 1881, Ignatiev warned that "a repetition of disorders, like those in the southern provinces which witnessed the despoliation of the Jews, cannot be tolerated, and should be anticipated by taking timely, appropriate measures."⁹

Ignatiev's two-pronged approach to pogrom violence sought to maintain calm in the short term until he had accomplished his ultimate task of curbing "Jewish exploitation." He urged the governors to convey this

⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (21/IV/1881), l. 3; for telegraphic reports, see *K-A*, 15–19.

⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3 (19/VI/1882), ll. 51–60, for an investigation of the failure of local authorities to report promptly to the Department of Police about the Okny pogrom. See RGIA, f. 1282, op. 2, d. 2143 (29/V/1882), ll. 9–12, for an investigation of the leaking of information about troop movements during the Smela pogrom.

⁷ *K-A*, 2 (V/1881).

⁸ See Kantor, "Aleksandr III," 149–58. While the tsar made many derogatory comments about the Jews, he was uniformly hostile to pogroms and *pogromshchiki*.

⁹ Cited in P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhavii na rubezhe 1870–1880-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964), 389.

to the population on the eve of Easter in 1882, and it was illustrated when the restrictive May Laws were eventually announced. The delineation of the new rules was accompanied by a parallel announcement from the Committee of Ministers reminding provincial administrators of their obligation either to prevent disorders or to choke them off at the first sign. Included was an open warning:

For any carelessness by administrative or police functionaries, the guilty will lose their positions. As was obvious in recent times, the disorders were stirred up by malevolent persons, from greed and other motives, and it is necessary for the chief administrator to explain to the class representatives in the towns and villages that they are obliged to take supervisory measures for the prevention of attempts to stir up disorders against the Jews, and to explain to the local population their criminal liability for violence against persons or property.

The government took a variety of measures to ensure that this decree was well publicized, and it appeared in the periodical press.¹⁰ One of the first acts of Count Dmitrii Tolstoi, when he replaced Ignatiev at the MVD at the end of May 1882, was to demand from the governors-general a list of the precautions which they were taking to prevent pogroms.¹¹ Tolstoi himself issued a stern warning against pogroms on 9 June 1882, in which he made the prevention of pogroms the personal responsibility of the governors and warned of severe legal consequences for any administrator who failed to prevent disorders in his bailiwick. This too was widely reported in the press. Tolstoi ultimately went so far as to propose, in a letter to the War Ministry, that more troops be moved into the Pale of Settlement, that military forces be subordinated to the police, and that the deployment of the army be revisited with the needs of internal security foremost in mind.¹²

Individual governors responded to these admonitions by emphasizing measures which they had already taken on their own initiative.¹³ These included frequent public declarations. Even before the first pogrom, for example, Odessa governor-general A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov issued a public announcement during Holy Week that any participants in street violence would be subjected to military justice.¹⁴ In the midst of the Kiev pogrom, Governor-General A. R. Drenteln issued a public proclamation

¹⁰ GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175 (24/V/1882), ll. 32–3ob. For a published version, see *Odesskii vestnik*, 106:15/V/1882.

¹¹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (VI/1882), ll. 126–7ob.

¹² Fuller, *Civil–Military Conflict*, 106. The army successfully resisted this radical plan, which would have placed domestic security concerns ahead of national security.

¹³ For a report from the Kherson governor, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (24/VI/1882), ll. 108–9ob; from the Tauride governor, *ibid.*, ch. 4 (25/IX/1882).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, d. 197 (23/III/1881), ll. 2ob–3ob.

reflecting the paternalistic approach which he took to his responsibilities. Reminding would-be rioters of the strict punishment which would befall them, and the misery which this would cause their families, he exhorted them:

Orthodox People, I turn to you with true words, as your chief administrator [*nachalnik*] and as a man who wishes you well, and I ask you, in the name of the Tsar whom we both serve, to put away evil deeds and not to listen to the evil people who only mislead you. The Sovereign Himself made me the chief administrator of this area, and I know His will and can convey it to you: those people who mislead you and instigate you to plunder and murder, speak lies and slander.¹⁵

Governor P. A. Bilbasov of Poltava province announced a whole series of preventative measures to the general public on 28 April, "since I know that there are to be found ill-intentioned persons who are convinced that the violence of Christians against Jews which took place in the city of Elisavetgrad was in accord with the views of the government, and they try to repeat this kind of riot in the midst of the population in the province entrusted to me."¹⁶ His counterpart in Tauride province, A. A. Kavelin, issued a public warning on 6 May that violence against Jews or anybody else would be prosecuted with the full force of the law. No one, he declared, could be allowed to follow the law as he chose, and still less to engage in vigilante activity.¹⁷ Also on 6 May, the governor-general of the Northwest, E. I. Totleben, announced plans to safeguard person and property. All public gatherings were forbidden. "If, at the demand of the authorities, the crowd does not disperse then, according to legal regulations, weapons will be used against those who do not comply, and those who participate in violence will be immediately arrested and suffer the appropriate punishment."¹⁸ So great was the desire to leave no stone unturned that such decrees were even issued in provinces, such as Smolensk, that lay outside the Pale of Settlement.¹⁹

The authorities were frustrated to find that such proclamations often did more harm than good, by spreading rumors of pogroms. For this reason, the higher authorities warned that the decrees should not circulate in printed form among the general public, where they might sow rumor and confusion. An archetypal example occurred in Lublin province in July

¹⁵ *Odesskii vestnik*, 99:6/V/1881. ¹⁶ *K-A*, 28-9 (28/IV/1881).

¹⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 681, ch. 4 (25/IX/1881), ll. 4-5ob.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, op. 38, d. 197 (6/V/1881), ll. 139-40. Totleben has been praised by historian-critics of the government, such as S. M. Dubnow. His firm words, it has been claimed, ensured that there would be no pogroms in the Northwest. In fact, as the previous quotations reveal, his declaration was almost identical to decrees issued at the same time in areas where there were pogroms. See RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128 (6/V/1881), l. 74.

¹⁹ *K-A*, 60-1 (8/V/1881).

1882, when an illiterate Jew, Morda Karp, secured a copy of the May anti-pogrom decree of the Committee of Ministers. At his request, a local scribe, Aleksandr Kulchiskii, read the manifesto but changed the ending: "By order of His Imperial Majesty, it is forbidden to beat the Yids, but not to throw them immediately into the river and drown them!"²⁰

If official announcements could be misinterpreted, how much greater the chance that newspaper reportage would be misconstrued. There were at least two occasions, confirmed by official investigations, when peasants or townspeople misread pogrom accounts as an invitation to conduct a pogrom.²¹ In general, the government was extremely unhappy with the conduct of the press, but equally uncertain as to how best to control it.

Many government agents blamed the periodical press for creating hostility toward the Jews, for stirring up the general population, and for spreading misleading rumors and reports.²² Even before the first pogrom, for example, Dondukov-Korsakov in Odessa had ordered the chairman of the local press censorship committee to forbid reports about potential pogroms and to impose a general ban on discussion of the Jewish Question.²³ Once the pogroms began, the government employed the official *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* to issue definitive pogrom reports. The newspaper's dry, barebones, and often tardy reporting could not compete with the lurid and dramatic accounts offered in the non-official press.²⁴ Still less desirable was the fact that this reportage was often combined with sharp criticism of local officials for their inability to control the violence. Prestigious capital newspapers like the liberal *Golos* proved a particular *bête noire* for the government, not least because it excelled at obtaining local reportage of events. The newspaper's version of the Kiev pogrom, which described a frenzied mob screaming "Vodka . . . and blood!" enraged the Kiev authorities.²⁵ Likewise, local officials were ordered to provide a full report in response to the *Golos* claim that there had been numerous rapes during the Balta pogrom.²⁶

²⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 15 (17/VII/1882), l. 4ob.

²¹ *Ibid.*, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (14 May 1881), ll. 46–52, involving *Syn otechestva*; *K-A*, 49 (7/V/1881), involving the *Herold*, published in St. Petersburg. There are many more anecdotal reports of such confusion.

²² The Kiev authorities recommended permitting only official announcements to be printed about pogroms: *K-A*, 12–13 (27/IV/1881); the Warsaw gendarmerie accused certain newspapers of being "the chief instigators of hostility toward the Jews": GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1 (18/III/1882), ll. 6a–6bob.

²³ See Chapter 1, p. 25.

²⁴ See RGIA, f. 1282, op. 2, d. 2144 (1881), ll. 80–9, for an example of the process by which the official account of the Warsaw pogrom was assembled. There is no evidence that it was the official policy of *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* to misrepresent pogrom incidents.

²⁵ *Golos*, 119:1/V/1881. See earlier complaints of the Kiev authorities about the press to the director of police: *K-A*, 12–13 (27/IV/1881).

²⁶ A. Zel'tser, "Pogrom v Balte," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 13 (1996), 61.

It was easy to criticize, less easy to find an effective policy. The regime of Alexander II had conceded that its goal of creating a civil society in Russia required a press that was at least partially free. But the entire Reform Era was dogged by attempts to devise an effective compromise between the goals of the government, which included a modicum of control, and the aspirations of editors struggling against constraints in a competitive environment. In such circumstances, confusion or indecision on the side of the government usually resulted in the victory of the press. The efforts of the regime to censor the press during the pogrom crisis fully conform to this general rule.

There were a number of unsuccessful initiatives by the central censorship body, the Chief Administration for Press Affairs (GUDP), a department of the MVD. On 1 August 1881, the GUDP sent a secret circular to the governors complaining of the nature of pogrom reporting in the provincial press, which was held to be too critical of measures that had been taken against pogroms. The governors were asked to tell the censors that such "unsatisfactory" reporting should not be permitted.²⁷ No less a figure than K. P. Pobedonostsev complained that, even while the government was trying to calm the population, the newspaper *Iuzhnyi kraj* had reprinted, as a news item, a revolutionary proclamation calling for attacks upon Jews.²⁸

On 20 September 1881, the GUDP expressed its dissatisfaction with the discussion in both the capital and the provincial press of relations between Jews and non-Jews. Members of the GUDP feared that such reports would hinder the operation of the provincial committees engaged in the discussion of the Jewish Question. Censors were ordered to ban publication or republication of any official decrees or announcements having to do with these deliberations.²⁹ On 21 April 1882, the GUDP went further still, prohibiting any discussion of deliberations in the Committee of Ministers and other high state institutions relating to the Jewish Question.³⁰

Such restrictions were ineffective, as a casual perusal of the contemporary periodical press reveals. At a time when rioting was enveloping vast areas of the empire, the press could not be expected to ignore disorders, if only because newspapers were supposed to print official warnings against pogroms. The MVD, responsible for censorship, found itself in a contradictory position. Even as the GUDP was advising editors to refrain from any coverage of the Ignatiev commissions, Ignatiev himself was urging the

²⁷ RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8 (1/VIII/1881), l. 122.

²⁸ GARF, f. 677, op. 1, d. 963 (6/VI/1881), ll. 63-4.

²⁹ RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8 (1/VIII/1881), l. 122. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, d. 26 (21/IV/1882), l. 26ob.

governors to point out the work of the commissions to the general public as proof that the government was confronting the Jewish Question.³¹

The government could not even expect a polite hearing from the organs it proposed to regulate. In April 1882, *Golos* reprinted an announcement from *Pravitel'svennyi vestnik* that complained of the exaggerated and incendiary reporting of pogroms in the press and of critical appraisals of the conduct of local officials. The task of the press, the article exhorted, was to assist the government in the quieting of minds, rather than spreading unfounded rumors which gave rise to dangerous, mutual antipathy between Christians and Jews. *Golos*, a frequent target of official complaints about biased and exaggerated pogrom reporting, refused to take this lecture with good grace. The paper indignantly rejected the charge that it had disseminated unfounded rumors. Rather, in an unsubtle jibe at the uncritical coverage of *Pravitel'svennyi vestnik*, the editor declared that he had sent a reliable and experienced person to report on the Balta pogrom. This correspondent reported what appeared in the light of day, before the eyes of the entire town, and from a wide variety of sources. "Isn't this all that a newspaper is obligated to do before the public and, one might add, the government? In this way not only does it not depart from its goal of acting to support [the government], but by turning up rumors, provides the opportunity to ascertain exactly what has happened."³² Ultimately, the best the government could hope to do was to use private newspapers which were friendly to it to counter criticism and exaggerated reporting at home and abroad.³³

Repression

Russian officials always regarded *force majeure* as their most dependable means of maintaining public order. When officials arrived at a pogrom location, they were invariably accompanied by troops, and they were expected to use them. When the governor of Poltava plunged into a crowd of people in order to deter them from disorders, he was viewed as foolhardy rather than brave.³⁴ Preventative measures to ward off pogroms were always planned like military campaigns, and pogrom centers were placed under a form of martial law. It was common practice to reinforce police with military patrols. Troops were frequently quartered

³¹ GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175 (23/III/1882), ll. 25–6. ³² *Golos*, 103:20/IV/1882.

³³ See John D. Klier, "The Times of London, the Russian Press and the Pogroms of 1881–1882," *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, 308 (1984), 1–26.

³⁴ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), ll. 174ob–5ob. Kutaisov was quite critical of this form of pacification: *K-A*, 150–1.

on householders as a preventative or a punitive measure. Yet even this could be problematical. The townspeople of Briansk were indignant when troops were quartered on them: They resented both the expense and the "shame" which this brought.³⁵ The municipal council of Verkhnedneprovsk had a lively debate as to whether the Jews, as the chief beneficiaries, should pay the cost of troops brought in as a protective measure.³⁶ In other areas, the Jews were more than willing to pay for troops and to play the lead role in quartering them, although some critics saw this as just another opportunity for Jews to "lord it over Christians."³⁷

Events surrounding the hundreds of pogroms eloquently demonstrated the problems involving civilian-military cooperation and coordination during civil unrest. Especially complex were the difficulties encountered in using troops to quell urban disorders without creating situations which compelled them to use deadly force, a problem that has been well chronicled by William Fuller. Even suppression of rural unrest proved difficult, as the pogrom waves spread from the towns to the villages. The most common response was to dispatch troops to sweep across the affected area. While the troops overawed the peasantry, officers were expected to explain the illegality of attacks on the Jews and their property. Some officers preferred to let the birch do the talking for them, and staged a form of didactic punishment known as an *ekzekutsiia*. This involved gathering together entire villages to watch while miscreants were beaten. Punitive expeditions of this kind were of dubious legality after the court reforms of 1865 outlawed collective punishments. Nonetheless, some officers pursued them with gusto and usually persuaded local civil officials to legitimize them by their presence. In the village of Mar'evka the peasant elder Egor Fabriko was flogged, in flagrant violation of the law governing the local administration. Preparations for an *ekzekutsiia* were preceded by having local Jews and police officials identify peasants who they claimed were either actual or potential *pogromshchiki*. Mass floggings were intended to have a deterrent effect, but in the village of Poklitarovka the *ekzekutsiia* bore all the marks of retribution, for it occurred on 24 April, a week after the pogrom. Twenty peasants were selected for punishment, including two old men whose children had participated in the disorders. The victims were divided into groups, and received from 50 to 300 blows with a *nagaika*. Afterwards, the local Jewish tavern-keeper provided the troops with free vodka, which was served to the soldiers in the square where the floggings were carried out. Recognizing the questionable

³⁵ K-A, 375. ³⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (1881), ll. 48-50.

³⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (18/V/1881), ll. 26ob-27.

legality of these actions, officials presented them in different ways to their superiors. Kiev governor N. P. Gesse, in his official report on the Smela pogrom, emphasized, in the face of conflicting testimony, that corporal punishment had been administered by troops before his arrival.³⁸ Victims of flogging included Jews who were defending their property. When Governor-General Dondukov-Korsakov learned of these punitive expeditions, he immediately ordered them halted.³⁹ Governor-General Drenteln, on the other hand, warmly approved of them, considering them "timely." The last word, invariably, was that of the emperor. What officer would be deterred from collective corporal punishment had he known that Alexander had annotated a report of one *ekzekutsiia* with the words "energetic and sensible"?⁴⁰

The willingness of the regime to use troops against the rioters, and to dispatch detachments wherever they were threatened, created additional problems. The refusal to send troops, however legitimate the reasons might be, was invariably seen by Jewish communities and outside observers as criminal negligence. The widespread dispersal of forces, the need to move them from place to place, ensured that they were either spread too thinly or not available in the right place at the right time. Drenteln despairingly lamented that "if we were to send troops to all the small towns which have requested them, the Russian army wouldn't be large enough."⁴¹

A final consideration fashioned the pogroms into a real dilemma for the army. Much of the "pogrom season" was in the late spring and summer, at the time when Russian forces customarily struck winter quarters and went into summer camp. This was the occasion for intensive training for combat forces and for the perfection of military maneuvers. Without summer camp, the Russian army could not be in a suitable state of combat readiness. The decision to make troops available for anti-pogrom duty thus had direct implications for Russia's national security. It was with this in mind that Ignatiev secured permission from the military high command in the summer of 1881 that provincial governors could keep troops on standby for pogrom duty, rather than dispatching them to summer camp. He reminded officials that "this measure has serious consequences and should not be taken lightly."⁴² Since the governors were well aware that pogroms blotted their service record and could lead to their dismissal, they invariably erred on the side of caution. It was understandable that the governor of Poltava should request leave to disperse his forces over the

³⁸ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (14/V/1881), ll. 103-5ob, 96ob; GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (24/IV/1881).

³⁹ K-A, 250-1. ⁴⁰ Kantor, "Aleksandr III," 153. ⁴¹ K-A, 19 (3/V/1881).

⁴² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (3/VI/1881), ll. 5-7.

province in order to prevent pogroms.⁴³ But why did the governors of Kursk and Penza provinces, which were not part of the Pale and which had minimal Jewish populations, also seek to keep their forces back from summer camp?⁴⁴ Drenteln, marshaling his forces to keep order, had to strip troops away from the Austrian frontier.⁴⁵ Fearing the impact of such troop movements on Russia's international prestige, he recommended that they not be publicized.⁴⁶ Clearly this was a situation that could not be allowed to continue. As the tsar noted on a report of the Warsaw pogrom: "All this is shameful [*preskverno*] and shows that we must finish with the Jewish Question as soon as possible."⁴⁷

Nemesis

The representatives of state power always arrived at the scene of a pogrom in pairs. If "order" was the task of the civil and military authorities, "law" was represented by the public prosecutor, who was expected to make an early appearance. In the eyes of the state, it was important that justice be rapid and public in order to achieve a deterrent effect. It was also to be visibly "legal," based on well-elucidated norms, so that it might serve the goal of rooting a legal consciousness amidst a peasant population perceived as untamed and capricious.⁴⁸ The theoretical task of combining repression and education presented immediate problems for the regime. If, as widely accepted, the disorders emerged from resentment toward the Jews, linking the regime too closely with them would diminish it in the eyes of the general population. This was even more the case if the Jews were seen to be "lording it over the peasants" and arrogantly claiming the special protection of the state. Yet any failure to respond severely to the pogroms would create the impression that violence was allowed, in turn generating more unrest, with potentially fatal consequences. This was a dilemma with which the regime grappled throughout 1881-2.⁴⁹

There was also the problem of the large numbers involved. The crowds of arrested *pogromshchiki* (400 in Elisavetgrad, 1,300 in Kiev, 250 in Odessa) could not be adequately accommodated from the perspective of

⁴³ *Ibid.* (17/VI/1881), l. 62ob. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 78-80. ⁴⁵ *K-A*, 288 (25/V/1881).

⁴⁶ *K-A*, 60 (15/V/1881). ⁴⁷ Cited in Kantor, "Aleksandr III," 153.

⁴⁸ For this reason, a number of observers, including Count Kutaisov, opposed the use of punitive expeditions and mass floggings. See *K-A*, 216-17. See Stephen Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1999), 209-42, for the lack of consensus over the proper punishments to deter criminal activity.

⁴⁹ Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1990), 145-60, does a thorough job of exploring the dilemmas involved in punishing the *pogromshchiki*. I would, however, question his sweeping generalization that "nineteenth-century Russia was not a state governed by the rule of law" (*ibid.*, 147).

either security or public health.⁵⁰ These considerations notwithstanding, old habits died hard, and the underlying inclination of the regime was toward harshness, only rarely tempered with mercy. This was especially the case because, under the existing emergency legislation operative in the provinces of the Pale of Settlement, the higher authorities had extensive powers that permitted bureaucratic caprice, such as administrative detention, expulsion, or exile. Ignatiev, in a letter to the governors on 3 April 1882, demanded the strictest punishment for those who incited the crowd against the Jews. He stressed that not one participant in a pogrom should escape punishment. Speed was of the essence in order to quiet the public mind.⁵¹

This was sound advice, since a number of provincial authorities reported, in the aftermath of rural riots, that the peasantry was waiting to see if and how they would be punished. The need for speed took priority over strict legality. In mid-May, Tauride governor Kavelin, faced with disorders in the neighboring Aleksandrovsk district, billeted troops at the peasants' expense on ten villages, prior to bringing ringleaders and instigators to trial.⁵² At the end of May 1881, Poltava governor Bilbasov authorized court cases to go ahead, even in the absence of properly formulated police indictments. He ordered all Justices of the Peace to move cases of pogrom violence to the front of their dockets. Even light sentences were acceptable if they warned the peasants of the error of their ways.⁵³ These were the same considerations which made punitive expeditions and mass floggings such an attractive expedient to some officials. The distinction between the peasantry, with their perceived naiveté, and the other classes, who were expected to know better, was illustrated by an instruction from the MVD to the authorities that non-peasant *pogromshchiki* should receive more severe sentences.⁵⁴

Kiev's Drenteln was the first governor-general to confront large numbers of pogrom cases scattered around different provinces. His actions deserve special attention because they were important both for creating precedents and for providing a general picture of how the judicial authorities – including those not particularly sympathetic to the Jews – initially responded to legal problems arising from the pogroms. Drenteln, for one, displayed a grudging respect for the *pogromshchiki*, whose hostility

⁵⁰ *K-A*, 10 (28/IV/1881); 24 (29/IV/1881); 24 (17/IV/1881).

⁵¹ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1620 (1882), l. 6ob. ⁵² *K-A*, 74 (15/V/1881).

⁵³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (29/V/1881), ll. 63ob–4. On the other hand, the governor of pogrom-free Mogilev was worried that peasants on *otkhod*, returning to their villages after participating in pogroms in the South and receiving light sentences, would spread the violence to the Northwest: *ibid.*, ch. 4 (7/X/1881), ll. 13–14ob.

⁵⁴ *K-A*, 60 (1881).

to the Jews he saw as directed against a group responsible for all the disorders of contemporary Russian life. "Alongside bestiality and senselessness, one sees a sort of slavish obedience and unbelievable benevolence ... Many in the crowd were truly convinced that they were performing a useful deed for the emperor, and that there is some official order to despoil the Jews. There is even a rumor that this order is a consequence of the Jews having killed the tsar, may he rest in peace."⁵⁵ It was Drenteln's fear that, should pogrom cases be handed over to the civil courts, the vast majority of defendants would be acquitted. There was certainly a foundation for this assumption. In August 1881, the governor of Chernigov province complained that twenty-four of twenty-six persons arrested for participation in the Borzno pogrom had been freed by the civil courts.⁵⁶

With this in mind, Drenteln established a simple guideline: "Swiftness in handing down a sentence, and – as regards initiators and instigators – a very stiff sentence, is essentially the most important consideration in the state interest, in order to show the population that wild excesses are intolerable and will attract severe punishment." For the purpose of establishing jurisdiction he divided all those arrested into one of four categories: (1) those who took a direct part in the disorders, destroying and plundering Jewish property; (2) those who obstructed the authorities in the performance of their duties; (3) those who picked up property which had been left in the street; and (4) members of the riotous crowd who disturbed public order. Under the emergency legislation of 5 April 1879, Drenteln assigned to courts-martial those accused of instigating disorders, those arrested at the scene on charges of robbery, and those who resisted arrest by police or army.⁵⁷ As Fuller has shown, military courts were not kangaroo or drumhead courts, and operated with a firm sense of legality. They were employed when convictions in civilian courts seemed unlikely and when speed was required.⁵⁸ It was in precisely such a situation that the governors-general resorted to them in 1881–2.

The majority of those arrested were charged with disturbing the peace or receiving stolen goods, a problematical charge, since the law applied only to goods that were not returned before the end of three weeks. Drenteln resolved to deal with these cases by administrative measures, as he was authorized to do under the emergency legislation. He ordered all detained residents of Kiev to be released to the responsibility of their families or workplaces. All non-residents of Kiev were sent back to their

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 43 (3/V/1881).

⁵⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (23/VIII/1881), ll. 245–7ob.

⁵⁷ *K-A*, 42–5 (3/V/1881). ⁵⁸ Fuller, *Civil–Military Conflict*, 121–8.

place of residence by military convoy. This was a degrading punishment, usually reserved for exiled convicts and, it might be noted, for Jews found to be illegally resident in Kiev. It also had serious economic consequences for peasants from the interior who had hoped to enhance the family budget by working as hired labor in the South. Peasants who were resident in villages surrounding Kiev were sent to their home villages, to be tried by *volost* courts. Presumably these defendants were happy to have escaped more serious consequences. Under these circumstances, *volost* courts proved to be obliging. In Khotovsk *volost*, for example, thirty-six of forty-eight peasant defendants were convicted and sentenced to twenty blows each. A report of the Kiev District *ispravnik* listed a total of 371 peasants in 15 *volosts* who were sentenced to corporal punishment for the Kiev pogrom.⁵⁹

Ironically, it was the military, not the *volost* courts, which let Drenteln down. The May session of the Kiev Military District Court that tried the Kiev *pogromshchiki* – and whose proceedings, it might be noted, were well publicized in advance – handed out comparatively lenient sentences. This was due in part to the openly Judeophobe sentiments displayed by the military prosecutor, Major-General V. S. Strelnikov. Of twenty-three defendants charged with crimes as serious as resisting the army and police and wholesale destruction, eight were acquitted. Only four of those found guilty were given serious punishments: A ringleader received three and a half years in a penal battalion, three others a year and a half each, and the rest prison terms of three weeks (four) or two months (seven).⁶⁰ Count P. I. Kutaisov was very critical of these sentences, and Alexander III's annotation on his report read "This is unforgivable."⁶¹ The tsar's discontent may account for the much more severe sentences handed out to nine Kiev *pogromshchiki* tried by the Kiev Military Court on 2 July. Three ringleaders were sentenced to exile to Siberia, while six others received prison terms ranging from two to six months.⁶²

Drenteln and the other governors-general submitted so many cases to military tribunals that they could not keep up with the demand. Already in mid-May, Drenteln was advised that only cases of theft and resisting the authorities should be submitted to military courts.⁶³ So

⁵⁹ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (10/V/1881), ll. 60–4.

⁶⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (22/V/1881), ll. 11–12ob.

⁶¹ Kantor, "Aleksandr III," 153. Strelnikov suffered no hindrance to his service career because he was subsequently assassinated by revolutionary terrorists on 19 March 1882.

⁶² RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (2/VII/1881), ll. 13–18.

⁶³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (29/VII/1881), ll. 44–6ob. In July 1881, the Kharkov governor-general asked the War Ministry to suspend the requirement that courts-martial must be composed of staff officers, since they were being distracted by pogrom trials from more important military duties.

common did the resort to courts-martial become that the Ministry of Justice became concerned that the status and function of the civil courts were being undermined. Thus, in May of 1882, the chief prosecutor of the Odessa Court District proudly announced to Minister of Justice D. N. Nabokov that he had convinced the new governor-general of Odessa, I. V. Gurko, to consent to the trial of participants in a major pogrom in Aleksandriia in the civil courts.⁶⁴

The unwelcome reappearance of pogroms in 1882 prompted all agencies of the state to cooperate in anticipation of another wave of mass arrests. In the immediate aftermath of the Balta pogrom, the Ministry of Justice secured imperial confirmation of an order that all criminal cases involving pogroms, whatever might be the judicial instance, were to be moved to the front of the docket.⁶⁵ As cases began to build up, Drenteln approached the MVD to ask for guidance in selecting the proper statutes under which to try *pogromshchiki*. In response, on 8 June the Ministry of Justice issued a set of instructions to the prosecutors of judicial districts, setting forth precise instructions as to how defendants were to be categorized and under what statutes of the Criminal Code they were to be tried.⁶⁶

No ministry or other authority ever compiled a comprehensive report on the number of *pogromshchiki* arrested, tried, and convicted, or on the sentences which they received. From individual reports, however, it is possible to provide an overall impression of the response of the Russian judicial system to the challenge of the pogroms. To give some sense of the scale of the problem, it can be calculated on the basis of confused and imprecise but official statistics that a minimum of 5,500 people were arrested for some sort of pogrom-related activity in 1881.⁶⁷ Over 700 people were arrested for involvement in more than 50 disorders in 1882.⁶⁸ How was the Russian court system to deal with these massive numbers, while navigating among the conflicting routes of severity for

⁶⁴ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249 (29/V/1882), ll. 80–3ob.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, d. 1241 (8/IV/1882), l. 2.

⁶⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (8/VI/188), ll. 64–6ob.

⁶⁷ This computation is based on *K-A*, 531–41, crosschecked against other available data. The figure is inflated somewhat by the totals for Odessa (1,581), which were not a response to an open pogrom, but to minor street violence and a sweep through the city's night shelters. These arrests did have consequences: 233 people were punished by administrative or court action, and 558 were expelled from the city under military guard. On the other hand, these figures do not include those arrested for the Warsaw pogrom.

⁶⁸ These figures are my computations derived from police and court records cited in the footnotes. Reflecting official concerns about "clashes between Christians and Jews," at least 250 of these defendants were Jews, usually accused of disturbing the peace and assaults on Christians.

preventative considerations, mercy in order not to alienate the population, and the pragmatic demands for speed?

Not all of those arrested were tried or punished, but at least a third were. Three different approaches to retribution may be discerned. We have already encountered the resort to *ekzekutsiia*. Given the dubious legality of such actions, they were not uniformly recorded. Fastidious officials, such as the gendarmerie officer Rudov, described them in a critical tone.⁶⁹ Other officers noted bluntly that "they had flogged the whole village."⁷⁰

The regular court system also handled a large number of cases, most commonly at the level of the Justices of the Peace (JPs). Most *pogrom-shchiki* tried in these courts were accused under the general rubric of "disturbing the peace" (*buistvo*, as defined by Article 38 of the Criminal Code) and related statutes applicable to criminal damage. Laws on receiving stolen goods were also applied, although, as noted above, there were problems with the statute of limitations. Individuals who responded to official demands to surrender looted goods were not prosecuted. The maximum punishment a JP could impose in criminal affairs was R300, jail terms of three months and prison terms of up to eighteen months.

Summary accounts do exist for some judicial districts which allow generalizations about conviction rates and severity of sentence. By the end of May 1881, JPs had tried 220 defendants for relatively minor disturbances in Odessa on 3–4 May. A total of 138 were convicted. Of 172 accused of disturbing the peace, 95 were convicted and sentenced to periods of arrest ranging from four days to two months. Thirty-two of thirty-seven convicted of theft received jail sentences of between three weeks and three months. Other misdemeanors, such as failing to obey the authorities and insulting the police, brought fines ranging from R5 to R50, and periods of arrest from ten days to one month.⁷¹ In June 1881 the prosecutor of the Elisavetgrad Judicial District provided summaries for three sets of pogrom trials that had been conducted by JPs during the month of May. A total of eighteen of thirty-two defendants were convicted for various public order offenses in Bereznegovatoe and Bol'shaia Nagartov, for which they received custodial sentences ranging from four days to two weeks, and R5 fines. Of fifty-seven charged for the Aleksandriia pogrom, fifty-four were convicted; they received comparatively heavy sentences reflecting the greater seriousness of this pogrom.

⁶⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38 (V/1881), ll. 38–45. According to Rudov, when an investigating magistrate tried to intervene, the commanding officer told him, "Mr. Official, I ask you not to go there, for it's where I have the right to hew."

⁷⁰ As at Smela, where almost 300 people were flogged: *ibid.*, l. 40ob; *K-A*, 534; GARF, f. 102, op. 1882, d. 280, ch. 6 (8/IV/1882), ll. 13–16.

⁷¹ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (31/V/1881), l. 268.

Four culprits received a week in jail, forty received a month's detention, fourteen received three months, and a soldier arrested for theft was given a six-month term. A total of twenty-six culprits arrested for participation in four pogroms (including less serious cases from Novaia Praga) received sentences ranging from six days to two weeks. Of the eleven defendants tried in the higher courts for offenses during the Aleksandriia pogrom, five were sentenced to terms of forced labor and one to prison, while the rest were acquitted.⁷² A large number of cases heard throughout the Pale by JPs suggest that the typical sentence for the offense of rumor-mongering ranged from five to ten days' imprisonment.

Criminal cases of a more serious nature, such as armed robbery, resisting the army or the police, rape, or murder, were technically the responsibility of the higher civil courts. However, criminal acts of such a serious nature were seldom left to these jurisdictions. Indeed, the prosecutor of the Odessa Judicial Chamber was able to secure a trial in civilian courts for the Aleksandriia *pogromshchiki* only by offering assurances to the Odessa governor-general that the trial would proceed with "the desired speed, and quite correctly, devoid of any tendentiousness, so that its outcome can be considered completely assured."⁷³

The common destination for *pogromshchiki* in 1881 was a military court, which may be placed in the category of exceptional law, along with quartering troops and administrative exile. The emergency legislation of 5 April 1879 authorized governors-general to arrest or banish dangerous individuals and court-martial anyone whose actions precipitated public disorder.⁷⁴ These powers were originally designed to counter the revolutionary movement, and Fuller is in no doubt that their purpose was to ensure that harsher sentences would be handed out for criminal offenses.⁷⁵ The authorities made liberal use of their powers. The Kharkov governor-general alone in 1881 assigned almost 800 pogrom cases to courts-martial, irrespective of the severity of the crimes. Drenteln was more selective, although he did send serious cases, such as those relating to rape and murder during the Balta pogrom, to courts-martial.⁷⁶ The rapist was exiled to hard labor in Siberia, while two murderers were sentenced to death.⁷⁷ As noted above, the burden of such legal work, which required the involvement of staff officers, had a negative impact upon the general

⁷² *Ibid.*, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249 (28/VI/1881), ll. 112–13. ⁷³ *Ibid.*, l. 81ob.

⁷⁴ Jonathan Daly, "On the Significance of Emergency Legislation in Late Imperial Russia," *Slavic Review*, 54, 3 (1995), 607.

⁷⁵ Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict*, 112. This point is worth emphasizing, since Aronson (*Troubled Waters*, 159) points to contemporary claims that military courts were used in order to impose more lenient sentences or to provide acquittals.

⁷⁶ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248 (12/VI/1882). ⁷⁷ *Rassvet*, 28:11/VII/1882.

efficiency of the army.⁷⁸ The governors-general also made liberal use of their power of expulsion and administrative exile. In Odessa, more than 500 people were summarily expelled from the city. In Kiev, 274 suffered this fate.⁷⁹ Since the provocative role of the Jews was seen as a factor in causing pogroms, they too were the target of expulsion campaigns, both collectively and individually.⁸⁰ Forgoing the judicial process, Drenteln exiled one instigator of the Kiev pogrom to exile in Viatka, while another was sentenced to internal exile after serving a short prison term.⁸¹

Nothing about the administration of post-pogrom justice suggests that the authorities took an indulgent attitude toward the participants. Nonetheless, many observers, Jewish and non-Jewish, complained that the courts were far too lenient. This sentiment was summed up by a Polish landowner from Warsaw who wrote to the government to complain that there was only one form of punishment appropriate for the *pogromshchiki*: exile to Siberia and forced labor.⁸²

Official liability

The pogroms consumed careers as well as Jewish property. In retrospect it seems evident that there was little that officials could do to prevent individual pogroms, especially after they had taken on a wave character. Nonetheless, the outbreak of disorders was *ipso facto* proof of the failure of the provincial administration, and scapegoats were sought and found. Officials with high-level protection, such as Drenteln in Kiev, or strong local ties, such as the much-criticized A. S. Erdeli in Kherson, might survive, but few others were safe. The move of Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, long a fixture on the Odessa scene, may not have been a consequence of his failure to prevent repeated pogroms in his region, but Governor A. L. Shostak of Chernigov almost certainly lost his post due to criticism of his handling of pogroms.⁸³ The dismissal of two other governors, N. R. Gesse of Kiev and L. A. Miloradovich of Podolia, was

⁷⁸ Fuller's figures (*Civil-Military Conflict*, 117) for the number of civilians tried in military courts for pogrom offenses (287 in 1881 and 239 in 1882) are significantly lower. He notes that his data are incomplete.

⁷⁹ *K-A*, 540, 532.

⁸⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (21/VI/1881), ll. 110-11ob, 139-40 (Kiev), 153-4ob (Kharkov).

⁸¹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (12/V/1881), ll. 1-2; (23/V/1881), ll. 18ob.

⁸² *K-A*, 85-6 (19/V/1881).

⁸³ He had the misfortune of hosting a senatorial inspection just as the pogroms broke out, and he was criticized by Senator Polovtsev: *ibid.*, 16, 19. S. V. Shakhovskoi, sent to assess the situation, replaced Shostak before the end of the year.

attributed to the pogroms.⁸⁴ Significantly, of the nine provinces in the Pale where pogroms occurred, seven had new governors by 1883. While some governors were merely transferred, Gesse, Miloradovich, Shostak, and Iu. N. Podgorichani-Petrovich of Volynia were all out of the civil service by 1883.⁸⁵

Contemporaries of the pogroms and later historians have claimed that, if the central authorities were themselves not involved in pogrom-mongering, they nonetheless took an indulgent attitude toward local officials who were either indolent or criminally negligent.⁸⁶ There is no factual basis for this claim. One of the very first requests made by Loris-Melikov, upon receiving word of the Elisavetgrad pogrom, was for an assessment of the performance of the municipal authorities.⁸⁷ Local officials were never in any doubt as to what the central government expected: preferably the prevention of pogroms, but at a minimum their speedy and expeditious repression, if possible without fatalities. Those who failed paid the price. The police chiefs of Elisavetgrad and Balta, I. P. Bogdanovich and K. I. Timoshevskii respectively, were almost immediately removed from their posts after the pogroms.⁸⁸ The Balta *ispravnik* was transferred.⁸⁹ The Marshal of the Nobility of Balta district, accused of being acquiescent in the pogroms, quickly retired "for health reasons."⁹⁰

The process of separating the sheep from the goats extended to the lowest levels of the administration. Although some officials received commendations for meritorious service during the pogroms, the provincial administration was more interested in identifying and purging those who had been found wanting.⁹¹ Gubernatorial reports on pogroms routinely

⁸⁴ V. D. Novitskii claims that Drentel'n made Gesse the scapegoat for his own failures during the Kiev pogrom: *Iz vospominanii zhandarma* (Moscow, 1991; reprint of 1929 edn.), 158. For the claim that Miloradovich was sacked due to the pogroms, see *NKhV*, 26:26/VI/1882.

⁸⁵ *Adres-kalendar'*, *Obshchaia rospis' nachal'stvuiushchikh i prochikh dolzhnostnykh lits po vsem upravleniiam v Rossiiskoi imperii* (SPb, 1883); *NKhV* claimed in 1883 that the governors of Poltava and Ekaterinoslav had been removed because of pogroms in their administration (42:23/X/1883). Such claims appear to have been a combination of gossip and wishful thinking.

⁸⁶ *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, 2 vols. (Cologne and Leipzig, 1910) I, 33, with special reference to the governor-generalship of the Southwest under Drentel'n. To the contrary, as noted above, all three governors subordinate to Drentel'n lost their posts.

⁸⁷ *K-A*, 3 (17/IV/1881).

⁸⁸ *Adres-kalendar'*; see *K-A*, 23, for the recommendation that Bogdanovich be transferred; for the transfer of Timoshevskii, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (11/VI/1882), l. 117.

⁸⁹ *Rassvet*, 23:6/VI/1882.

⁹⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (9/VII/1882), l. 160ob.

⁹¹ See RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (V/1881), for Drentel'n's request to Gesse for a list of officials who had acquitted themselves well during the pogroms in Kiev province.

noted that local officials had been removed from office for dereliction of duty, and a number of peasant officials were turned over to criminal proceedings.⁹² Some clergymen, most often but not always Roman Catholic priests in the Kingdom of Poland, were transferred to new parishes because of improper involvement in pogroms.⁹³ The Holy Synod arranged for Russian Orthodox priests who had resisted or prevented pogroms to receive commendations.⁹⁴

The seriousness with which the government viewed such matters is illustrated by the investigation of the pogrom that took place in Preny, Suwalki province, Kingdom of Poland, on 3 August 1882. The Warsaw governor-general dispatched an especially critical report on the conduct of the local officials for their failure to anticipate the pogrom (which fell on a Catholic Holy Day) and their incompetence in suppressing it. The district *ispravnik*, Shablovskii, came in for special criticism for remaining at his rural estate for three hours after he had received word of the outbreak of the disturbances. The official report strongly suggests that the acting governor of Suwalki province initially attempted a *pro forma* investigation designed to cover up Shablovskii's dereliction of duty. The governor quickly realized, to his chagrin, that the governor-general was entirely serious: He demanded the policeman's resignation and proposed that he be prosecuted. The governor, himself forced to grovel, threw Shablovskii to the wolves, discovering a variety of grounds on which he could be disciplined.⁹⁵

There was one exception to the swath that cut through incompetent officials. Although a number of military officers came in for criticism for their conduct during the pogroms – which included slow responses to emergencies, the failure to coordinate properly with civilian authorities, and clumsy tactics which resulted in a need to resort to deadly force – no officer was disciplined, reprimanded, or removed for actions taken in the course of repressing pogroms.⁹⁶ To take only one dramatic example, the

⁹² See report of Aleksandrovsk District *ispravnik*, Ekaterinoslav province, for 19 June 1881, which lists officials who were brought to trial. They include a *sotskii*, a village *starosta*, and a *desiatskii*: RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (1881), ll. 54–60.

⁹³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (26/V/1881), ll. 20–30b; op. 39, d. 280, ch. 15 (5/V/1882), l. 20b.

⁹⁴ *K-A*, 408–9 (1881); *Rassvet*, 25 (20/VI/1882), notes a total of thirty-two awards to clerics for services in May 1881.

⁹⁵ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 11 (1882), ll. 14–48, 74. In the event, Shablovskii was dismissed but not prosecuted. For a press report about Shablovskii's fate, see *Rassvet*, 38:19/IX/1882. It is difficult to generalize using cases from the Kingdom of Poland, where a different set of security considerations prevailed.

⁹⁶ See criticism of officers, such as the unfortunate Lt. Semenov in Nezhin, who were nonetheless not disciplined in order to safeguard morale: *K-A*, 351.

military commander at the time of the Balta pogrom, despite widespread criticism and denunciations, was virtually the only official not to suffer disciplinary action.⁹⁷ This policy of lenience may have been a tacit admission of the difficulties in which field commanders found themselves during urban pogroms. More likely it was a conscious decision to defend the honor of the army and to place the blame on its civilian counterparts. Despite this exception for the military, there can be no doubt that the central government made it plain to its underlings that disorders were totally unacceptable. Local authorities were well aware of this fact and appreciated that pogroms posed dangers for them as well as for the Jews.

Yet the government's practical efforts to contain the violence, punish those responsible, and hold accountable officials whose response to the pogroms had been inadequate did not, of course, address the underlying issue of what had caused the pogroms in the first place and how a recurrence of such events could be avoided.

Conceptualizing the pogroms

On 11 May 1881, Emperor Alexander III received a delegation of Jewish notables, headed by Baron Goratsii Gintsburg, in his palace at Gatchina outside St. Petersburg. Press accounts indicated that the meeting had gone well from the Jewish point of view. Alexander assured the delegation that he had equal regard for all his subjects, regardless of their race or creed. Discussing the pogroms, the emperor observed that "the Jews serve only as a pretext and that this is the work of the hands of the anarchists."⁹⁸ What went largely unreported at the time was the tsar's subsequent comment that "there are certainly some economic causes which have contributed to it, such as the exploitation of the peasant by the Jew."⁹⁹ So were pogroms caused by anarchists, Jewish exploitation, or both? The tsar's words were of the greatest importance, because it was the Russian

⁹⁷ The officer in charge was a Captain Krapukhin. See Drentel'n's report to D. A. Tolstoi of an investigation of Krapukhin for dereliction of duty during the Balta pogrom: GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (29/VI/1882), l. 141ob.

⁹⁸ Reported in *Golos*, 31:13/V/1881.

⁹⁹ As reported by the Austrian consul in St. Petersburg, Kalnoky: Natan Gelber, "Di rusishe pogromen onheyb di 80-er yorn in shayn fun estraykhishe diplomatisher korespondents," *Historishe shriftn*, II (Vilna, 1937), 469. The Hebrew-language press, citing foreign accounts, did publish the tsar's words, but only after the passage of two months: Moshe Mishkinsky, "'Black Repartition' and the Pogroms of 1881-1882," in John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992), 86.

leadership's conceptualization of the pogroms that determined their response to them.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, throughout the empire and beyond, diagnosis preceded prescription. Specifically, it was for the elites to provide explanations, for the mass of drunken, rioting *pogromshchiki* proved incapable of articulating the motives of their actions.

From the very first, the terminology employed for the pogroms was crucial. The term utilized in virtually all contemporary Russian reports was "disorders" (*bezporiadki*), always used in the plural. This was a generic term employed to describe a wide range of riots and civil disturbances, rural and urban. In contrast to the Eskimos, who purportedly have a multitude of words for snow, Russian bureaucrats were satisfied with one catch-all term. The word "disorders" in the title of a tsarist-era archival file might equally refer to an urban riot, a peasant uprising, a military mutiny, or an attack on a brothel by dissatisfied customers. Yet, like snow in the Arctic, violence was common in Russia. This was why, as noted earlier, much of the institutional framework of the Russian Empire was shaped by the need to anticipate, forestall, or repress violent disorders. Only in 1881 did the term "pogrom" become a familiar synonym in the press for attacks directed specifically against Jews. The widespread popular usage prompted its occasional use in official circles. The word rapidly entered foreign lexicons as a generic term for anti-Jewish rioting.¹⁰¹

The governor-general of Odessa, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, employed different – and revealing – terminology for disorders in Odessa: He depicted them as "clashes between the Russian and Jewish population."¹⁰² His words mirrored the first public account of the Elisavetgrad pogrom, published in the official newspaper *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, which also spoke of a "clash between Christians and Jews."¹⁰³ In this conceptualization, violence was a two-way street, with Jews as equal participants in public disorder. Dondukov-Korsakov offered concrete examples: the appearance of a mob of axe-wielding Jews, intent on vengeance against Christian *pogromshchiki*, and the discovery of Jewish students armed with revolvers. It was no surprise to him that, among the 850 people arrested

¹⁰⁰ This was overtly recognized in press reports on the meeting that appeared in the Jewish press. See *Rassvet*, 20:16/V/1881, and Count Kutaisov's report (*K-A*, 414–17) for a discussion of the implications arising from the nexus between incitement and exploitation.

¹⁰¹ John D. Klier, "The Pogrom Paradigm in Russian History," in Klier and Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms*, 13–15.

¹⁰² RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (9/V/1881), l. 615.

¹⁰³ [The reference for this quotation could not be verified – the editors.]

on public order charges, 150 were Jews.¹⁰⁴ These figures also give the lie to the stereotype of Jewish passivity in the face of pogroms.

This was not a concept restricted to Odessa, with its long tradition of clashes between Jews and Christians at holiday time.¹⁰⁵ It is evident from the precautions taken by the authorities that the day-to-day conduct of the Jews was believed to play an important role in the onset of pogroms. Given that the typical pogrom arose from a tavern brawl, the most common preventative measure employed by the state was the closure of taverns on Christian holidays or whenever disorders were threatened. Bazaars and fairs were also a source of conflict, and Jews were continually reminded to conduct themselves cautiously by avoiding disputes, aggressive behavior, or fights.¹⁰⁶ In the aftermath of the Elisavetgrad pogrom, serious consideration was given to changing the upcoming St. George's Day Fair, despite the deleterious effect this would have had on the local economy.¹⁰⁷

The combativeness of the Jews was recognized to the extent that in some areas they were allowed, with official permission and oversight, to organize self-defense units. A number of towns set up a civil guard with Jewish participation. Sometimes the Jews did their own organizing, as in Berdichev, where Jewish residents, armed with clubs, patrolled the streets in April and May 1881.¹⁰⁸ In advance of a threatened pogrom in Volochisk, Volynia province, Jews organized a patrol, 300 strong, to guard Jewish houses.¹⁰⁹ The Jews of Rovno, Volynia province, were reportedly allowed by the police to turn back any suspicious characters disembarking at the local rail station.¹¹⁰ Spontaneous self-defense, on the other hand, was generally viewed by the authorities as provocative and likely to intensify pogrom violence. This assumption held even when, as in the case of the Jewish colony of Sladkovodnyi, Ekaterinoslav province, Jews managed to drive off a gang of peasant *pogromshchiki*.¹¹¹ Jews charged with possessing or discharging firearms during disorders were

¹⁰⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (9/V/1881), l. 622. An additional eighty Jews were arrested on 4 May, armed with axes and revolvers, and accused of planning to carry out disorders: *K-A*, 33 (4/V/1881). Dondukov-Korsakov used this terminology again in June, when he asked the authorities in Nikolaev for particulars of the disturbances there: RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (16/VI/1881), l. 586.

¹⁰⁵ The pogrom in Pereiaslav, Poltava province, was also described as a "clash between Christians and Jews of the city of Pereiaslav": *K-A*, 325 (6/VII/1881).

¹⁰⁶ See *ibid.*, 32 (1881), for precautions taken by the Poltava governor in advance of the Nikolaevskii Fair; for precautions in Chernigov province, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (5/VIII/1881), l. 220.

¹⁰⁷ *K-A*, 5 (18/IV/1881). ¹⁰⁸ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (1881), l. 20.

¹⁰⁹ *K-A*, 295 (1/V/1881). ¹¹⁰ Reported in *Rus'*, 41:22/VIII/1881 and 44:12/IX/1881.

¹¹¹ *K-A*, 68 (10/V/1881).

arrested.¹¹² Crowds of Jews armed with axes and cudgels, intent on confronting Christian mobs, were usually dispersed by force by the authorities, most notoriously at Balta.¹¹³ When the scale of destruction in Balta became known, the authorities tried to justify their mishandling of the situation by blaming the Jews for the eruption of violence. They claimed that the disorders had grown out of an incident when Jews threw stones at the local church, an accusation that was quickly disproved.¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, tales of Jewish provocation were a continuing motif of pogrom reports. Indeed, initial reports of the deadly Smela pogrom claimed that it had been triggered by Jewish attacks on Russians.¹¹⁵

The failure of Jews to conform to the code of good conduct envisioned for them by the authorities caused much critical comment. A special Jewish vice, in official eyes, was the spreading of rumors. Rumor-mongering was a crucial ingredient in stirring up the popular mood and in disseminating news of the pogroms. A major anti-pogrom measure was the arrest and prosecution of rumor-mongers. A good many gossips were arrested after being reported to the authorities by Jews.¹¹⁶ Yet the Jews, with their characteristic mobility, intercommunal connections, and stereotypical desire to know all the latest news, were themselves seen as a major conduit for rumors in the countryside. A number of Jews were prosecuted for spreading false rumors.¹¹⁷

An important motive for the spreading of rumors by Jews, many officials asserted, was the desire to create a sense of panic and force the government to send troops to areas supposedly threatened by pogroms. For the same reason, Jews were widely blamed for the appearance of crude, homemade proclamations urging the population to "beat the Jews."¹¹⁸ Such a document, "found" by a Jew in the street, nailed to a wall, or sent through the post, might be sufficient to prompt the dispatch of troops to an area which otherwise was not seen as threatened. A number of Jews were sent to prison in the Odessa governor-generalship for false denunciations of local gendarmerie officers.¹¹⁹

¹¹² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), ll. 175–6. Six armed Jewish students who were detained in Odessa were also found to be in possession of socialist newspapers: *K-A*, 65 (9/V/1881).

¹¹³ In June 1882, local officials in Petrovskii province in the Kingdom of Poland with difficulty deterred a crowd of 700 Jews, armed with pikes and staves, from attacking local peasants: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2 (27/VI/1882), ll. 8–10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 3 (1882), ll. 19–25ob. ¹¹⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (4/V/1881), l. 14.

¹¹⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (16/VI/1881), ll. 19–21ob, 395–6.

¹¹⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (25/V/1881), ll. 14–15; *K-A*, 379 (1881).

¹¹⁸ A gendarme report from Suwalki, Kingdom of Poland, claimed that Jews had hired a scribe to write an incendiary proclamation early in 1882: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 11 (13/IV/1882), ll. 1–3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (18/V/1881), l. 27ob; (9/VIII/1882), ll. 222–4.

The most common demand was that the Jews "conduct themselves cautiously," especially at times of greatest danger, such as the Paschal season. The governor of Tauride province, for example, noted approvingly that the Jews of Berdiansk had virtually disappeared from the streets, and were being mocked by the populace for their cowardice.¹²⁰ Such restraint was not always the case. In the days following the first pogrom in Elisavetgrad, a major brawl erupted between Christian and Jewish traders in the Kishinev bazaar, which attracted the personal intervention of the governor of Bessarabia. As a consequence, both Jews and non-Jews suffered criminal prosecution.¹²¹ Dondukov-Korsakov in Odessa complained that reports from the areas affected by pogroms "almost uniformly testify that often the most immediate grounds were incautious and provocative or importunate actions of the Jews themselves."¹²² Drenteln's early report on the Kiev pogrom admitted that "there is still no clear indication of the reason for the initial outbreak, but one can surmise that the Jews themselves, by some thoughtless escapade, stirred up the crowd."¹²³

Conveniently forgetting the axe-wielding Jews mentioned above, Russian officials claimed that Jews displayed their customary cowardliness when faced with pogroms, only to become arrogant and boastful once troops were brought in to protect them. When troops were called out to provide security over Easter, Tauride governor A. A. Kavelin complained, the Jews began to taunt Christians with their impotence.¹²⁴ Poltava governor Bilbasov reported that, after troops had been summoned to Pereiaslav to suppress the pogrom there, the Jews had given vent to "the most cynical boastfulness," claiming that they were under the special protection of the government. At the slightest hint of a quarrel, a Jew was likely to remind his Christian adversary that "in Kiev the Jews are now wading in Christian blood." The governor ordered the arrest of a Jew who had boasted that the Jews "would be up to their knees in Christian blood and would wipe their boots on Christian bodies."¹²⁵ In the aftermath of the Balta pogrom, the head of the Podolia gendarmerie reported to his superiors that an unidentified Jew had assured a coachman that the tsar had ordered ten people shot as punishment. When the coachman

¹²⁰ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (8 May 1881), ll. 244-6. This did not save them from a pogrom.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 172-7; f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244 (30/IV/1882), ll. 5-6, for prosecution of Jews for attacking a peasant in a tavern; (11/IX/1882), l. 17, for a fight between a Jewish butcher and a peasant official, a hundereder.

¹²² *K-A*, 55 (13/V/1881). ¹²³ *Ibid.*, 76 (16/V/1881).

¹²⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (15/V/1881), ll. 217-21.

¹²⁵ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), l. 176.

expressed his doubts, the Jew assured him, "No, it's true. The tsar loves us, we pay money."¹²⁶

V. V. fon-Val, the governor of Vitebsk province, lamented that the Jews, "in their customary way," were using the national emergency to advance their own interests.¹²⁷ He ordered local rabbis to advise their co-religionists to conduct themselves properly and not to give vent, as was their habit, "to arbitrariness, fraud, and the like."¹²⁸ The police colonel of Romny district reported to the Poltava governor in 1882 that the Jews had become especially impudent and arrogant, complaining of theft and violence by peasants. Investigations almost invariably revealed that peasant actions were a direct response to the provocative conduct by Jews. Such behavior had so poisoned relations with the local populace that the governor felt obliged to petition the governor-general to station a division of troops in Romny for the entire year.¹²⁹

An exasperated Dondukov-Korsakov sent a circular to all police officials in Ekaterinoslav province. He complained that Jews were seizing every opportunity to present themselves "as under the special protection of the administration, and even adopting a menacing position, threatening individuals, subjecting them to all sorts of insults, and raising offensive suspicions that objects such as clothes and other things which they have acquired are actually objects looted at the time of the disorders." The governor-general also charged the Jews with spreading rumors about threats to private property, including warnings that forthcoming acts of arson would burn whole towns. This, he claimed, was part of a plot to frighten the propertied classes and to deflect attention from the underlying causes of the pogroms.¹³⁰ Following this lead, the minister of internal affairs, N. P. Ignatiev, reported to the emperor that, in many cases, the pogroms arose from the impudence of the Jews themselves.¹³¹

Another trait of the Jews especially enraged the provincial administration, already feeling the hot breath of their superiors in St. Petersburg on their necks. Jews were prepared to circumvent the normal hierarchy, appealing over the heads of governors to governors-general and beyond to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This typically occurred when Jews were dissatisfied with the conduct of local authorities or when requests for protection were not promptly answered. On 5 May 1881, the Jewish community of Rovno, Volynia province, sent a panicked telegram to the

¹²⁶ Zel'tser, "Pogrom v Balte," 63.

¹²⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 680 (21/VII/1881), ll. 38-41.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175 (4/VIII/1881), l. 18ob.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 12 (29/VI/1882), ll. 11-12ob.

¹³⁰ *K-A*, 461-2 (20/VI/1881). ¹³¹ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1622 (22/III/1882), ll. 5-7ob.

MVD, beseeching "mercy on a defenseless people." Despite a well-recognized threat, they claimed, the governor-general had declared his inability to send troops.¹³² A similar complaint was telegraphed to St. Petersburg by the Jews of Bogoslav.¹³³

The responsible official in both these cases was Kiev governor-general Drenteln, already under a cloud for his inept suppression of the Kiev pogrom in April. Drenteln's outrage at these Jewish complaints perhaps explains his notorious outburst, which one newspaper called a "moral pogrom,"¹³⁴ while on a visit to Balta on 6 August 1882. Drenteln was already aware, when he arrived in the city, that anonymous denunciations of local officials had been sent to the MVD, because he had been ordered to investigate them.¹³⁵ He knew too that the Jews of Balta had sent a delegation to St. Petersburg. The official version of the events that he submitted to the MVD was thus careful to justify his failure to station troops in Balta in advance of a rumored pogrom.¹³⁶ Publicists, Jewish and non-Jewish, had seized on the Balta events as the archetypal pogrom. "Balta" came to encompass official collusion and ineptitude, murder, rape, and looting, all culminating in an official cover-up. Drenteln attacked the Jewish communal representatives of Balta when he received their delegation. He fulminated that the Jews' love of money made them universally hated. He scorned as hypocritical their petition asking for the commutation of the death penalty passed on Balta rioters. Included in this harangue was a telling phrase in which Drenteln accused Jews of having "slandered the city representatives as if they had incited the tempestuous mob against the Jews."¹³⁷

If viewed in terms of a local clash, as it initially was, the attack on the Jews of Elisavetgrad was cause for concern, but not for alarm. It appeared in St. Petersburg to be a familiar episode of drunkenness and holiday high spirits, ignited by the incautious behavior of local Jews. It had flared up and briefly overwhelmed the scant resources of the forces of order. The Elisavetgrad disorders were thus nothing out of the ordinary,

¹³² A follow-up telegram to the MVD on 10 May announced that "the danger grows with every minute . . . we await an attack hour by hour": *K-A*, 40.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 27-8 (3/V/1881). The Vitebsk governor also complained about such tactics: *ibid.*, 87 (20/V/1881).

¹³⁴ *NKhV*, 34:21/VIII/1882.

¹³⁵ For Jewish denunciations of Drentel'n and the Balta authorities, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (all undated, but 1882), ll. 10-12, 13-16ob, 17-28, 35-8ob; Ignat'ev's request to Drentel'n for an investigation, ll. 29-34ob (11/V/1882). These denunciations played a pivotal role in the mythologizing of Russian pogroms, discussed in the Epilogue.

¹³⁶ For Drentel'n's report, which was read by the emperor, see *ibid.*, (6/V/1882), ll. 42-9ob.

¹³⁷ See *Golos*, 227:23/VIII/1882, for the text; and S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1918), 316-17 for the classic interpretation.

and the usual methods of intervention and prevention were relied upon. A further indication of the relative unimportance attached to the Elisavetgrad events was the Imperial Manifesto of 29 April (prepared in the previous week) with which Alexander broke with his more liberal ministers. P. A. Zaionchkovskii argues that the tsar's decision to issue this ukase grew from his conviction of the weakness of the terrorist movement, which had initially been linked to the pogroms.¹³⁸

The spread of disorders to the outlying countryside, and to a major, well-garrisoned provincial capital such as Kiev, forced a reevaluation. Anti-Jewish disorders had never before been so widespread or recurrent. The proliferation of rumors proved especially unnerving. The discovery of a revolutionary manifesto in Kiev on the night of 27/8 April raised the question of possible socialist involvement. Even if they had not triggered the pogroms, officials wondered, were socialists somehow using them? Officials sent to investigate disorders, such as Count P. I. Kutaisov, were specifically instructed to explore possible revolutionary involvement.¹³⁹

For a brief period, anti-socialist rhetoric colored official pronouncements on the pogroms. In a meeting with Baron G. O. Gintsburg on 4 May, the tsar's brother, Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, declared that the pogroms had their origins "not in agitation exclusively against Jews, but in a general effort to spread sedition."¹⁴⁰ On 6 May, Ignatiev sent a circular to all the governors, "to set forth the view of the government on the current internal situation." In Ignatiev's characteristic self-publicizing fashion, he also published it in the official government newspaper, *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*. The statement reviewed in broad fashion the rise of the revolutionary movement and its underlying causes. The latter, according to Ignatiev, included the abandonment of religion and moral principles, the inactivity of the authorities (i.e., Alexander II's liberal councilors), the apathy of officials and social activists, and the general selfishness which had come to dominate society. The Imperial Manifesto of 29 April was a signal, he declared, that the rot had come to an end.¹⁴¹ Jewish spokesmen and publicists pretended that Ignatiev's circular and Alexander's words during his meeting with the Jewish delegation had placed an imprimatur on the charge that the revolutionaries were behind the pogroms. In so doing, they ignored the fine print. Ignatiev's circular was an indictment of the Great Reforms – from which Jews had

¹³⁸ Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, 366–75.

¹³⁹ *K-A*, 46–8 (12/V/1881). In his report to the tsar about Kutaisov's mission, Ignatiev noted the possible role of "ill-intentioned persons" and remarked that the disorders "found ready soil in the relations between the Christian and Jewish populations."

¹⁴⁰ *Rassvet*, 19:9/V/1881. ¹⁴¹ Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, 384–5.

generally benefited – and a promise that their failings would be set right. The emperor's criticism of Jewish exploitation was an even louder warning signal.

The regime quickly abandoned the belief that revolutionaries had played a role in the disorders for the simple reason that no physical evidence was ever discovered. A consensus emerged, based on investigations and a careful reading of the socialist underground press, that seditionists did not instigate the pogroms, but attempted to use them "to fish in troubled waters." The pogroms gave them the opportunity to accustom the people to violence and street disorders and to arouse antagonism against the forces of law and order when they suppressed the pogroms by force. The government would lose prestige and popular confidence by being seen to take the side of the Jews.¹⁴² The definitive statement on the subject was contained in a report of 15 March 1882, in which Ignatiev informed Alexander III that "detailed investigations of popular violence, conducted *in situ*, have clearly demonstrated that these disorders did not have any ties with the socialist movement."¹⁴³

"Jewish exploitation"

Even had the government assumed a revolutionary component in the pogroms, a question would have remained. Why had it been so easy for agitators to trigger pogroms across the length and breadth of the south-western regions of the empire? Ruling out socialist involvement entirely raised the question still more sharply, while leaving only one causal element – "Jewish exploitation." Russian officials easily accepted this motive which, together with "Jewish fanaticism," had long constituted the essence of the Russian Jewish Question. As a readymade explanation, it negated the need for any more complex evaluations, and thus was a godsend for harried officials responding to incessant demands for information from their superiors. Moreover, the explanation already had a pedigree, since it had been widely used to explain the Odessa pogrom of 1871. A "pogrom paradigm" already existed, suited to the needs of the moment.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Count Kutaisov specifically rejected any claims that the revolutionaries played a role in the pogroms. For a report regarding the Smela pogrom, warning that the use of force to suppress disorders played into the hands of the revolutionaries, see GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (1882), ll. 170–7. The tsar commented on this report, "Very interesting and sad."

¹⁴³ Cited in Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, 384. Thus, Ignat'ev had moved away from the opinion he expressed at the beginning of the disorders, when he reported to the emperor that he "did not share the opinion of the Kiev governor-general about the absence of a political character in the commotions taking place in the South": *K-A*, 59 (14/V/1881).

¹⁴⁴ Klier, "Pogrom Paradigm."

It will suffice to note that *every* non-Jewish assessment of the pogroms, without exception, relied on the concept of Jewish exploitation. This can perhaps be best demonstrated by citing the words of elected and appointed officials at the grass roots, of elected judicial personnel, of the agents of the police and the security police, of the army, and of the echelons of the higher administration, including vice-governors, governors, and governors-general. All asserted, with one voice, that the Jews themselves were to blame for the disorders.

Early in August 1881, the *volost* elder of the small town of Nosovka, Chernigov province, convoked a peasant assembly, or *skhod*, to discuss measures to prevent pogroms. Instead, the peasants condemned their Jewish neighbors, demanded their wholesale expulsion from Nosovka and a ban on all their economic activities.¹⁴⁵ Before the outbreak of a pogrom in Berdiansk, Tauride province, a meeting of (non-Jewish) townspeople asserted that "we find that among us are people who without any labor devour the fruits of our burdensome toil and, using the simplicity of our ways, our feebleness in defense of our own interests, live at our expense, exhaust the economic side of the Christian population – these people are the parasite-Jews."¹⁴⁶

In the city of Pereiaslav, several weeks before the pogrom, representatives of the Christian townspeople called for the expulsion of Jews from the city, explaining that "Jews, unaccustomed to heavy labor, have sought to earn money by easier kinds of work, especially trade, through which the resourcefulness and pushiness of the Jewish nation, as well as their effrontery and disposition to fraudulent practice, have given these aliens a wide arena for exploitative activity."¹⁴⁷ In the aftermath of the Pereiaslav pogrom a special committee was created to explore ways of improving relations between the two communities. The Christian townspeople were not in the least repentant. The pogrom, they contended, arose from the fact that "the mass of the people, waking from a long sleep, desire to shake off the Jewish yoke and break away, as much as possible, from the rapacious Yid clutches. Such desires, in our opinion, are just and lawful, and it seems to us that a failure to satisfy them may have serious consequences for the Jews."¹⁴⁸

The mayors of two other small towns in Kherson province which suffered disorders, Anan'ev and Ol'viopolsk, explained in their report that "it was only exploitation by the Jews and their intoxication of the people with vodka which prepared the ground for the explosion of disorders."¹⁴⁹ JPs in Kherson province also pointed to the evils of Jewish

¹⁴⁵ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (6/VIII/1881), l. 221. ¹⁴⁶ K-A, 374 (24/IV/1881).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 321–2 (16/VI/1881). ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 325 (6/VII/1881).

¹⁴⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 1415ob.

tavern-keeping. The JP of Tiraspol district divided the entire Jewish population of 13,000 into two categories: a few hundred pursuing useful crafts and all the rest who exploited the peasantry through usury and tavern-keeping. His colleague in Aleksandriia district characterized Jewish taverns as "dens of thieves ready for any outrage."¹⁵⁰ The municipal governments of three of the principal cities of the province complained of the "permanent malfesance" of the Jews and "the unbearable yoke carried by all the productive elements of the region, from rich to poor."¹⁵¹

The police fully shared the sentiments of these locally elected bodies. A retired police sergeant from Elisavetgrad felt so strongly on the subject that he sent a long memorandum about Jewish exploitation to the government investigator, Count Kutaisov.¹⁵² The sergeant of a police district in Odessa presented a compendium of sins under the category of Jewish exploitation: usury, the lease and purchase of private estates in ways that drove up the price of peasant land rentals, and the corruption of peasant youth who were encouraged to steal from their parents by Jewish usurers and tavern-keepers. He noted that all these complaints had surfaced in recent court cases.¹⁵³ The Kiev district police chief warned his superiors that if means were not found to control Jewish exploitation and limit their residence in the countryside, "we may foresee a reappearance of attacks on the Jews, but at a level we cannot even imagine."¹⁵⁴ A captain of the Bessarabia gendarmerie, Skanderanov, prepared an extensive portrait of the wiles and dishonesties perpetrated by the Jews amidst the gullible Moldavian peasantry.¹⁵⁵ The commander of the gendarmerie of the province of Podolia noted the misconduct of the Jews, their illegal settlement throughout the countryside, and their involvement in the theft of livestock and smuggling. These latter practices especially infuriated the peasantry who lacked a legal means to deal with Jewish miscreants. He suggested that peasant communities be given the legal right to expel Jews from the countryside, warning that, in the absence of such a measure, there could be no guarantee against a repetition of the pogroms.¹⁵⁶ Lt. General A. Kosich, the commander of the military forces that had suppressed the Elisavetgrad pogrom, condemned the apathy of well-off Jews toward the national interest, while decrying the inability of the Christian rabble to protect themselves from Jewish exploitation.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, I. 1413. ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I. 1397ob.

¹⁵² RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 126 (1881), ll. 15-19.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, op. 19, d. 125 (19/VI/1881), ll. 459-65.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, op. 9, d. 127 (28/V/1881), ll. 76-85.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, op. 19, d. 125 (31/V/1881), ll. 154-9.

¹⁵⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (15/IX/1882), ll. 165-7.

¹⁵⁷ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (19/VI/1881), ll. 495-500ob.

These sentiments, universally expressed by their subordinates, were accurately reflected in the reports of provincial chiefs. The conclusion of a very thorough and wide-ranging report by the vice-governor of Kherson province, Pashchenko, was that "the essential and prime cause of anti-Jewish disorders in Kherson province was the boundless exploitation of the Christian population carried out by the Jews in every aspect of their practical activities, although resting primarily upon the shoulders of the more backward working-class population, who are powerless to fight against them."¹⁵⁸ Tauride governor Kavelin explained that the pogroms "grow out of the historically based hatred of the people for the Jews because of their exploitative activities, especially as directed against the peasant population. The conduct of the Jews is such that the local population is always in debt to them. The peasants cannot ignore the fact that a Jew who enters the village is within two or three years a rich man, compared to the peasants, all of whom are in debt to him." When peasant superstition and ignorance was added to this equation, exemplified by the belief that Jews kidnap Christian children and drink their blood, a very dangerous situation ensued.¹⁵⁹ Ekaterinoslav governor I. N. Durnovo located the foundation of hostility to the Jews in the history of the Cossacks and their hatred of the Poles and their Jewish allies. The situation was complicated in modern times by the economic yoke of the Jews, which amounted virtually to a "new serfdom" imposed upon the recently emancipated peasantry. "In a word, the Jew, settling in the countryside, sucks all the vital juices out of the population, and if he also succeeds in leasing state or private farmland, then the peasants are almost completely ensnared by him." Such an explosive situation was a tempting target for anarchists intent on spreading sedition.¹⁶⁰ Chernigov province had two governors in the period of the pogroms. In 1881 Governor A. L. Shostak pointed to the "common antipathy toward the Jews which exists in the population irrespective of nationality; Russian, Little Russian, Pole, and Lithuanian with a remarkable unanimity view the 'Yid' as their natural, domestic foe." Under the new conditions of Reform Era Russia, Jews had come to dominate the economy of the countryside. "Their tribal and religious particularity, their exclusive style of life, and the particular moral character of the Jews created a sharp division between them and the local village population."¹⁶¹ Shostak was relieved of his post, in part because of criticism of his handling of the pogroms made by his successor, S. V. Shakhovskoi.

¹⁵⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 1417.

¹⁵⁹ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (9/VII/1881), ll. 238-43.

¹⁶⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (9/VI/1881), ll. 99ob-100ob.

¹⁶¹ *K-A*, 360 (16/V/1881).

Nonetheless, Shakhovskoi fully shared his predecessor's low opinion of the Jews. He complained that they continued to intoxicate, defraud, and beat the backward villagers. The simple *muzhiki* had approached him with tears in their eyes to beg him to save them from their despised tormentors.¹⁶²

The long-serving Odessa governor-general Dondukov-Korsakov had been complaining to the capital about the Jews for years, so his criticisms come as no surprise. "The exploitation of the local population by the Jews, their seizure of all branches of trade in town and country, given the special nature of their transactions and the impossibility of fighting them with the usual weapons, stirs up a special antagonism among the urban and rural lower classes . . . The Jewish Question constitutes the most essential question of the day here. It runs like a red thread through all the phenomena of local life, economic, social, and educational, impinging upon all aspects of work, and due to mistakes and inattentiveness to its consequences, it has been aggravated to an extreme degree."¹⁶³ In 1882, Dondukov-Korsakov was replaced by I. V. Gurko. In August of that year Gurko lamented that he was unable to commute the sentences of several *pogromshchiki* who had been sentenced to hard labor in Siberian exile. It was important to show that the government was serious about punishing pogroms, Gurko observed, even though he was keenly aware that pogroms arose from "the extreme backwardness of the lower levels of the Christian population, who have long been aware of the unpunished burden of exploitation by the Jews, as well as the absence of any other means to cope with them except by open assaults on Jewish property."¹⁶⁴

A similar situation was described in the provinces overseen by Governor-General Drenteln. "The exploitation carried out by the Jews in all areas of life, trade, manufacture, commerce, agriculture, etc. makes them an object of hatred to almost all local inhabitants, who are conscious of their powerlessness before them. Therefore, for a very long time the common people in particular have viewed the Jews with hostility, and one must admit that their complaint remains unanswered, due either to the craftiness of the Jews or to local historical complications. This, in its turn, inspires discontent, which accumulates, roots itself, preparing an explosion which merely awaits some external push."¹⁶⁵ Kharkov governor-general Sviatopolk-Mirskii offered a stark précis of these charges: "In all areas of public life, the Jews appear as a dark force, directed against the Russian people and the existing state order,

¹⁶² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (15/II/1882), ll. 1488-9.

¹⁶³ K-A, 27 (29/IV/1881).

¹⁶⁴ RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249 (7/VIII/1882), ll. 117-21ob.

¹⁶⁵ K-A, 74 (16/V/1881).

against whom the local population is helpless to employ legal means, either as individuals or through the agency of the state." The Jews were seen, he claimed, "as an organized band of robbers."¹⁶⁶

These charges all came together when Count Kutaisov, having traveled through the Pale and read through all the reports excerpted above, sat down to pen his own observations on the pogroms. Kutaisov noted the claim of Jewish communities that their restricted legal position, especially the Pale of Settlement, underlay all the faults that were attributed to them. Rightlessness, not exploitation, they contended, was the culprit. Kutaisov could not agree: "There is no sphere that is not penetrated by this evil, no class which does not feel its pressure, yet the Jews absolutely deny its existence, forgetting that an implacable, unbribable witness stands against them – history."¹⁶⁷ In one of his summaries, Kutaisov observed that:

It seems to me that it would be far more just to seek in the Jews themselves the causes giving rise to such extreme hostility to them, and it would be hard not to agree with this if one takes into consideration in this area the hatred of Jews because of their isolation, their efforts to escape obligations, such as military service, which thus fall more heavily on the rest of the population, the demand for rights and prerogatives greater even than those enjoyed by Russians, evasion of the more burdensome crafts (for we do not see Jewish stonemasons, carpenters, common laborers, and the like), exploitation, especially weighing on the rural inhabitant and, finally, a national character which is noteworthy for its extreme abasement when aware of its weakness, and extremely arrogant the moment it feels under outside protection.¹⁶⁸

As the local authorities saw it, even as the wind blew away the remains of torn Jewish featherbeds, the Jews were up to their old tricks. There was universal belief that the Jews wildly exaggerated the extent of their pogrom losses. Support for this claim was found in a series of investigations in Kiev. A list of 152 victims of the Kiev pogrom was assembled, with losses put at almost a million rubles (R958,914). Total losses for all victims of the pogrom were placed at R1,400,000. When the Kiev police sought to verify these claims, they arrived at the much-reduced figure of R419,585. The Kiev mayor appointed a commission composed of deputies from the city council (the Duma) and other experienced individuals. It concluded that the losses of the 152 victims were no more than R148,735.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 1971 (5/VIII/1881), ll. 250–9.

¹⁶⁷ K-A, 275. ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 416.

¹⁶⁹ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127 (10/VI/1881), ll. 71–3ob. These investigations were reported by the Kiev newspaper *Kievlianin* in the issue for 9 June 1881. An editorial suggested that total Jewish losses should be no more than R220,000. A copy of the newspaper was sent by the head of the Kiev gendarmerie to Count Kutaisov. The list of 152, incidentally, did not include any of the wealthy Brodskii family, who were particular targets of the *pogromshchiki*.

Local authorities also reported that Jews were concluding private restitution agreements with peasant communities. Jews assured gullible peasants that the authorities were planning to use police measures to collect the full amount of losses claimed by Jewish victims. In return for a private settlement, the claimants promised not to bring accused *pogromshchiki* to court. This was seen as an attempt by Jews to trick and deceive peasants. A number of governors and governor-generals, such as Dondukov-Korsakov, advised local authorities to be especially attentive to prevent such agreements.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), ll. 1340–50b. The emperor, to whom this measure was reported on 27 June 1881, was strongly supportive. See also *K-A*, 458–9 (20/VI/1881).

4 Russian society views the pogroms

The fiercest battles against the Jews were fought with fists on the streets and in the papers with the pen by the large number of antisemitic journalists such as Suvorin, Ozmidov, Pikhno, Aksakov.

Linden, "Prototyp des Pogroms"¹

The outbreak of the pogroms presented to the Russian press opportunity and risk in almost equal measure. It offered editors of provincial newspapers the chance to be at the center of a breaking story of nationwide interest. The editors of Judeophobe publications in Odessa and Kiev, who had devoted special attention to the Jewish Question over the years, could demonstrate their expertise and recapitulate familiar arguments. In theory, the provincial press labored under the heavier burden of pre-censorship. Yet it also benefited from the government's indecision about whether to employ newspapers as a mouthpiece or a watchdog. While some of the national press, especially *Golos* in St. Petersburg, led the way in critical reportage of the disorders, even the pre-censored provincial press had virtually a free hand, as indicated by the continual complaints of the local administration. What is evident, from even a casual reading of the press, is that no aspect of the pogroms – including atrocity reports and criticism of officials – was off-limits.

The failure of censorship

The Russian censorship never coped successfully with the explosive growth of the periodical press in the Reform Era or with the regime's desire to promote the growth of a civil society. This was readily apparent in 1881, when the authorities, both local and national, failed miserably to manage the spread of information. Those restrictions that were imposed, such as an attempted ban on reporters sending dispatches by telegraph,

¹ *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, 2 vols. (Cologne and Leipzig, 1910), vol. I, 39. The named journalists were the Judeophobe editors of *Novoe vremia*, *Novorossiiskii telegraf*, *Kievlianin*, and *Rus'* respectively.

ensured that precise information was replaced by rumor, which invariably seriously exaggerated the situation. Efforts to restrict the flow of information abroad were easily circumvented. The romantic legend that grew up around the efforts of the Kovno circle of Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor to alert the West to the pogroms obscures the fact that the foreign press did not need to rely on smuggled information when the Russian press itself was filled with atrocity reports, and foreign reporters succeeded in traveling around the Pale.

Press censorship at home was no more successful, given the fine line separating reporting and commenting on pogroms. Attempts were nonetheless made. After the first outbreaks, the Kiev authorities attempted to control newspaper reports that warned of pogroms or were thought to exacerbate Christian–Jewish relations.² On 1 August 1881, the head of the Chief Administration for Press Affairs (GUDP), Prince P. Viazemskii, complained to the governors that the provincial press was providing “inappropriate” coverage, marked by critical evaluation of government measures to deal with pogroms. They were advised to instruct local censors to be stricter in stopping such articles.³ On 20 September, another circular from the GUDP noted the intense interest in Christian–Jewish relations in the columns of the press. Such attention, it was feared, would have a bad impact upon the population and the work of the provincial Ignatiev commissions, especially given the short period envisioned for their work. Therefore, the censorship forbade the publication or reprinting of any information on the commissions, including official circulars and instructions.⁴ The ban was extended, in April 1882, to include discussion of the Jewish Question in the Committee of Ministers, at a time when the rumors about preparation of the May Laws made this one of the most widely reported issues of the day.⁵ The government was unhappy with the tone of pogrom articles in *Golos, Rus’, Novosti*, and *Moskovskie vedomosti*, but was deterred from using administrative measures because they would also have to be applied to newspapers of a conservative bent.⁶ After the Balta pogrom, Ignatiev sought to restrict the use of the telegraph to transmit pogrom information.⁷

These efforts of the government were widely reported and have given rise to the assumption in the secondary literature that coverage of the pogroms was tightly controlled and censored. As this study repeatedly

² *K-A*, 40 (27/IV/1881). ³ RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8 (1881), l. 122. ⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, d. 26 (1882), l. 26ob.

⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 776, op. 2, d. 22, ll. 123–123ob. The GUDP instead decided to have a quiet word with the editors to urge them to change their tone.

⁷ Ignat’ev to Miloradovich [*the reference for this quotation could not be identified – the editors*].

demonstrates, measures designed to stifle the spread of information were easily ignored or circumvented. None of this is surprising, given the practical problems of censoring breaking news. Most importantly, how could a policy of heightened censorship retain any credibility when Ignatiev, the ultimate authority, used the slightest pretext to hold forth in the press, foreign and domestic? The censor proved unable to censor himself: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

There were nonetheless a few victims of vindictive censorship, largely papers considered unfriendly to the government. The liberal flagship *Golos* was given a second warning in May 1882. Part of the indictment against the paper was its inflammatory reporting of the Balta pogrom.⁸ The GUDP ordered the provincial censors to forbid the reprinting of a pogrom account that had appeared in issue 6 of the liberal *Glasnost'* since it "raised anxiety and exaggerated the danger."⁹ Not surprisingly, the Jewish press was a particular target. Between 1881 and 1882, a total of four issues of *Rassvet* and *Russkii evrei* appeared without editorials or articles, "for reasons beyond the editor's control," the code words for interference by pre-publication censorship.¹⁰ The sharp tone of *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* made it a special target: It was given a number of warnings about the tone of its pogrom reportage.¹¹ The censor banned a book that compiled pogrom reports that had already appeared in the press, fearful that it would poison relations between Christians and Jews.¹² The editor of the notoriously Judeophobe *Novorossiiskii telegraf* was allegedly told by the authorities to curb the paper's Judeophobe vitriol.¹³ These few exceptions, while significant, hardly reveal a system in full control of the situation.

Active measures to gain mastery of the pogrom narrative were equally unsuccessful. The government used the two official publications at its disposal, *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, the organ of the MVD, and *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), to present its view of matters domestic and foreign. In February 1882, the government announced that henceforth, as a way of preventing

⁸ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1509 (V/1882), ll. 1–3ob.

⁹ "Do istorii zhiivs'kikh pogromiv u tsars'kii Rosii," *Zbirnik prats evreiv'koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1928), vol. I, 242.

¹⁰ The issues were nos. 12 and 17 (1882) for *Rassvet* and 26 (1881) and 33 (1882) for *Russkii evrei*.

¹¹ RGIA, f. 776, op. 2, d. 22, ll. 139–42. Ironically, Ignat'ev modified a GUDP recommendation for a six-week publication ban on the paper to a strong warning: *ibid.*, ll. 156–9.

¹² *Ibid.*, op. 20, d. 635 (1883), ll. 1–3; L. M. Dobrovol'skii, ed., *Zapreshchenaia kniga v Rossii, 1825–1904* (Moscow, 1962), 151–2.

¹³ This claim exists only as an unsubstantiated rumor reported by *Iuzhnyi krai* and reprinted in *NKhV*, 9:26/II/1881.

disinformation, *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* would provide a full and detailed account of every pogrom. This initiative collapsed almost immediately, as it proved impossible to give coherent accounts of the myriad events that followed.¹⁴

Censorship in pogrom centers fared no better. Thus, in the midst of the Kiev pogrom, the provincial authorities complained to V. K. Pleve, the director of police in St. Petersburg, that "the appearance in newspapers of articles about the disorders carried out by the mob, and the spread of this news by way of the press, given the present unsettled state of society, strongly act to stir up and irritate the passions of the people."¹⁵ In Vilna, the editor of *Vilenskii vestnik* apologized for an article which was interpreted as blaming the Jews for revolutionary violence, reportedly after a delegation of Jewish communal leaders had complained to the governor-general.¹⁶

The editorial policies of both *Kievljanin* and *Novoe vremia* featured in denunciations to the central authorities that the press was to blame for inciting the pogroms.¹⁷ An archetypal episode involved the unprincipled Jew-baiting Odessa newspaper, *Novorossiiskii telegraf*. On 20 March 1881, three weeks before Easter, the paper reported rumors that the Jews would be attacked during the Paschal season. The ostensible pretext was the involvement of large numbers of "Yids and Yidkas" in the Russian revolutionary movement. Ironically, the article denied the latter claim, conceding the "shameful truth" that Russians took pride of place in the nihilist movement. In any event, violence was not the proper response:

The Jews are guilty of much, but their guilt is only economic; they beat us with the ruble, sucking the juices from the people among whom they live, yet their exploitation should not be countered with the fist, nor should we defend ourselves with violence, but by the force of the ruble, by obstructing their means of exploitation,

¹⁴ *The Times*, 30,530:10/IV/1882. On 22 April (30,488), *The Times* reported that the government had ordered that no pogrom account could appear which had not first been published in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*. This regulation, if it was in fact decreed (I have found no evidence to this effect), made absolutely no difference to the detailed coverage of pogroms in the press. Restrictions were imposed on the reporting of the Ignat'ev commissions, though. See Chapter 5.

¹⁵ *K-A*, 12–13 (27/IV/1881). In my article, "The Russian Press and the Anti-Jewish Pogroms of 1881," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 17, 2 (1983), 199–221, I argue that there was no sustained press campaign against the Jews in the aftermath of the assassination of Alexander II.

¹⁶ Darius Staliunas, "Anti-Jewish Disturbances in the North-Western Provinces in the Early 1880s," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 34, 2 (2004), 128; for the delegation, see *Jewish World*, 431:13N/1881.

¹⁷ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (2/V/1881), ll. 139–40. Most of the reports furnished to Kutaisov by Jewish communities stressed the responsibility of the press for pogrom-mongering: *K-A*, 226–7, 230–1, 235, 428.

and by the diminution of their field of activity as much as possible. Russians ought to join together tightly for such a struggle, and support each other as the Jews support each other; but any honorable person and any true patriot should stand opposed to physical violence, for such violence is directed by the anarchists for whom there is only one goal – to sow discord wherever possible.¹⁸

Critics of *Novorossiiskii telegraf* attacked this article as rank hypocrisy, given the newspaper's long campaign of verbal violence against the Jews. The Odessa governor-general clearly had the article in mind three days later when he cited the local press's "tactless and untimely incitement against the activities of the Jews" as justification for ordering the local censorship to ban discussions of the Jewish Question.¹⁹

Pogrom coverage in the Russian press

This requirement, like all similar efforts of the government to restrict press discussion of the Jews, was impossible to enforce once the pogroms broke out. Every serious newspaper in the empire found it necessary to take a stand on the Jewish Question while explaining to its readers the origins of the violence and recommending how the pogroms might best be countered. The resultant discussion illustrated the symbiotic relationship between the press and the government. With parallel discussions of the pogroms taking place inside and outside the corridors of power, it was not always apparent who was influencing whom.

The Russian press, like the government, was taken unawares when the first pogrom broke out in Elisavetgrad. If there was a pogrom danger, editors had earlier calculated, it was in Odessa. *Kievlianin* mocked the exaggerated panic of local Jews, recalling the already cited proverb that "fear makes the eyes widen" (81:10/IV/1881). When rumor turned to reality, reports were confused and contradictory. Purely descriptive accounts were filled with vivid scenes, reportedly from eyewitnesses, alongside the most fantastic rumors. Once they had provided descriptions, correspondents turned promptly to the task of allocating blame.

The simplest expedient, especially given Russian society's instinctive fear of the masses, was to blame the *pogromshchiki* themselves. "A dark deed, and how dark the people carrying it out," lamented *Elisavetgradskii vestnik* (43:22/IV/1881). Others concurred. According to the liberal *Moskovskii telegraf*, "the present repetition of scenes of unrestrained

¹⁸ These words appear to be a play on an old Russian proverb, recorded as early as 1822: "Don't beat a peasant with cudgels, beat him with rubles." See Stephen Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1999), 209.

¹⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (23/III/1881), ll. 2ob-3.

medieval willfulness testifies only to the strong survival amidst the masses of primitive, wild instincts, as well as the weak development among them of a feeling of humanity and lawfulness" (108:21/IV/1881).

While "the people" thus served as the raw material for pogroms, analysts sought the spark that had caused the explosion. The week following the Elisavetgrad pogrom marked the first appearance of the charge that the press was responsible for stirring up popular passions and for instigating the disorders. The charge was made forcefully and simultaneously by three newspapers loosely tied to the liberal camp, *Golos*, *Poriadok*, and *Zaria*. Conceding that the objective conditions for anti-Jewish violence already existed, editorialists argued that the Judeophobe press had lit the match to the fuse. *Golos* explained to its readership that "residents of the capital can hardly have an understanding of the irrational preaching of antipathy and hatred against the Jews which is heard almost everywhere on a daily basis from provincials of a certain type, and is even printed in the columns of a few provincial organs, especially in Odessa and Vilna" (109:21/IV/1881). *Poriadok's* editor, M. Stasiulevich, was an old foe of the conservative editor Mikhail Katkov, so he included the latter's *Moskovskie vedomosti* in the ranks of those papers whose "pseudo-patriotism" helped to "electrify" the crowds of *pogromshchiki*.²⁰ An examination of Katkov's paper reveals that the charge had no validity and illustrates that Russian conservatives were automatically assumed to be Judeophobes.

Kiev's *Zaria* singled out *Novorossiiskii telegraf* for opprobrium. An editorial compared the Judeophobes of that paper to Octavius Caesar [sic], who in his speech at Julius Caesar's funeral stated ironically that "Brutus is an honorable man." "*Novorossiiskii telegraf*, which for two years has stirred up the population against the 'Yids' has suddenly become their defender. But what kind of defense is this? 'We are against physical violence' – with such a rubric did the Odessa publicist begin and end his defense, but the impression one gets from this defense is that, to the contrary, he would like nothing more than this sort of violence" (88:22/IV/1881).

The editor of *Novorossiiskii telegraf* was taken aback by this sortie, especially after mild disorders broke out in Odessa on 3 May, despite the numerous precautions taken to forestall them. The paper had already begun to assemble a defense following the Elisavetgrad pogrom by reprinting, on 25 April, its anti-pogrom article of 20 March. This was not the moment to be trading accusations, warned an accompanying editorial. "When a person is dangerously ill the doctor does not ask the

²⁰ *Poriadok's* accusations are summarized and refuted in *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 116:28/IV/1881.

cause of the sickness but takes measures to cure it. So too with the Jews – we must take steps to stop the disorders” (1888:5/V/1881). The paper attempted to assert its law-and-order credentials by going further than any other newspaper in calling for resolute measures. While other editors lamented the deaths of *pogromshchiki*, *Novorossiiskii telegraf* welcomed them. On 8 May, it complained of the uncertainty into which the city had been plunged:

Nobody is calm, as each person fears for his property, and it is not only the Jews who are afraid, but Christians too . . . Trade has come to a halt; both shops and offices open and then close. Undoubtedly there is a working-class element in the ranks of the rioters, but the preponderant group are the residents of quarries and flop-houses and all that riffraff that never does any work and is easily inflamed by the nihilist teaching that the moment is now ripe for easy gain. And because of this riffraff the whole city is in fear. It is therefore necessary, for the good of all the peaceful and hardworking residents of Odessa, to carry out a decisive blow against this rioting scum and, we repeat, not to shirk from the most extreme measures.

The editor announced that he was quite content that a few rioters be sacrificed in order to quiet the city and free the troops from their dangerous, burdensome work (1891:8/V/1881).

Other newspapers refused to be intimidated by the charge that they had created the conditions for the pogroms. The premier Judeophobe paper in the capital, *Novoe vremia*, haughtily dismissed the scribes of the liberal press as sons of the fairytale witch Baba Yaga who traveled around Russia, expressing their contempt for anything filled with the true Russian spirit, “smelling of Rus” (1852:26/IV/1881). *Moskovskie vedomosti* went further still while refuting attacks made on it by *Poriadok*. Using a smear technique long ago perfected by Katkov, an editorial on 3 May suggested that the sentiments expressed by *Poriadok*, “the doctrinaire organ of Polish–Russian liberalism,” reflected the attitudes contained in revolutionary manifestoes which appeared in the South in conjunction with the disorders.

In the early days of the pogroms, newspaper accounts were rife with tales of “dark forces” at work, represented by “unknown persons” leading the crowds. Authentic reports of the discovery of revolutionary proclamations in the midst of the Kiev pogrom strengthened these fears. The Judeophile *Novosti* argued on 4 May that the discovery of proclamations created a whole new situation. The problem was no longer how to resolve the Jewish Question, but how to safeguard the population from the spread of revolutionary propaganda. *Novorossiiskii telegraf* agreed, stating on 5 May that “decisive measures are all the more appropriate because the Odessa disorders appear with the participation of the socialists. It is clear that the seditionists are using the popular historical hatred toward the

Jews only as an opportunity for their revolutionary objectives" (1888:5/V/1881).

Fear of revolutionary activity was always grist for Katkov's mill, and *Moskovskie vedomosti* continued to seek socialist involvement as late as the Nizhnii Novgorod pogrom of 1884. The initial reports of the paper's Kiev correspondent emphasized the appearance of revolutionary propaganda, as well as evidence of planning and direction (118-19/30/IV-1/V/1881). On 3 May the paper twitted *Poriadok* for denying a political character to the pogroms in the light of evidence from Elisavetgrad and Kiev. "They didn't beat the Yids, but Yid-property. They had it exactly in mind to carry out a socialist riot in order to create, in the midst of the suffering masses, a ruined, discontented class and, in particular, to complicate all the economic relations of an area where the economic activity of the Jews plays such an important role." The editorial pointed to the part allegedly played by the subversive Southern Russian Workers Union. A later editorial devoted to the fall in value of Russian bonds on foreign stock exchanges accused the revolutionaries of trying to engender disorders on a large scale in order to bring into question the security of a sizeable segment of the empire (134:16/V/1881). Because of his obsession with the revolutionary menace, and perhaps due to his close business relations with Jewish financiers in Moscow, Katkov never moved much beyond this interpretation of events.²¹

Most of the press abandoned this "red scare," as did the government in St. Petersburg. *Kievlianin* voiced doubts about socialist participation as early as 1 May, closely followed by *Poriadok* (125:8/V/1881), *Rus'* (30:6/VI/1881), and *Russkii kur'er* (123:7/V/1881). Skeptics claimed vindication when Major-General V. S. Strelnikov, the prosecutor of the Kiev Military District Court, went out of his way in the course of the trial of the Kiev *pogromshchiki* to deny any socialist involvement.

An alternative approach was to blame the Jews themselves for the scale that the disorders had attained. An early report on the Elisavetgrad pogrom in *Golos* explained that the crowd had not gone beyond breaking windows and petty vandalism until Jews shot at them with revolvers. This act drove the crowd into a frenzy (108:20/IV/1881). *Kievlianin* noted of the same pogrom that "here, in all probability, more than a small role was played by shots from revolvers, to which the Jews hastened for their defense" (89:23/IV/1881). *Russkii kur'er's* Elisavetgrad correspondent developed this theme on 23 April, in an article rife with errors. The

²¹ For accusations that Katkov's presumed Judeophilia derived from his well-known partnerships with Jewish financiers, see the Judeophobe *Gazeta A. Gattsuka* (32:18/VIII/1881).

disorders, he reported, grew out of a fight during which Jews attacked a Russian with an axe. When the offending Jews were not arrested, a crowd threw stones at a Jewish home. In return, Jews fired on the crowd from their houses and the synagogue. This action triggered the pogrom. The report ended with the erroneous news that several soldiers had been wounded by Jews and that a few Russians had been killed, although no specific details were provided.

Novoe vremia's account from Elisavetgrad, more detailed still, illustrates how pogrom accounts could become elaborated and embellished, taking on a life of their own. It painted a general picture of arrogance, recklessness, and provocation on the part of Jews throughout the Pale. The paper claimed that in both Elisavetgrad and Odessa Jews thronged the streets during Christian holidays, especially when Easter and Passover did not occur at the same time. They taunted passing Russians with the claim that the troops dispatched to ensure order were there specifically to protect them and to beat unruly Christians. On 15 April a group of Jews began to harass a drunken Russian simpleton, provoking an angry gathering of Russians. At first the crowd did no more than break windows. The Jews, who had bought up all the revolvers in town, opened fire. This action provoked a real frenzy of destruction from members of the crowd, many of them shouting "For the faith and the tsar" (1850:24/IV/1881).

By far the most common explanation was the one increasingly favored by the government, in part encouraged by the press: "Jewish exploitation" (see Figures 6 and 7). The only real divide between commentators was whether the blame should fall on the Jews alone or whether mitigating factors should be taken into account. *Novorossiiskii telegraf* was happy to cite precedent on this score, reminding its readers that an identical charge had been raised against the Jews in the aftermath of the Odessa pogrom of 1871 (1895:13/V/1881). The Jews had apparently learned nothing in the interval.

The charge itself had been so fully elaborated by the Judeophobe press in recent years that there was little new to add. *Kievlianin* summed up the situation on 26 April: "The facts of recent days should confirm to one's own eyes that the Jewish Question wasn't in fact something fabricated by the Judeophobes, and that people fighting against Jewry were completely in the right when they continually pointed out this evil, which has such a serious character." The population was hostile to the Jews because they were always associated with the idea of a relentless, merciless exploiter. "Of course nobody would claim that all Jews are like this, but they are types of a basic sort who are constantly confronted by the population in the guise of tavern-keeper, money-lender, profiteer, etc." There was no hint in *Kievlianin's* indictment that the Jews could in any way be excused from

Самая производительная работа евреев вь Россіи.



Figure 6. “Productive work of Russian Jews at its best” (*Evreiskii vopros v kartinakh*, 1884).

“The Italian prince: Oh, poor, unfortunate Jews, you have trouble stuffing the Russian peasant into the sack? Don’t worry, let me help you, it’s no big deal.

The Jews: No need, Your Excellency, we’re getting there ourselves; our way he won’t even notice how he got into the sack. We do it quietly, cautiously, telling him it is in his own best interest; in case you insist on helping, let us do everything, and you just offer your helping hand at the end.

The Italian prince: Okay, but don’t shake the sack too hard so that it does not tear – you would suffer the consequences . . . he has a bear’s paw!

The Jews: Tearing, gvalt! Beating, robbery, destruction! . . .”

responsibility for their actions, since they arrogantly refused to remedy their flaws. This provided *Kievlianin* with an opportunity to chide an old polemical foe, the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, for failing to provide corrective leadership.

Novorossiiskii telegraf, chary after so much criticism, confined itself to the republication of descriptions of exploitation from other Judeophobe newspapers. *Novoe vremia*, in contrast, displayed no reluctance to emphasize the reality of the “abnormal relations . . . between Russians

Первое знакомство.



- Нить-ли старых вещей? я все покупаю.
 — Какой он бедный! не одяглы-ли его шинкаремъ въ нашомъ сель?

Figure 7. "First and second meeting" (*Evreiskii vopros v kartinakh*, 1884).

"(1) First meeting

- Do you happen to have some old things? I buy everything.
 – How miserable he is! Why not make him the inn-keeper in our village?

(2) Last farewell (20 years later)

Well, everything's mine, you do not own anything anymore, though you still owe me, and I have it all written down: You owe me 30 pounds of sugar at 5 r[ubles] which you haven't paid in 15 years. Counting 10 percent each month means 6 r. interest for the first year and 5 r. payback, together 11 r.; for the second year 13 r. interest and 11 r. payback, together 24 r.; for the third year we count 53 r.; for the 4th year – 116 r.; for the 5th year – 255 r.; for the 6th year – 560 r.; for the 7th year – 1,230 r.; for the 8th year – 2,710 r.; for the 9th year – 5,970 r.; for the 10th year – 13,135 r.; for the 11th year – 28,835 r.; for the 12th year – 63,200 r.; for the 13th year – 132,000 r.; for the 14th year – 277,000 r.; for the 15th year – 608,000 r. Well, and what is your property worth? Not more than 100,000 r. I'm an honorable Jew, I do not wish to bleed you white, I'd rather have my own business fail; I will only take your property to pay the debt, and remit the rest, because you have been merciful when I was just a poor little Jew."

Последнее прощание (20 лет спустя).



Ну, все мое, у лана ничего к'ять, а лань еще осталось мнѣ должнъ, у мена тутъ все написано: сахару явилъ въ долгъ 30 фунтовъ за 5 р., и не платилъ 15 лѣтъ. Теперь посчитаемъ на 10 процентовъ въ мѣсяцъ: проценты за первый годъ 6 р., да капиталъ 5 р., всего 11 р.; за второй годъ проценты 13 р., да капиталъ 11 р., всего 24 р.; за третий годъ потому же счету 53 р.; за 4-й годъ—116 р.; за 5-й годъ—255 р.; за 6-й годъ—560 р.; за 7-й годъ—1230 р.; за 8-й годъ—2710 р.; за 9-й годъ—5970 р.; за 10-й годъ—13135 р.; за 11-й годъ—28835 р.; за 12-й годъ—63,900 р.; за 13-й годъ—132,000 р.; за 14-й годъ—277,000 р.; за 15-й годъ—600,000 р. Ну, а умѣна лана сколько стоить? не больше 100,000 р. П честный мерей, обмань лана лану, некай лучше мена проладеть, за весь долгъ беру шибше, а остальное дарю лану за то, что лань похвалять мена, когда я былъ еще бѣднымъ идиоткомъ.

Figure 7. (cont.)

and Jews" (1847:21/IV/1881). Its report on the Elisavetgrad pogrom took the form of a chronicle of Jewish dishonesty and chicanery in the town (1850:24/IV/1881). On 26 April, the paper lamented that Jewish exploitation had finally forced the common people to seek revenge. On 1 May, it paraphrased Hamlet, "to beat or not to beat," and proceeded to attribute popular hostility to Jewish exploitation in an editorial that achieved considerable notoriety (see Figure 8). The editorial abandoned any hope of transforming the Jews: "The Jews, a race quite alien to the Indo-European races, possess characteristics which will not allow them to assimilate with the Russian population except for the case of individuals . . . What the Jews were, so they shall remain" (1857:1/V/1881).

Other organs displayed greater ambivalence regarding the question of Jewish exploitation. This was not a question of rhetoric, for many papers differed not a whit from the Judeophobe press in their indictments of Jewish life. Instead they replaced the defeatism and pessimism of the



Figure 8. "Hamlet. To beat or not to beat? That is the question!"
(*Bundy'nik*, 1881).

Judeophobes with a confidence that the Jews were not irredeemably bad. Since the Jews' negative features were a consequence of the vicissitudes of history, they were correctable over time, although editorialists disagreed over how much time was required. Glib assurances that reform was simple and easily attained seemed to be contradicted by detailed expostulations of Jewish cupidity and deceit. The editorialist for *Birzhevyye vedomosti* compared Jews to the southern grain beetle, whose depredations had such a disastrous effect on the local economy. The effect of this rhetoric was only slightly muted by the observation that insects, if concentrated in a field, would exhaust it and destroy themselves, or the declaration that

Jews could not be exterminated because they were, after all, people "with a soul, a heart and a body, and a mental capacity no worse than that of people of other religious beliefs" (153:21/IV/1881). Even while proposing that the Pale of Settlement be abolished, the church periodical *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik* had little good to say about the Jews:

Unhappily, the evil-doing carried out by the local population against the Jews was not entirely without cause, being explained by that merciless exploitation which they undergo from the Jews in their daily material interests. Jewish profiteers really do suck the blood from the poor peasants and use unconscionable tricks to drive them to ruin. The greed of the Jews, one must say, has no limits and constitutes, as it were, a special and specific affinity of the Israelite race. Undoubtedly this character of Jewry was developed owing to the entirely abnormal position in which they were placed everywhere and at all times in the Christian epoch (54:6/V/1881).

The liberal *Golos* was attempting to break the habits of a lifetime, as it replaced its aggressive Judeophobia of the 1860s and 1870s with a more balanced perspective.²² Apropos of the pogroms, the paper opined that "the Semitic race, for all its aptitudes, possesses many qualities which make it far from a sympathetic object for Russians . . . As we see, the Jew does not irritate the Russians because he is a Jew, but because where the Jews are numerous, the Russian finds a poor foundation for economic well-being. The Jew extracts his living not from productive work, but from different kinds of profiteering which all have but one objective – to extract money as easily as possible from his neighbor's pocket" (108:20/IV/1881).

Not all of the press found it necessary to dwell on the issue of exploitation. The liberal *Strana* was unwilling to discuss it at all, given the contemporary situation. Calm consideration of the best means to save people from the ravages of moneylenders or traders, be they Christian or Jew, was impossible when entire quarters of towns were being pillaged. Violence against *any* minority was inherently dangerous to the state order: "Yesterday they beat the Jews, tomorrow they might beat the so-called kulaks and the landowners or schismatics, or students, or the village sergeants, along with the bureaucrats or the grain traders" (53:5/V/1881). *Zaria* dismissed claims of exploitation as a hypocritical ploy by competitors of the Jews to usurp their economic position (88:22/IV/1881).

Besides the main themes, there were many variations, including some that resist easy categorization. A number of writers placed the blame on weaknesses inherent in Russian society. *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti*

²² For the phenomenon of liberal Judeophobia in Russia, see John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 370–83 (hereafter *IRJQ*).

FIAT LUX!! Пресбургскій эпизодъ изъ исторіи поборниковъ свободы.

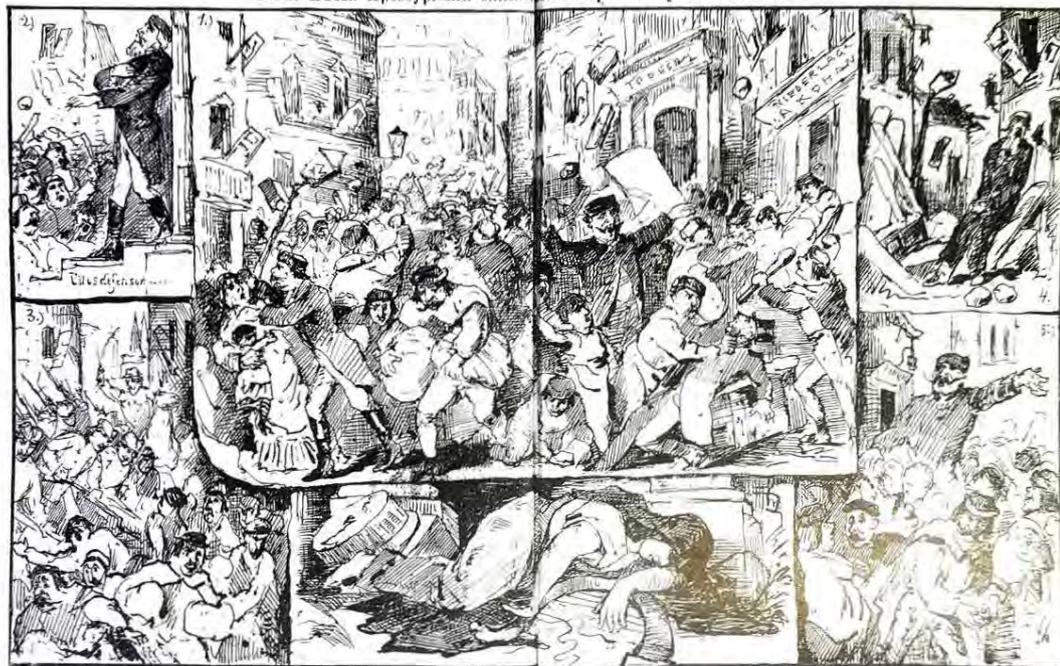


Figure 9. "Fiat lux!! Episode from the history of the Pressburg defenders of liberty" (Maiaak, 1882).

"(1) Pressburg battle; (2) Pacifying speech of the archivist Vavka; (3) [illegible]; (4) Liberté, égalité, fraternité; (5) Rabble-rousers distribute black money; (6) Fiat lux."

argued that the mentors of society, teachers and clergy, were partially to blame for failing to effectively inculcate Christian teachings in the masses. "Society" was also faulted for its collective inability to rise above the philosophy of the Russian proverb: "My hut is on the outskirts; I don't know anything" (89:1/V/1881). A *Golos* editorial offered a liberal twist of a legal perspective: The fault lay in the legal status of the Jews that confined them to the Pale and forced them to be a burden to their neighbors (108:20/IV/1881). *Novosti* agreed with this judgement, claiming that people were free to attack the Jews because the legal system effectively placed them outside the protection of the law (110:29/IV/1881).

Efforts were also made to establish a broader, European frame of reference. A number of editorials cited the burgeoning antisemitic movement in Germany and noted recent violence against German and Austrian Jews.²³ Virtually the only cartoon to appear in a Russian publication related to pogrom violence was devoted to the riot in Pressburg (see Figure 9).²⁴ The example of foreign violence helped to mitigate the charge of Russian "barbarism" somewhat. For much the same reason, Russian publicists welcomed the Warsaw pogrom as a demonstration that the cultural level of the Poles was not as high as they liked to pretend. The foreign connection could be taken to extremes, as by a correspondent for *Odesskii vestnik* who reported a rumor that the pogroms were the work of Otto von Bismarck, the German chancellor, who sought to weaken Russia from within and ruin its credit on the foreign markets (109:9/V/1881).

Having exhausted, though not resolved, the question of who was to blame for the pogroms, Russian journalism sought to find solutions to the problems that had been raised. There were two principal approaches: One sought to alter the nature of Jewish/non-Jewish relations by reforming the legal status of the Jews, the other by improving the situation of the peasants and urban working classes.

Periodicals that had espoused greater legal rights for the Jews pointed to the disorders as a vindication of their stance. On 21 April, before the details of the Elisavetgrad pogrom were fully known, *Golos* cast blame on the unequal legal status of the Jews. By concentrating Jews in the western and southern regions of the empire, to the detriment of their Christian neighbors, the law alienated Jews from Russian society. The paper returned to the attack on 29 April, reminding its readers that it had been a voice crying in the wilderness the previous year when it had

²³ See, for example, *Birzhevye vedomosti* (153:21/IV/1881). ²⁴ *Maiak*, 39 (1882), 612-13.

espoused reform "in the spirit of the age." Jewish exploitation did exist, but it was purely a product of the Pale, within which Jews devoured one another by competition in crafts and petty trade. The only other economic outlet, agriculture, was denied them by regulations forbidding the purchase of land within the Pale. Because of these bad policies that had produced pogroms, Russia stood disgraced in the eyes of the world (117:29/IV/1881).

Novosti had long advocated Jewish emancipation – its editor, O. K. Notovich, was a Jewish convert to Christianity – and on 29 April it presented a long editorial which denounced the Pale as a medieval ghetto within which Jews exploited Christians as the "natural product of the struggle for existence of an *artificially concentrated*, numerous and diverse population." Everything pointed to the need to abolish the Pale, even if one accepted the government's assertion that the Jews exploited their neighbors. If that was indeed the case, the "burden" of Jewish settlement should be spread out over the entire empire where, as the experience of both capitals and Siberia demonstrated, their harmfulness would be significantly attenuated (110:29/IV/1881).

Poriadok, a new paper linked to the liberal thick journal *Vestnik Evropy*, and itself staunchly liberal and sympathetic to the Jews, repeatedly argued for the abolition of the Pale. "We now eat, together with the Jews, the bitter fruit of overcrowding," an editorial announced on 4 May. The Pale was an anomaly in a rational state, as evidenced by its ability to produce blindness in reasonable men:

It is as simple as this, that intelligent people, educated and well acquainted with the southern and western provinces, have no difficulty in declaring heatedly that it is necessary if not to destroy all Jews, then to resettle them in Palestine. The ardent conviction of people who are so alien to contemporary theoretical and practical interests is the best demonstration, *ad absurdum*, against the system of crowding the Jewish population in Russia. A system giving birth to such a blind utopia can be safely assessed by its direct consequences (121:4/V/1881).

A subsequent editorial noted that in areas that were closed to the Jews there had nonetheless appeared widespread exploitation conducted by the "Russian Orthodox Yids," the village kulaks who had arisen in the aftermath of the emancipation of the serfs. There was nothing innately "Jewish" about exploitation. Quite the contrary: By overcrowding the Jews and restricting them to economic activities that were especially conducive to exploitation, the law virtually forced the Jews to become what they were. *Poriadok's* remedy was precise: Jews must be given "unconditional legal equality," to be

followed by free choice of residence and occupation (125:8/V/1881, 135:18/V/1881).

The liberal press was not alone in shouting "I told you so!" The Judeophobe press argued that the eruption of popular violence, "a cry for help from the masses," was evidence of a need to further restrict the rights of Jews. *Kievlianin* refined its own Judeophobe prescriptions. The Russian government itself, the paper reminded its readers on 26 April, had long recognized the need to fight against the prejudices which had developed in the Jews over the ages, and which combined religious fanaticism and the flawed morality of the Talmud. The government had even created a special school system for the Jews, in the hope that the Jewish intelligentsia thus produced would join the reformist effort. Instead,

the majority of the practical sons of Israel, educated with state money and receiving diplomas, given wide rights, soon understood that the mission of enlightenment is not easy, and the power of the Jewish monetary world grew stronger among them. Instead of a struggle, they entered into a union with Jewry and took the lead as its defenders; instead of lectures and exposures, they engaged in boastful hymns to the Jewish race . . . When part of the Russian press understood that it was impossible to depend on the "Jewish intelligentsia," and that instead of being an ally of Russian society in the solution of the Jewish Question, it was rather an enemy who had gone over to the service of Jewry, the cry arose that "the Yid is coming!"²⁵ directed against the Yid intelligentsia (92:26/IV/1881).

The "Russian national party," the paper explained, now understood that the further growth of this group was undesirable. The government should not only withdraw all state financial support for Jewish education, but also abandon all unrealistic plans to assimilate the Jews. The Jews could not just be left alone, however. Since their economic impact was most harmful in the village, they should be resettled into towns and cities, "not by mindless violence, but through the force of the law." This proposal became the keystone of the subsequent May Laws of 1882.

On 24 May, a *Kievlianin* editorial elaborated a detailed program of reform. It called for the organization of and financial support for Jewish emigration abroad, with the exception of young men still liable for military service. Jewish artisans should be assisted to move from the Pale to eastern Russia (i.e., Siberia), but not to the central Russian provinces. Jews should be forbidden to own or lease taverns, to contract for hired labor, to lease private or public land in the village, or to foreclose on real estate held as collateral for debts. These latter activities had all been identified by the

²⁵ This was a reference to a widely noted article in *Novoe vremia* in 1880 that lamented the large number of Jews in Odessa schools. See Klier, *IRJQ*, 403-7.

paper over the years as areas of Jewish malfeasance.²⁶ Jews should be barred from holding state contracts to provision the armed forces, a concern which harked back to military procurement scandals during the recent Russo-Turkish War.²⁷ Finally, the Jewish community, not the state, should pay for the training and relocation of Jewish artisans. The reform of the Jews would be a long-drawn-out affair, the editorialist conceded, but the alternative was even more unacceptable. To grant wider rights and freedoms to the Jews before they rose above their current level of moral development would constitute a serious danger for the Christian population, and would do nothing to forestall further outbursts of popular vengeance (114:24/V/1881).

Novorossiiskii telegraf, discouraged somewhat from its aggressive Judeophobia by accusations of pogrom-mongering, did not offer its own proposals for solving the Jewish Question until late June. The editor gave a prominent place to a letter from a local landowner who advocated restricting the range and nature of Jewish economic activity by placing the Jews under the supervision of a special trade police while also forbidding them to bid for state contracts or enter state service (1931:26/VI/1881). On 14 July the paper issued a warning against equal rights for Jews. Could Russia even contemplate legal equality or free movement throughout the country, the paper asked rhetorically, when the Jews continued to consider themselves a special race, alien to the local population and its interests, and felt themselves free to ignore existing laws? Equal rights would accomplish nothing save the creation of a new form of serfdom in which the Jews replaced the landowners (1945:14/VII/1881).

I. S. Aksakov, the prominent Panslav journalist, had long been the doyen of intellectual Judeophobia in Russia. He accepted Jewish exploitation as a given, but was far more fascinated with the clash between two rival spiritual-moral systems, which he characterized as the "Christian banner" and the "Jewish banner." The analysis of events which he published in his weekly, *Rus'*, was cerebral and complex, layering his preferred philosophical and religious concerns on top of more practical considerations. While decrying pogrom violence, commentary in *Rus'* invariably romanticized it. Aksakov depicted pogroms as a form of moral protest, rather than blind violence. The crowds were intent, the paper claimed, not on the plunder of Jewish goods, but on destroying property that they thought had been wrongfully taken from them. Aksakov was fond of

²⁶ John D. Klier, "Kievianin and the Jews: A Decade of Disillusionment, 1864-1873," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 5, 1 (1981), 1-15.

²⁷ Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, "The 'Jewish Policy' of the Late Imperial War Ministry: The Impact of the Russian Right," *Kritika*, 3, 2 (2002), 225-34.

quoting the alleged cries of the rampaging crowd when it encountered resistance: "Leave us alone, this is our blood!" Aksakov's principal concern was that his beloved Russian people would now have to pay dearly for their misguided but sincere actions. Against this background, a *Rus'* editorial dismissed any thought of Jewish emancipation. "The question should not be posed as to the emancipation of the Jews, but as to the emancipation of the Russian population from the Jewish yoke; not about the equalization of Jews with Christians, but about the removal of the rightless position of the Christian population before the Jews; that would be the correct formulation of the question, without which a proper resolution is impossible" (30:6/VI/1881). On 20 June, Aksakov bitterly attacked the "liberal solution" to the Jewish Question, the abolition of the Pale:

Liberalism in regard to the Jews means placing the Russian population in a cabal; an action which conforms to the requirements of "contemporary progress" means taking down a dam, letting flow the Jewish stream over the rest of Russia, which will lead only to the regression of the Russian population, which will have its own economic growth cut off. The liberals substitute for the old cry of "*place aux dames*" the new one of "*place aux Juifs*." (32:20/VI/1881)

While Aksakov was content to retain the old legal restrictions of the Pale, he recognized that it offered no long-range solution to the Jewish Question. Reflecting his propensity to place public affairs in a philosophical context, Aksakov offered a program designed to destroy the reputed Jewish underground government known as the *kahal*. Aksakov published in *Rus'* excerpts from a revised version of the notorious *Book of the Kahal* (*Kniga kagala*) by Iakov Brafman. The author called for the Russian government to withdraw all legal support for the administrative and educational activities of the organized Jewish community. This action was to be complemented by Russian state action against the Alliance Israélite Universelle and what Brafman claimed was its Russian branch, the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia (OPE) (46/7:26/IX-3/X/1881). This leap of faith from the realities of street violence to an obsessive fear of a mysterious Jewish world conspiracy became all too characteristic of Aksakov's treatment of the Jews after 1881.²⁸ Despite, or perhaps because of, the fantastic element in Aksakov's writings on the Jews in 1881, they exercised a strong influence on Russian public opinion.²⁹ This influence was especially detectable during the activities of the provincial Ignatiev commissions of 1881.

²⁸ Klier, *IRJQ*, 282-3.

²⁹ See the anonymous letter to Ignat'ev recommending the *Rus'* articles as a guide to Russian policy: *K-A*, 517-18 (8/X/1881).

Perhaps the most dramatic and controversial solution to the Jewish Question in 1881 was offered by *Novoe vremia* in an editorial on 1 May (i.e., well before the mass flight of Jewish refugees abroad or emigration debates in the Jewish press). The paper attacked the liberal formula of assimilation via dismantling the system of restrictive legislation. The talents of the Jews lay in trade and commerce, neither of which was in demand in the economically underdeveloped Russian countryside. The problem of superfluous Jews was compounded by their unusually high birth rate. None of these problems could be solved by legal equality. Indeed, such a solution recalled the man who threw himself into a river to escape the rain. A solution might better be found in the well-known fact that the Jews were cosmopolitans who dwelt wherever life was easiest for them, *ubi bene ibi patria*. It was only necessary to complicate the Jew's life and he would seek a more comfortable location. Not coercion but legislation could make Europe and America appear more desirable. For example, Jews could be totally banned from tavern-keeping, from trade in real estate, from free movement around the country. Indigent Jews might even be given subsidies to assist their departure, although this was a task more appropriate for the Jewish plutocracy. After all, noted the author sarcastically, the entire project would require less than the profits from one railroad. *Novoe vremia* pointed to Irish emigration to America as proof that such an exodus was possible, and offered a vision of a Russia stripped of half of its Jews.

Some of the papers that deigned to comment treated *Novoe vremia's* proposal as a joke. *Russkii kur'er* suggested that it differed only in style from the vengefulness of the *pogromshchiki* (121:5/V/1881). Taking a pragmatic rather than a humanitarian perspective, *Birzhevye vedomosti* pondered the ruinous economic effect on Russia of the disappearance of the Jews and their capital (256:28/X/1881). *Poriadok*, as might be expected, ridiculed the plan as a proposal of people who were either out of their wits or totally terrorized by the possibility that the pogroms might lead to the abolition of the Pale. It dismissed these self-proclaimed "national patriots" as nothing more than stalking horses for mercantile elements who hoped to benefit from restrictions on Jewish commerce (135:18/V/1881).

Surprisingly, *Zaria*, usually a supporter of Jewish interests, took the suggestion seriously and urged Jews not to be put off by its source. With proper organization such a scheme might be workable and was vastly superior to utopian dreams of instantly transforming large numbers of Jewish tavern-keepers into productive workingmen. It was unquestionably preferable to mass violence directed at the Jews. The state need not pay for foreign resettlement, but merely free potential emigrants from all

taxes and obligations (100:6/V/1881). It is significant that *Zaria* was published in Kiev (where expulsions were taking place) and had Jews on its editorial board. Its receptiveness to emigration schemes was possibly a reflection of the debate that was taking place within the Jewish community itself.

In the midst of radical and bizarre schemes, old palliatives were also rediscovered. *Novosti* continued to promote assimilation as the best protection against pogroms. The newspaper, perhaps reflecting Notovich's personal experience, begged the state to relax prohibitions on mixed marriages in order to facilitate the assimilation process (218:21/VIII/1881). A lingering faith in the merits of acculturation was also detectable in the enormous publicity which the Russian press gave to two Jewish religious reform movements, the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood in Elisavetgrad and Kiev, and New Israel in Kishinev, both of which proclaimed their commitment to assimilation and which are discussed in Chapter 8.

Not all papers blamed the pogroms on the Jews, and some editors looked beyond the Jews for means of stemming the violence. Writers from this perspective refused to romanticize the pogroms, seeing them rather as a sad benchmark of the lowly state of the Russian people. It was with the Christian masses that reform must begin. *Russkii kur'er*, for example, emphasized the need to improve the economic life of the population and to develop a legal consciousness in the masses (106:20/IV/1881). *Moskovskii telegraf* called upon the government to probe the causes of peasant distress and to satisfy their material and spiritual needs. An editorial urged the authorities to foster a spirit of cooperation among the peasants so that they might effectively resist exploitation. Creating a rural banking system, for example, would render the village usurer superfluous. The intellectual level of the people had to be raised, which could best be accomplished by creating schools and "recognizing the rights of the Little Russian language and literature" – an unexpected expression of Ukrainophile sentiment. These measures must be joined together by "the true spirit and content of Christian teaching" (108:21/IV/1881). The liberal *Strana* complained that the population was not only weighed down by the exploitation of Jews and kulaks, but also powerless to redress abuses of power by local police authorities. The spread of popular literacy, the availability of cheap editions of the law code, and greater accessibility to the court system would be as effective as a radical transformation of the economy in enabling the people to defend themselves from exploitation (53:5/V/1881).

The diversity of opinion on the pogroms, ranging from condemnation of the Jews themselves to open calls for complete Jewish emancipation,

demonstrates the comprehensive nature of the coverage. It is obvious that the censorship had little effect in dampening debate, in part because the censors themselves were uncertain as to the correct line to follow. In the search for scapegoats, journalists took aim at journalistic rivals and specific local authorities, especially in newspapers that were outside the latter's reach.

Two elements of Russian society, polar opposites though they were, took a particular interest in the pogroms. These were the spokesmen for Moscow-based capitalists and their mortal enemies, the ideologues of the Russian revolutionary movement. In the case of the pogroms, they proved to be two sides of the same coin, their concerns displaying a striking symmetry. Both emphasized the socio-economic side of the pogroms. Both sought to publicize their concerns to a wider audience. As a final, ironic link, both were accused by their enemies of having instigated the pogroms.

Capitalists

The economic consequences of the pogroms were of great concern to Russian bureaucrats from the first day. Official reports routinely estimated the total damage done by the rioting and sought to evaluate the consequences for the local economy. Ekaterinoslav governor I. N. Durnovo reported on 7 May 1881 that Russians were as alarmed by the pogroms as were Jews, since "due to the close ties which exist here between Russians and Jews in commercial-manufacturing relations, the destruction of Jewish property and the inevitable insolvencies will have a heavy impact upon the interests of Russian traders."³⁰ On 27 May, the governor-general of Kharkov, Sviatopolk-Mirskii, complained that the disorders had completely paralyzed trade.³¹ In the summer of 1881, a police sergeant in the Odessa district complained that the economic life of all southern Russia was under threat.³² Even in areas that did not suffer from pogroms, there was a knock-on effect. The Minsk gendarmerie reported on 26 August 1882 that, in the aftermath of the Warsaw and Balta pogroms, many tradesmen had been ruined, with dire consequences for the economy of the Northeast.³³ Commercial confidence was hardly strengthened when rumors

³⁰ *K-A*, 57-8 (7/V/1881). ³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³² *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (1881), ll. 445-51.

³³ *GARF*, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 13, ll. 2-2ob.

circulated in Tauride province in May that attacks on Jews were to be followed by assaults on Russian merchants.³⁴

Efforts to combat disorders by canceling or postponing fairs, as was envisioned after the Elisavetgrad pogrom, threatened to make the economic situation worse.³⁵ As Poltava governor Bilbasov reported on 7 May 1881, the upcoming Ilinsk Fair had an annual turnover of R15 million in imports and R10 million in exports. Any threat to the security of trade operations at that time would have dangerous consequences for the region.³⁶ These concerns elicited the first intervention by worried merchants. On 14 May, the Moscow Stock Exchange Committee sent a petition to the Ministry of Finance on behalf of Moscow merchants who had trade connections with Ukraine. Any disruption of the Voznesensk, Trinity, or Ilinsk Fairs, they warned, would have grave consequences for the merchants, the Stock Exchange, and trade and manufacturing in general. They asked that every possible measure be taken to maintain order during the fairs, a request which was passed on to the MVD.³⁷ The governors-general were alerted, and the Stock Exchange Committee was assured that every precaution would be taken.³⁸

These measures stemmed neither the pogroms nor their economic consequences. The situation provoked a private initiative by one of the most important Moscow textile manufacturers, T. S. Morozov. On 30 May 1881, Morozov sent a personal letter to the minister of internal affairs, Ignatiev. The trade-commercial class needed to be convinced, Morozov explained, that the inactivity of local authorities, as recently witnessed in Kiev, would not be repeated. The manufacturing centers of Russia, with Moscow in the lead, always felt keenly any problems in the South of the empire. Because of the disorders, many buyers proposed to pay their bills in installments or even sought substantial discounts. This was understandable. Sales of goods at the St. Nicholas Fair in Poltava and the Voznesensk Fair in Romny were down by half from the previous year. If present trends continued, a number of manufacturers were sure to go out of business. Employers would be forced to fire workers, with social consequences too terrible to contemplate. Morozov lauded Ignatiev's "concern for the interests of national trade and commerce and your unending energy on behalf of the tranquility of our dear Fatherland." He was confident that the new minister would do all in his power to

³⁴ RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125 (V/1881), ll. 96–7ob.

³⁵ On 18 April, Odessa governor-general Dondukov-Korsakov reported plans to the MVD to change the date of the St. George's Day Fair: *K-A*, 5–6 (18/IV/1881).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 53 (7/V/1881). ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197 (5/VI/1881), l. 73ob.

guarantee the preservation of order.³⁹ Nonetheless, his praise carried a cautionary undertone.

By the spring of 1882, in the aftermath of the Balta pogrom, two facts had become obvious to the larger Moscow manufacturers. The first was that the authorities were incapable of preventing further pogroms. The second was that the preventative measures that were being proposed by leading officials represented a further threat to the smooth running of their commercial operations. An important aspect of the MVD's anti-pogrom strategy, which found its ultimate culmination in the May Laws, was a further restriction on Jewish mobility throughout the empire. The ministry's target included the large number of Jews who came to Moscow to engage in trade. Many fell under the rubric of a law of 1865 which had permitted Jewish artisans to settle in the Russian interior. In April 1882, the Moscow governor-general issued guidelines under which the local police were ordered to verify the credentials of Jews resident in Moscow and expel those who were illegally settled. While masquerading as artisans, the majority of these settlers were in fact engaged in trade and commerce, which did not give them residence rights.

Two leading Moscow manufacturers, P. I. Riabov and N. I. Shchukin, composed a petition, secured the signatures of the directors of fifty Moscow firms, and submitted it to the Ministry of Finance. On 5 May 1882, the finance minister, N. Kh. Bunge, forwarded it to Ignatiev.⁴⁰ The petition was a warning against the harmful consequences sure to arise from artificial restrictions on Jewish residence in Moscow. The economic importance of the Jews had become apparent in the aftermath of the pogroms. At the recent Kharkov Fair, for example, Jews had made only a quarter of their usual purchases from Moscow firms. The petitioners emphasized that Jews played a major role in conveying goods manufactured in Moscow to Ukraine and the Northeast, where they competed, with great effectiveness, against Polish, German, and Austrian manufactured goods. Jewish residents in Moscow, however spurious their passports might be, served as agents and commissioners for their co-religionists in the western provinces. On their say-so, Moscow merchants were prepared to advance large quantities of goods on credit. Their functions, based on the trust they had built up over years, could not be replaced by short-term visits to the old capital. The message was clear:

³⁹ Iu. G. Oksman, ed., "Otklik moskovskikh promyshlennikov na anti-evreiskie besporiadki 1881 goda," *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 19 (1926), 258-60.

⁴⁰ Riabov was chairman of the Serpukhovsk Zemstvo Board, and Shchukin was director of the large Danilov works. They were not, however, able to gain the endorsement of the Moscow Stock Exchange Society.

Expulsions were counterproductive and must be abandoned, while renewed efforts had to be taken to prevent pogroms. "We are already experiencing stagnation in business which can be attributed to this muddle, and in the case of a repetition we foresee the most terrible consequences for Moscow with its tens of millions of outstanding credit in the region."⁴¹

One historian of the Moscow merchantry has scorned this resort to "petition politics" as conveying "an impression of total political and moral obtuseness."⁴² In fact, the handling of the petition reveals much more. Instead of letting the petition make its uncertain way through the usual bureaucratic channels, the sponsors leaked it to one of the most influential newspapers in the country, Katkov's *Moskovskie vedomosti*. As a consequence, the petition prompted a thorough airing of the manufacturers' point of view.

Katkov, the doyen of Moscow journalists, with close links to the imperial court and to Moscow capitalists, was the logical choice for this task. He had a lengthy pedigree as a Judeophile, albeit an eccentric one, and displayed a particular interest in the economic aspects of the Jewish Question. He fully appreciated the connection between the pogroms and the fall in Russian bonds on the international stock market.⁴³ His obsession that the pogroms were a socialist plot to destabilize Russia did not disable his critical faculties when evaluating government initiatives aimed at stopping pogroms. He praised the petition and its fifty signatories as coming from a "healthy, wise and active part of our society," who correctly recognized that the solution to the Jewish Question was neither to beat the Jews already trapped within the Pale, nor to drive into it others from all corners of the empire so that they might be beaten too.⁴⁴

It comes as no surprise that Katkov, a master of journalistic polemics, provoked a lively public debate with his coverage of the Moscow petition. Much taken aback was the editor of *Rus'*, Ivan Aksakov. Aksakov too had very close relations with Moscow merchants, as they had financed his journalistic endeavors over the years. His response was therefore uncharacteristically restrained, confined to a lame protest that the Jewish Question must be resolved to the advantage of the village population of the South and West, not the interests of a few rich Moscow capitalists

⁴¹ *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 128:10/V/1882.

⁴² Jo Anne Ruckman, *The Moscow Business Elite: A Social and Cultural Portrait, 1840-1905* (DeKalb, 1984), 144. Ruckman faults the petition for failing to mention antisemitism, humanitarian considerations, or religious toleration. This is a curious criticism, since it demands a modern sensibility which Ruckman's own social history shows was lacking among Moscow merchants.

⁴³ *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 134:16/V/1881. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 128:10/V/1882.

(20:15/V/1882). A subsequent article developed the argument no further than to claim that the signatory firms were not very large. Had their arguments been more widely accepted, there would have been many more signatures (23:5/VI/1882).

The conservative *Novoe vremia* took the opposite tack, arguing that the signatories need not be taken seriously, either because they represented major firms that did not have to worry about Jewish competition, or were inexperienced company heads, sons who had recently taken over from their fathers (2229:14/V/1882). As for the essence of the argument, an article reminded readers that the issue was the *illegal* settlement of Jews in Moscow. A stand had to be taken, otherwise half the names on the next such petition would be those of Jews. The paper did not regret, as did many others, the destruction of Jewish trade, since it presented an opportunity for the establishment of genuine Russian competition (2228:13/V/1882).

Kievlianin sarcastically applauded the fact that the Jews had found defenders among those very people whom they had earlier accused of inciting mobs against them. Speaking as the voice of those who had to live with "Jewish competition" on a daily basis, the paper assured its readers that the market would be better served when trade in Russian goods was in the hands of Russian merchants. This was especially the case because the old system of regional fairs, upon which the present trade network depended, was giving way to railroad-based markets (104:13/V/1882).

The only paper to wholeheartedly agree with Katkov was his old foe, *Golos*. The liberal tenets of free trade that they shared gave them a small patch of common ground. *Golos* preferred to laugh at the expense of Aksakov, who had romanticized the pogroms as the authentic voice of the people. Throwing his own words back at him, an editorial noted that the merchants had delivered a "creative blow" at Aksakov's illusions, and his rejection of the belief that the "proper order" included rights for all Russian subjects. The petition, based only on self-interest, might lack a moral element, but it nonetheless championed the well-being of the state, law and order, and the free and unhindered development of life (125:12/V/1882).

The merchant campaign came to nothing, since the following week saw the promulgation of the May Laws, which rejected every assumption underlying the petition. Indeed, Ignatiev lightly dismissed the petition, scoffing that "it is well known by what means names are secured on these multi-signature pronouncements."⁴⁵ In one sense, however, *Novoe*

⁴⁵ B. V. Anan'ich, *Bankirskie doma v Rossii, 1860-1914 gg.* (Leningrad, 1991), 48.

vremia's warning proved prophetic. There was indeed a second petition a decade later, albeit not with half the signatories representing Jewish firms. The petition of 1891 was a response to police preparations for the wholesale expulsion of Jews from Moscow. The arguments, like those of the sponsors of the earlier petition, were much the same. So was the fruitless outcome.⁴⁶ But eventual failure should not disguise the fact that certain elements of the Russian population – even a group that allegedly welcomed pogroms – recognized the economic utility of the Jews and were willing to defend Jewish interests. It is also highly symbolic that merchant petitions were invariably submitted to the Ministry of Finance, which gave as much weight to the economic side of the Jewish Question as did the Ministry of Internal Affairs to questions of public order.

Socialists

The responses of members of the Russian revolutionary movement to the pogroms have been the most intensely examined of all contemporary reactions. Detailed exegesis has been accorded virtually every proclamation and observation, published and unpublished. In part this reflects the near-obsessive interest in the revolutionary tradition that long characterized modern Russian historiography. Scholars have also pondered the ready acceptance of violence against a group who stood high in the hierarchy of victims of the imperial regime by young radicals who were themselves willing to suffer the greatest hardships for altruistic motives. How could the “golden youth,” fired by idealism and self-sacrifice, justify violence, rape, and murder? There is the added irony that they were moved by the same common fund of ideals that inspired the rise of Jewish Populists in response to the events of 1881–2.

There are many answers to this question. For members of a movement that glorified “the people,” the very existence of a mass movement did much to justify it. The influential Populist N. N. Zlatovratskii declined to condemn popular persecution of the Jews, asking “who can guarantee to me that I am right, and not the entire people?”⁴⁷ When forced to choose between the Jews and “the people,” Populists confidently opted for the latter. Moreover, in the confused days after the assassination of Alexander II, some populist agitators saw in the pogroms the promise of a mass social movement which would sweep away not the Jews, but exploiters of every race and religion. There is another explanation more basic still. Revolutionaries shared the mundane Judeophobia of the society of

⁴⁶ IAGM, f. 16, op. 81, d. 121, ch. 1 (7N/1891), ll. 175–9.

⁴⁷ V. G. Korolenko, *Vospominaniia o pisatelakh* (Moscow, 1934), 83–4.

which they were a part, although they usually colored it with a socialist gloss.

The emergent European socialist movement invariably subordinated the national to the social question, confident that the national question, in all its guises, was subordinate to social realities and would disappear of its own accord when the social question was resolved.⁴⁸ The socialist movement in Russia prior to the 1870s dealt with the Jews only in passing. The "men of the '70s," the Populists, were dominated by a romanticized cult of "the people" and driven by an ideological need to reach out to the peasant masses. Debates centered on tactics, on whether to indulge and incite the natural, anarchistic impulses of the masses (the so-called *bunt-arstvo*), a direction associated with Mikhail Bakunin, or to prepare them for revolution through propaganda and agitation, a trend associated with Petr Lavrov.⁴⁹

The identification of "the people" with the peasantry had important implications for the Jews. Jewish peasants were entirely absent from the Russian interior. In the Pale and the Kingdom of Poland, Jews were an integral part of rural life, but in roles such as tavern-keepers and petty traders, and cognate pursuits that were dismissed as unproductive. Populists had no reason to see the Jews in other than negative terms. Even the growing number of revolutionaries of Jewish descent, with a few prominent exceptions, eschewed special concern for the Jews. Any contribution that Jews may have brought into Populism from the Jewish milieu, as documented by Erich Haberer, was unconscious.⁵⁰ As a rule, Jewish socialists abandoned any religious ties to Judaism and sought to sunder their cultural links as well.⁵¹

Despite efforts to ignore it, the Jewish Question did intrude on the revolutionary movement. Hotbeds of revolutionary furor, such as the New Russia University in Odessa, were also centers of intense

⁴⁸ For a selection of materials on this theme, see Helmut Hirsch, *Marx und Moses. Karl Marx zur "Judenfrage" und zu Juden* (Frankfurt am Main and Cirencester, 1980); Julius Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism* (London, 1978); Edmund Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage* (Berlin, 1962).

⁴⁹ For the classic treatment of these phenomena, see Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (Chicago and London, 1983).

⁵⁰ Erich E. Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1995), 9-26, 29-56, contends that Populists such as Mark Natanson brought a sensibility to Russian Populism that derived from the Jewish Enlightenment movement, the *Haskalah*.

⁵¹ Few went as far as O. V. Aptekman, who converted to Russian Orthodoxy in order to draw closer to "the people": Venturi, *Roots*, 503-4. There were a number of false conversions in order to circumvent the restrictions of the Pale. For general attitudes, see B. Frumkin, "Iz istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia sredi evreev v 1870-kh godakh," *Evreiskaia starina*, 3, 2 (1911), 224.

Judeophobia, both popular and intellectual.⁵² Debates on the Jewish Question took place among Kiev socialists in the early 1870s, pitting the members of the so-called Kiev Commune against the *Buntari*, who were followers of Bakunin.⁵³ The memoirs of one contemporary, Ben Ami, recount that the regicide A. I. Zheliabov was very hostile to the Jews, while the Kiev revolutionary Ivanov was firmly convinced of the reality of the Blood Libel.⁵⁴

Organizational debates were also an integral part of socialist theorizing: Was revolutionary agitation best conducted in a uniform or a multiform guise? Within the Pale, political activists such as the Ukrainians V. Debohorii-Mokrievych and Iakiv Stefanovych agreed with the Jew Lev Deich that separate organizations for different ethnic groups were superfluous.⁵⁵ This was more easily stipulated than implemented. As Lavrov, one of the intellectual fathers of the Populist movement observed, "the *national* question, in our opinion, must entirely disappear in view of the important tasks of the social struggle, [but] nationalities form the real and unavoidable basis on which every social process takes place. One has to work in a *given* place, in a society speaking a *given* language and formed in a *given* culture. [Otherwise] the goal of social action will take on an entirely abstract character."⁵⁶

But was activity of any sort worthwhile if carried out in Yiddish and under the influence of Jewish culture? The whole question of the placement of the Jewish Question within a socialist context depended upon one's view of the Jews: Were they some sort of exploiting caste (as Marx implied), or did they reveal the same variegation and diversity as other nationalities inhabiting the Russian Empire?⁵⁷ Socialists were not the first to confront this question. Both state-sponsored and private studies of the

⁵² The newspaper *Zemstvo* (24:13/V/1881) described two anti-Jewish groups at New Russia University, the "Society of St Bartholomew's Night" and the "Society for the Extermination of Moral Vermin." But see a denial of the existence of such activities in *Odesskii vestnik*, 5:8/I/1881. The socialist E. Kovalskaia, co-founder of the Southern Russian Workers Union, reported on the opposition of Kiev workers to the admission of Jews to the movement on the grounds that they had killed Christ. Their resistance was overcome when a priest confirmed Kovalskaia's contention that Christ was also a Jew. See C. S. Ingerflom, "Idéologie révolutionnaire et mentalité antisémite. Les socialistes russes face aux pogroms de 1881-1883," *Annales*, 37, 3 (1982), 439.

⁵³ M. Mishkinsky, "The Attitude of the Southern-Russian Workers Union Toward the Jews (1880-1881)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 6, 2 (1982), 194.

⁵⁴ Ben Ami [M. Rabinovich], "Moi snosheniia s M. Dragomanovym i rabota v 'Vol'nom slove,'" *Evreiskaia starina*, 8 (1915), 357. These experiences would seem to counter Haberer's general claim, in *Jews and Revolution*, that the Russian revolutionary movement was relatively free of the Judeophobia of the surrounding society.

⁵⁵ Mishkinsky, "Attitude," 194.

⁵⁶ Cited in Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge, 1981), 32-3.

⁵⁷ Ingerflom, "Idéologie," 437-8.

Jews spent much time cataloguing Jewish occupations and pursuits and assigning an index of productivity to each.⁵⁸ One of the first socialists to write on the Jewish Question, M. P. Drahomanov (Dragomanov), identified six different categories into which the Jews might be fitted and made a meticulous division of the Jews into contrasting categories of "exploiting" and "non-exploiting."⁵⁹ For Moshe Mishkinsky, a willingness to recognize differentiation within the Jewish community serves as an essential criterion for comparing attitudes toward the Jews within different strands of the revolutionary movement.⁶⁰

Two outstanding representatives of the Russian revolutionary movement in emigration voiced sharply different opinions about the Jews. Mikhail Bakunin, with little to say specifically about Russian Jewry, frequently made unflattering remarks regarding Jews in general. These views derived from two sources. Bakunin was influenced by German antisemitism, whose conception of the Jewish danger is clearly mirrored in his writings.⁶¹ Added to this was personal enmity. Many of Bakunin's greatest rivals within the socialist movement were Jews such as Marx and Lassalle, and his hostility to them was conveniently expressed in ethnic terms.⁶² In the course of a polemic with Moses Hess, Bakunin denied that Jews were fit for socialism. "Long before our time history imprinted upon them an essential mercantile and bourgeois spirit and therefore they are, taken as a nation, par excellence the exploiters of the labor of others combined with a natural dread and abhorrence of the popular masses whom they despise, openly or secretly."⁶³ The Bakunist journal *Rabotnik*, published in Geneva, also used insulting language when speaking of the Jews.⁶⁴

Petr Lavrov, the "grand old man" of Russian socialism, evinced no special interest in the Jewish Question before the 1870s. Nonetheless, as

⁵⁸ For studies of the Jews conducted by officers of the Russian General Staff, and that of the Ukrainophile ethnographer P. P. Chubinskii, see Klier, *IRJQ*, 303-4ff.

⁵⁹ See *Kievskii telegraf*, 4:8/1/1875, and *Vestnik Evropy*, 7 (July 1875), 133-79.

⁶⁰ Moshe Mishkinsky, "Did the Russian Jacobins (Blanquists) Have a Special Attitude Towards the Jews," in A. Rapoport-Albert and S. Zipperstein, eds., *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* (London, 1988), 326-7.

⁶¹ See in particular Bakunin's recurrent complaint that Jews dominated the German press, and constituted most of the journalists: Silberman, *Sozialisten*, 272-3. He also inveighed against the centralized German state as the entrenchment of "the Yid kingdom, the bankocracy" (cited in Mishkinsky, "Russian Jacobins," 328).

⁶² For example: "All these quacks are Jews: Marx, Hess, Borkheim, Liebknecht, Jacoby, Weiss, Utin, and many others, they're all Jews. By tradition and instinct they all have this restless, intriguing, profiteering bourgeois-nationality" (cited in Silberman, *Sozialisten*, 273). Not all the targets on Bakunin's list were actually Jews.

⁶³ Cited *ibid.*, 272.

⁶⁴ Moshe Mishkinsky, "Al emdata shel ha-tnu'a ha-mahpekhanit ha-rusit le-gabe ha-yehudim bi-shnot ha-70 shel ha-mea ha-19," *He-avar*, 9 (1962), 47.

editor between 1873 and 1878 of the foremost revolutionary émigré publication, *Vpered!*, he opened its columns to Jewish socialists of a nationalistic bent, especially Aaron Liberman. He subsequently was regarded as a sympathetic friend to Jewish socialists.⁶⁵ Liberman combined the qualities of a socialist and a maskil, or partisan of the Jewish enlightenment movement, the Haskalah, who never abandoned the Jewish milieu. He was one of the first to view the Jewish community in a conscious way through the prism of socialist theory. As Jonathan Frankel neatly summarizes, "Liberman had taken his stand as a member of that branch of the Haskalah which sought to combine political and social protest with Jewish patriotism."⁶⁶

Liberman's core beliefs were published in an article in *Vpered!* in the autumn of 1875. In a survey of the unequal legal situation of the Jews in the Russian Empire he observed that "we don't even have a 'sick man' [i.e., the Ottoman Empire, symbolic protector of Russia's Muslim population], we can hope neither in the emperor, nor in the Gintsburgs, Poliakovs, Varshavskiis [prominent Jewish financiers] and the like, whose own interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the people. For the people, salvation is only to be found in a socialist revolution." Liberman replaced the stereotypical concept of the Jewish people as a unified entity with a portrait of Jewish society riven by the same class rivalries as any other nationality. At the same time he retained a conception of the Jews as a unified people by claiming that their collective historical experience made them especially receptive to socialism:

Socialism is not alien to us. The community [*obshchina*] is our existence; revolution is our tradition; the commune is the basis of our legislation, outlined with sufficient clarity by enactments concerning the inalienability of land, jubilee, and sabbatical years [when debts were abrogated], concerning equality and brotherhood and the like. Our ancient social condition is anarchy; the existing ties between ourselves throughout the world – an international. The great prophets of our time, such as Marx and Lassalle, were educated and matured in the spirit of our people.

Liberman was perhaps thinking only of the Jewish masses in this passage, although his precise meaning is unclear. In any event, his Jewish emphasis was qualified by a purely populist invocation of the suffering Russian people. "Can we calmly eat a crust of bread knowing that the grain has been grown on land watered by the peasant's blood, and forcibly stolen

⁶⁵ See E. Tcherikower, "Peter Lavrov and the Jewish Socialist Emigres," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 7 (1952), 132–45.

⁶⁶ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 31, 28–48. See also Boris Sapir, "Liberman et le socialisme russe," *International Review for Social History*, 3 (1938), 25–88.

from people who are starving to death? The Russian peasant is our brother; for us, socialists, there are neither racial nor nationalistic differences; all of us living in Russia are Russians; we have identical interests and customs. We are Russians, all joined against the foe in the name of equality and brotherhood."⁶⁷

Lavrov and the editorial board of *Vpered!* indulged Liberman's approach to Russian Jewry, even while expressing mild disapproval of his overly messianic tone. Liberman pursued his "Jewish" work by conducting propaganda work among Jewish youths in Russia, by seeking to organize immigrant Jewish workers in London, and by publishing a short-lived Hebrew-language revolutionary periodical, *Ha-Emet (The Truth)* intended for circulation in Russia. Under the pressure of his non-Jewish comrades, however, Liberman backed away from his claims that the Jewish masses displayed revolutionary proclivities born of Jewish culture, history, and tradition. Instead, he pursued more orthodox directions of agitation and propaganda.⁶⁸

Liberman's praise for the revolutionary potential of the Jewish masses elicited an immediate challenge, especially from Ukrainian radicals who held a very different image of the Jew. A member of Drahomanov's circle in Switzerland fired off a letter of protest:

It is incorrect to view the Jews as divided into classes. The Jews in Russia are not a nation, just an entire class that lives exclusively at the expense of the Little Russian population. The strength of their exploitation is great, and their harmfulness knows no end . . . Therefore, if we find it possible to preach revolution and only revolution against the [Polish] *pany*, then how do we justify being in favor of Jewry, knowing the Yids full well, and having no faith in any ridiculous "Yid International," nor [do we believe] in the Yids' sympathy for revolution . . . We have an obligation to be permeated with hatred for the Yids, just like that for the *pany*, if not even more.⁶⁹

Such views were fully shared by S. A. Podolinskii, a Ukrainian revolutionary at one time close to the *Vpered!* circle.⁷⁰ In a letter to V. N. Smirnov in 1876,

⁶⁷ *Vpered!*, 16:20/VIII-1/IX/1875.

⁶⁸ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 34-44. In Liberman's famous "Manifesto to Jewish Youth" (*Vpered!* 38:20/VII-1/VIII/1876), he again emphasized the class divisions within Jewry, condemning the Jewish bourgeoisie as a stratum of blood-sucking exploiters who not only despoiled the Jewish masses, but fanned racial and religious hatred against the Jews by also exploiting other nationalities.

⁶⁹ E. Tcherikower, "Der onheyl fun der yidisher sotsyalistisher bavegung," *Historische shriftn*, I (Vilna, 1929), 513. See *Listi Mikhaïla Drahomanova (1876-1878)* (L'vov, 1910), letter of 28/II/1876.

⁷⁰ Boris Sapir suggests that his advocacy of the Ukrainian national movement estranged Podolinskii from the Lavrovists, while his unrestrained Judeophobia made him *persona non grata* with *Vpered!*: Boris Sapir, ed. and introduction, "*Vpered!*" 1873-1877: *From the Archives of Valerian Nikolaevich Smirnov* (Dordrecht, 1970), I, 279-80.

Podolinskii sought to establish the causes for the anti-Jewish antipathy that was so apparent among Little Russians, Poles, Romanians, and even Great Russians and Germans. Judeophobes among the socialists, he noted, attributed such hatred to the simple fact that all Yids were exploiters. This explanation could not be considered sufficient since it was well known that there were also Yid workers and Yid socialists. The key must be sought, according to Podolinskii, in a racial antipathy that was so great that, while a Jew might be of sterling character, a socialist, or even a friend, it was impossible to live a common life with him. The "Yid Question" revolved around the reality of popular antipathy toward the Jews.⁷¹

Podolinskii formulated a set of general laws to explain the inevitability of Judeophobia. Despite the claims of cosmopolitans, there were marked physical, mental, and moral differences between the various races. Consequently, it was very difficult for diverse races to coexist in a common community (*obshchina*). The greater the differences, the more rude, medieval, and bestial the relations between diverse groups would become. The differences between Jews and Slavs were far greater than between Slavs and any other European people. In areas where Jews were a significant minority, they blocked the spread of socialist ideas among the population. Given these "laws," there were only two humane and progressive resolutions to the Jewish Question. The first would be the complete mixing (*smeshenie*) of the Jews with another nationality and their acceptance of that people's superior civilization. More promising would be the resettlement of the Jews and their colonization somewhere in an independent nation. The latter was Podolinskii's preferred solution, since it would free the Slavs from the Jews, while permitting the Jews to develop their own unique civilization and culture. Failure to resolve the anomalous position of the Jews among the European peoples would have unwanted consequences. "You and all the other defenders of the Yids, much more than we Judeophobes, expedite the appearance of rude, bloody scenes."⁷²

Liberman's articles on Jews and socialism provoked a letter of protest from Podolinskii to *Vpered!*:

Concerning the *Yidophilia* in editorials . . . I will say that the very absence of *Yidophobia* is *Yidophilia* because, in my opinion, *Yidophobia* is as obligatory for every Russian socialist as is *Bourgeoisie-phobia*. I deny, save for the most insignificant exceptions . . . the existence and the very possibility in Russia (and not just in Ukraine) of Yid Socialists who are completely committed to those features which I

⁷¹ Writing in Russian, Podolinskii used the pejorative "zhid/zhidovskii" throughout. He would have been well aware of the provocative significance of this usage.

⁷² Sapir, *Vpered!*, II, 459-60 (12/V/1876).

believe constitute the necessary attributes of socialism. Correspondence, such as that from Vilna and Belostok [i.e., Liberman's articles], is complete *Yidophilia*.⁷³

The existence of such overt prejudice against Jews is further confirmed by an article submitted to *Vpered!* in 1876 from a veteran revolutionary, entitled "Prejudices of Our Social Revolutionaries Against the Jews." Even his title, the author averred, would be enough to make any good socialist blush with shame. Nonetheless, it could not be denied that such prejudices existed, to the detriment of both Jews and the socialist movement. He conjectured that the seeds of anti-Jewish prejudices lay in the ignorant songs of childhood that implanted the image of the "Yid" as a rogue and unbeliever. Unable to rid himself of these prejudices, the mature socialist agitator was incapable of countering them among the people in the proper way, by relating them to economic conditions. Instead, the revolutionaries themselves fell in with the popular prejudice that "all the Yids have to be destroyed."

These attitudes were completely discreditable, the author warned. It sufficed to note that they were shared by the hypocritical agents of the bourgeois press such as Kraevskii, Shul'gin, and Brafman, "who praise *Jews* when Gintsburg pays them a salary, and begin to abuse the *Yids* when the salary is stopped, when they receive subsidies from the government or from the zemstvo to abuse unbelievers."⁷⁴ It was entirely understandable that an "honorable" newspaper such as *Golos* might praise the Jewish aristocracy even while reviling the petty Jewish shopkeeper for sucking the blood of the people. It was disconcerting, therefore, to hear such sentiments from the lips of socialists. Yet agitational materials, such as the pamphlet "The Steam Engine," did precisely that by blaming the "*pany* and the *Yids*" for the shortage of peasant land and the resultant poverty and starvation. "Aren't you tangling up, rather than straightening out, the confused understanding of the people by identifying the idea of the *Yids*, i.e., people who, under different conditions, can be variously useful or harmful for others, with the *pany*, i.e., people who always and everywhere are the same . . . always harmful for others?"

Prejudicial attitudes were not directed only against the Jews in general, but also against Jewish social revolutionaries, comrades-in-arms. According to the author, Jewish socialists were greeted by snide remarks like "you Jews are a muddle-headed people" or "Jewish revolutionaries will probably make a speculative business out of the social revolutionary

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 466 (19/VI/1876).

⁷⁴ Kraevskii was the editor of the liberal *Golos*, Shul'gin of the conservative, russifying *Kievlianin*, and Brafman was the Jewish renegade and Judeophobe author. *Golos* pursued a Judeophobe editorial line at this time.

idea". Faced with these attitudes Jewish socialists dropped out of the movement, depriving it of valuable strength. The author argued that it was incumbent on the movement to take a more rational approach to the Jewish Question.⁷⁵ Significantly, the editorial board of *Vpered!*, determined to avoid a scandal within the ranks, declined to publish this letter or Podolinskii's oft-repeated proposals to provide an article setting forth his own distinctive views on the Jews.⁷⁶

Not all revolutionaries – or all Ukrainian radicals – were skeptical about the revolutionary potential of the Jewish masses. As early as 1877 Mykhailo Drahomanov sought Ukrainian-Jewish cooperation in the socialist movement, arranging for talks in Kiev to explore possibilities.⁷⁷ He also assisted the publication of the revolutionary manifesto, "From the Group of Socialist Jews" and appended an optimistic commentary.⁷⁸ But Drahomanov was the exception that proved the rule, as the revolutionary movement as a whole disdained work among the Jews. Moshe Mishkinsky is quite correct in seeing these attitudes as crucial for interpreting the conduct of socialist groups when confronted with the pogroms.⁷⁹

A number of revolutionaries, such as Drahomanov, had specifically warned of the possibility of pogroms against the Jews. Much of the socialist Judeophobia of the 1870s, when drawn to its logical consequence, pointed in this direction. One underground organization, the Southern Russian Workers Union (IuRRS), actually toyed with the idea of using the antipathy of the masses toward the Poles and Jews as a catalyst for revolution.⁸⁰ An agitational leaflet dated 30 January 1881 urged the peasants to organize secret councils to keep an eye "on things the *pany* and the Jews are plotting together, and the tricks in which they participate". It recommended that, whenever possible, matters should be settled "with an obstinate *pan*, or a Jew, a policeman-grafter, or a bribed witness".⁸¹

When they did appear, the pogroms took the revolutionary movement as a whole by surprise. Individual socialists were slow to adopt tactics in

⁷⁵ Sotsial'nyi revoliutsioner 1, "Predrassudki nashikh sotsial'nykh revoliutsionerov protiv evreev," Sapir, ed., "Vpered!," II, 501–8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 461–2. Jewish revolutionaries, denying that Judeophobia was a problem in the movement, advised the editors of *Vpered!* not to publish the latter article: Haberer, *Jews and Revolution*, 312–13. In the light of the Judeophobia apparent in other sources, they appear to have been overly sanguine about the problem.

⁷⁷ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 101.

⁷⁸ M. P. Drahomanov, *Sobranie politicheskikh sochinenii* (Paris, 1905–6), II, 32–8.

⁷⁹ Mishkinsky, "Al emdata," 38.

⁸⁰ Mishkinsky ("Attitude," 198–203) discusses in detail the extent to which the use of ethnic hatreds was an integral part of the union's ideology. He concludes that "what is certain is that some leaders of the union held to such an attitude and that, for a time, albeit a short one, it was representative of the union as a whole."

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

relation to the disorders, or to issue revolutionary proclamations to the workers. The government soon realized this and, after its initial panic, and with a few exceptions, disregarded revolutionary agitation as a major factor in the outbreak of pogroms.

Revolutionary activists confronted the pogroms in two ways, practically and ideologically. The practical response took the form of revolutionary proclamations addressed directly to "the people" or in rhetorical support for them. Ideological speculation constituted the fare served up by the underground press to sympathizers. It featured sober analyses of the pogrom movement and debates over tactics. This distinction between agitation and ideology has not always been recognized by commentators. The ideological diversity of the revolutionary movement, including interfactional differences, must also be kept in mind.

Proclamations and declarations of support were usually authored in haste, under the pressures of the moment and in an effort to catch up with a popular initiative. The content of such pronouncements reflected the core ideology of their authors. Mainstream Populists attempted to direct this unexpected popular initiative by speaking directly to the people as *pogromshchiki*. A contrasting approach was taken by the ideological followers of Petr Tkachev, whom Mishkinsky has labeled "the Russian Jacobins." They advocated the revolutionary seizure of power by a small group of elite revolutionaries as rapidly as possible, before capitalism could be firmly rooted in Russia. Anything that helped to destabilize the regime was welcomed. In the June 1881 number of his émigré journal *Nabat*, Tkachev exulted in the outbreak of the pogroms. He rejected any effort to direct these elemental outbursts of popular wrath. They were not prompted by external agitation nor by theoretical considerations, but simply because the people saw Jews as one of a number of groups of exploiters. "They started by attacking the *Yid* and not the *priest* only because the *Yid* exploiter was closer and less well defended, and also because they had to start with someone. We shall find that the popular uprising against the *Yids* is nothing but an uprising against the exploiters and executioners of the People. One senses within it all the signs of the awakening *social revolution*."⁸²

Numerous proclamations appeared in the course of the pogroms, but they were usually homegrown, amateurish productions. They ranged from crude attempts at anti-Jewish incitement to efforts to transfer the

⁸² Mishkinsky, "Russian Jacobins," 341 (italics in the original).

attention of the rioters from the Jews to the authorities.⁸³ There were even rumors that Minsk revolutionaries had made a public declaration to the Jews denying responsibility for the violence.⁸⁴ The first attempt at anything resembling a mass appeal appeared in Kiev on 27/8 April 1881, in the middle of the Kiev pogrom. It was written by a member of the IuRRS, Pavlo Ivaniv, and printed by the union's press, although it was confiscated by the police before it could be distributed. The lateness and vagueness of the response of the IuRRS, perceived by the local authorities as a strong, well-organized body, contributed significantly to the government's dismissal of socialist responsibility for the pogroms. The proclamation, in Russian, read:

Brother workers. You are beating the Yids, but indiscriminately. One should not beat the Yid because he is a Yid, and prays to God in his own way – indeed, God is one and the same to all, but rather one should beat him because he is robbing the people, he is sucking the blood of the working man. Speaking honestly, any of our own merchants or factory owners are worse than the Yid in robbing and ruining the worker, sucking the last drop out of him, scraping together all the wealth for himself, as he cultivates his big belly. Should such a bloodsucker be left in peace while any Jew, even one who earns his daily bread no more easily than our own people, by hard work, by a trade, by unskilled labor – should he really be despoiled? It is a sin to hurt a poor worker, even a Tatar. If you are to beat, then at the same time beat every kulak-robber who is making capital out of our sweat and blood – beat any of the authorities who protect those who rob us, who shoot into the crowd for the sake of some villainous millionaire like Brodskii and kill innocent people. This is the new order. Let us stand together in friendship, brothers, for our just cause.⁸⁵

There are a number of striking features to this proclamation, the first public response to the pogroms by a revolutionary group whose ideology is well known to the historian. The first is that it departed radically from the union's pre-pogrom agitational pamphlet of 30 January 1881, even though it was written by the same man.⁸⁶ The Kiev document clearly distinguished between groups within the Jewish community, denying that all Jews were exploiters or deserved to be the target of popular vengeance. Further, it rejected the tactic of using the pogroms as a point of departure

⁸³ For examples, see *K-A*, 287, 297–8. Officials claimed that many proclamations were forgeries produced by Jews in order to force the dispatch of troops for their protection. For one example, from Suwalki province, see GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 11 (13/IV/1882), ll. 1–2.

⁸⁴ Haberer, *Jews and Revolution*, 219.

⁸⁵ *K-A*, 225. See Mishkinsky, "Attitude," 206–7, for Russian and English versions. For a fuller explication, see the same author's "'Igud ha-poalim ha-drom rusi' ve-ha-pogrom be-kiev bi-shnat 1881," *Shvut*, 1 (1973), 62–73.

⁸⁶ Mishkinsky, "Attitude," 208–9.

for the spread of revolutionary violence.⁸⁷ It did, however, confirm the government's fear that the revolutionaries would use the suppression of pogroms as a device to embitter relations between the population and the authorities.

Mishkinsky detects some inconsistencies and problems in Ivaniv's views. One such contradiction is the author's use of the pejorative "Yid" (*zhid*) in the Russian-language text. Another is the apparent contradiction to the overall anti-pogrom message in the words "One should not beat the Yid because he is a Yid . . . but . . . because he is robbing the people". It seems to me more likely that this "contradiction" was not the result of ideological confusion or of haste in writing the proclamation, but rather a play on the well-known popular saying, "*ne tot zhid kto evrei, a tot zhid kto zhid*" ("Not the Yid who is a Jew, but the Yid who is a Yid").⁸⁸

The Narodnovoltsy

No such initial restraint is detectable in the publication emanating from Narodnaia volia (People's Will), the revolutionary socialist group whose agents had carried out the assassination of Alexander II. On 30 August 1881, a decree entitled "From the Executive Committee [of Narodnaia volia] to the Ukrainian People" was published in Ukrainian. The proclamation read in part:

Who has seized from your hands the lands, the forest, and the taverns? The Jews. From whom must the peasant beg, through his tears, for access to his land allotment, to his field? The Jews. Wherever one looks, wherever one goes, the Jews are there. The Jew curses you, cheats you, drinks your blood . . . And only let the peasants stand up and defend themselves from their cruel enemies, as they did in Elisavetgrad, Kiev, and Smela – at once the tsar helps the Jews; they bring in the Moskali [i.e., Muscovites, Russians], and peasant blood – Christian blood – flows! . . . The Jew insults a person, deceives him, drinks his blood . . . You can't deal with them other than with force, with rebellion, good people. Only blood will wash away the people's woes. You have already begun to rebel against the Jews. You have done well. Soon the Russian land will rise in rebellion against the tsar, the *pany*, and the Jews. It is good that you will be with us.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ S. Vaisenberg, "Evrei v russkikh poslovitsakh," *Ruskaia starina*, 7 (April–June 1915), 231.

⁸⁹ Cited in S. Valk, "G. G. Romanenko (iz istorii 'Narodnoi Voli')," *Katorga i ssylka* (1928), 50–2. See also Yitshak Maor, "Ha-kruz ha-anti-shemi shel 'narodnaya volya,'" *Zion*, 15 (1950), 150–5. Ukrainian lacks a pejorative term for Jew, like the Russian *zhid* ('Yid'), so I have translated *Zyd* as Jew, although Romanenko's hostile intent is clear.

The tone of this manifesto was radically different from the Kiev proclamation. All Jews were lumped together as exploiters of the peasants and allies of the *pany*. The violence against the Jews was only a beginning, but a highly appropriate and laudatory one. Although the proclamation anticipated that violence would spread to the bureaucracy and landowners, "the useless Jews" were condemned as most guilty for the people's suffering.

The author of the proclamation was G. G. Romanenko, the son of a landowner in Bessarabia province who had left New Russia University for a life in the revolutionary underground. The publication of this decree by the press of the Executive Committee of *Narodnaia volia*, with that body's apparent signature and implied seal of approval, has generated enormous historical controversy. As Erich Haberer has shown, the document cannot be considered the officially approved opinion of the Executive Committee. Romanenko issued the proclamation without the approval of any of his colleagues, at a time when the Executive Committee was in complete disarray because of police harassment. At least two Executive Committee members, Vera Figner and Lev Tikhomirov, repudiated the document as soon as they read it. Figner in Odessa ordered all copies to be burned.⁹⁰ Rank-and-file members were less critical, however. Local cadres in Elisavetgrad, scene of the first pogrom, reprinted it on a hectograph.⁹¹ Romanenko cleverly reinforced the effect of the proclamation by referring to it in a later article that he published in the underground newspaper *Narodnaia volia* (23/X/1881), noting that "here the author only repeats the view expressed by the [Executive] Committee in the proclamation to the Ukrainian people."⁹²

When the party press of *Narodnaia volia* began an extensive discussion of the pogroms in the late summer of 1881, its observations lacked Romanenko's passionate tone, but otherwise did not differ sharply from his sentiments. A commentary published in *Listok Narodnoi voli* for 22 July 1881 observed that the people were beginning to replace the idea of a beneficial tsar with a confused concept of "benefactors," who were in fact the socialists. The anti-Jewish movement, the author claimed, had not been stirred up by the socialist movement, but it was an echo of socialist activity.

⁹⁰ Valk, "Romanenko," 52; V. Ia. Bogucharskii, *Iz istorii politicheskoi bor'by v 70 i 80-kh gg. XIX v.* (Moscow, 1912), 222.

⁹¹ Valk, "Romanenko," 52.

⁹² Erich Haberer, "Cosmopolitanism, Antisemitism, and Populism: A Reappraisal of the Russian and Jewish Socialist Response to the Pogrom of 1881-1882," in John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992), 105-10.

A new element had been added to the methods of the revolutionary struggle.⁹³

The commentator clearly derived his conclusions from "A Letter from the Village" that was printed in the same issue and which sought to illustrate the opportunities that the Narodnovoltsy might draw from the pogroms. The author depicted the peasantry as a large, inchoate mass, naively relying upon the "Good Tsar" to ease their misery. The pogroms introduced a ferment into a hitherto stable situation. The rumors accompanying the pogroms encouraged the peasantry to question and explore current events. Responding to the urban riots, rural Jews panicked and threw in their lot with the local landowners and kulaks, taunting the peasants with the threat of official retribution in the case of any disorders. This encouraged the people to recognize the solidarity of their class enemies. Unrest directed against the Jews was followed by threats against landed property. In this way the pogroms, and the response of the Jews to them, strengthened popular unrest and directed peasant thoughts toward economic revolution. The revolutionary party benefited from this process. The propensity of the Jews to blame the socialists for the pogroms (in order to frighten the authorities and elicit their protection) created a bond between the socialists and the people, dimly understood, but full of promise.

The analysis was more descriptive than judgemental. Thus, the tactlessness of the Jews was described, but not commented on. The willingness of the Jews to ally with the rich implied that this was a natural alliance, but the author was not explicit on this score. What could not be missed, however, was the note of enthusiasm that underlay the entire article. A "pogrom consciousness" among the peasantry did not go far enough, but it was a step in the right direction.⁹⁴

More interesting still was the "contemporary survey" printed in the underground newspaper *Narodnaia volia* on 23 October 1881. The author was Romanenko, who used it, as already noted, to connect the Executive Committee to his proclamation "To the Ukrainian People." Romanenko welcomed the disorders since they presaged social revolution, as in France in 1789. There was widespread misery in Russia and heightened class antagonisms. "In the South, before other localities, popular dissatisfaction was expressed in a mass revolutionary movement which local conditions gave an anti-Jewish hue."

Why the Jews? Because the landowning class in the South was already an anachronism, a spent force eliciting more condescension than antipathy.

⁹³ Reprinted in *Literatura partii "Narodnoi Voli"* (Moscow, 1907), 212-19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 194-8. Ingerflom ("Idéologie," 443) attributes this article to V. A. Zhebunev, a member of the Executive Committee of *Narodnaia volia*.

"All the attention of the people who are defending themselves is now concentrated on the merchants, the tavern-keepers, the usurers, in a word, on the Jews, great and small, this local 'bourgeoisie' which, slowly but surely, as nowhere else, robbed the working man." Romanenko conceded that the typical Jewish "bourgeois" was no better off than the peasants whom he exploited and that the conduct of the Jews was the inevitable consequence of the economic system. These qualifications were promptly eclipsed by his depiction of the rapacious treatment of the peasantry by the "Yids." Significantly, he chose his examples from the columns of the conservative Judeophobe newspaper *Kievlianin*. Romanenko expressed no regret in observing that "it isn't the people's business that our economic conditions were not created by the Jews and that, as individuals, they were not responsible for them." If the landlords and tsarist authorities naively attributed all social unrest to the revolutionaries, then the peasant could not be faulted for ascribing all his troubles to "that rascal Itsek."

Romanenko cited newspaper accounts of the pogroms with relish. All the right things were happening. Violence was spreading to rich Jews and attempts to protect them generated sharp hostility toward the police, the army, and the authorities. If the precedent of the French Revolution was a guide, social revolution was in the offing. Narodnaia volia must now act in a creative way. "We don't have the right to respond negatively or even indifferently to a genuinely popular movement; we are obliged to provide a general formula for forces which are justly discontented and actively protesting, and to consciously direct these forces." This is precisely what the Executive Committee had done, Romanenko claimed, in its proclamation "To the Ukrainian People."⁹⁵

Romanenko was arrested on 9 November 1881, but the sentiments he expressed remained current in the Narodnovoltsy underground. When another serious pogrom occurred in Ekaterinoslav on 20 July 1883, the "Workers' Faction" of Narodnaia volia put out another proclamation, emphasizing the ties of the Jews to the authorities. In an analysis largely characterized by wishful thinking, an editorial in the supplement to *Listok Narodnoi voli* reemphasized the theme of the pogroms as a prelude to social revolution. "They [the people] beat the Jews, not as Jews [*evrei*] but as Yids [*shidy*], that is, as exploiters of the people. They understand very well that the authorities defend them not as Jews, not as a persecuted people, and still less as an intellectual force, all of which they fiercely persecute, but as Yids, that is, as a people who keep the people in cabal, who work along with them [the authorities], giving them bribes, etc." The

⁹⁵ *Literatura partii "Narodnoi Voli,"* 212-19.

pogroms were losing their Jewish character, the editorial claimed, and moving on to economic and political grounds. The author invoked the precedent of the French Revolution, so beloved of Russian revolutionaries. It too had allegedly begun with a massacre of the Jews, a phenomenon that was apparently part of an inescapable process. "The Jews, as K. Marx very well explains somewhere, an unfortunate people who have long been persecuted, have become a people who are attuned and sensitized to the highest degree; they reproduce in themselves, mirror-like . . . all the vices of the surrounding milieu, all the sickness of a given social stratum, so that when the anti-Jewish movements begin, one can be assured that they contain a protest against the whole order of things."⁹⁶

Only in late 1884, forced to recognize that the pogroms did not foreshadow a wholesale revolution, did Narodnovoltsy editorialists finally back away from the concept of the pogroms as proto-revolution. A self-critical editorial, published in the September 1884 issue of *Narodnaia volia*, observed that

The revolutionary should take part only in such protests which his consciousness and conscience recommend to him as something expedient . . . Revolutionaries must recognize this when the people, attempting to generalize its protest, pursue a mistaken formula, such as happened, for example, in the anti-Jewish disorders. In this case, there was apparent in our midst complete confusion in the reasoning of individuals. They say that the anti-Jewish movement springs from economic causes and that it has a serious underpinning . . . Everything in the world has a serious underpinning, but that doesn't make everything expedient. The question is this: Have the people chosen the right path for the improvement of their lot? . . . We wish to be completely understood. Protest is a matter of the first importance, for without protest there is no revolution. To stifle protest is a criminal act for a revolutionary. But he is obligated by word and deed to turn this protest into something expedient, correctly formulated, and directed against the *general* condition.⁹⁷

The course of Narodnovoltsy attitudes toward the pogroms grew logically out of the evolving ideals of the movement. Disillusioned by the failure of the "movement to the people," the Narodnovoltsy pursued a campaign of political terror to destroy the state, which they decried as the real enemy of the Russian people. Terrorism would force political change in the form of a constitutional regime that could evolve toward socialism. A popular insurrection could not be expected in the near future, nor would the masses move spontaneously. A struggle that shattered the Russian state system, on the other hand, would allow the people to express themselves, to develop a political consciousness, to become a force capable of

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 311-13. ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 337-8.

acting independently and winning its own rights and forms of communal life. While the revolutionaries were quite prepared to launch a "revolution from above" in the event that the assassination of the tsar failed to trigger a social revolution, this was considered as the worst possible scenario. It was always preferable for the will of the people to assert itself.⁹⁸ This helps to explain why the movement was willing to indulge the *pogromshchiki* for so long and was so slow to reject the course and target of peasant disorders. By 1883 it was apparent that pogroms did not lead toward social revolution and were even likely to hinder it.

The Chernoperedeltsy

It has been said that when the *Zemlia i volia* (Land and Freedom) movement of the 1870s broke into successor movements, the *Narodnovoltsy* took the "freedom" (*volia*) or political action, and the movement known as "Black Repartition" (*Chernyi peredel*) took the land (*zemlia*), or the emphasis on social change. The strand of Populism to which this latter faction clung was the tradition of agitation and education among the peasantry. Only by raising the level of peasant consciousness could a social revolution be expedited. While the *Narodnovoltsy* pursued direct action in the name of the people, therefore, the *Chernoperedeltsy* emphasized close ties to the peasantry and patient work among them. The response of the *Chernoperedeltsy* in exile to the pogroms reflected these specific concerns.

In the autumn of 1881, ideologists of *Chernyi Peredel*, writing in the movement's journal, linked the pogroms to the assassination of the tsar. All the internal contradictions of the life of the masses were heightened by the event, they concluded, and found an outlet in a way that reflected the peasant milieu and conditions of life.⁹⁹ A "Letter from the South," written by one Prokonenko, put flesh on the bare theoretical bones. Antipathy to the Yids, he observed, grew out of their exploitation of the people, although the restricted legal position of the Jews forced them to rely upon exploitative activities. Whatever the pretext, the moment of retribution had come, and the people, who differentiated among their enemies, turned against the alien exploiter before the homegrown landlords and kulaks. "The anti-Jewish rout [is] a prelude to a more serious and useful popular movement." This reality was confirmed by current

⁹⁸ This characterization of *Narodnaia volia* is largely based on Venturi, *Roots*, 675-9.

⁹⁹ *Chernyi peredel*, 4:IX/1881; reprinted in *Chernyi peredel. Organ sotsialistov-federalistov, 1880-1881 g.* (Moscow and Petrograd, 1923), 300-1. (Hereafter *Chernyi peredel* reprint).

rumors that, once the Jews were completely expelled from the countryside, the tsar would distribute all the land to the peasants.¹⁰⁰

According to this analysis, the pogroms also resulted in the growing prestige of the socialist movement in peasant eyes, since both government and rumor attributed the violence to socialist influence. They yearned for the socialists to come and lead them in a pogrom. While this belief was as mistaken as the notorious peasant faith in the benevolence of the tsar, it was a step forward. "Popular belief already sees the socialist as their defender and this, from purely practical considerations in the countryside, is a very important thing."¹⁰¹

There was some ambiguity in the views of another Chernyi Peredel publication, *Zerno*, which targeted the workers of St. Petersburg. In a June 1881 examination of the pogroms, an article asked the workers "to look closely at the Jews themselves and you will see that far from all of them are rich, and not all are kulaks. There are many poor among them, who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, who are squeezed by the kulaks and bosses no less than you are . . . Understand that all workers of whatever religion and nationality must unite, must work against the common enemy." Yet this same article also included a bitter attack upon "Jewish exploitation", while exculpating the masses for carrying out pogroms. Reportedly, a harsher version of the article was rewritten and toned down only after the intervention of a Jewish revolutionary.¹⁰²

By the end of 1881, these contradictions were resolved, as Chernopere-deltsy ideologues grew increasingly critical of the pogroms and the response of revolutionaries to them. Socialists had an obligation to educate and direct the people, making full use of the appropriate popular impulses. The pogroms were not such an appropriate impulse. The Jews became an obvious target because of their own national-religious exclusivity and the rightless position into which the state placed them. Arising from such factors, attacks upon the Jews did nothing to raise popular consciousness and had no positive educational influence. Indeed, they were more likely to play into the hands of those who sought to distract the people from recognizing the real system that sucked them dry, by projecting their resentment onto its accidental agents. The revolutionary intelligentsia was guilty of failing to educate the people to resist this deception.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 304. ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 306-7.

¹⁰² Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 100; Moshe Mishkinsky, "'Black Repartition' and the Pogroms of 1881-1882," in Klier and Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms*, 76. For an analogous occurrence involving the rewriting of a proclamation written by I. Gurvich in Minsk, see Haberer, *Jews and Revolution*, 219.

¹⁰³ *Chernyi peredel*, 5:XII/1881; *Chernyi peredel reprint*, 319-20.

An anonymous report "From Elisavetgrad District" confirmed this analysis. The real instigators and leaders of the pogroms, it reported, were the local bourgeoisie, "elements alien to the people, for whom it was necessary to harm the competitor-Yid, but that is all; they don't think about the interests of the people. It isn't surprising, of course, that the masses, hungry and destitute, took up the executioners' role, not asking how and why." The only positive feature of the pogroms was their tendency to spread from the Yids to the better-off.¹⁰⁴ Clearly, for the Chernoperedeltsy, the pogroms were not only a mistake, but one for which the socialist movement had to take a measure of responsibility and blame.

Revolutionaries in emigration

The ambivalence toward and even approval of pogroms by revolutionaries within the Russian Empire were encouraged by the pressures of the moment and the need to craft strategies suited to unfolding events. These conditions made it inappropriate to openly criticize either the people or comrades. Outside Russia, and far from the immediate revolutionary crisis, matters were different. After the fact, incorrect revolutionary tactics could be submitted to a cooler analysis. Revolutionaries in emigration were also more aware of how the movement might lose moral prestige if linked to events that were universally reviled in the West.

Drahomanov, the Ukrainian revolutionary who had persistently emphasized the importance of the national issue, was one of the first to take up the cudgels. In his article, "The Jewish Question in Ukraine," published in July 1882, he faulted both Jewish and non-Jewish socialists. They had scorned his past warnings about the potential for mass violence against the Jews which arose from the economic role they played in Ukraine. Invoking the dubious formula of "cosmopolitanism," his fellow socialists attempted to ignore the national question and to avoid submitting it to serious analysis. This was not unexpected, since socialists of both Russian and Jewish descent had lost their links to their own national masses. "Socialists and Populists of Jewish origin, cut off from their own people, are less capable than others of establishing ties to the non-Jewish masses, and serve only to strengthen the 'general Russian [*obshcherusskii*],' that is, rootless element among the Russian socialists and Populists."¹⁰⁵

Drahomanov claimed that the confused response of both wings of the Russian social revolutionary movement to the pogroms demonstrated

¹⁰⁴ *Chernyi peredel* reprint, 346-7. ¹⁰⁵ *Volnoe slovo*, 41:15/VII/1882.

their inability to conduct a proper analysis of this significant mass movement. The Narodnaia volia proclamation, "To the Ukrainian People," did not advance beyond the popular awareness that Jews were guilty of exploitation. It ignored the fact that many poor and pauperized Jews, who lived a life of productive labor, were among the victims. The Chernyi Peredel faction went to the other extreme, typified by an exhortation to the people, published in *Zerno*, that they should remember that there were poor Jews with whom they should make common cause against the economic foe. This appeal, complained Drahomanov, failed to recognize the national links which tied together the Jewish pauper and Jewish kulak, or the propensity of the Jewish pauper to become a Jewish kulak, whenever conditions permitted.

Newly emergent Jewish nationalists and Populists sought to maintain ties to their people. Lacking proper social awareness, they did more harm than good. "This passionate relationship of Jewish nationalists and Populists to their co-nationals was one of the chief reasons for their ignoring the growth of the anti-Jewish movement in the mass of the people in Ukraine, and they did not give a timely warning to their co-nationals; if this relationship does not become more objective, there is the danger that the bitter lessons of the past year will have passed for the Jews in vain."¹⁰⁶

This criticism was doubly telling because it was seconded by young Jewish Populists (as opposed to Populists who were Jews), such as Ben Ami of the Odessa Am Olam movement, who was given a forum in Drahomanov's *Volnoe slovo*, and served for a time as a close collaborator. Such criticism piqued the consciences of some of the leaders of Narodnaia volia in exile, most particularly Pavel Akselrod, who was Jewish. Akselrod recognized the failure of the Narodnovoltsy to respond adequately to the pogroms and, almost alone, resolved to remedy the situation. Apparently he hoped to elicit the approval of Georgi Plekhanov, Lev Deich, and Vera Zasulich, the leaders of Chernyi Peredel in exile, as well as the Executive Committee of Narodnaia volia. He composed a number of drafts for a brochure which he wrote for this purpose. One, entitled "On the Tasks of the Jewish Socialist Youth," was published only in the 1920s;¹⁰⁷ another version was located by S. Kolinchuk in the Manuscript Division of the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "O zadachakh evreisko-sotsialisticheskoi intelligentsii," in *Iz arkhiva P. B. Aksel'roda* (Berlin, 1924), 215-29.

¹⁰⁸ S. Kolinchuk, "Pavel Aksel'rod, Lev Deich i drugie ... (Evrei-Narodniki i pogromy 80-kh gg. XIX v.," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 2, 18 (1998), 51-2.

Akselrod's central objective was to bolster the spirits of socialists of Jewish origin, who were stunned by the ferocity of popular violence against the Jews, and to offer them a plan of action. Jewish socialists had to recognize that, in their enthusiasm for the ideal of internationalism they had erred by neglecting their fellow Jews. If they had conducted sustained agitation and propaganda among Jews, while forging strong links to the purely Russian workers' movement, they could have "weakened the one-sided and ugly nationalistic character of the 'anti-Jewish disorders,' preparing elements which, at least in a few cases, could have diverted the crowd from attacks on the poor and directed them if not against the centers of popular exploitation as a whole, at least against rich Jews."¹⁰⁹

Jewish socialists must not become disillusioned with the Russian people, because the pogroms were not a display of national and religious hatred, but a response to socioeconomic phenomena and needed to be understood in the context of class struggle. Akselrod reminded his readers that historical circumstances such as religious persecution had excluded Jews from the productive role of agriculture, forcing them instead to survive as tradesmen, middlemen, and usurers. Although they were, in the main, destitute and poverty-stricken, the peasants viewed them as exploiters, while the petty bourgeoisie and capitalists saw them as competitors. Even the professional classes feared the competition of university-educated Jewish youth. In Russia, therefore, the Jews constituted an economic force that, in the struggle for existence, came into conflict with the most diverse strata of the population. The government, as well as non-Jewish capitalists, were prepared to exploit this hostility in order to provide an outlet for popular unrest. "There is not the slightest doubt that agents of the government and various elements of the Christian bourgeoisie not only directly supported the anti-Jewish movement, but in many places triggered and led it."¹¹⁰

Given this state of affairs, it was entirely appropriate for Jewish socialists to undertake work among their own people. They must not be distracted by current fancies, such as projects for the "national renaissance of the Jews or the establishment of a Jewish state." The emigration movement, so much in vogue that socialists had to at least consider it, could be effective only if half the Russian-Jewish population departed. Even if the resources existed for such a project, there would remain the problem of transforming Jews into an economically productive element in their new lands. Within this process of productivization lay the ultimate solution to

Kolinchuk sees the final version of the article as milder in its condemnation of the pogroms, because Aksel'rod came to accept that a true revolutionary could not be indifferent to a popular mass movement: *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁰⁹ "O zadachakh," 218. ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 224.

the Jewish Question. Jews must be transformed into a genuine proletariat, surviving by physical, productive labor. The Russian proletariat would cease to see the Jews as exploiters, and welcome them as fellow workers as the two groups amalgamated through the process of merger (*sliianié*).¹¹¹ As I have shown elsewhere, there was no consensus among Russian-language publicists as to what precisely this term meant.¹¹² Abraham Ascher, Akselrod's biographer, suggests that "from the context it would appear that at the very least he had in mind that Jews adopt the Russian language, immerse themselves in Russian culture, live among non-Jews, and join non-sectarian political organizations."¹¹³

This prescription presented a quandary. Akselrod estimated that the process of transforming Russian Jews into a productive proletariat would require ten to fifteen years and the growth of a new generation more accustomed to productive labor. Even then the process could only begin with the abolition of the Pale of Settlement and the replacement of absolutism with free political institutions. The process of merger was attainable, as the example of Western Europe demonstrated. But it would take far longer in Russia because the average Russian Jew was at a higher level of intellectual and political attainment than the mass of peasants and townsmen. Consequently, existing popular culture held no attraction for Jews. Indeed, "speaking of the merger of the Jewish masses with the Christian population, we do not have in mind simply their merger with existing elements as they are. In general this merger will be reasonable and expedient only when major social-political reforms have given scope for the more rapid political and intellectual development of the lower classes in Russia in general."¹¹⁴

Hedged about with qualifications, Akselrod's prescribed goals for the Jewish socialist intelligentsia were symbolic at best. His prerequisites that would make possible the "proletarianizing" of the Jews and the elevation of the intellectual and political level of the non-Jewish masses were nothing less than the fall of the autocracy and "major social-political reforms," extending over decades. It was, in effect, only a reaffirmation of the general goals of the socialist movement. A weak Jewish coloration was blended in to salve the guilty consciences of revolutionaries of Jewish descent who could not bring themselves to repudiate pogroms in clear and unqualified language.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 226. ¹¹² Klier, *IRJQ*, 66-7.

¹¹³ Abraham Ascher, "Pavel Axelrod: A Conflict Between Jewish Loyalty and Revolutionary Dedication," *Russian Review*, 24 (1965), 256.

¹¹⁴ "O zadachakh," 226.

Even then, Akselrod's pamphlet never saw the light of day. Erich Haberer argues that the disagreements among the Chernoperedeltsy over a formal repudiation of pogroms were so great that Akselrod was constrained to abandon the effort.¹¹⁵ Jonathan Frankel identifies Akselrod's less-than-flattering description of the Russian masses as culturally inferior to the Jews as the principal reason underlying this disagreement.¹¹⁶ He points to Petr Lavrov who, while conceding that a treatment of the Jewish Question from the socialist point of view was a desideratum, admitted that "I find the question extremely complicated and, in practice for a party that has as its objective to come together [sblizit'sia] with the people and to support them against the government, difficult in the very highest degree. It is very easy to solve it on paper, but in view of the present popular passion and the need for the Russian socialists to have the people, as much as possible, on their side, reality is something else."¹¹⁷ The sentiments of Akselrod's close colleague, Lev Deich, also of Jewish descent, provide an appropriate epitaph for the efforts of the would-be architects of revolution to resolve this apparently banal social problem: "The Jewish Question now is really, in practice, almost insoluble for the revolutionaries."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Haberer, *Jews and Revolution*, 225-6. ¹¹⁶ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 106.

¹¹⁷ *Iz arkhiva P. B. Aksel'roda*, 30. ¹¹⁸ Cited in Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 107.

5 The crystallization of prejudice

Ignatiev possesses an “unrestrained and insatiable need to lie. He lies as a consequence of the demands of his own nature, as the bird sings and the dog barks; he lies at every turn without the slightest reason or need, even when he harms himself.”

E. M. Feoktistov¹

“Father of Lies”

Moving troops about the countryside and flogging peasants was only a short-term solution to the pogrom crisis. How was the government to deal with the deeper malaise created by Jewish exploitation, which had been identified by all commentators? A few provincial authorities resorted to traditional solutions, such as expelling illegally settled Jews, as was done in Kiev, Orel, and Moscow. This merely exacerbated the situation, as exemplified by the Pereiaslav pogrom, which arose in part from resentment against an influx of Jewish refugees from Kiev.² Expulsions, as noted in the previous chapter, drew complaints from prominent Russian businessmen. Another expedient, proposed by the Kiev administration, was the concentration of all legally resident Jews into one district. Yet this promised to do nothing more than provide *pogromshchiki* with a convenient target. Something more substantial was clearly required. The official who, more than anyone else, took up the challenge of ending the conditions which gave rise to pogroms was the new minister of internal affairs, Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev.

Ignatiev’s own contemporaries, as well as later historians, are united in their critical evaluation of him. The Jewish press in the 1880s denounced him as a vicious antisemite who was virtually the author of the pogroms. His character was further blackened by charges of corruption and mendacity. The charge of venality – linked to a huge bribe he is said to have

¹ Cited in P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhavna na rubezhe 1870–1880-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964), 335.

² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (8/VII/1881), l. 185ob.

sought from Baron G. O. Gintsburg to sabotage the May Laws and to the claim that he leased estates to a Jewish agent before the laws came into force – has no stronger foundation than the hearsay testimony of enemies.³ His habitual economy with the truth is not so easily denied.⁴ Contemporaries claimed that the man the Turks called *Mentir Pasha* – the "Father of Lies" – had during his time as Russian ambassador to the Sublime Porte imbibed too much Oriental duplicity. Others put it down to a fundamental character flaw, as famously described by his subordinate, E. M. Feoktistov, cited above. Soviet historians denounced him as a Panslav fanatic, an arch-reactionary, a cat's-paw of Pobedonostsev. In truth, Ignatiev was a rather more complex individual, whether seen from the perspective of his political objectives or of his policies for dealing with the Jews.⁵

Zaionchkovskii characterized Ignatiev as one of Pobedonostsev's creatures, but it should be noted that he was first brought into the cabinet in March 1881 by the moderate interior minister Loris-Melikov. Ignatiev imitated Loris-Melikov's policy of actively seeking the support of segments of society for government policy, in order to mend the "parting of the ways" which notoriously divided state and society at the end of the nineteenth century. In a style of government that was nicknamed "popular politics," Ignatiev recruited groups of specialists, the so-called knowledgeable individuals, to advise the government on specific matters of policy. Within the first month of his appointment to the MVD, he invited a panel of thirteen experts to discuss lowering the hugely unpopular redemption payments that peasants paid for the land they had received in the emancipation of 1861. In September 1881, another invited conference of thirty-five specialists offered their opinions on the excise tax on spirits and the logistics of peasant resettlement. Into this category may perhaps be placed the Kakhanov Commission, a major government

³ G. B. Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei*, I (Paris, 1933), 254; *Jewish Encyclopedia*, V, 558; see Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, 380 and 417, where the author is willing to accept the testimony of the otherwise unreliable account of Kliachko. The claim that Ignat'ev and other state officials had recently renewed the leases of their Jewish agents was made in a session of the Volynia Provincial Jewish Committee in November 1881. The claim was excised from the official transcript of the proceedings: TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 534, d. 282 (1881–90), l. 126ob. Typical was the contemporary rumor, recalled by M. L. Lilienblum in 1909, that Ignat'ev had bought up foreign securities (*tseny bumagi*) in advance of the Balta pogrom, in the expectation that Russian securities would fall after the event: JNL, Gintsburg Collection, F40, 1281, A 11/3.

⁴ For an unconvincing defense of Ignat'ev's veracity, see W. T. Stead, *Truth About Russia* (London and Paris, 1888), 263–9, who proclaimed him "the Russian Mr. Gladstone."

⁵ This is not to deny Ignat'ev's extreme mendacity, however, which was perfectly illustrated by the newspaper interviews he gave after his fall, blaming everyone but himself for his strict measures against the Jews: *Rassvet*, 27:4/VII/1882.

initiative which was charged with making recommendations for the reform of local government.⁶ The extreme example of Ignatiev's use of public consultation, or at least the illusion of the same, was his proposal to convoke an estate-based consultative body, the Assembly of the Land (*Zemskii sobor*) at the time of Alexander III's imperial coronation in Moscow in 1882. This scheme, inspired by romantic and demotic Slavophile dreams, terrified reactionaries such as Pobedonostev who turned the tsar against the plan and brought about Ignatiev's fall.⁷

Another unique tactic employed by Ignatiev, which has not been properly appreciated by historians, was his use of the periodical press to publicize and promote his policies. He made a practice of granting exclusive interviews and of permitting their publication. This was especially noteworthy with regard to the Jewish Question. He gave sensational and controversial interviews on the subject of Jewish emigration to the Ekaterinoslav communal activist, Dr. Isaak Orshanskii (discussed below), to the millionaire railroad contractor, S. S. Poliakov (see Chapter 7), and to the state rabbi of St. Petersburg, A. N. Drabkin (see Chapter 10). Ignatiev could never resist the temptation to play to the gallery. Prior to his departure for the capital at the beginning of 1881, Orshanskii wrote to Ignatiev to request an interview. Instead, Ignatiev sent instructions to the local police – which arrived too late – to deny Orshanskii a travel permit.⁸ When Orshanskii arrived in Petersburg in spite of the ban, Ignatiev received him and made vague declarations about the “western border being open for the Jews,” which gained instant notoriety. Even after his fall, Ignatiev gave interviews to the foreign press in which he tried to justify his policies. Almost all of these interviews prompted official clarifications or denials.⁹ Ignatiev's fatal flaw was his inability to reconcile his dissembling nature with the need to maintain consistency in public declarations. All his efforts to manage public opinion produced confusion, even panic, in the groups he sought to mollify.

Ignatiev endeavored to use the press in other ways. A number of Russian ministers, before and after Ignatiev, sought to recruit “reptile” newspapers, which would faithfully disseminate official views. Ignatiev was the first to attempt to use the Jewish press in this way. According to Feoktistov, Ignatiev's personal intervention secured for Aleksandr Tserderbaum the right to publish the Yiddish-language *Dos Yudishes Folksblat* in 1881. The historian of Russian censorship and the Jews,

⁶ L. G. Zakharova, *Zemskaia kontrreforma 1890 g.* (Moscow, 1968), 69.

⁷ P. A. Zaionchkovskii, “Popytka sozyva zemskogo sobora i padenie ministerstva N. P. Ignat'eva,” *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 5 (1960), 126–39.

⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1882), l. 1478.

⁹ For examples of retractions or clarifications, see *NKhV*, 6:5/II/1882; 7:12/II/1882; 26:26/VI/1882; 27:3/VII/1882.

Dmitrii Eliashevich, suggests that Ignatiev sought to have a "pocket publication" that would defend his measures among the Jewish masses. This approach was duplicated in his efforts to employ prominent Jews such as Poliakov and Drabkin to publicize his views.

The principal task of the MVD was the maintenance of domestic order. The widespread outbreak of pogroms forced Ignatiev to turn to their underlying causes and to the Jewish Question as a whole. He viewed this undertaking as a mandate given to him from the grassroots. In his end-of-year report to the tsar in 1881, Ignatiev celebrated his Jewish policies as among his chief accomplishments.¹⁰ A close examination of Ignatiev's actions regarding the Jewish Question shows them to have been clear and consistent, even if their presentation was at times muddled. Their origins should not be sought either in a monolithic antisemitism or in personal venality, as almost all Ignatiev's critics have claimed.

The documentary record confirms that Ignatiev and his agents, especially the head of the Department of Police, V. K. Pleve, made full use of their powers in an effort to end the pogrom wave. A stream of ministerial circulars demanded that measures be taken to anticipate and prevent pogroms and to deal with them expeditiously if they occurred. The center issued insistent demands for reports on the local situation and the mood of the populace. Ignatiev regretfully acquiesced in the deployment of troops as a pogrom deterrent, aware of the negative impact on military morale and preparedness. While he invited harsh punishment of *pogromshchiki*, he was reluctant to have local authorities resort to ultimate measures, lest this lose the regime popular support. He secured an imperial commendation for the governor-general of Warsaw when the latter suppressed the Christmas Day pogrom in Warsaw without the loss of Polish lives.¹¹

Ignatiev was determined to pursue a more activist agenda, rather than just "defending Yids from Christians." His starting point was the unanimous opinion of every relevant official that Jewish exploitation was the underlying cause of the pogroms. His concern was heightened when, in the wake of the first pogroms, a number of peasant and town communities passed resolutions (*prigovory*) demanding the expulsion of Jews, individually or collectively, due to their allegedly harmful moral influence. The inability of local officials to respond speedily to these demands played a role in the outbreak of several pogroms.¹² If minds were to be quieted, Ignatiev believed, the government had to display its willingness to respond

¹⁰ Zaionchkovskii, *Kriza*, 487.

¹¹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (22/1/1882), l. 1468ob.

¹² See RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241 (1882), ll. 9–12ob, for the case of Aleksandriia on 23 April 1882.

to local initiatives of this type. The choice in his mind was clear: visible and rapid state action to control the Jews or uncontrolled, spontaneous eruptions of popular violence.

The idea of investigative commissions was apparently given to Ignatiev by others, although it was a concept that fitted perfectly with his use of "knowledgeable individuals" and publicity. In a comprehensive review of the pogroms, submitted to Ignatiev on 5 August 1881, Kharkov governor-general Sviatopolk-Mirskii, proposed the creation of special commissions in Chernigov and Poltava provinces to investigate the Jewish Question, to be chaired by their governors. The membership would include local bureaucrats and invited experts. These commissions would be charged with examining, as quickly as possible, all existing legislation concerning the Jews and devising projects to protect the lower classes from Jewish exploitation. The reports of these commissions would be sent to a special committee in St. Petersburg, which would examine them, consult with members who had shown themselves particularly informed and active, and draft new legislation. Such a project would be a visible sign to the people that the government was doing something to help them and would also put the capital in touch with local expertise.¹³

The idea won Ignatiev's immediate approval.¹⁴ On 21 August he wrote to the tsar to recommend the creation of such commissions for every province in the Pale. He noted that:

while energetically suppressing the recent disorders and caprice in order to protect the Jews from violence, the government recognizes as just and urgent the taking of no less energetic measures for the attenuation of the present abnormal conditions existing between the native population and the Jews, and for the safeguarding of the population from that harmful activity of the Jews which, according to local information, gave rise to the unrest.

The tsar approved the proposal on 22 August 1881, authorizing the creation of provincial commissions to study the Jewish Question, assemble statistics, and make recommendations.¹⁵

When the official announcement, perfunctory and lacking detail, appeared in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* on 2 September 1881, the project was already well under way. On 25 August Ignatiev sent the governors a copy of his 21 August letter to the tsar, accompanied by the agenda which the commissions were to follow. The agenda consisted of three questions: (1) What aspects of Jewish economic activity had an especially harmful

¹³ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (5/VIII/1881), ll. 257-8ob.

¹⁴ Sviatopolk-Mirskii's original, in the Moscow archives (*ibid.*), bears the telltale blue underlining that reveals that it was read by the minister.

¹⁵ *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, I, 826-7.

influence on the life of the native population of the Pale? (2) What practical difficulties were encountered in those localities, given the existing legislation concerning the Jews, regarding the sale and lease of land, trade in alcohol, and usury? (3) What changes in the existing legislation were necessary to prevent evasion of the law by the Jews, and what legal and administrative measures should be taken in order to paralyze the harmful influence of the Jews on the economic life of the country? The commissions were also charged with collecting information on the percentage of Jews in towns and villages, the extent of Jewish involvement in the spirit trade, the number of persons employed by Jews, the amount of land owned or leased by Jews, and the number of Jews directly engaged in agriculture.¹⁶

Critics rightly described the charge to the committees as a bill of indictment against Russian Jewry, but it was also an accurate reflection of the information and interpretations that had been flowing into St. Petersburg from the pogrom centers. There is no reason to assume insincerity on Ignatiev's part in the creation of what became universally known as the "Ignatiev commissions." Moreover, irrespective of the intentions underlying their creation, Michael Aronson has demonstrated that the work of the commissions offered an unprecedented survey of official thinking on the Jewish Question after a century of Russian rule over the territories of the Pale.¹⁷ No less important, the reports of the various committees clearly demonstrated the evolution of public opinion and its symbiotic relationship with official policy in the creation of a national consensus on the Jewish Question.

The Ignatiev commissions

The two distinctive features of the Ignatiev commissions were their openness and their diversity. After the initial announcement, the Russian press expressed the hope that deliberations would be accessible to the press and the public.¹⁸ Sviatopolk-Mirskii wrote to Ignatiev in September, urging that the proceedings of the commissions be fully reported in the press, in order to demonstrate the commitment of the government to reform. It was no accident that two commissions, Kiev and Bessarabia, numbered

¹⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 133 (1881-2), ll. 1-3.

¹⁷ I. Michael Aronson, "The Attitudes of Russian Officials in the 1880s Toward Jewish Assimilation and Emigration," *Slavic Review*, 34, 1 (1975), 1-18; Aronson, "The Prospects for Jewish Emancipation in Russia: The 1880s," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 55, 3 (1977), 348-69; Aronson, "Russian Commissions on the Jewish Questions in the 1880s," *East European Quarterly*, 14, 1 (1980), 59-74.

¹⁸ See, for instance, *Kievlianin*, 195:4/IX/1881.

the editors of local newspapers among their members.¹⁹ The activities of the Kharkov commission were published in the official *Khar'kovskie gubernskie vedomosti*. These reports encouraged members of the public to make submissions of their own to the commission, where they were discussed in later sessions (Kharkov 221–2).²⁰ The Podolia commission published its working agenda in the local *Podolskii listok*, while the Poltava commission opened its meetings to the general public.²¹ Well over half of the committees had some or all of their proceedings reported in the press, and all major newspapers, inside and outside the Pale, commented on their activities. The Chernigov commission published its proceedings by 1881 and those of most of the commissions followed by 1884. The one exception to the general rule of openness was the Minsk commission, whose members displayed an almost pathological fear of publicity. The governor of Minsk province, A. Petrov, attributed this reticence to the members' fear of Jewish reprisals against their critics. The Minsk commission thus met in closed sessions, frequently without the participation of the two Jewish members.²²

The extensive publicity achieved by the committees appears doubly ironic when viewed in the light of Ignatiev's mendacity in this regard. While he made no public objection to transparency and openness, the Chief Office of Press Affairs, under his authority, issued a secret circular to the governors on 20 September 1881, forbidding the press to publish or republish government instructions or announcements devoted to the Jewish Question.²³ In the light of the copious coverage of the commissions, this instruction was an abject failure. It conformed to the general experience of the censorship that, once the genie of publicity was let loose, it could never be returned to its bottle.

The commissions varied considerably in their composition, mode of operation, and general set-up. This was a tradition long associated with the MVD, whose frequent surveys of national problems had accustomed it to the realities of a heterogeneous empire. Ignatiev stood ready to accept

¹⁹ The Kiev member was D. I. Pikhno, the editor of *Kievlianin*, and his Bessarabian counterpart was G. Nerychev, editor of *Zemskii vestnik*.

²⁰ All published materials of the Ignat'ev commissions will be cited by place name and page number in the text or in the notes. A variety of pagination systems were employed. These materials are: *Trudy gubernskikh kommissii po evreiskomu voprosu. I: Gubernii: Vilenskaia, Kovenskaia, Grodnenskaia, Vitebskaia, Mogilevskaia, Minskaia* (SPb, 1884); *II: Gubernii: Khar'kovskaia, Ekaterinoslavskaia, Kievskaia, Tavricheskaia, Volynskaia, Bessarabskaia, Poltavaiskaia, Khersonskaia, s' Odesskim Gradonachal'stvom i Podol'skaia* (SPb, 1884). See *Russkii evrei*, 50:9/XII/1881, for a report on the conclusions of Chernigov. All references to Chernigov in the text are cited from this article.

²¹ Reported in *Rassvet*, 44:30/X/1881. ²² *K-A*, 519 (31/X/1881).

²³ RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8 (1881), l. 122.

local initiatives: On his own authority, A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, the Odessa governor-general, created a special, separate committee for the city of Odessa and restricted Jewish participation to two representatives. Ignatiev not only concurred, but even advised other committees that they should use this figure as a norm.²⁴ Each province was nonetheless permitted to go its own way, for the Kovno commission apparently had five Jewish members.²⁵ Committees were created for the provinces of Vilna, Kovno, and Grodno (the Governor-Generalship of the Northwest); Minsk, Mogilev, and Vitebsk in Belorussia; Kiev, Podolia, and Volynia (the Governor-Generalship of the Southwest); Kherson, Bessarabia, Tauride, and Ekaterinoslav; the municipality of Odessa (the Odessa Governor-Generalship); and Chernigov, Poltava, and Kharkov (the Governor-Generalship of Kharkov). The province of the Pale was the only province outside the Pale, perhaps included because it had a sizeable Jewish population and was part of a governor-generalship that also included two Pale provinces. There were no committees created for the provinces of the "Privistula Region" (i.e., the Kingdom of Poland) – the government was disinclined to consult Poles on any matter.

The composition of the commissions depended in large measure on the preferences of the governor, who usually served as chairman. Some commissions were purely bureaucratic in structure, composed entirely of employees of the MVD, as was the case in Vitebsk, but most were organized on the principle of social estate (*soslovie*) representation. Although they served elsewhere, the Vilna commission barred peasant *volost* officials, for fear that they would spread rumors (especially in the light of recurrent peasant *prigovory*). Most commissions made a special point of inviting peasant representation, and some had representatives from every district (e.g., Bessarabia). Commissions like that of Ekaterinoslav were very large, swelled by the appointment of temporary members. These included a number of well-known local Judeophobes, such as A. S. Dembovetskii in Mogilev, K. M. Bazili in Odessa, and M. I. Grinevich in Poltava. The Bessarabia and Minsk commissions took the *soslovie* principle to its logical extreme by inviting a single representative from the clergy, a decision that was protested by the Bessarabian Jewish members (Bessarabia 701).

The Jewish elite secular leadership in the capital sought to ensure that the Jews were well represented by knowledgeable and articulate spokesmen. Participants were supplied with the requisite documentation to

²⁴ K-A, 509–10 (10/IX/1881).

²⁵ Kovno 2. They were Dr. G. B. Kagan, Candidate of Law L. E. Frank, Senior Doctor of the Municipal Hospital A. Feinberg, the merchant G. A. Verbolovskii, and the state rabbi R. I. Shnitkind.

counter Judeophobe attacks. In practice, the situation of the Jewish members varied considerably. As noted above, Jewish members for Minsk had difficulty even attending sessions. There were also delays in inviting the Jews to the first sessions of the Mogilev commission.²⁶ Dr. Maks Mandelshtam, a representative on the Kiev committee, described his attendance as "going to Golgotha." He complained that his comments as recorded in the minutes were shortened or distorted by the chairman.²⁷ In Odessa the renowned Jewish publicist and attorney M. G. Morgulis attempted to play an active role in the debates. The general hostility of the commission forced him into a reduced role, wherein he and his colleague Tiktin submitted memoranda disputing the findings of the committee. He was rewarded with criticism in the final report, which described his tactics as "a real hindrance" (Odessa 990).

Although Jewish delegates were forced to listen to large amounts of Judeophobe abuse, they were usually given ample opportunity for rebuttal. In the Bessarabia commission, the articulate Jewish delegate G. Dynin dissuaded his fellow members from adopting a resolution based on Iakov Brafman's claims about the secret Jewish government, the kahal (Bessarabia 717). Basing its conjectures purely on the known membership of the commissions, the Jewish newspaper *Rassvet* found the outlook for Jews in the Northwest to be promising and prospects in the South to be mixed, while anticipating grief in the Judeophobe center of Kiev (40:2/X/1881). Taking the commissions as a whole, however, it is difficult to identify them so simply as either Judeophobe or Judeophile in orientation.

The commissions differed in the manner of their operations. They were given two months, September and October, to submit their findings to the MVD. Some made a conscientious effort to follow the agenda provided by Ignatiev (Podolia, Kovno, Vilna, and Kherson), while others ignored it completely (Poltava). Two commissions complained that two months was not sufficient time for such a gargantuan task (Kharkov and Ekaterinoslav). A typical method of operation was to assign various questions to subcommittees that would bring reports before the whole, where they were then debated and voted upon (Kherson). Other commissions accepted memoranda and resolutions from individuals, commission members, or representatives of social estates. When this occurred, as in the Mogilev and Ekaterinoslav committees, the MVD program was totally ignored and sessions were preoccupied with narrow *soslovie* interests. The chairmen often had a decisive impact upon the committees as in Kiev and Kharkov, where the governor-chairmen helped to steer the final resolution

²⁶ *Rassvet*, 41:9/X/1881.

²⁷ M. Mandelshtam, "Ignat'evskaia komissiiia v Kiev 1881 g.," *Perezhitoe*, 4 (1913), 54-7.

in a Judeophobe and Judeophile direction respectively. M. Morgulis, as noted, attempted unsuccessfully to orient the Kiev committee away from its hostility to Jews, while Jewish members of the Bessarabia and Kharkov commissions helped to shape the discussion and were effective in their debates with Judeophobes. On occasion, a single committed Judeophobe could play a significant role. In the Mogilev committee, A. S. Dembovetskii, the chairman, conducted a campaign against the Jews, fueled by quotations from Brafman and the German antisemite August Rohling. Perhaps the most interesting example of this phenomenon occurred in the Bessarabia commission, where a *volost* elder, the peasant Motuzenko, led a call for restrictive legislation. Challenged by a Jewish opponent to justify his continued references to talmudic fanaticism, he cited three books that he had read on the subject. Since the state censor had passed them, he asserted, they must be true (Bessarabia 774).

Given the short space of time within which the commissions had to work, no books or pamphlets were published with the specific objective of influencing their deliberations, in contrast to the massive literary outpouring which surrounded the subsequent Palen Commission. The press, however, was very free with its advice. Under the rubric "*tout savoir – c'est tout pardonner*," *Rassvet* published a series of editorials. They dealt with the Pale of Settlement, the alcohol trade, usury, and other forms of "exploitation," and were a thinly disguised effort to rebut the assumptions which underlay Ignatiev's charge to the commissions (40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, and 50:1881). *Russkii evrei* conceded that the Jews were not angels, but called upon the Jewish intelligentsia to justify the realities of Jewish life, while working to rectify their negative aspects (37–8:9–16/IX/1881). *Rus'* (51:31/IX/1881) and *Zemstvo* (4:30/I/1882) – the latter not usually a Judeophobe publication – attacked the Kharkov and Poltava committees respectively, with *Zemstvo* condemning the "Judaizing" Christian membership of the Poltava committee. The conservative *Novoe vremia* applauded the commissions, while alerting them to the influence of "a sort of Jewish Parliament in the capital" (the meeting of communal leaders convoked by Baron Gintzburg), and warned that Jewish members of the commissions would try to sabotage their work (1981:3/IX/1881). Unquestionably the most effective press agitation was found in the pages of Ivan Aksakov's Judeophobe *Rus'*, which carried excerpts from a new and expanded version of Brafman's *Kniga kagala*.

The impact of two decades of ideological Judeophobia in the Russian press ensured that, although the committees were given a rather narrow mandate to evaluate the economic impact of the Jews, virtually every committee felt obliged to explain economic phenomena through references to the innate nature of the Jews. A curious consensus linked

Judeophobes and Judeophiles. On the basis of comments made by Jews and non-Jews in the commissions, as well as commentaries in the Jewish and non-Jewish press, a general agreement emerged that the Jews were indeed a separate minority that was alienated from the surrounding Christian community. As a consequence, these isolated Jews played an economically harmful role in the Russian state.²⁸

The concept of Jewish alienation was not difficult for Russian Jewish intellectuals to admit. While in the past they had always emphasized the Jews' willingness to integrate into Russian society, they had also conceded that Russian Jewry still had far to go to break the chains of fanaticism and traditionalism. As one of the pioneers of integration, Osip Rabinovich, had stressed two decades before, this had to be a reciprocal process. While Jews had to shed their less admirable characteristics and merge into Russian culture, Russian society had to abandon its ancient anti-Jewish prejudices and move to greet them in a spirit of toleration and respect.²⁹ Yet the optimistic faith in acculturation and integration in the late 1850s had given way to hostility in the mid-1860s and to the development of ideological Judeophobia in the 1870s. The press had made Jew-baiting a conscious policy, with the tacit consent of much of Russian society. The pogroms were surely the last straw, with Jewish spokesmen claiming that street violence was the logical culmination of literary Judeophobia.

Given this reality, how could one speak of the joining together of the Jewish and Russian people? In the deliberations of the commissions, Jews and non-Jews agreed that the Jews were alienated from the surrounding population, but differed as to the reasons and the conclusions that should be drawn. Thus, fully twelve of the sixteen commission reports included extended treatments of the problem of Jewish exclusivity and alienation as the foundation for understanding the economic harm created by Jews.³⁰ In some cases, such as Bessarabia (717) and Odessa (994), Jewish members voted with the majority to specify the solution of this problem as fundamental to the resolution of the Jewish Question.

²⁸ Virtually the only exception was the Tauride committee, which contended that the Jews in Crimea were unusually free of fanaticism and eager to abandon their racial exclusivity. The commission rejected measures that would punish the Jews for shortcomings which were not unique to them. It recommended instead measures to raise the intellectual level of the masses and ensure that the institutions designed to protect them were functioning properly (Tauride 517–20).

²⁹ John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 85 (hereafter *IRJQ*).

³⁰ The exceptions were Ekaterinoslav, Grodno, and Kharkov, as well as the eccentric Tauride, which closely followed the Ignat'ev agenda and concentrated purely on economic questions.

Most commissions saw the questions of alienation and exploitation as interrelated. The Jews exploited the rest of the population because they were segregated from them and shared neither their cultural values nor their morals. The concentration of the Jews as an isolated social entity had an invidious economic impact on Jew and Christian alike. Jewish isolation discouraged productive pursuits such as agriculture. The Jew in the countryside remained forever the alien and, consequently, ever the exploiter (Kherson 1084–7). This attitude was encapsulated in a *Rassvet* editorial, “Without Illusions” (31:31/VII/1881), written even before the first meetings of the commissions. The author denounced as hypocrisy the claim that Jewish and Christian society were growing closer together. “We don’t fool ourselves in this regard: We don’t hope, at least in the near future, for a brotherly handclasp. We seek only one thing now, respect for our person, a recognition of our human worth, and not only as a paper ideal, but in the free consciousness of Russian society.”

Ignatiev’s charge had emphasized the economic harm of the Jews. The commissions all agreed that such harm existed, and accepted that its chief manifestations lay in the purchase and lease of farmland, trade in alcoholic beverages, and usury, all phenomena that Ignatiev had specifically identified. Reflecting local peculiarities, however, the committees differed as to the actual extent of the harm.

“The Jews make drunkards of the peasants” was a cliché among Judeophobes, who decried the Jewish tavern as the center for the degradation and ruin of the village. The linchpin of Jewish exploitation in the village, critics in the press had always contended, was the trade in spirits. Contemporaneously with the creation of the Jewish commissions, Ignatiev convoked his panel of knowledgeable individuals in St. Petersburg to advise the government on the proper conduct of the state vodka monopoly, in which the Jews were deeply embedded.³¹

It was to be expected that all the committees dealt at length with the liquor trade and that most reports condemned the role of Jews in the system. In Bessarabia (746) and Ekaterinoslav (237–8), there were unanimous votes to ban the Jews from the tavern trade. Jewish delegates acquiesced in such proposals. This reflected the conviction of the Jewish communal leadership, visible even before the pogroms, that Jews would be better off if they completely avoided this occupation. The leadership recognized that the involvement of Jews in distillation and tavern-keeping provided a rhetorical stick for Judeophobes to beat the Jews. Few Jews

³¹ This panel met from late September to early October 1881. Appropriately, its activities were carefully monitored by the Jewish press. See *Rassvet*, 51:18/XII/1881.

made a decent living from the trade, and it placed them in continuous physical danger.

Surprisingly, perhaps, two commissions dismissed the seriousness of the problem. The Tauride committee followed the familiar Judeophile defense that drunkenness was a social problem that had nothing to do with the nationality of those who filled the glass (518). The Poltava commission pointed out that public intoxication was a problem in areas where Jews were not permitted to live, and there was little to distinguish the Jewish tavern-keeper and his Christian kulak counterpart. The banning of Jewish establishments would raise neither the economic nor the moral level of the population (811–12). The Kovno commission dodged the issue altogether, noting Jewish malfeasance, but arrogating any reform initiative to the knowledgeable individuals meeting in the capital (10–11). The commissions of provinces in Ukraine – Kiev (406), Podolia (119), Volynia (577), and Chernigov, as well as Mogilev (28) – voted for a comprehensive ban on the spirit trade for Jews, while the Belorussian provinces of Vitebsk (36) Grodno (22–3), and Minsk (III–IV) sought merely to restrict them to urban areas. The Grodno committee added an interesting corollary to its recommendation: a proposal that the price of tavern licenses be lowered in order to encourage the large numbers of Jews trading illegally to purchase them.

Here too anomalies appeared. The Vilna commission prepared the most detailed and critical report on the Jewish tavern trade. The report consciously refuted the most common line of defense of Jewish spokesmen, the use of statistics to prove that alcohol abuse was greater outside the Pale. Even while condemning the last major government initiative to control the trade, the law of 14 May 1874 which required Jews to sell alcohol only in taverns located in their own homes, the commission did not advocate banning the trade (143–5). The Vitebsk commission voted to outlaw Jewish ownership and management of distilleries, while emphasizing that they did not seek to ban the activities of Jewish distillers (36). The Kherson commission proposed to ban the retail sale of alcoholic beverages, but permit distillation for wholesale distribution (1104).

Despite high-flown rhetoric, all treatments of the question could be traced to economic motives. The Polish landowners of Lithuania had long been accustomed to lease the right to produce and sell alcohol on their estates to Jews. While they were happy to blame the Jews for intoxicating their peasants, they never gave thought to withholding the privilege. Matters did not change when the monopoly reverted to the Russian state. Moreover, there was a chronic shortage of skilled distillers in the Russian Empire, and the delegates of neither Vitebsk nor Kherson were willing to deny themselves practical Jewish expertise.

A similar ambivalence surrounded the commissions' comments on another sore economic point, the purchase or rental of agricultural land by Jews. The burghers of Odessa offered no opinion on a matter that was of little practical interest to them. Despite years of Judeophobe complaints that Jews bought up all the best houses in the city, there was no call for restrictions of Jewish acquisition of real estate, an indication that free trade in property was valued in this modernizing city. The commission members of Tauride, where Jewish landownership was minimal, had no opinion to voice. Kharkov, outside the Pale, was also unprepared to comment. Only two headline commissions, Chernigov and Kherson (1105), opted for a total ban on all Jewish landholding and leases. Ekaterinoslav also favored a ban, except for land that a Jewish purchaser proposed to cultivate himself (239-40).

To the extent that they recommended restrictions, all other commissions professed a desire to defend the peasantry, reflecting the post-emancipation skepticism of Russian society that an independent peasantry could protect and maintain itself. The Kiev (406), Vitebsk (32-3), Poltava (805-6), Podolia (119), Bessarabia (764), Vilna (140-1), Mogilev (23-4), and Grodno (19-20) commissions all specified that under no circumstances should Jews be permitted to acquire peasant land, by either sale or lease. The remaining commissions failed to perceive this as a problem. In Poltava, for example, out of four million *desiatins* only 37,700 were owned and only 172,000 leased by Jews (806). In Bessarabia, Jews owned 2.5 percent of the total acreage and leased a total of 5 percent. A Jewish deputy, G. Grinberg, noted that two-thirds of the land rented by Jews was his, and that he was actively engaged in cultivating it (758-9).

The same special interests that defended the Jewish trade in spirits also made their presence felt elsewhere. A ban on the acquisition of peasant land by Jews inconvenienced nobody and removed a group of potential competitors to the gentry. The trade in peasant land was irregular and involved small-holdings. The sale and lease of large estates was a different matter altogether. Landowners on the committees worked openly and energetically to ensure that free trade in land was untrammelled, even if the prospective purchaser was a Jew. The chairman of the Grodno committee, General Veimarn, having presided over commission sessions that emphasized the economic harmfulness of the Jews, was forced to intervene on behalf of the Polish landowners of Grodno province. He petitioned the central government to relax rules put in place after the Polish uprising of 1863 that blocked the acquisition by Poles and Jews of land that had been acquired by Russians under a program of special discounts and subsidies — a linchpin of Russification policies in the Northwest. The request was couched in terms of Russian interests, of course. Veimarn claimed that

Russian civil servants in the area were often too busy to farm their own land and were constrained to sell or lease it to someone else. Knowing full well that the "someone else" would be Poles or Jews, the governor asked that the rules be relaxed because they could not be effectively enforced (2-4).

In neighboring Vilna, the commission, hostile to the Jews in so many other respects, saw no harm in the lease of land to Jews as long as it was not procured from the peasantry. The committee warned that new restrictions would only "penalize the more developed classes," i.e., the noble landlords (141). The Poltava commission was also concerned about fulfillment of the law, urging that bans not be placed on Jewish leaseholding lest landowners be forced to circumvent the law (which they were clearly prepared to do). As for landowning itself, the commission's only concern was that, if Jews acquired land, they would come to dominate institutions of local government. The solution was simple: Jews should be allowed to own land, but their rights to participate in local government should be curtailed (803-10).

Sharp debates in commissions revolved around very practical considerations. The Vitebsk commission, in a close vote, called for a ban on Jews serving as managers of private estates, but deadlocked on the question of a ban on leasing land from estate owners (32-3; 24). In the Podolia commission, some delegates defended the reliability of Jewish renters, and the commission voted to permit the continued leasing of land, albeit with a twelve-year limit on the length of the lease, as a precaution to prevent sales disguised as long-term leases (51-2; 118). The Bessarabia commission, unconcerned with Jewish ownership, entertained a proposal for a *minimum* norm of 500 *desiatins* in order to prevent Jews from acquiring land and subletting it to peasants in small parcels, a technique generally viewed as exploitation. In the end, no restrictions were voted, in deference to landowning interests (763-4). In complete contrast, the Grodno commission voted to permit Jews to acquire property only in small lots, for personal agriculture (32). The Minsk commission took the unusual step of declaring the leasing of private land by Jews to be a harmful phenomenon, even while voting not to impose restrictions (IX).

In summary, the discussion of the land question in the Ignatiev commissions presented the fascinating perspective of Judeophobic sentiments in direct collision with economic reality. Commissions in areas with a large Jewish settlement were willing to pay lip service to charges that the Jews were a harmful, alien element in the countryside. At no cost to themselves, they voted to ban all trade in real estate between peasants and Jews. On the other hand, they were usually unwilling to invite legislation in restraint of trade. While statistics subsequently prepared for the

Palen Commission disproved the claim that Jews were close to dominating rural Russia, in many regions of the Pale there were Jewish capitalists with an interest in acquiring land as a logical source of investment.³² The banning of such capitalist activity might not have caused a wholesale collapse in land values, but some landowners feared such an outcome, and they were taking no chances.

The selective economic concerns of the officials and landowners who dominated the Ignatiev commissions was nowhere more apparent than when they turned to the third part of the MVD triad, usury. This was quintessentially a problem for the peasants, invariably in need of cash in hand at tax-time or for long-term credits for land purchases. In contrast, landowners were served by the Gentry Land Bank, with its generous lending policies. The problem of long-term peasant credit was already under consideration in St. Petersburg, where Ignatiev toyed with plans to create a Peasant Land Bank. Clearly the priority that Ignatiev wished the commissions to explore touched on short-term credit.

Peasant members of the commissions were more than willing to consider the problem, and peasant *volost* officials as well as Marshals of the Nobility admitted that action was required (Ekaterinoslav 262-7). But whereas commissions as a whole were willing to pretend that the Jews were to blame for the alienation of peasant land and to take remedial action, nothing similar was done in regard to usury. Either the matter was ignored altogether (Kiev, Odessa, Tauride) or viewed in very general terms. Usury was an outgrowth of local economic conditions, explained the Grodno commission, and there was nothing specifically Jewish about it (15). The Podolia commission likewise observed that usury was no more than the inevitable consequence of a shortage of credit (59). Only the Poltava commission offered a possible prescription, proposing that procedures be taken to assist illiterates who signed loan agreements without knowing the contents (810). As this brief survey suggests, the provinces did not share the center's concern with Jewish money-lending or saw it as part of a far wider problem. Still less did the commissions complain of large-scale Jewish financial operations. Several commissions even singled them out as helpful and beneficial for the local economy.

A motley collection of other concerns was also identified by the commissions. Most complained of the complete domination by the Jews of petty trade and artisan activities, two of the oldest and most persistent charges. There was disagreement about the impact of major commercial enterprises pursued by the Jews, such as their role in the grain trade.

³² See V. Alenitsyn, *Evreiskoe naselenie i zemlevladienie v iugo-zapadnykh guberniakh evropeiskoi Rossii* (SPb, 1884).

Commissions obsessed with Jewish exploitation were naturally inclined to categorize these activities as harmful, while more discerning commissions emphasized the beneficial economic impact of industry or the greater reliability and order of Jewish grain-brokers. A number of commissions raised the issue of the treatment of hired laborers by Jewish contractors, especially the subcontracting of workers. Added to these was a longstanding concern at the employment of Christian servants by Jews. Opinions were divided as to whether this represented an effort at acculturation or a phenomenon that exploited, degraded, and corrupted Christians.

Several of the commissions raised questions that were tangential to the main concerns at hand, but that reflected both local conditions and the MVD's fears that Jews were circumventing the laws of the land. The alleged evasion of military service by the Jews took pride of place in this category. A number of commissions, such as Kiev (408), suggested ways by which Jews might be more accurately counted, examined, and recruited. The right of Jews to reside in Kiev remained a controversial issue, and the subject of contradictory legislation, throughout the nineteenth century. The Kiev commission thus examined the settlement question in depth and petitioned the central government to strengthen residence restrictions. Otherwise, they warned, Kiev would turn into another Russian Jerusalem, like Vilna (409-10). The commission of the border province of Volynia also raised the issue of the Jews' involvement in smuggling (583-98).

Although both Jews and Judeophobes – the former grudgingly, the latter eagerly – reached a rough agreement that the Jews were harmful in their existing position,³³ they differed sharply over the implications. Jewish spokesmen used the admission as a starting point for a campaign in support of equal rights for Jews, arguing that equality would eliminate their equivocal and harmful situation. Judeophobes differed in their efforts to place the specific issue of Jewish harmfulness in the wider context of the Jewish Question as a whole. Much had been written about the themes of the anti-Christian Jewish banner, the conspiratorial kahal, and Jewish exploitation over the previous two decades, but the material was widely scattered in books, pamphlets, and the press. The veteran Judeophobe Aksakov, editor of *Rus'*, provided a convenient summary by publishing a resume of a new edition of Brafman's *Book of the Kahal (Kniga kagala)*, which warned of the existence of an underground

³³ See Judah Leib Gordon's call for Jewish self-improvement, exemplified by agricultural colonization and the foundation of trade schools, in *Ha-Melits* (29:28/VII/1881) and the discussion in Michael Stanislawski, *For Whom Do I Toil?* (Oxford and New York, 1988), 167-70.

"talmudic municipal republic," organized on a worldwide basis (46-7:26/IX-3/X/1881).³⁴ Aksakov called upon the commissions to use Brafman's work as a guide (48:10/X/1881). Many followed this advice and used citations from Brafman to add an air of expertise to their resolutions. This offered a magic key to make sense of all the complexities of the Jewish Question, such as Jewish isolation, Jewish exploitation, and Jewish intransigence to reform. Brafman's commentary suggested a quick and easy method to combat the perceived evil: the abolition of the kahal.

Every commission made some allusion to the kahal, the much-reviled organ of Jewish separatism. Ten reports referred to Brafman by name, although other prominent Judeophobes and antisemites, such as Ippolit Liutostanskii and August Rohling, were also mentioned.³⁵ Four commissions, including those most hostile to the Jews (Mogilev, Kiev, Vilna, and Bessarabia), referred specifically to materials published in *Rus'* or clearly relied upon them. The Odessa commission was the scene of a lengthy debate over the reliability of Brafman's work, which consumed parts of two sessions. It was conducted between the Marshal of the Nobility of Odessa district, Znachko-Iavorskii, and M. G. Morgulis, who had already published a number of rebuttals of Brafman's charges in the Russian Jewish press. The Kherson commission, acquainted with the critical assessment of Brafman by another Russian Jewish publicist, I. I. Shershevskii, was reluctant to make a definitive judgement. Instead, they petitioned the central government to institute a formal investigation of the reality of the kahal and the abuses attributed to it (1166).³⁶

It was one thing to agree that the Jews were alienated from the wider non-Jewish community, or even that the mechanism for this alienation was encompassed by the kahal, and quite another to identify these phenomena as an essential element of Judaism or of Jewry itself. The two basic responses to this issue serve as the clearest criteria for differentiating Judeophiles and Judeophobes in Russia. Did these abuses derive from within or without? Were they essential, elemental components of the Jewish national character or were they accidental characteristics resulting from centuries of persecution and anti-Jewish fanaticism on the part of

³⁴ For the background of *Kniga kagala*, see Klier, *IRJQ*, 263-83; for Aksakov's *Rus'*, see John D. Klier, "Evreiskii vopros v slavianofil'skoi presse 1862-1886 gg.," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 1, 17 (1998), 51-9.

³⁵ References to Brafman appear in the reports of Kherson, Kiev, Odessa, Poltava, Podolia, Grodno, Volynia, Mogilev, Vilna, and Bessarabia provinces. For Rohling, see Mogilev 36.

³⁶ Against this background should be seen the much-mocked declaration of the second conference of Jewish communal representatives solemnly denying the existence of the kahal, discussed in Chapter 10.

Christian society? These questions formed the crux of the debate in a number of commissions.

Given the complexity of these issues, commissions such as Bessarabia (717-18) and Podolia (87) declared themselves unable to decide. Other commissions had less difficulty in reaching a conclusion. The covering report of the Vilna commission noted the total absence of any tradition of assimilation (*assimilatsiia*) in Jewish history. "From the beginning of the Christian era to the present moment, Jews have remained exactly what they were in Palestine; they represent, wherever they live, a separate, strongly isolated race with caste objectives, quite alien and almost always hostile to the native population" (6). Jews regarded national states not as homelands, but as objects for exploitation. They hated Christians and lacked the slightest feeling of Russian patriotism. Many centuries would be required to eradicate attitudes that had been deeply bred into Jewish flesh and blood (7-8). A landowner and *zemstvo* member in the Ekaterinoslav commission emphasized that the Jews were an alien element in a state based upon the principles of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. The time had not yet come when the nationalities of the Russian Empire could blend together (339-40).³⁷ Father Lashkov, the lone cleric on the commissions, rejected Jewish claims that education promoted the merger of nationalities. He asserted that the process was only possible "in the spirit of the faith," to which the precepts of the Jews were entirely alien (771). The Volynia commission overtly rejected the Judeophile argument that Jews evaded discriminatory laws out of necessity, in order to make a living. Rather, argued the majority, the cause lay in the talmudic casuistry employed by Jews in order to placate their consciences for the guilt of their unbridled rapacity (650-1). The Mogilev commission cited the Old Testament to demonstrate that the Jews were invariably hostile to non-Jews and denied any possibility of rapprochement between Christianity and a hostile Judaism (1-4). A subcommittee of the Kiev commission, charged with investigating the abnormal relationship between Christians and Jews, declared that it would be unfair to impute to the Jews everything that had entered the Talmud at different times and under different conditions, but that they would have to be held responsible for talmudic beliefs they preserved to the present day (412).

³⁷ This was a viewpoint completely shared by Alexander III. Responding to a claim in the newspaper *Russkii kur'er* that the true principle of nationalism should be "the equality and brotherhood of people," the tsar commented that "it is disgusting to read such articles. And Russians are writing this": cited in P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletia* (Moscow, 1970), 284.

Other commissions were more sympathetic. The final report of the Kovno commission attributed the abnormal Christian-Jewish relationship to diverse causes: the exclusive life of the Jews, complicated by history, local economic and political conditions, and the Jewish corporate spirit. The commission did not deny that the restrictive legislation of the Pale of Settlement created conditions of competition that were ruinous for the Jews. It was the resultant struggle for survival that forced Jews to resort to ruthless exploitation of the gullible peasant masses (12). Even while noting the harm done by Jewish economic practices, the Grodno commission denied that negative characteristics should be ascribed to the Jewish national character, formed, as they saw it, not by nature but by upbringing and environment. The Grodno delegates condemned the Pale for creating a Jewish proletariat that was forced to resort to any means in order to survive (11-12). The Kherson commission took a middle path. The membership was unable to agree whether or not talmudic morality, reinforced by kahal separatism, explained the negative features of Jewish life. It did agree, though, that, whatever the source, such features were accentuated by discriminatory legislation (1085-6).

The diverse judgements surveyed above, while offering useful insights into the broader assumptions that educated Russians held about the Jewish national character, remained highly theoretical and abstract. The charge given to the commissions by Ignatiev forced delegates to quit the realm of theory and offer specific palliatives for the evils that they had identified. These practical recommendations produced some surprises. Some commissions that were Judeophile in principle recommended restrictive measures, while a number of their Judeophobe counterparts proposed to discipline the Jews with punishments that they would have been happy to receive. Three different issues – Jewish communal autonomy, the Pale of Settlement, and quotas for Jews in public education – serve to illustrate this point.

Since virtually all commissions agreed that the Jews were alienated from Christian society, it might have been expected that all would recommend that Jewish communal autonomy be limited or abolished, usually through the removal of taxes that were levied specifically upon Jews. This was a demand inherent in all of Brafman's work. The most important Jewish tax was the impost on the slaughter and sale of kosher meat, the Basket Tax (*korobochnyi nalog*). A secondary source of revenue, assigned to support a state-run Jewish school system, was a tax on Sabbath candles. Thirteen commissions urged the abolition or modification of such taxes because they promoted separatism. A number of these resolutions were passed unanimously, with the support of the

Jewish members. Clearly Jewish delegates found it impossible to reconcile a special Jewish tax system – especially one that was notorious for the abuses that surrounded it – with a professed desire for merger or with the request that Jews be equal before the law. Moreover, since almost all Jewish delegates were representatives of the modernizing Russian Jewish intelligentsia, they could be expected to welcome measures that would weaken the power of the traditional Jewish community. The decision of the Bessarabia commission was reached in a special spirit of amity. Plans were announced in a committee session to consolidate the Jewish hospital, heretofore financed by a special levy, with the Christian hospital. The new joint institution committed itself to the provision of kosher food for its Jewish patients (719–20). Moreover, Jewish delegates could not overlook complaints against the Basket Tax that had been accumulating for decades. The tax, placed on a basic dietary item, had been blamed for weakening the health of the Jewish poor. A number of public scandals, involving tax farmers and the lease and collection of the tax, were also fresh in the public mind.

Many commissions saw tax reform as the positive first step toward the surrender of the Russian government's supervision of Jewish religious life. They also proposed abolition of the state rabbinate and state regulation of synagogues and prayer houses. These were reforms associated with the ideas of Brafman, who had complained that the government, by undertaking such supervision, was actually maintaining the tyranny of kahal institutions.

The abolition of the Candle Tax had other implications. When a state Jewish school system was created under Nicholas I, this tax was used to finance it. Abolition of the Candle Tax implied the elimination of the remnants of the state Jewish school system, a separate measure recommended by a number of commissions. Schools that served only Jews should be replaced by the education of young Jews in state schools, although this proposal was soon caught up in the debate over quotas to limit the number of Jews in state schools.

If Jews were to lose the last vestiges of their autonomous system of self-government, how were they to be governed, given existing restrictions on Jewish participation in local self-government? For commissions such as those of Volynia and Mogilev, this presented no problem, since they envisioned the wholesale expulsion of the Jews from the countryside, harking back to proposals first envisioned in the Jewish Statute of 1804.³⁸ Another of Brafman's ideas also reappeared. As a member of a

³⁸ See John D. Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Question" in Russia, 1772–1825* (Dekalb, 1986), 146–50.

commission convoked by the authorities in Vilna in 1869–70 to discuss the status of the Jews, Brafman had urged the abolition of autonomous Jewish institutions, and the subordination of Jews resident in rural areas to the peasant village administration, the *volost*. Members of the Jewish delegation at Vilna had successfully undermined this program at the time with arguments that the Jews were more urban than rural in character and could not be fitted easily into a system designed to serve the needs of the peasants. They had convinced the Russian authorities that it would be unfair to subordinate the Jews, a literate and sophisticated people, to the ignorant peasant masses.³⁹ This idea was resurrected, appropriately enough, by the Vilna commission (153) and its neighbor in Kovno (18). The Podolia commission envisioned an all-class *volost* administration that would include all residents of the countryside (126). Commissions in Ukraine stood this argument on its head, as the Volynia commission accepted that the Jews were far superior to the peasantry in subtlety and deviousness and under no circumstances should be permitted to join the peasant *volost*, where they would cause unimaginable mischief (562). It was generally assumed that the more sophisticated urban population could hold its own with the Jews, although the commissions of Poltava (797–8), Kherson (1094–5), and Mogilev (33) emphasized that existing legislation that restricted the percentage of Jews in the organs of municipal government should be kept in force.

Discussions of how the Jews were to be governed led logically to the question of where Jews should be permitted to live. The legal disabilities that underpinned the Pale of Settlement were universally recognized as the fundamental element of the Jewish Question, and were subject to a long-running debate. Judeophiles argued that abolition would immediately resolve most of the contradictions of Jewish life, including over-concentration, overcompetition, and, ultimately, pogroms. Wherever a forum could be found – in the press, in reports to Count Kutaisov, in the Ignatiev commissions – Jews and their friends argued for abolition. But opposition to the Pale had never been a purely Judeophile stance. Those less sympathetic to the Jews were also wont to argue that the Jewish Question could be resolved by dispersing the Jews in Russia like a drop of poison in the ocean. Why, they asked, should the provinces of the Pale be the only part of the empire required to bear the Jewish yoke? Consequently, commission debates over the future of the Pale had an unpredictable quality.

³⁹ Klier, *IRJQ*, 173–81.

At one extreme were those commissions that wished to strengthen the Pale in some way, particularly by further restricting Jewish residence in the countryside as a means of limiting the economic damage they did to the peasantry. This stance directly foreshadowed the central feature of the May Laws and may well have provided inspiration for Ignatiev. There is no doubt that Ignatiev pointed to such recommendations when seeking to justify the May Laws in the Committee of Ministers. Representatives from urban centers also dreamed of limiting the Jewish presence. As noted above, the city of Kiev had long fought against Jewish settlement. Although the city was located within the Pale, there were restrictions on the social classes of Jews allowed to reside there, and only two quarters of the city were open to free Jewish domicile. The contiguous location of forbidden and open quarters ensured that there was a large illegal settlement throughout the city, especially of poor Jews for whom the city served as a magnet of economic opportunity. The Kiev commission addressed this problem by proposing that Kiev be subjected to the same rules of Jewish settlement as any city in the interior of the empire. This would have effectively stripped Kiev of all but a few First Guild Jewish merchants and properly registered artisans (409). As for the Pale itself, the Kiev commission advocated its retention, fearing that abolition would merely transplant a harmful kulak element into the interior and thus spread the risk of disorders (418).

Ironically, the majority opinion was challenged by the premier Judeophobe on the committee, D. I. Pikhno, the editor of the notoriously Judeophobe newspaper, *Kievlianin*.⁴⁰ Pikhno reasserted his paper's long-standing commitment to the abolition of the Pale. The Jews were increasing more rapidly than the Christian population, he warned, producing the overcrowding which drove Jews out of urban areas and into the villages. Expulsion of rural Jews would make matters still worse. Emigration, increasingly proposed as a remedy, would merely siphon off the most industrious and able elements of the Jewish population. If the Jewish presence was an evil, it was unfair that the southwestern part of the empire should bear its full burden. Pikhno was convinced that the passage of Jews into the interior would introduce a healthy element of competition. Therefore, Jews should be allowed to settle freely throughout urban areas of the empire (420-2). Pikhno represented a minority view within the Judeophobe camp. Proposals for resettlement from the villages were also voiced by the commissions of Volynia (567), Mogilev (24-5), and Chernigov. The Kherson commission, after a long debate, voted down

⁴⁰ See John D. Klier, "Kievlianin and the Jews: A Decade of Disillusionment, 1864-1873," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 5, 1 (1981), 1-15.

a subcommittee recommendation that Jews be expelled from the countryside. Not all Jews were harmful, the full commission decided, and wholesale expulsion would cause the collapse of trade and commerce in the countryside (1106-7).

Four commissions (Grodno, Odessa, Podolia, and Volynia) rejected any abolition of the Pale. The Grodno commission warned against any extension of Jewish rights until the government reached definitive conclusions about unresolved questions regarding the existence of the kahal and the influence of the Talmud (32). The Odessa commission considered that the existing regulations of the Pale permitted sufficient mobility for those with education, capital, or skills and did not require further elaboration (998). The Podolia commission was essentially in agreement, adding its concern that free immigration to the interior would merely spread the problems faced by the western provinces (127). Unsurprisingly, these commissions were not entirely opposed to the movement of Jews in other directions. Reflecting the vigorous debate on emigration abroad already taking place in the Jewish community, three of the commissions which favored retention of the Pale also asked the government to expedite the process of out-migration. The Volynia commission expressed the rhetorical wish that all Jews in the province be exiled abroad (561). The Grodno commission was dubious about the prospects of its preferred solution, agricultural colonization, and therefore proposed to ease Jewish movement abroad (32). The Podolia commission went further still, calling on the state to provide economic assistance to emigrants, to permit the establishment of Jewish agencies for this purpose, and to revoke provisions of the Russian law that forbade emigration. The commission also advanced the curious proposal, later adopted by Ignatiev, that Jews be settled *en masse* in the newly conquered provinces of Central Asia (127). Even commissions that advocated relaxation of the Pale, such as Kovno (13) and Kherson (1106), entertained proposals for assisting emigration. These recommendations emphasized that emigrating Jews should lose their citizenship and be forbidden to return to Russia, confirming that these proposals were not motivated by Judeophile sentiments.

Relaxation of the Pale was recommended by the commissions of Bessarabia (736), Ekaterinoslav (238), Kharkov (62), Kherson (1106), Kovno (13), Mogilev (31-2), Poltava (787), and Vilna (138). The chairman of the Vitebsk commission did not permit a vote on the Pale, but it is apparent from the commission debate that a resolution calling for abolition would have passed (31). The Tauride commission did not raise the issue or put it to a vote, although here too internal discussions suggested that a majority would have supported a motion to relax the Pale.

Self-serving considerations were readily apparent in a number of commission debates on the Pale. Vilna's membership, while recommending dispersal of the Jews, asked rhetorically how the province might be protected from the Jewish danger in its midst (138). The Bessarabia commission voted unanimously for abolition, a ballot which included the vote of the articulate peasant Judeophobe, the *volost* elder Matuzenko. Ignoring the contradiction, the commission then attempted to place restrictions on the in-migration of Jews to Bessarabia (735–40). The Mogilev commission, with conscience enough to reject free movement that would have merely removed local problems to other venues, nonetheless proposed that the Jewish population be diminished by half and left it to the state to identify a suitable territory into which to deposit them (31). The Kovno commission, displaying an interest in newly founded Jewish self-help groups such as ORT,⁴¹ proposed that Jews be permitted to migrate internally to settle in agricultural colonies created under the aegis of such organizations (13).

Several commissions took an optimistic view, anticipating that the abolition of the Pale would quickly resolve the Jewish Question throughout Russia. Jewish exploitation was the consequence of fanaticism, isolation, and alienation, the Ekaterinoslav commission reminded the government. With the dispersal of Jews to the interior, the negative impact of overconcentration would cease and the Jews would undergo moral improvement. Jews transformed in this way would cease to provoke the antipathy of the rest of the population (289–90). The Poltava commission concurred, claiming that the interests of the state demanded the destruction of Jewish solidarity and insularity. Scattering the Jews across Russia would end their harmful overconcentration and promote merger (787–8).

Superficially, Jews could take heart from such widespread support for the abolition of the Pale. Yet the rationalizations that underlay most recommendations were profoundly pessimistic in their evaluation of the Jews. Idealistic and humanitarian arguments, once a commonplace in such debates, had vanished completely from the discussion, which now centered on how best peasant Russia might be protected from a Jewish menace that was simply taken for granted. Arguments were couched in negative terms – how the Jewish peril could be averted – rather than the positive plea that the common good would be served by abolition. The few concessions to the Jews were framed by numerous qualifications.

⁴¹ This was the Society for the Spread of Productive Work Among the Jews, founded in St. Petersburg in 1880. See Leon Shapiro, *The History of ORT* (New York, 1980).

The pessimism that overshadowed commission debates raised the broader consideration of the extent to which the Jewish Question might be resolved by the internal transformation of the Jews, rather than just shuttling them from one place to another. In the past Jews and Judeophobes agreed on the premise that internal transformation and regeneration could be achieved through education and enlightenment. The commission debates witnessed the last gasp of this hitherto universally prescribed palliative.

Ignatiev's charge to the commissions said nothing about education, perhaps because schooling lay outside his direct area of responsibility. The general willingness of commissions to abolish the Jewish taxes that supported the structure of state Jewish schools promised the demise of that system. This need not have been a fatal blow. More and more Jews were flocking to state schools, motivated by the promise of upward mobility and the generous reductions in military service given to those with education. If the state Jewish schools were to close, Russian schools would have to admit more pupils, and this ran counter to recent calls to limit the number of Jewish students in state education. Odessa was the birthplace of the first call for quotas, and it is not surprising that the commission here voted both to abolish Jewish schools and to limit free Jewish access to state schools. This raised the question of quotas, and the commission's majority voted to set admission norms equivalent to the percentage of Jews in the local population. To restore some balance, the commission voted a proposal that Jews be permitted to establish their own state-recognized schools, whose students would not be counted in the totals for establishing the general norm. It was not explained how these schools would differ from the state Jewish schools they would replace or how they were to be financed (995-6). The Bessarabia commission opted for a more realistic approach. It proposed to abolish special schools and to permit the Jews to enter state schools, which would supplement the curriculum with a class devoted to Jewish religious education. Bessarabia also considered the quota question, not because it was thought necessary, but simply because it had been attracting so much controversy in the press. The commission voted that the implementation of quotas in the province would be "inexpedient" (722). The Vitebsk (39-40) and Chernigov commissions also ignored the issue of quotas, calling instead for a state school system which would serve all faiths and offer special religious instruction for Jews. The Kovno commission also envisioned a new school system for Jews, although it failed to elaborate (16-17). The Kharkov commission (outside the Pale) voted not to impose norms on Jews at any level of schooling, since common schooling was beneficial. However, the decision to reject quotas for

secondary schools passed only because the governor broke a 9-9 deadlock. Second thoughts could be discerned in the commission's declaration that "it would be desirable for the advancement of education among the native population, as the only way in which it can be elevated, to make possible the unrestricted entry of Russian children into secondary schools, irrespective of Jewish students, and to ask the government for an increase in educational institutions" (100). The Volynia and Ekaterinoslav commissions joined Odessa in voting for quotas. Volynia set the norm at the percentage of Jews in the local population, with a maximum of 14 percent (564). Ekaterinoslav also voted for norms set at the percentage of the Jewish population, stipulating that it not be exceeded even if there were places available (240-1).

At first glance, and assuming that quotas were inevitable, the issue might appear to have been resolved in the Jews' favor. Only a few committees voted for a formal quota system, and most committees were eager to transfer Jews out of traditional schooling and into state schools or some form of Talmud-free Jewish schools. Yet two important assumptions were in open conflict. On the one hand was the assumption that only education could ultimately transform the Jews into an integrated, tolerant community of good subjects living side by side in amity with their non-Jewish neighbors. Counter to this was the fear that Jews were filling up the existing schools, depriving the peasantry of the skills and moral elevation which they would require in order to escape the coils of Jewish exploitation. The government was not about to resolve this contradiction by a wholesale investment in local schools. Indeed, the Ministry of Education was increasingly alarmed at the flood of non-noble elements into the existing secondary schools. As a consequence, the contradiction could be resolved only by abandoning one of the two premises. The recurrent juxtaposition of "alien" Jews and "native" population pointed the way to an eventual reallocation of resources, with negative consequences for Jews.

Only a few individual voices questioned the value of education for Jews and, by implication, the possibility that enlightenment might reform them. A member of the Mogilev commission claimed that it was useless to civilize the Jews, because they invariably adopted Germanic culture and swelled the ranks of Russia's Teutonic enemies (13). The Volynia commission's majority challenged one member's claim that an educated person loses his antipathetic features and is transformed into a good member of society. Experience shows, the commission report argued, that a Jew, even one with high intellectual accomplishments, did not lose his solidarity with the Jewish masses. In the practical realm, the educated Jew continued to display all the separatist tendencies of the

Jewish race (647–8). Nor were converts exempt. The submission of a group of Kharkov merchants attacked Jewish converts to Russian Orthodoxy: “The Jewish convert is the most pernicious creature among human beings” (204). In the debate over quotas in the Ekaterinoslav commission, the Judeophobe deputy Miklashevskii accused the Jews of subverting Christian education. When they abandoned the excesses of the Talmud, they also abandoned the Law of Moses, thus becoming an element that undermined all morality. It was no accident, he observed, that Jews stood in the first rank of those engaged in subversive political activity (328–9). This attitude was shared by the Kharkov delegate Petr Lesnitskii, who reported to the committee on the harmful consequences of educating Christians and Jews together in the same school. Jewish cosmopolitanism attacked everything Russian and patriotic, decrying it as slavish and illiberal. “In such an atmosphere grew up [the revolutionaries] Zheliabov and Trigoni, both graduates of Jewish *gimnazii* [sic], and together with them are many who, while not known by name, are lost forever to family, religion, and fatherland.” Well-intentioned people might speak of merger, Lesnitskii continued, but the only real merger that took place between Christians and Jews was in the realm of the anarchists. Educated Jews still pursued the goals of the Talmud (225–8). An Ekaterinoslav delegate concurred. Education just helped the Jews to evade the law more effectively, he complained (276).

The reports of the provincial commissions provide a valuable insight into the public mind in the wake of the pogroms. Many of the commission members were bureaucrats and government officials, to be sure, but membership was also drawn from a cross-section of urban and rural society. Ignatiev seems genuinely to have sought the collective opinion of Russian society. The opinions which he received demonstrate to what extent ideological Judeophobia had come to dominate public opinion, providing a context and format for inchoate prejudices. Brafman’s pernicious claims of a Jewish conspiracy, economic and political, were woven into the framework of debate. Judeophobe and Judeophile agreed upon the deleterious impact of Jews, especially in the villages, but could reach no consensus as to causes and solutions. The defenders of the Jews were clearly losing the battle for the hearts and minds of Russian society.

The opinions of the commissions gave Ignatiev a powerful tool, which he was not loath to use in his struggle to impose legal restrictions on the Jews. He had no compunction about misrepresenting the conclusions of the commissions, as when he told the American chargé d’affaires, Wickham Hoffman, that “the government had received the reports of the numerous local boards” and that these had “not only by a

majority, but unanimously, recommended their expulsion from the empire."⁴² He would similarly misrepresent the conclusions during the debates within the Committee of Ministers over his proposed agenda of new restrictive legislation for the empire's Jews. The new laws themselves were the most important legacy of the Ignatiev commissions.

⁴² Cyrus Adler and Aaron M. Margalith, *With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews, 1840-1945* (New York, 1946), 209.

6 Prejudice into policy

Amidst all the pogroms of the last year were those which were not restricted to one town, but to all thinking and feeling Jewry: These are the moral pogroms, destroying everything that gives a person faith in humanity and progress. S. M. Dubnow¹

On the basis of three and a half years' experience, it seems that the May Laws have given rise to diverse questions and puzzles, and even their adherents believe that they need review and supplementation. N. N. Golitsyn²

Framing the May Laws

The first meetings of the Ignatiev commissions sufficed to confirm the collective prejudices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding the social and economic harmfulness of the Jews. While Jews and Judeophiles might complain that the commissions' findings were exaggerated and contradictory, there was no denying that they demonstrated widespread public antipathy toward the Jews. Ignatiev himself assumed that a forceful response from the government would have many positive consequences. It would justify his popular politics by demonstrating the government's responsiveness to public concerns regarding the Jewish Question. Of equal importance, as he saw it, an official initiative would reduce the peasants' feelings of powerlessness in the face of the Jews' arrogance, thus preventing the eruption of popular vengeance that sought to teach the Jews a lesson.³

The existing Jewish Committee in the Ministry of Internal Affairs was clearly not the body to administer the short, sharp legislative shock that

¹ *Rassvet*, 20:16/V/1882.

² N. N. Golitsyn, "O peresmotre 'Vremennykh Pravil' 3-go maia 1882 goda" (unpublished report, SPb, n.d.).

³ For analogous use of the "wrath of the people" by German antisemites opposed to Jewish emancipation, including the Antisemitic Petition of 1881, see Richard S. Levy, "Continuities and Discontinuities of Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Germany, 1819–1938," in Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith, eds., *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 196–7.

Ignatiev desired.⁴ Consequently, on 17 or 19 October 1881, while the provincial commission project was barely under way, Ignatiev recommended that the emperor create a new MVD Committee on the Jews, to review their reports and to consider the Jewish Question in its totality.⁵ The new committee was placed under the chairmanship of Ignatiev's like-minded deputy, D. V. Gotovtsev, and informally bore his name. Its membership comprised the bureaucrats N. N. Bestuzhev-Riumin, deputy chairman of the Department of Religious Affairs for Foreign Confessions, D. I. Voeikov, P. N. Tseretelev, and Professor I. E. Andreevskii, with the governors of the provinces of St. Petersburg, Tauride, Poltava, Minsk, Kovno, and Volynia serving as consulting members. The committee began its deliberations in early December 1881.⁶ A symbiotic relationship grew up between this committee and the provincial commissions. The committee used their reports to justify many of its own recommendations, while the participating governors voiced many of the committee's assumptions in meetings of their provincial commissions.

The deliberations of the Gotovtsev Committee demonstrate the extent to which Judeophobia held sway within the MVD. Its conclusions not only marked a sharp break with the emancipationist gradualism of the Reform Era, but also challenged the assumptions which had underlain the Russian response to the Jewish Question since 1772. While previous critics of the Jews had always emphasized that they were in urgent need of reform, they had usually assumed that Jews were capable of reform. "Reformed" Jews were granted a variety of legal privileges. Additionally, a century-old policy of pragmatism decreed that, while the native population had to be protected from Jewish exploitation, the Jews did have their economic uses. It was assumed that the correct policies would eventually make the Jews productive. All these assumptions were brought into question during the deliberations of the Gotovtsev Committee.⁷

⁴ The committee had been appointed in 1872, charged with the task of promoting Jewish-gentile merger (*sliianie*). A year previously, a majority of the committee had recommended the abolition of the Pale of Settlement. See *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, IX, 692; Iu. I. Gessen, *Zakon i zhizn'* (SPb, 1911), 151.

⁵ See the summary of the committee's work in GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1632, ll. 1-2. Both dates appear in the sources.

⁶ Gessen notes the presence of several representatives of "society," such as Professor Andreevskii, presumably to give the illusion that the findings of the committee represented the voice of "society" rather than the government alone: *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii*, II (Leningrad, 1927), 222.

⁷ The deliberations of the Committee on the Jews exist in a number of versions. While there are some discrepancies, for example, on the specific number of recommendations which the committee forwarded to Ignat'ev, the overall direction is clear enough. I have used the following sources: For the protocols of the sessions of 2, 8, and 13 December 1881, see RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 160, ll. 1-18ob; for the sessions of 20, 27, 30 January, and

Preliminary discussions within the committee noted that contemporary events were challenging the assumption that the European experience demonstrated that granting equal rights would promote Jewish assimilation. The leaders of European Jewry now proclaimed that European Jews constituted a unified whole, whose members could not be expected to lose their racial characteristics (R1:9ob). Instead of working for assimilation, the Jews created institutions such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, with a network of subordinate institutions, the infamous kahals, throughout Europe. Europeans were themselves rethinking their generosity toward the Jews, as demonstrated by the rising antipathy to Jewish emancipation in Austria, Germany, and France.⁸ The latter case was of special significance: If, in a highly civilized society such as France, 38 million Frenchmen could not stomach 30,000 Jews, what hope was there for Russia with its four million Jews (R1:11ob–12)? The Kingdom of Poland, on Russia's doorstep, was often held up as an object lesson on the tranquilizing benefits that arose from Jewish equality. But was not this argument totally discredited by the Christmas Day pogrom in Warsaw (G:5)? The rhetoric coming from the Gotovtsev Committee appeared almost to welcome the Warsaw pogrom, since it could be used to discomfit Judeophile spokesmen. This attitude reinforced the belief of Jewish publicists that the Warsaw pogrom had been organized by government agents for this express purpose.⁹

The committee found the Russian example equally depressing. Although their rights were continually expanded under the liberal regime of Alexander II, the Jews refused to pursue assimilation, but used these rights to the detriment of the state and the gentile population. "The Jews made every effort to preserve their isolation [*zamknutost'*] with the help of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded at the beginning of the 60s, and have closed ranks even more in the present, in part because of the rights given to them: The formerly secret administration of their societies – the kahals – found a center in the Alliance Israélite Universelle, set up by those foreign chiefs of

2 February 1882, see GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1618, ll. 1–21. Pagination is designated within the text as either R1 (RGIA) or G(ARF) with the relevant page number. For the minutes of the sessions in January and February 1882, see also RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 180, ll. 6–83ob; ll. 17–83ob record the comments of the governors-general of the Pale on the proposed legislation. References to these files are designated within the text as R2.

⁸ The committee claimed that the examples of Austria-Hungary and Germany, where Jews had the right to be non-confessional (*konfessionslos*) demonstrated that hostility toward the Jews did not have a religious foundation (G:14ob–15).

⁹ In a memorandum written by E. B. Levin, a close associate of Baron Gintsburg, he stated that "the Warsaw pogrom was organized deliberately, so that the project of the temporary laws would not grow stale, and thus the news of the pogrom was eagerly awaited by the committee" ("Evreiskii vopros i anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1881 i 1882 g.", 184). See the discussion of the Levin Memorandum in Chapter 10 and the Epilogue.

Jewry – Montefiore, Crémieux, and Rothschild” (G:80). Aided by these agencies, the Jews in the course of twenty years took hold of all local trade and real estate. This process was expedited by the teaching of the Talmud, which not only permitted but urged Jews to act toward non-believers “by fraud or force, usury or theft” (G:17ob). The inchoate response of the Russian masses to exploitation took the form of pogroms (G:9).

Defining the problem was simple, but bitter experience demonstrated that solving it was quite another matter. In one of the first meetings of the committee, Gotovtsev proposed an agenda for its work. It brought together virtually every social or economic complaint made against the Jews over the previous century. On the general level, Gotovtsev urged that existing breaches in the Pale of Settlement be walled up. He recommended a moratorium on the movement of Jewish master craftsmen into the interior on the basis of the law of 1865 and the resettlement of those found not to be engaged in handicrafts.¹⁰

Gotovtsev also displayed the longstanding determination of Russian officials to safeguard the simple peasants from the depredations of the Jews. He sought to expedite procedures by which peasant communities might expel resident Jews. He envisioned restrictions to block Jewish middleman activity, usury, and trade in spirits. Jews were to be barred from commercial activity on Sundays and Christian holidays. Jewish capitalists would lose the right to buy or lease estates. These were the traditional weapons employed by the government against those categories of Jews viewed as especially dangerous for the peasantry: the tavern-keeper, the market-trader, the village usurer, the Jewish kulak.¹¹

Several recommendations, in a supplement to Gotovtsev’s agenda, reveal that other categories of Jews, heretofore seen in a positive light, were also to be targeted. They would have barred Jewish attorneys from representing clients in court cases involving peasants, while provincial authorities might review lawsuits between Christians and Jews. Gotovtsev sought quotas on the enrollment of Jews in primary and middle schools. Maximum numbers were also to be set for Jewish elected representatives and hired personnel in the institutions of local self-government, the *zemstvo*. These recommendations had serious implications. They questioned one of the most potent symbols of Jewish acculturation: the credentials of Jews in the legal profession. This was an implied attack against two of the jewels of the Reform Era, the courts and the *zemstvos*.

¹⁰ For the law of 1865, which permitted registered artisans to move to the Russian interior, see John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 30–1 (hereafter *IRJQ*).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 300–31.

Moreover, education had been the major tool through which Russian governments sought to make Russians out of Jews. Most ominous of all, Gotovtsev concluded his agenda with a call to abolish the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia (the OPE). He characterized this mildly reformist and acculturationist body as nothing less than the Russian branch of the malevolent Alliance Israélite Universelle (RI:4ob). Fear of the Alliance – the bedrock of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories – was widespread within the MVD and was fully shared by both Ignatiev and Gotovtsev.

Gotovtsev thus offered a picture of a unified Jewry, led by a sinister international organization (the AIU), operating through national and local bodies (the OPE and the kahals). This Jewish conspiracy strove for economic domination over Russia, especially through the exploitation of its most vulnerable and largest element, the peasantry. The peasants responded to this threat in the only way open to them, crude violence.

Since the scale of the danger ensured that it could not be quickly overcome, the committee took a dual approach to the Jewish Question. The most pressing challenge lay in convincing the local population that the government was taking measures to protect them from Jewish exploitation. This required the introduction of temporary emergency measures. In the longer term, all legislation relating to the Jews, with the status of the Pale of Settlement at the top of the list, had to be reexamined. This daunting task would take time. While the committee did propose an agenda for a complete reconsideration of the legal status of the Jews, it devoted most of its attention to the creation of a set of measures to end the pogrom crisis.¹²

The seven measures which the committee recommended to the MVD demonstrated the membership's obsession with safeguarding the peasantry by removing the Jews from their midst. Critics of the Gotovtsev Committee in the Committee of Ministers claimed that this *idée fixe* overrode concern for the prevention of pogroms. They noted that, while the vast majority of the disorders were rural, they were not the most serious. The majority of deaths, injuries, and property damage occurred during the urban riots. Rural Jews, isolated amidst peasant communities, were potentially the most vulnerable to violence, but they did not constitute the majority of victims. How could the vandalizing of a tavern in the village of Visunsk compare to the pogroms of Elisavetgrad, Kiev, or Warsaw? Moreover, the Gotovtsev Committee employed the ambiguous

¹² The committee offered a twelve-point program, with many subdivisions (G:18–21). It bore many similarities to the agenda eventually devised by the Palen Commission, which was created in 1883.

formula, “outside the towns and small towns” (*vne gorodakh i mestechkakh*), which ignored the quasi-rural nature of many of the small towns that feature so prominently in East European Jewish culture as the *shtetlakh*.¹³

The committee recommended to Ignatiev that:

- (1) Jews be forbidden to reside outside the towns and small towns.
- (2) Peasant communities be given the right to expel Jews from their midst. The rights of Jews who remained were to be respected.
- (3) Peasant communities should be allowed to petition to expel Jews residing on noble-owned estates located near their village.
- (4) Jews should lose the right to own or lease property outside the towns and small towns. Existing leases that were at least six months old would remain in force until expiration.
- (5) Jews should be forbidden to build any structures outside the towns and small towns.
- (6) Jews should be forbidden to trade in spirits outside the towns and small towns.
- (7) Contracts negotiated by Jews, but concluded in the name of a non-Jewish go-between, were to be declared null and void.

The intent of these proposals was clear enough. New Jewish settlement in peasant villages would be halted. The occupations of Jews already resident in the countryside would be so restricted that they would be compelled to relocate. Those who did not depart willingly would be forcibly expelled. The availability of such a mechanism would encourage peasant communities to pursue legally sanctioned expulsion rather than mob violence (G:21ob–22).

The committee displayed little concern for the implications of these measures. Recognizing that Jews driven out of the countryside would be bereft of property and livelihood, the committee blithely recommended that refugees be settled in Russia’s newly conquered territories of Central Asia. It confidently predicted (G:21) that funds could be found in the existing system of special taxes for Jews or even from the generosity of Jewish capitalists (but not, presumably, the same ones who were trying to place Russia in economic slavery). A willingness to allow existing contracts to run their full term was a tacit acknowledgement by the committee of the economic role that the Jews played in the countryside.

The irony of the committee’s recommendations was that the standard exemption for “the towns and small towns” left in place a huge number of rural Jews. “Small town” (Polish: *miasteczko*; Russian: *mestechko*) was a

¹³ See John D. Klier, “What Exactly Was a Shtetl?,” in Gennady Estraiikh and Mikhail Krutikov, eds., *The Shtetl: Image and Reality* (Oxford, 2000), 23–35.

purely administrative term lacking precise definitional guidelines. The status of a small town could change by administrative fiat, as when Empress Catherine II transformed a number of small Belorussian towns into administrative centers as part of her urbanizing reforms.¹⁴ Landlords in the western provinces were allowed to create settlements with the status of a *mestechko* throughout the nineteenth century, with no guidelines offered or criteria required. All restrictive legislation imposed on the Jews in the following decades was bedeviled by the absence of a clear legal definition of a small town. The consequence was misery for Jews and frustration for Judeophobes.

Some former small towns, such as Vitebsk or Zhitomir, evolved into sizeable settlements with thousands of inhabitants. Others never exceeded a few hundred souls, and preserved an overwhelmingly rural character. Very few of them, if any, were inhabited exclusively by Jews. What all small towns did have in common was their role as market towns that attracted large numbers of peasants on a weekly basis for trade and commerce. In other words, they served as outposts for those activities that the committee regarded as Jewish exploitation of the peasantry. They were precisely the type of settlement that ran the greatest risk of pogroms, as official statistics demonstrated.

The committee was able to justify its recommendations by pointing selectively to the recommendations of some of the provincial commissions, while ignoring those of a contrary mien. The presence of a number of governors-general as *ad hoc* members of the committee added further credence to the proposals. The committee urged Ignatiev to put measures in place before Easter 1882. The recommendations concurred exactly with Ignatiev's thinking. He edited the committee's recommendations into a draft law of four provisions, to which he added two of his own (5 and 6 below). This constituted the original draft of what would become the May Laws:

- (1) To forbid to Jews permanent residence, settlement, or sojourn (*osedlost', vodvorenie i zhitel'stvo*) outside the towns and small towns, except for existing Jewish agricultural colonies.
- (2) To forbid the future purchase (*vladenie*) by Jews, outside the towns or small towns, of real estate or private estates, or the lease of land by contract or mortgage (*zakladnym krepostiam*), either directly or as a second party.
- (3) To forbid the Jews to secure, outside the towns and small towns, any existing structure or to build new ones, or to lease them or hold mortgages on them, either in their own name or as second parties.

¹⁴ E. K. Anishchenko, *Cherta osedlosti. Belorusskaia sinagoga v tsarstrovaniie Ekateriny II* (Minsk, 1998), 65–6.

- (4) To forbid Jews to trade in spirits outside the towns and small towns, on either a wholesale or a retail basis.
- (5) In the future, Jewish artisans who were settled outside the Pale would be permitted to live only in towns, not in peasant villages.¹⁵
- (6) Jews were to be forbidden to trade on Sundays or Christian holidays, so that establishments which were closed for Jewish holidays should also be closed for Christian festivals (G:27-8).

The debate over the May Laws

By March of 1882, Ignatiev was ready to turn his draft statute into law. The most straightforward method for transforming a ministerial proposal into legislation in the Russian Empire was to submit it for debate and confirmation by the State Council, a body of high state officials created in 1810 to provide a system of procedural legality for the enactment of laws.¹⁶ This route had one serious drawback from Ignatiev's point of view. The State Council was dominated by appointees of Alexander II and might not look with favor on an unabashed effort to reverse a state policy that bore the imprint of the Tsar-Liberator. Nor would this be a rapid procedure. Ignatiev therefore made the claim that his proposals were not new and as a consequence did not require review by the State Council. Instead, he proposed to submit them for ratification, as temporary measures, to the Committee of Ministers. As Iu. I. Gessen points out, he also tried to evade the scrutiny of his ministerial colleagues by pretending that he had the support of the tsar and that the measures were too minor to require a fully fledged review.¹⁷

This device did not succeed, not least because Ignatiev was impinging upon the territory of his colleagues. The minister of justice, D. N. Nabokov, was not pleased with hasty changes to the legal system. The minister of finance, N. Kh. Bunge, was aghast at the financial implications of Ignatiev's proposals. The minister of state domains, M. N. Ostrovskii, was alert to the potential erosion of landowner prerogatives. All three ministers prepared memoranda which they circulated in advance of the decisive meetings of the Committee of Ministers, where Ignatiev's draft was considered. While all three ministers conceded that the relations between Jews and non-Jews were abnormal and required reform, they

¹⁵ In other words, Jews were still to be allowed to resettle into the Russian interior under the rubrics of the law of 28 June 1865, even though Gotovtsev had specifically called for such resettlement to cease.

¹⁶ See Heidi W. Whelan, *Alexander III and the State Council* (New Brunswick, 1982), 49-50, for a description of various procedures for enacting legislation outside the State Council.

¹⁷ Gessen, *Istoriia*, II, 225-6.

did not share the Judeophobe fantasies which Ignatiev and Gotovtsev had developed within the hothouse atmosphere of the MVD. Fearing the human cost of the proposed laws, they moved to soften them. Yet at the same time, they could not be nonchalant about a possible reoccurrence of pogroms. As a result, they were willing to permit implementation of those restrictive measures that most promised to expedite pacification.

Minister of Finance Bunge moved the debate from the realm of theory into the world of daily commercial relations. He recalled the government's long experience of imposing restrictions upon the Jews only to have them founder in practice. Virtually the only people who benefited from such experiments were members of the lower administration, who supplemented their income with Jewish bribes. In the real world, the Jews constituted a mass of hundreds of thousands of people, who were linked directly to the economic interests of the entire non-Jewish population. Precipitous changes, such as the expulsion of hordes of Jews from the countryside, would undermine Christian-Jewish relations, both economically and socially. Worse still were the political implications of alienating large numbers of Jews, landowners, and manufacturers.¹⁸ Before changes on this scale were undertaken, all aspects of the Jewish Question had to be fully explored. Only then might the State Council consider reforms through proper legislative procedures. Bunge also put his finger on the weak spot in Ignatiev's plea for rapid, sweeping actions, which he had buttressed by alluding to the recommendations of the governors-general. As Bunge pointed out, while all these officials called for change and restrictive measures, they totally disagreed over which measures to implement and at what speed. Neither Bunge nor the governors-general were blind to the fact that the state liquor monopoly furnished fully one-third of the state budget. Bunge observed that, even while they inveighed against the harmful influence of the Jewish tavern-keeper, the governors-general actually recommended moving very slowly to drive them out of the countryside (R2:84-9ob).

The minister of state domains, Ostrovskii, warned of the human cost of expulsions from the countryside of masses of people, "even if they are Jews." He was also concerned that some of the proposals made by Gotovtsev for eliminating Jews from the countryside might infringe the prerogatives of rural estate-owners. For example, why should peasant communities have the right to expel Jews who were resident on a landlord's estate? How would Jews be forced to surrender control over property? This was a question that had serious implications for the value of

¹⁸ Bunge may well have had in mind the petition of Moscow manufacturers. See Chapter 4.

rural real estate. Revealing that Judeophobes often reached Judeophile conclusions, Ostrovskii voiced the fear that restraint of trade imposed upon Jews in the Pale would encourage Jewish capital to speculate in property located in the Russian interior (R2:90-90ob).

While agreeing with Ignatiev that Jewish separatism and caste organization had to be combated, Minister of Justice Nabokov saw danger in using provisional measures to deal with fundamental rights such as those of property and residence. The proposed regulations would trigger a three-cornered fight: Unsophisticated peasants could not be trusted to utilize a system of expulsion; Jews would spare no effort to win over village authorities; the police could not be relied on to oversee the system properly. The consequence would be embittered relations between peasants and rural Jews. The hasty expulsion of large numbers of Jews would be difficult and perhaps even hazardous: What if the Jews put up physical resistance? Nabokov agreed entirely with Bunge's call for a thorough review of all existing conditions, followed by a carefully drafted plan of legislation to be considered through the proper legal channels.

These comments made it clear that Ignatiev would not have an easy ride when his draft law was formally submitted to the Committee of Ministers in April. And so it proved, although Ignatiev came armed with responses to the objections raised previously by his fellow ministers.¹⁹ The resultant debate covered the draft regulations, the mechanisms proposed by the Gotovtsev Committee to minimize Jewish settlement in rural areas, and the assumptions underlying the MVD's whole approach to the Jewish Question. Ignatiev launched his proposals with a declaration that his ministry was determined to prevent a repetition of the anti-Jewish disorders. Pogroms were exerting a baleful influence on the whole state: In Chernigov province, for example, troops spent more time guarding Jewish taverns than they did in military training. On the basis of extensive consultation with the provincial commissions and the higher authorities, it was universally agreed that the cause of the pogroms was the economic burden that the Jews placed on the peasantry.

Ignatiev recognized, from the criticisms of Bunge and Nabokov, that he would have to give way on some points. He therefore distilled his

¹⁹ There are a number of accounts of the meetings of the Committee of Ministers, which do not always agree in specifics. There is a secondhand account by E. A. Peretts, whose gossipy memoirs, *Dnevnik E. A. Perettsa, 1880-1883* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927), are the most dramatic. Peretts' account, based on discussions with several members of the Committee of Ministers, covers only the session of 20 April. In addition, there is an official synopsis of the meetings of 20 and 27 April and 4 May 1882 in RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 180, ll. 101-22. My summary combines these accounts, indicating the specific sources as P[eretts] or R[GIA].

draft to four provisional regulations: Jews should be forbidden new settlement outside the towns and small towns; no Jew should be given a license for a village tavern after 1 June 1882; Jews should be forbidden to purchase, lease, or hold a mortgage on property outside the towns and small towns; Jewish shops should be under the same regulations as Christian shops regarding trade on Sundays and Christian holidays. Ignatiev justified his partial climbdown by arguing that, if Jews were not to be expelled from the village by *ad hoc* measures, at least new settlement must be denied them.

Ignatiev was especially adamant that Jews be removed from the tavern trade. While it was true that most pogroms began in the towns and small towns (a most damaging admission on Ignatiev's part), he asserted that there was not a tavern in any village for miles around which remained untouched (a huge exaggeration according to the figures of the MVD itself). A ban could easily be enforced, Ignatiev glibly assured his fellow ministers, since it was the eve of the renewal period for tavern permits. Restrictions on Jewish landholding must be introduced, he argued, because Jewish control of land was second only to tavern-keeping as the most serious cause of anti-Jewish feeling. To await fundamental legislation on Jewish landholding would be to permit much of the land of the Pale to pass into their hands. The utility of a ban on Sunday trading was self-evident: Many pogroms had begun near Jewish shops and taverns on Christian holidays (R:101ob-7ob).

Bunge spoke, carrying on where his memorandum had left off. The proposed measures had extraordinarily serious implications for Russian finances. Events had already driven the banking house of Rothschild to announce that it would no longer buy Russian bonds. The consequence was a sharp drop in their value on the stock exchange. Ardent young patriots might claim that Russia had no need to kowtow to capitalists.²⁰ But without money, fortresses were not built and soldiers were not armed. The newly proposed measures would produce an exodus of Jews similar to the flight of the Marranos from Spain, with similarly ruinous consequences for the state. Moreover, simple justice decreed that such sweeping changes could not be imposed as provisional measures. Ignatiev's proposal lacked an underlying system or order. It would be more appropriate, before instituting such measures, to enforce the legislation that was already on the books. Ignatiev responded that a fundamental review of the law would take too long. Jews were sucking the blood of the population at that very moment (P:130-1).

²⁰ Peretts saw this as a dig at the erratic General M. D. Skobelev (P:130).

State Comptroller D. M. Solskii intervened to complain that the wrong miscreants were being targeted. He launched a bitter attack on the Judeophobe press and faulted Ignatiev's own ministry for its inept efforts to prevent disorders and consequent mishandling of the suppression of pogroms. Solskii's comments reveal in embryo some of the predominant myths of the pogroms and show that Russian statesmen were both reading and judging the press. Solskii targeted individual newspapers for publishing extremely one-sided, Jew-baiting articles. The Jewish pogroms, with their millions of rubles' worth of damage and Jewish fatalities, were the natural consequence of this instigation. "And all this took place, if not with the permission, then at least under the responsibility [*vedoma*] of the government, since the MVD, which was responsible for press affairs and for general security, had remained a simple spectator of these disorders." As far as Solskii knew, not a single caution had been given by the censor for the incendiary articles against the Jews in *Novoe vremia* and other newspapers; not a single policeman had been punished in those areas where pogroms had appeared on their watch. Indeed, the inactivity of the police was at times scandalous. It was when he suggested that they had all read, no doubt, the coverage of the recent pogrom (in Balta) which was carried in *Golos* that Ignatiev interrupted to ask if one could draw conclusions on the basis of an ungrounded (*pustaia*) article in a newspaper. Solskii responded that the article in *Golos* was well documented, with witnesses cited by name. In any event, the whole matter required investigation. If the correspondent was wrong, he should be punished and a correction carried in *Pravitel'svennyi vestnik*. If he was telling the truth, then the responsible officials and the police on the scene must be severely punished. The Jews were Russian subjects, after all, and the government was obliged to safeguard their lives and property (P:131-2).

Ignatiev replied that he had already ordered this to be done, and he had advised that those guilty of dereliction of duty be sent on leave until minds had been quieted.²¹ This response met with general disapproval from the ministers. Solskii loudly interjected that this was far from adequate. "It

²¹ Ignat'ev was to have his revenge upon *Golos*. Shortly before his fall, he recommended that the paper receive a warning for abuse of the police and the local administration. The paper's editorial comments on the actions of the government against the pogroms "served not to pacify minds, but to prolong the Jewish disturbance presently taking place." The paper was faulted for exaggerating rumors arising from the Balta pogrom: GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1509 (May 1882), ll. 3-3ob. This campaign finally led to the closing of *Golos*, Russia's foremost liberal newspaper, in 1883. See Paul A. Russo, "Golos, 1878-1883: Portrait of a Russian Newspaper" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1974).

was necessary to punish the guilty and to make a general announcement that the government would not tolerate such lawlessness" (P:132).

The president of the Committee of Ministers, M. Kh. Reiter (a former minister of finance) summarized the debate. He noted that no one had spoken in favor of promulgating all of Ignatiev's recommended measures.²² It was thus the consensus of the committee that the proposal should not be ratified. Legislation of this nature should be passed through the State Council. The minister of internal affairs had insisted that Jews be forbidden to buy or sell estates in the countryside, where they were genuine vampires. Such a regulation had to be put into statutory law. The most that could be done at present was to seek the emperor's approval for a temporary regulation to suspend purchase and rental agreements until the question was fully resolved.

Reiter noted Solskii's comments. It was true that the authorities were inactive in the face of the baiting of the Jews, and this could not be tolerated. Everyone had to be defended from illegal agitation. "Today they bait and plunder the Jews. Tomorrow it will be the turn of the so-called kulaks,²³ who are Jews in a moral sense, albeit of the Russian Orthodox faith – then will come the turn of the merchants and the landowners. In a word, from such official inactivity one could expect in the near future the rise of the most horrible socialism. To prevent this it was necessary to make a determined announcement that the government would not tolerate Jewish pogroms and, on the contrary, would severely punish those who were guilty of them, as well as responsible officials who were inactive in the event of such criminal instigation." Ignatiev had lost the initial skirmish. As he left the room he was heard to mutter that the Committee of Ministers was little better than the editorial board of *Golos* (P:132–3).

On 27 April, the Committee of Ministers returned to the draft law in order to make a final decision. Three of the four proposals that Ignatiev had submitted to the committee on 20 April were approved, but only in the form of temporary measures. The members conceded Ignatiev's point that opportunities for clashes between Christians and Jews had to be reduced. They rejected the principle that Jews should be removed from the countryside and resettled in urban areas, either by a mass expulsion order by the government or through the action of peasant communities. The towns and small towns were incapable of absorbing such an influx of

²² This is confirmed by a letter from Golovnin to former minister of war Miliutin where he reported that everyone in the committee spoke against Ignat'ev: P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhaviiia na rubezhe 1870–1880-kh godov* (Moscow, 1964), 417.

²³ For this motif in conservative thought, see Klier, *IRJQ*, 320–8.

refugees, and an expulsion might trigger further peasant disorders. On the other hand, it might be expedient to restrict the continued movement of Jews into the countryside. Therefore, *new* settlement of Jews outside the towns and small towns was forbidden as a temporary measure. The committee spent hardly any time discussing a similar, temporary ban on Jewish purchase or lease of land outside the towns and small towns, reflecting the clichéd belief that Jewish landownership was somehow harmful.²⁴ The restriction on Jewish Sunday trade was also approved on the nod, with the proviso that Jewish shops should be allowed to open at the same time as Christian shops.

Even accepting that these were temporary measures, pending a wholesale review of legislation on the Jews, Ignatiev had secured at least part of his program, despite the hostile reception he had received on 20 April. The committee was adamant, however, that it would make no concessions to Ignatiev's desire to drive the Jews out of the tavern trade. This rejection was posed in legal, humanitarian, and economic terms. While restrictions on residence and commerce were permitted on a provisional basis, no such concession was forthcoming with regard to the tavern trade. Too many people would be deprived of their livelihood, the committee explained, and – perhaps more to the point – a ban would damage the interests of the Treasury. Not even the recognition that many pogroms occurred in the proximity of taverns was enough to budge the committee. The most it was prepared to do was to insist that the authorities enforce existing legislation on the tavern trade and close taverns at the first hint of trouble.

From these discussions emerged six proposals which the Committee of Ministers submitted for confirmation to the emperor:

- (1) As a temporary measure prior to a general review of the laws concerning the Jews, they were forbidden to settle anew outside the towns and small towns, with the exception of existing Jewish agricultural colonies.
- (2) All purchases, mortgages, and leases by Jews of land located outside the towns and small towns were suspended on a temporary basis.
- (3) Jews were forbidden to carry on trade on Sundays and the twelve major feasts of the Orthodox Church.²⁵
- (4) Rules 1–3 were to apply only to the Pale of Settlement.²⁶

²⁴ Hans J. Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (London, 1986), 113–75.

²⁵ Zaionchkovskii misconstrues this rule, claiming that it applied to trade in spirits: *Krizis*, 418.

²⁶ This may have appeared self-evident, but it was in fact a repudiation of Gotovtsev's proposal to end the privileges that Jews enjoyed in the Russian interior under the law of 1865.

- (5) The MVD and the Ministry of Finance were to advise local officials to strictly enforce rules governing tavern-keeping by Jews.
- (6) The emperor was requested to appoint a special commission to review all questions which had arisen in the Committee of Ministers in the course of discussions of the new laws.

As the discussions cited above reveal, the ministers agreed to the pared-down laws because they accepted Ignatiev's argument that it was necessary to do *something*, and even temporary measures were better than nothing.²⁷ At the same time, the ministers made no secret of their dissatisfaction with the conduct of officials who were under the authority of the MVD. The committee recommended, therefore, that a public declaration be issued that the Jews were under the full protection of the law and that attacks on them were not permitted and would be punished. This declaration was to be accompanied by an unambiguous warning to local officials that they would be held responsible for any failure to anticipate pogroms and to move against them expeditiously. All officials were to inform the local population, in no uncertain terms, of the impermissibility of pogrom activity.

The recommendations of the Committee of Ministers were ratified by the emperor on 3 May 1882. As published shortly thereafter, on 12 May, the regulations included only Articles 1-4. The twin warning to the population and to responsible officials were issued simultaneously as resolutions of the Senate.²⁸ Because of their allegedly provisional nature, the laws were sometimes called the Temporary Regulations, although they were better known as the May Laws, after the month of their promulgation.

For Ignatiev this proved a pyrrhic victory. As a consequence of his scheme to convoke a consultative popular assembly, a *zemskii sobor*, he lost the confidence of Pobedonostsev and the tsar, and was forced to resign at the end of May 1882.²⁹ Gotovtsev, the architect of his repressive legislation for the Jews, soon followed his patron into retirement.³⁰

²⁷ Zaionchkovskii describes the attitude of the Committee of Ministers as "friendly opposition" (*Krizis*, 418), a curious characterization of decisions which did much to gut Ignat'ev's original proposals.

²⁸ Gessen inaccurately claims (*Istoriia*, II, 227) that the circular about the responsibility of local officials in the event of pogroms was delayed until after Ignat'ev's fall. He perhaps confuses this with Tolstoi's restatement of the Senate decree on 9 June 1882.

²⁹ Zaionchkovskii fully documents Ignat'ev's fall from grace without any reference to his "Jewish" policies. The accounts of the meetings of the Committee of Ministers, however, suggest that Ignat'ev had completely lost the confidence of his colleagues on matters of law and order. They could not have been sad to see their mercurial colleague depart.

³⁰ *NKhV*, 25:19/VI/1882. Gessen links Gotovtsev's dismissal to his "arch-retrograde" position on the Jewish Question: *Istoriia*, II, 227. There is no evidence for this in the documentary record.

Ignatiev was succeeded by Count D. A. Tolstoi, the *bête noire* of Russian liberals and radicals during his previous term of service as minister of education. As the conservative journalist Mikhail Katkov rejoiced, "the name of Count Tolstoi by itself is already a manifesto and a program."³¹ Although Tolstoi would in future easily accommodate himself to the anti-Jewish direction of the so-called 'Era of the Counter-Reforms', especially within the MVD, his past record did not suggest that he was an instinctive Judeophobe.³² Whatever Tolstoi's genuine sentiments may have been, his self-imposed mandate was clear: to maintain order in the wake of Ignatiev's erratic policies. Ignatiev, rightly or wrongly, had been perceived as weak in communicating to officials and the general public the unacceptability of pogroms. No such failing could be laid at Tolstoi's door. On 9 June 1882, Tolstoi issued a circular to the governors, reminding them of the Senate decrees which accompanied the May Laws.³³ Of special significance, Tolstoi also directed the attention of the governors to the circular of former minister of internal affairs L. S. Makov, of 3 April 1880, which had suspended the resettlement of Jews illegally resident outside the Pale of Settlement. It is tempting to connect this with the chaos that accompanied the implementation of the May Laws, but it may equally have been a response to the mass expulsions from centers such as Kiev and Orel.³⁴

Such actions did not prevent the repetition of pogroms, although the authorities relied on ever-harsher measures, including a more rapid resort to deadly force. Officials of sufficient standing or influence at court, such as Kiev governor-general Drenteln, could even ignore Tolstoi's importuning. In the wake of the Balta pogrom, Drenteln delivered a savage speech to a gathering of Jewish communal leaders, on 6 August 1882. He accused the Jews of provoking the pogrom by their actions, and then

³¹ L. G. Zakharova, *Zemskaiia kontrreforma 1890 g.* (Moscow, 1968), 72.

³² He had maintained good relations over educational matters with Jewish communities in Novorossia: *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 182 (November/December 1875), 58–68. Historians differ over Tolstoi's motives for the reorganization of the state-run Jewish school system. For contrasting views, see Klier, *IRFQ*, 244, and Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1995), 77, 288, n. 7. Tolstoi's Judeophobe pedigree is extrapolated from an interview which he gave to the English journalist John Baddeley, *Russia in the "Eighties"* (London, 1921), 186, in which he was quoted as saying that "Nihilism is a disease. It is the moral cancer of our time. You can no more stamp it out or abolish it than the Hebrew leprosy, but the one and the other may be reduced to comparative harmlessness."

³³ This is the statement to which Gessen refers (*Istoriia*, II, 227). Perhaps he had in mind the editorial judgement of *Golos*, which attributed greater authority to Tolstoi's pronouncement because it was "imperially affirmed," unlike the Senate declaration: quoted in *NKhV*, 25:19/VI/1882.

³⁴ *NKhV*, 29:17/VII/1882, suggests the second motivation, but also notes the problems of enforcement of the May Laws in Grodno province.

creating a scandal by circulating erroneous accounts abroad. To puncture the Jews' alleged self-importance, he made the astounding claim that the Senate decree which accompanied the May Laws was directed against violence in general, and not pogrom violence in particular. Small wonder that Drenteln's critics – and he was widely criticized in the national press – called his remarks “a moral pogrom.”³⁵ Others, less mighty than a governor-general, defied Tolstoi at their risk. The Jewish press claimed that the governors of the provinces of Podolia and Ekaterinoslav were dismissed because pogroms broke out under their jurisdiction.³⁶ Yet while pogroms did reoccur, they ceased to be epidemic. Serious but isolated pogroms occurred in Ekaterinoslav in 1883 and Nizhnii Novgorod in 1884. Although any violence involving Jews was routinely described as a pogrom, there were no more attacks on the model of 1881–2 until the beginning of the next century.³⁷

The response of the government to the 1881–2 pogroms conforms to a pattern that Donald Horowitz has identified in other episodes of ethnic rioting. “Rarely does the target group gain anything durable after the riot . . . The violence often does counter preexisting policy immobility and make action possible that seemed impossible previously. Everywhere the riot gives way to a struggle to interpret the event, a struggle that occurs at multiple levels and can produce conflicting results . . . Sometimes, however, a dominant interpretation of the violent event takes hold, and that makes bold policy initiatives possible.”³⁸ In this case, the “bold policy initiative” represented an effort to reverse a 100-year-old Russian policy of social integration of the Jews.

The implementation of the May Laws

At the time of the promulgation of the May Laws, one journalist wondered if they would share the fate of what had hitherto been Ignatiev's greatest

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 34:21/VII/1882. It is worth noting that this article illustrates the ease with which the press was able to criticize the conduct of high officials albeit outside their area of jurisdiction.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26:26/VI/1882; 42:23/X/1882. Again, this may well have been wishful thinking.

³⁷ See the pogrom-like violence, and the problems of interpretation surrounding it, in Iuzovka in 1892, as described by Theodore H. Friedgut in *Iuzovka and Revolution*, vol. I, *Life and Work in Russia's Donbass, 1869–1924* (Princeton, 1989), 201–3. Dubnow emphasizes the destructiveness of the “street pogrom” in Starodub, Chernigov province, on 29 September 1891: S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1918), 411. The first serious pogrom of the twentieth century was the notorious outbreak in Kishinev in 1903. See Edward Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York and London, 1992). The circumstances of the Kishinev pogrom were often “read back” into the disorders of 1881–2.

³⁸ Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 455–6.

accomplishment, the drafting of the Treaty of San Stefano.³⁹ The Laws have acquired an exceptionally notorious reputation in Russian Jewish historiography since S. M. Dubnow first called them “legislative pogroms.”⁴⁰ A contemporary Jewish newspaper claimed that just one of the provisions of the Laws was “worse than the whole, horrible Balta pogrom.”⁴¹ Some of the more recent scholarship on Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe has focused almost entirely on the May Laws.⁴² A collection of Senate resolutions dealing with Jewish residence rights, published twenty years after the Laws came into effect, listed 500 cases to which they gave rise. Significantly, as I. G. Sen observed in a review, “on almost every page is the formula, ‘the finding of such-and-such provincial administration is overturned.’”⁴³ Since there is no consensus, either among the Laws’ contemporaries or among later historians, about their actual impact, they are worth looking at in detail.

In their final form, the Laws recalled the jocular definition of a camel as a horse designed by a committee. Born in haste, muddled in intent, designed to be temporary, they were hardly a masterpiece of the lawmakers’ art. Not surprisingly, the Laws were mired in controversy from the very start. It was, for example, unclear when precisely they came into effect, on the day of their confirmation by the emperor or on the day of their first publication in the official provincial press organs, the *vedomosti*, a date that differed from province to province. The specific date was of vital importance in determining whether a particular contract or residence permit was valid.

The wording of each of the Laws was problematical. Article 1 redundantly juxtaposed “in the future” (*vpred*) and “anew” (*znov*). Equally ambiguous, as events were to show, was the term “to settle” (*selit’sia*), which could imply both temporary and permanent residence.⁴⁴ Could Jews “settle anew” in

³⁹ *Zaria*, 121:3/VI/1882. The treaty, drafted and signed in 1878 when Ignat’ev was Russian ambassador to Constantinople, ended the hostilities in the Russo-Turkish War. The Turks were forced to make massive concessions to the Russians, including the establishment of an independent Bulgarian state, widely assumed to be a putative Russian satellite. In the event, many of the treaty’s provisions were overturned by the Congress of Berlin in 1879.

⁴⁰ Dubnow, *History*, II, 309. ⁴¹ *Russkii evrei*, 6:11/II/1883.

⁴² See, for instance, Bernard K. Johnpoll, “Why They Left: Russian-Jewish Mass Migration and Repressive Laws, 1881–1917,” *American Jewish Archives*, 47, 1 (1995), 17–54.

⁴³ I. G. Sen, “Zakon 3 maia,” *Evreiskaia biblioteka*, 10 (1903), 320.

⁴⁴ The administrations of Chernigov and Kherson province wrote to the MVD to request a definition of the words “*poselenie*,” “*vodvorenie*,” “*osedlost’*,” and “*selit’sia*.” See Golitsyn, “O peresmotre ‘Vremennykh Pravil’ 3-go maia 1882 goda,” 35, 64. Further citations from this report, which was prepared for the Palen Commission, are listed in the text as Go[litsyn]. The Ekaterinoslav governor also queried the definition of “*selit’sia*” (Go:64–5). Golitsyn himself was unable to provide a satisfactory definition (Go:90). The MVD asked the Senate to provide a precise definition of “their own homes” for enforcement of rules on the liquor trade, 12 December 1882 (Go:72).

agricultural colonies, or were the efforts of the Society for the Spread of Productive Work Among the Jews (ORT) to be nipped in the bud?

The intent of Article 2, it is clear from discussions within the Jewish Committee and the Committee of Ministers, was to prevent the acquisition or lease, directly or indirectly, of real estate in the countryside. The exact wording, however, did not do this. It suspended the "certification" (*sovershenie*) of deeds, mortgages, and leases "in the names of Jews." This ban did not cover informal, personal agreements which were not certified, nor did it address the issue of Christians who fronted for Jews who put up the money, even though these were well-known, common practices which had been criticized by Judeophobes for years.

The third law began as a categorical ban on Jewish trade on Sundays and Christian holidays, only to be modified to bring it into conjunction with the rules governing Christian shops, which did trade on Sundays, after the conclusion of church services.⁴⁵ To make matters more confusing still, the fifth and sixth provisions that had been ratified by the tsar – calling for strict enforcement of the rules governing the spirit trade and the creation of a new committee to study the Jewish Question – were not published with Articles 1–4. Article 5 was communicated only to the appropriate personnel of the MVD and the Ministry of Finance. They began a crackdown on Jewish taverns, making reference to the "fifth temporary regulation," although there was nothing temporary about these particular rules. These actions created concern among Jews that there were other, unpublicized provisions to the May Laws.⁴⁶

This was only the tip of the legal iceberg. The May Laws spoke only of "Jews," as though there was no differentiation within this category. Did the prohibitions cover privileged categories of Jews, such as First Guild merchants or Honored Citizens? In a word, was Baron Gintzburg barred from adding to his existing landholdings? Would "privileged" widows lose their rights upon remarriage? What were the property rights of Jews already resident in the countryside? Was there a difference in the property rights of permanently and temporarily resident Jews in regard to ownership and rental of land? Were the property rights of non-resident Jews who inherited land in the countryside to be abrogated? How were such Jews to be forced to dispose of the property? What was the status of Jewish soldiers on active service who were not resident in their rural village when the May Laws were promulgated?

⁴⁵ The Starodub "street pogrom," mentioned in n. 37, grew out of the veto by the governor of Chernigov of an attempt of the Starodub дума to ban *all* Jewish trade on Sundays and Christian holidays: Dubnow, *History*, II, 411–12.

⁴⁶ *NKhV*, 28:10/VII/1882.

Finally, how were the May Laws to be enforced: by police action, in the form of peremptory expulsion, by force if necessary, or by the workings of the court system – i.e., were violations of the May Laws a criminal or a civil offense? How were violations of the May Laws to be punished, by fines, expulsion, or arrest?

It was evident from the beginning that the May Laws gave wide scope for malevolent interpretation by the enemies of the Jews, and this has been the dominant motif in the historiography. Less well appreciated have been the ample grounds they contained for evasion. They also supplied the basis for appeals to higher jurisdictions that, from pragmatic or ideological considerations, were less ill inclined toward the Jews. There are ample illustrations of these phenomena.

Almost all the provincial administrative bodies sought to interpret the May Laws in the most narrow and restrictive way when applied to the rights of Jews, and in the most expansive sense when defining categories of Jews to be classed as “illegally resident.” The Volynia administration, for example, resolved that Jews could live in the countryside only if they owned their own houses or held indefinite leases on property. Upon expiration of a lease, the Jewish holder was to be expelled from the village immediately. The administration further moved to restrict Jews who did have the right of rural residence. They were forbidden to move from house to house within the village or to move from one village to another. These broad interpretations found favor with the Kiev governor-general, who circulated them to his fellow governors-general and to the governors in his region. The governor-general of the Northwest took matters further by instructing his governors to begin the immediate expulsion of Jews who lacked or lost residence rights.⁴⁷

Whenever there was a question about the status of a particular Jewish householder, the provincial administration invariably found against him or her. Two such cases were especially outrageous. One Garfinkel, a Jewish resident of the village of Verkholes’ia, lost his home in a fire. The Grodno provincial authorities claimed that rebuilding would constitute “new residence” and ordered him to leave the village. In a village in Chernigov province, a Jewish family who had left to attend High Holiday services in a small town nearby was denied readmission on the grounds that, after a two-week absence, their return would constitute new settlement.⁴⁸ Jews who were on active service in the army when the May Laws were implemented, and therefore not physically present, were also

⁴⁷ There are statistics for one province, Kovno, where this was done. See below.

⁴⁸ For the Garfinkel case, see Go:16–17. The High Holidays incident was reported in *NKhV*, 22:31/V/1887, relating to a case dating to early 1884. Such capricious

identified as a group lacking residence rights by the authorities in Volynia (Go:22). The Kiev, Poltava, and Chernigov authorities were uncertain how to treat reservists and Jewish soldiers who had lived in the countryside before commencing service (Go:72-3, 24-5, 30-1, 95). Throughout the Pale, local officials received, but hardly required, exhortation from governors and governors-general to identify Jews who were liable for expulsion. The sudden appearance of a number of resolutions of peasant communities, seeking permission to resettle Jews dwelling in their village, also pointed to the instigation of local officials. A mass, forced movement of Jews out of the countryside loomed, if provincial officials were given their head.

Even without the intervention of the Senate, two phenomena enabled some Jews to escape the full impact of the law: the ambiguity and sloppy wording of the Laws themselves and the widespread collusion of officials with Jewish evasion. The collaborators ranged from peasants to noble landlords, neither of whom would or could part with their Jews. As the Odessa governor-general pointed out, the failure to define precisely the term "to settle" (*selit'sia*) ensured that Jews would have a whole range of pretexts under which to claim "temporary" settlement in the countryside (Go:60). Jews in Kremenchug district arrived for lengthy visits to relatives or actually moved in with them. In Kiev, Podolia, Mogilev, and Chernigov provinces, Jews purchased peasant harvests for years in advance and then settled down to await the delivery of their grain. Jews who purchased forest tracts for timber moved into the rural dachas that came with them. Jews frequently appeared "temporarily" in the guise of agents to Jews who did possess residence rights (Go:28, 51, 57, 56, 27).

It was easy for Jews to resort to such subterfuge, the governors reported sadly, because they had the almost universal cooperation of all social estates. Landlords concluded long-term contracts with Jews – up to thirty-six years – that obliterated any pretense of "temporary" residence. The most efficient method of evasion was the conclusion of oral contracts between parties, which did not have to be registered with the authorities. As long as the landowner or peasant stood by the agreement, it held. Since Jews offered better and more reliable terms than other groups, the propertied classes refused to dispense with them, and the peasants continued to rely upon their middleman services.⁴⁹ In Kishinev district, tavern

interpretations prompted a flood of petitions to the Senate from aggrieved Jews ranging from Garfinkel to Baron Gintsburg himself. These were exactly the cases that were highlighted by Simon Dubnow in his writings. See Dubnow, *History*, II, 340-2.

⁴⁹ In Bessarabia, Greek and Moldavian agents had been confident that they could replace Jewish leaseholders and secure better conditions in the absence of their competition. The moment land values began to fall, however, the landowners returned to their former Jewish agents (Go:61).

inspectors making spot checks invariably found a Jew who appeared to be in charge. When challenged, he would insist that he was only having a drink, and within minutes a disheveled peasant would appear, insisting that he was the holder of the patent on the tavern. What was even more unsettling than the collusion of peasants and noblemen, the Chernigov governor complained, was the cooperation in these intrigues by Excise officials. Whenever the legitimacy of a tavern lease was questioned, officials of the spirit monopoly always sided with the tavern-keeper, determined to keep government revenues flowing – literally (Go:61, 55).

Problems did not end when Jews were found by the police to be in violation of the May Laws. The bureaucratic process was long and involved; witnesses were uncooperative; Jews had developed the art of appealing any negative decision to a higher authority, up to the Senate itself, all the while remaining in place. A number of local authorities complained that Jews who had been ordered to leave either created innumerable obstacles and delays or simply ignored the order (Go:29, 39). What were the police to do then? As the governor of Bessarabia observed, punishments such as expulsion under armed military guard – a punishment usually reserved for criminals and vagrants – hardly seemed appropriate for violations of temporary residential restrictions (Go:63).

The enthusiasm of the authorities to go far beyond the letter, intent, or even implication of a set of badly drafted laws, complicated by the lack of any ministerial consensus on the requisite level of enforcement, guaranteed that infractions would be viewed indulgently by the courts. This was even more the case when the Senate assumed the responsibility to provide a definitive interpretation of all facets of the May Laws. In making its decisions, the Senate was faced with the prospect of a wholesale and precipitous resettlement of Jews from the countryside to the towns, amidst warnings of the economic and human costs that would follow. At the same time, senators were aware of energetic protests and petitions from landowners in the strategic western provinces. Unsurprisingly, the First Department of the Senate issued interpretations that drew the sting from the worst excesses of enforcement. In rulings of 19 January and 21 February 1884, the Senate ordered that all resettlement under the May Laws be stopped until it had resolved the numerous individual cases then under appeal. This was shortly followed by the significant decision that rejected the claim of provincial authorities that only Jews who owned their own homes in the countryside could claim the status of permanent resident. Of even greater significance were the Senate rulings of 26 March 1884 and 6 July 1885, which stated that Jews were not obliged to possess formal, registered contracts in order to claim residency rights. Informal agreements between the two parties would also serve (Go:16,

17, 48, 67). This ruling, which ensured that any Jew with a cooperative Christian business partner need have no fear of expulsion, was greeted with dismay by the governors. They claimed that these rulings virtually gutted the May Laws.⁵⁰

The effectiveness of the May Laws

How effective were the May Laws in the first decade after their promulgation? Contemporaries were deeply divided over the issue. The judgement of members of the literate public would have depended very much upon which newspaper they read. Jewish and Judeophile newspapers, and those of an economically liberal bent, saw the Laws as a looming social and economic disaster. *Birzhevye vedomosti* (198:19/VII/1882) warned against the harm done to the national economy by the abnormal and extra-legal status of the Jews. The paper later claimed that the Laws were unworkable because they sought to protect not real people, but "a theoretical, chancellery-created, ideal *muzhik*." The real peasants, deprived of the functions of the Jewish middlemen, had been left "without hands" (207:30/XII/1883). Mikhail Katkov's *Moskovskie vedomosti*, liberal in economics if not in politics, attributed the Laws to intrigues by highly placed persons in the administration (i.e., Ignatiev). Artificial restrictions would threaten the Jews, the surrounding population, and the interests of the state (198:19/VII/1882). *Vestnik Evropy*, a leader of the camp of political liberals, feared that overconcentrating the Jews would produce more pogroms, not fewer. Jewish exploitation could be ended only by raising the economic level of the Russian people: "The Jews are not strong by themselves; they are strong because of their lack of rights and the ignorance of the society that surrounds them" (6:VI/1882). The only benefactors of the Laws, declared *Odesskie novosti*, were the native kulaks, who could give full play to "inhuman and soulless relations with the victims who fall into their net" (278:20/XI/1885).

The most sustained and articulate opposition to the May Laws was to be found in the publications of A. Landau, the Jewish literary-political journal *Voskhod* and its weekly supplement, *Nedel'naiia khronika Voskhoda*. So sharp was the critical tone of these publications that they received two warnings from the censor in one year, and were obliged to mute their tone or risk a six-month suspension, as eventually happened in 1891. The papers were especially keen to condemn administrative abuses, ranging from those of the local police up to the governors-general

⁵⁰ For typical complaints on this score, see Go:47 and below.

themselves. In particular Landau's publications chronicled capricious interpretations of the May Laws: the Jews who were expelled for moving to another house or for celebrating the High Holidays in the city, the student home for the holidays who was ordered out of the parental home, the discharged soldiers who found their native villages closed to them. Categories of Jews who apparently had the right to live anywhere in Russia, such as doctors, mining engineers, and pharmacists, were denied rural residence inside the Pale. Towns where Jews had the right to live were declared to be unincorporated, and the Jews ordered out.

Nedel'naiia khronika Voskhoda fought back by publicizing such abuses, all the while emphasizing both their illegality and the cost in human and economic suffering. Virtually all the cases publicized by *NKbV* were overturned or modified by the Senate, and the paper urged all victims of official caprice to push their suit. It even suggested that a fund be set up to compensate Jews who won their cases against the local authorities (44:4/XI/1884). So common did appeals to the Senate become that the governor-general of the Northwest ordered that all appeals against local rulings should be moved directly to the Senate, bypassing the higher provincial instances, in order to save time (37:16/IX/1884).

The paper directed a special attack at the belief that the May Laws were justified because they prevented pogroms. Quite the contrary, it claimed, by placing Jews outside the law, by making them playthings of official caprice, the risk of pogroms was raised:

Imagine that today an order appears for the expulsion of the Jews from the villages and the countryside, an order that causes their final ruination, their literal and complete destruction, along with their families and innocent children, in short, an order requiring a pogrom, carried out by the police authorities, against the Jews; why then shouldn't it be possible that the simple mind of the child of nature tells him that tomorrow an order might appear ordering a pogrom against the Jews at the hands of their urban and rural neighbors? (4:29/I/1884)

It was not a chance happening that new pogroms broke out in Chernigov province shortly after that governor's eccentric interpretation of the May Laws that only Jewish property-owners could reside in the countryside. The May Laws, in short, did not provide security in the countryside, but caused economic ruin for Jew and Christian alike.

A very different picture of the May Laws was to be found in the Judeophobe press. These organs had been skeptical from the start. As *Novorossiiskii telegraf* editorialized, the best that could be hoped for from the Laws was that "the position of the people, who are found at the mercy of the Israelite race, if not improved, will at least not become worse" (2192:22/V/1882). Events had shown that even this faint hope was to be

disappointed. How could the effect of the Laws be judged, for good or evil, queried *Ekho*, when they were so thoroughly evaded by the Jews (204:19/VIII/1883)? The fear of evasion became an obsession for the most influential Judeophobe organ, *Kievlianin*. The columns of the paper ranged from enumerating episodes of Jewish evasion to lengthy analyses of how the Jews could theoretically evade the Laws. Indeed, one reader intervened to plead with the paper to stop giving the Jews so much practical advice (108:19/V/1882; 129:12/VI/1882; 127:12/VI/1886).

A litany of Judeophobe complaints accompanied the first years of operation. The number of Jews was not diminishing in the countryside, but growing. They hid their ownership of a mill or a tavern behind the facade of compliant Christians. Convoluted legal procedures ensured that Jews could openly scoff at the Laws, aided by the indulgence of the Senate. Remedies were less in evidence, aside from calls for stricter enforcement of and even the extension of the Laws to the Kingdom of Poland.

It is apparent that the public anguish of the Judeophobes mirrored exactly the complaints of the provincial administration. As part of its examination of the May Laws, noted above, the Senate asked for information from all the governors about how they had been implemented and what they had achieved. One of the first actions of the Palen Commission, created in 1883, was to ask the governors to evaluate the utility of the Laws. Both the Senate and the Palen Commission received a chorus of bitter complaints. The two reports, taken together, provide an up-to-date synopsis of the effect of the May Laws after two years in force. They have the added advantage of providing hard statistics. In their replies, the governors trod a fine line. On the one hand, they sought to demonstrate that actions had been taken as ordered. On the other, they were obliged to explain why the Laws were still far from attaining their objectives, especially in the light of a virtually unanimous call by these same authorities for their retention.

The governors all complained of the Senate decisions that suspended mass expulsion. They also noted that many Jews who would become eligible for expulsion were still protected by unexpired leases. Overall, the number of Jews in the countryside had diminished, although the two northeastern provinces had to admit that the number of rural Jews had actually increased since 1882. Mogilev province gave no figures, but Vilna admitted to an increase of 1,555 from 1882 to 1885 (Go:77). In order to avoid such an embarrassing admission, the hardline administration of Chernigov managed to turn an increase between 1882 and 1884 into a decline, from 32,791 to 30,063 in 1885 (Go:75-6). Poltava reported that not a single Jew settled in the province before 1882 had been resettled

(Go:52). The results of those provinces which had succeeded in reducing the numbers of rural Jews were disappointing, to say the least. Grodno reported a decline of 10%, Kherson a fall of 7% (362 individuals, from 4,910 to 4,548), Kovno a decrease of 194 individuals or 6%, and Bessarabia, the expulsion of 1,367 individuals (Go:78, 76, 44).⁵¹

Even the impending expiration of leases hardly promised the eradication of the Jewish presence in the countryside. Moreover, the side effects were undesirable in the extreme. The governors of both Volynia and Podolia reported an increase in the number of Jews resident in the countryside "without visible means of support." How were these *luftmenschen* surviving? The answer lay in widespread evasion of the law by the Jews. The governor of Mogilev specified that 1,666 taverns were not formally owned by Jews, implying that they were under Jewish control. In Podolia, 42 Jews were recognized as holders of legal tavern patents; most of the additional 545 taverns were assumed to be controlled by Jews under another person's name. The governors complained that all apparent successes, such as a small decrease in the number of leases held by Jews, were illusory, given wholesale evasion of the law. Such evasion was possible only with the cooperation of peasants (who served as the titular owners of Jewish taverns) and landowners (who concluded oral agreements with Jews or used a middleman to conclude a Jewish lease). One of the few benefits that were ascribed to the Laws was that they had made the Jews more cautious and less arrogant (Go:64, 68). Golitsyn's official report, cited in the beginning of this chapter, reveals the disappointed hopes of the partisans of the May Laws (Go:80).

Given this record of failure, it might seem paradoxical that all the governors asked that the Laws be retained. For their part, they argued that they represented a beginning and had demonstrated to the peasantry that the government was serious about blocking Jewish exploitation. This initiative had to be continued, lest the people lose confidence in the government. The Laws must be strengthened and made permanent. The legal complications raised by the Senate had to be put right. At least the governors could comfort themselves with the belief that time was on their side. Leases would eventually expire, and unclear clauses of the Laws would be resolved. The Senate did not always side with the Jews, and the senators could change their minds. What did seem to be unchanging was the clear consensus within the bureaucratic empire of the MVD

⁵¹ For comparison, incomplete statistics for 1893 show that the overall increase of families living outside the Pale was 4.2%: GARF, f. 102, op. 40, d. 139, ll. 17-19. Reports received in the first year of the May Laws indicated that Jews who had been resettled in the Russian interior by ORT were being expelled by the local authorities: *Rassvet*, 46:13/XI/1882.

that the Jews' activities must be curbed and that the May Laws remained the most effective weapon to achieve this. In the future, policy debates no longer centered on whether or not the Pale of Settlement should be weakened or retained, but on how best the May Laws might achieve their goals.

7 The pogroms as foreign policy crisis

Her Majesty's Government would always be most happy to act in concert with that of the United States on any question regarding religious liberty.

Earl Granville to James Russell Lowell¹

The events of 1881–2 complicated Russia's relations with the international community and created an ongoing political crisis for the regime. The outrages provided an ideal pretext for Russophobes to attack Russia's credentials as a civilized society. Anti-Russian protest rallies were held throughout the world. Questions were raised in national parliaments. The pope in Rome was reported to have instructed Catholic bishops to provide relief aid to victims.² The country was shamed by the need to declare martial law in some of its major cities.³ Russia's inability to control its own borders or to develop a coherent stance on emigration complicated relations with neighboring states.⁴ Russia's own military prowess was undermined by the need to redirect large parts of the army from training to the task of domestic peace-keeping. Russia's financial might was weakened, as Russian bonds and shares fell in value on foreign stock exchanges, and at least one important foreign loan was sabotaged.⁵ Not least was the excuse that the pogroms provided for foreign intervention in Russia's domestic affairs, echoing European responses to the Polish insurrections of 1830 and 1863.

Judeophobe sentiments might gain mastery of the pogrom debate in governmental circles, but they encountered little support abroad. At the end of 1881, alarmed by an Anglo-Jewish petition campaign, the government ordered Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials to draw up a

¹ Cited in Cyrus Adler and Aaron Margalith, *With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews, 1840–1945* (New York, 1946), 207.

² Reported in *NKhV*, 20:15/V/1882. ³ *K-A*, 60 (5/V/1881).

⁴ A number of states, such as Austria-Hungary and Romania, sent diplomatic notes seeking assurances of the safety of their nationals: *ibid.*, 37 (2/V/1881) and 45 (5/V/1881).

⁵ In his concluding remarks at the first Kiev pogrom trial, the prosecutor V. S. Strelnikov emphasized the harm done to Russia's reputation abroad, including a fall of Russian securities on international stock exchanges. See *Russkii evrei*, 23:4/VI/1881.

compendium of anti-pogrom measures for publication in the *Journal de St. Petersbourg*. This would demonstrate, it was hoped, the sincerity of the government's efforts to suppress the pogroms. Statistics were assembled to show that 3,675 people had been arrested for participation in the disorders in the South, of whom 2,359 were sent to trial. The Warsaw disorders saw 3,151 arrestees, of whom 2,302 were indicted. "These figures demonstrate that the measures taken to stem the disorders were far from weak." The intent of this tabulation was transparent: Foreign intervention, the report warned, would further complicate relations between Jews and non-Jews. "Since most of those involved in the movement against the Jews were uneducated, simple people, baseless rumors about foreign intervention on behalf of the Jews can only strengthen irritation and misunderstanding."⁶ Instead of quieting criticism, however, these figures provided grist for the mill of Russia's enemies. Far from proving the industry of the government in suppressing disorders, critics claimed, they showed precisely how the government had failed to prevent or repress a mass outbreak of violence. The figures revealed apathy and ineptitude, not energy and resolve. In the words of the *Jewish Chronicle*, "they think to hoodwink the world by this show of numbers" (672:10/II/1882).

Despite the manner in which this campaign backfired, the MVD and the MID continued to wage a campaign of justification, endeavoring to refute critical foreign coverage, particularly the sensationalist reporting of the Balta pogrom. The prosecutor of the Odessa Judicial Chamber wrote to the MID to draw attention to a grisly atrocity report (the mutilation of women and children) which had been reprinted by the *Presse* of Vienna, allegedly based on Russian accounts. The head of the Odessa Jewish hospital had written to *Novorossiiskii telegraf* to deny these claims. The prosecutor suggested that this disclaimer be reprinted in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*.⁷ The government also sought to use its friends in the West. Not least of these was Madame Olga Novikova (Novikoff), a well-connected Russian aristocrat frequently resident in London. Novikova's advocacy of Russian causes throughout the years earned her the admiring sobriquet of "The MP for Russia," and she was energetic in putting Russia's case before the British public as a frequent contributor to *The Times* and other prestigious publications.⁸

⁶ RGIA, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), ll. 1469-73.

⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248 (1882), ll. 52-4.

⁸ For Novikova's participation in press debates over the articles which appeared in *The Times*, see John D. Klier, "The Times of London, the Russian Press, and the Pogroms of 1881-2," *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, 308 (1984), 1-26. For a sympathetic biography, see W. T. Stead, *The MP for Russia*, vol. II (London, 1909), 277-86. For her

The Russian case in North America was presented by Zenaide Ragozin, a Russian-born American citizen best known for her later works on the ancient Near East. In April 1882, she published an article entitled "Russian Jews and Gentiles from a Russian Point of View" in the prestigious *New York Century Magazine*. Her essay was an extended paraphrase of Iakov Brafman's *Kniga kagala*, which led her to the following conclusion:

The Jews are disliked, nay, hated in those parts, not because they believe and pray differently, but because they are a parasitical race who, producing nothing, fasten on the produce of land and labor, and live on it, choking the breath of life out of commerce and industry as sure as the creeper throttles the tree that upholds it.⁹

The threat of foreign intervention

It was the task of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to defend Russia before the wider world. Foreign Minister N. K. Girs resorted to tried and true arguments to explain the hatred that Russians bore the Jews. In a discussion with the British consul in St. Petersburg, Sir E. Thornton, he claimed that

a great number of the Nihilists were of that persuasion; that their recent admission into the Russian colleges and universities had shown a very bad result as all students had turned out to be revolutionists and had contributed to the contamination of their comrades; that a very large majority of the smugglers on the frontiers and the vendors of spiritous liquors in the country were of that persuasion; and that it consequently had been found necessary to enforce with great stringency the laws with regard to them which already existed.¹⁰

A particularly embarrassing problem for Russian spokespeople was the widely reported incidence of rape during the pogroms. Rape claims were a central feature of the sensationalist reportage of the *Jewish World*, which formed the backbone of the condemnatory series on the pogroms published by *The Times* of London in early 1882 and widely reprinted, in a number of languages, in pamphlet form. The call for international protest against the pogroms, led by Rabbi Yitzhak Rül of Memel (now Klaipėda

misalliance with the Zionist leader Max Nordau, see Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley and London, 2001), 36–73. For representative letters in *The Times*, see n. 6.

⁹ 23, 4 (IV/1882), 919. This article prompted a fierce response by Emma Lazarus, "Russian Christianity Versus Modern Judaism," *Century Magazine*, 23, 5 (V/1882), 48–56. See also the response of the *JC*, 680:7/IV/1882.

¹⁰ *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia. Russia No. 1 (1882). State Papers*, vol. LXXXI (London, 1882), Thornton to Granville, 26 October 1881. In a conversation with the American minister in St. Petersburg, Girs avowed that the Russian Jews constituted a race separate and apart from the rest of the people and were "altogether unfitted for more liberty than they now possess": Adler and Margalith, *With Firmness*, 213.

in Lithuania), was highlighted by gruesome accounts of rapes.¹¹ In response to an international outcry, V. K. Pleve, the director of police, demanded a report on an incident attributed to the Balta pogrom, the simultaneous rape of a mother and her daughter. Kiev governor-general A. R. Drenteln personally oversaw an investigation of the matter.¹²

Such tales of rape and rapine elicited a worldwide reaction from Jews and non-Jews alike. The most common response was the collection of funds to assist victims and refugees. Later, various bodies solicited funds for emigration to both North America and Erets Israel. In some countries, most notably Britain and the United States, monetary collections were accompanied by public meetings to protest Russian barbarism, as well as mass petitions to the Russian emperor to ease the restrictions on his Jewish subjects. France was very active in financial assistance, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle played the pivotal role in the organization of trans-Atlantic migration. In 1882, a relief committee was formed under the presidency of Victor Hugo. Public protest, on the other hand, was more muted in France, nor was there great pressure placed upon the French government to undertake a diplomatic initiative. The republic was in the process of building good relations with Russia in order to escape the diplomatic isolation caused by defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the subsequent formation of Bismarck's *Dreikaiserbund*. Patriotic "Frenchmen of the Mosaic Faith" were loath to appear disloyal by stirring up too much hostility against a putative ally or by launching a "dangerous polemic" in the press. As Zosa Szajkowski summarized, "and so it came about that in France, the classical land of demonstrations, meetings and protests, not even one meeting was held against the pogroms in Russia."¹³

Bismarck's Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia's immediate neighbors, were also keen to retain good relations. They were most concerned with the practical problems of incoming Jewish refugees and of transmigration across their territory. Official Jewish bodies concentrated on relief rather than protest, aware that they had problems enough with antisemitism in their own backyards. Public protests and diplomatic interventions were far more common in the United States, but American agitation, although irksome, did not trouble the Russian authorities or Russian public opinion overly much.¹⁴ When a number of newspapers

¹¹ As an indication that these claims were openly made in Russia, see the letter as published in *NKhV*, 14:2/IV/1882, reprinted from the St. Petersburg *Herold*.

¹² A. Zel'tser, "Pogrom v Balte," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 13 (1996), 40-63.

¹³ Zosa Szajkowski, "The European Attitude to East European Jewish Emigration (1881-1893)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 41 (1951/2), 149.

¹⁴ The Russian press reported American protest meetings and official pronouncements, but without much comment. Besides outrage at the pogroms, the US government was also

carried leaked American diplomatic correspondence concerning the pogroms, the censorship authorities were primarily concerned because "the Jews in Russia will see in this action intercession on their behalf by a foreign power."¹⁵

Britain was an entirely different case, and Russian officialdom carefully monitored the mood of Russia's imperial rival. It was keenly recalled that, two years earlier, British diplomatic intervention had denied Russia its full share of the spoils of the Russo-Turkish War, overturning the San Stefano treaty that had been negotiated, ironically, by N. P. Ignatiev. British Russophobia was kept fresh by fears of Russian "plots" in Afghanistan. The Russian press, therefore, reported British responses to the pogroms almost to the exclusion of those given by any other of the great powers.

Even before the pogroms, the question of the legal status of Jews in Russia was enmeshed in controversy. In September 1880, L. Lewisohn, a German Jew who was a naturalized British subject, visited St. Petersburg on business. When he sought to register his passport, he was informed that, as a Jew, he had no residence rights and must depart the capital within twenty-four hours. This order was in apparent violation of the Anglo-Russian Trade Treaty of 12 January 1859, which permitted free access of British subjects into Russia on business. In response to Lewisohn's insistent complaints, the Foreign Office was forced reluctantly to investigate the affair, which eventually engendered two sets of parliamentary papers. The matter linked neatly to the wider issue of the status of the Jews in Russia, which had been under discussion in *The Times* for well over a year. The Anglo-Jewish leadership, including members of Parliament, was already active in the Lewisohn affair when the pogroms erupted. On 16 May 1881 NS, questions relating to the status of the Jews in Russia were raised in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the first of a total of fourteen interventions that were raised between May and August 1881, mainly by the Anglo-Jewish communal leader and

concerned over the legal position of American Jewish merchants in Russia. For Russian diplomatic monitoring of American activities, see AVPRI, f. 155, op. 340, d. 775 (22/III-3/IV/1882). See the diplomatic note of US secretary of state James Blaine on this topic in RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 132 (20/VII/1881), ll. 1-6. See also V. Zhuravleva, "Evreiskii vopros v Rossii glazami Amerikantsev," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 13 (1996), 64-87; V. V. Engel', "Evreiskii vopros" v *Russko-Amerikanskikh otnosheniakh* (Moscow, 1998).

¹⁵ RGIA, f. 776, op. 2, d. 22, ll. 139-40. Given the lukewarm concern of the British Foreign Office over the treatment of British Jews by the Russian authorities (see below), an American proposal to Lord Granville that the two countries work in concert on the issue came to nothing. See Cyrus Adler and Aaron M. Margalith, *American Intercession on Behalf of Jews in the Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 1840-1938*, special issue of *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 36 (New York, 1943), 205-7.

Conservative MP for Greenwich, Baron Henry de Worms. A majority of these interventions dealt with the Lewisohn case. He persistently pressed the Foreign Office minister, Sir Charles Dilke, for a government statement on the mistreatment of the Jews.

The attitude of Gladstone's government to the prospect of any diplomatic intervention in response to Russian Jew-baiting was cool, to say the least. This lay the Liberal leader open to charges of hypocrisy, since he had been a leading critic of the "Bulgarian Horrors", the Ottoman suppression of an uprising in Bulgaria in 1876. At the time he had condemned Conservative prime minister Benjamin Disraeli's reluctance to become involved. Gladstone's foreign minister, Lord Granville, was similarly unenthusiastic in pursuing either the Lewisohn case or the issue of the pogroms, and said as much in a meeting with a Jewish delegation comprising members of the Anglo-Jewish Committee and the Board of Deputies on 24 May 1881.¹⁶

It became harder to justify this *laissez-faire* attitude after the publication of *The Times'* atrocity-filled articles in January 1882. The *Daily Telegraph* editorialized that the government must lose no time "in addressing an emphatic protest to the Czar, against the awful and revolting cruelty practised by Russian subjects towards the Jews of the Empire." The *St. James Gazette* noted that "surely the righteous wrath which 'burned like fire' in the breast of Mr. Gladstone at the deeds of 1876, cannot remain unkindled by those of 1881."¹⁷ Pressed by Jewish parliamentarians of his own party, Gladstone responded to a planted question by MP John Simon in the Commons session of 9 February 1882 by expressing "the utmost pain and horror," even as he stressed the absence of a *locus standi* that would give Britain any pretext for intervention, public or private.¹⁸ Public outrage played into the hands of those members of the Anglo-Jewish leadership who wished to instigate a broad public campaign. The result of their endeavors was the convocation of a public meeting at the Mansion House on 1 February 1882, where "Russian barbarism" was pilloried by almost every speaker. The widespread sympathy demonstrated by non-Jews encouraged Baron de Worms to force a debate in the House of Commons on 3 March 1882, against the advice of his fellow Jewish parliamentarians (who were, it should be noted, all Liberals).

¹⁶ See a detailed account of the meeting in *The Times*, 30,203:25/V/1881.

¹⁷ Both cited in *Jewish World*, 467:20/I/1882.

¹⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, CCLXVI, col. 244-5 (9/II/1882) (London, 1882; hereafter *PD*). See also the report in *The Times*, 30,427:10/II/1882.

Against this background, Gladstone's government defended itself and threw a helpful lifeline to the beleaguered Russian government.¹⁹ In mid-February, after the Mansion House meeting but before the parliamentary debate, the government published a "Blue Book," containing the reports of British consuls in Russia relating to the pogroms.²⁰ The consular reports presented a very different picture of the pogroms from that published in *The Times*. The consuls were not unfriendly to the Jews, and Vice-Consul Law reported from St. Petersburg on 14 June 1881 NS, after a visit to Kiev, that "the sufferings of the Jews in Kiev have not been exaggerated; a majority of the traders have probably been ruined commercially, and vast numbers were suddenly reduced to destitution." At the same time, he argued that "the incidents of this outbreak have, as far as I can learn, been considerably exaggerated in the English press."²¹ In response to the horror stories contained in *The Times* account, Odessa consul-general Stanley declared on 18 January 1882 NS that "amongst the riots described are the disturbances which took place at Odessa last May, and the description is so incorrect and exaggerated, and the descriptions of what took place at some other of the places mentioned so far exceed in horrors the descriptions given to me by eye-witnesses at those places, that I think very little faith can be given to any part of it, more especially to the accounts of the violations of women." Stanley in no way excused the Russian authorities, whom he described as "most apathetic and neglectful of their duties, allowing the brutal mobs to plunder and ill-treat the Jews," but he emphasized that, on the basis of his personal investigation "there has been little loss of life, and violations of women have, I believe, been most rare."²² The Russian ambassador in London, A. B. Lobanov-Rostovskii, wasted no time in sending a copy of the Blue Book to Foreign Minister Girs, noting with some satisfaction that they "se sont plu à répondre dans le public."²³

The parliamentary debate, held on the evening of 3 March 1882 NS, despite some inevitable Russia-bashing, had an entirely satisfactory outcome from the tsarist government's point of view. The motion proposed:

¹⁹ In a letter to *The Times* that appeared on 25 January 1882, the Jewish leader A. Meyers reported that Gladstone had told him that he was "convinced that any government interference whatever, where cruelties sprang from the fanatical ignorance of a people, would do more harm than good." This was exactly the argument being made by the Russian government.

²⁰ *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews*, I. The reports, which dealt with all the pogroms up to and including Warsaw, were from the consuls in St. Petersburg (Hugh Wyndham and Vice-Consul Law), Warsaw (Colonel Francis Maude), Odessa (G. E. Stanley), Taganrog (F. Wooldridge), and Nikolaev (Vice-Consul William Wagstaff).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8. ²² *Ibid.*, 21-2.

²³ AVPRI, f. 155, op. 340, d. 775 (10:22/II/1882), l. 140b.

That this House, deeply deploring the persecution and outrages to which the Jews have been subjected in portions of the Russian Empire, trusts that Her Majesty's Government will find means, either alone or with other Great Powers, of using their good offices with the Government of His Majesty the Czar to prevent the reoccurrence of similar acts of violence.²⁴

As de Worms himself admitted, the motion committed the British government to do very little for Russian Jewry. Moreover, the tone of its rather anodyne sentiments were further watered down by friendly interventions that urged him to withdraw the motion with a vague assurance that the government would do something; it need not say what. Nor could de Worms carry his own fellow Jewish parliamentarians with him. His fiercest critic was the MP for Dewsbury, John Simon. Like de Worms, Simon was a member of the Russo-Jewish Committee (RJC) created by the Anglo-Jewish leadership in response to the crisis as the pogroms became endemic. He voiced the fear that the motion "jeopardized rather than aided the cause he has at heart." Simon made no secret of his belief that there was an underlying political objective for the motion.²⁵ De Worms was one of the first Conservative Jewish MPs, a lone voice in a House of Jewish Liberals. Arthur Cohen, another Jewish MP, noted that the motion had been brought forward in opposition to the wishes of every other Jewish MP. They were united in their belief that "the adoption of this motion would seriously endanger and prejudice the position of their co-religionists in Russia."²⁶

Another minority member, the Irish MP Frank Hugh O'Donnell, was no more helpful, reminding the assembly that Britain, so keen to instruct the Russians, had its own difficulties with unruly Indian and Irish subjects. Unlike them, the Jews were well equipped to defend themselves. "He could not but remember that in the hands of the Jews themselves rested the control of the money markets of the world; and, so long as that was the fact, a government like Russia must depend largely upon the favor of the rulers of the money market."²⁷

When he rose to speak, Prime Minister William Gladstone turned in a vintage performance. He gave nothing away, defending the competence and professionalism of the British consuls in Russia – impugned, out of necessity, by de Worms – and acquitted the Russian government of any

²⁴ *PD*, CCLXVII, col. 30 (3/III/1882) (London, 1882).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, cols. 40–4. There was a touch of hypocrisy here. According to Geoffrey Alderman (*The Jewish Community in British Politics* [Oxford, 1983], 40), Simon's planted question to Gladstone on 9 February had been designed specifically to deny the plight of the Jews as a political issue for the Conservatives. On the other hand, Simon had spoken forthrightly about this problem in meetings of the Anglo-Jewish Committee.

²⁶ *PD*, CCLXVII, col. 57 (3/III/1882). ²⁷ *Ibid.*

complicity in the pogroms. "I am bound to believe," he declared, "that the Emperor of Russia and his government regard these outrages with the same feelings as we contemplate them ourselves." There was no basis in international law for British intervention, and attempts to use British good offices in any public way could have harmful consequences. "The fact of our being a party in the case would be certain to cause a strong reaction, not merely in the minds of those who have committed the outrages, but likewise on the part of a much larger number, who, while, perhaps, not sympathizing with the outrages themselves, yet are jealously averse to anything that may seem like an invasion of national independence."²⁸ It was best just to let the Russian government go about the task of pacification, bolstered by the belief that "we give them credit for every desire to put down and to prevent conduct which is a disgrace to civilization and humanity; and that the Russian government will rather be encouraged by their assurances of our sympathy to use more and more vigorous efforts for the purpose of securing that great end."²⁹

Tacitly admitting that he lacked support in the Commons, de Worms withdrew his motion, under the pretense that he had made his point. The outcome was a tangible indication that the euphoria engendered by the Mansion House meeting would produce no further political triumphs, even when pogrom atrocities reappeared with renewed force in Balta. It was clear that, under Gladstone, British diplomacy, already distracted by the latest Eastern Crisis, would leave Russia alone.³⁰

Faced with public demonstrations and political rhetoric in England, the MID employed the *Journal de St. Petersbourg* to pursue a tripartite strategy. The paper emphasized that the Jewish Question was an internal, purely Russian matter; decried the anti-Russian campaign as "political rather than philanthropic"; and threw back into British teeth the vexed question of Ireland. The paper repeatedly stressed that foreign intervention in an internal Russian matter was incompatible with good relations between two friendly states. Indeed, the paper warned ominously that such actions "tend to add to the tension between the Jews and the Russian masses."³¹ The paper waxed indignant against the atrocity reports published in *The Times*: "The English journalists, with *The Times* as their head, have published alleged details of the Russian 'atrocities,' in which the greatest fantasy and plainest malevolence are strikingly apparent. It is easy enough

²⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 48. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, col. 50.

³⁰ The Eastern Crisis of 1881-2 was occasioned by the growth of anti-Western nationalism in Egypt, which led to riots in June 1882 and culminated in the occupation of Cairo by British troops in September 1882.

³¹ *The Times*, 30,429:13/II/1882. See also *ibid.*, 30,201:23/V/1881.

to pile up figures and statistics of people killed and goods lost, and say, 'Refute that if you can.'³² Commenting on the Mansion House meeting, in words that recalled ongoing discussions between Ignatiev and Girs (see below), the paper wondered what the impression would be "if similarly sweeping language were indulged in at meetings on the Continent in discussing English legislation in Ireland."³³ Why had all the agitation suddenly become so fierce and strident? "We can only suppose that the excellent relations created by the Gladstone cabinet have lasted too long for some people."³⁴ The Mansion House protests were depicted as designed "to revive the inveterate Russophobia which had been mitigated since the accession of the present British cabinet to office."³⁵ In short, agitation for the Jews was presented as a mere party-political weapon to poison the good relations between Britain and Russia.³⁶

Private diplomatic initiatives

While Girs and Ignatiev took satisfaction in such a positive outcome for Russian diplomacy in the official sphere, they displayed grave concern at private initiatives. Indeed, it is curious to observe that almost the same level of attention was directed toward the private initiatives of Anglo-Jewry as was given to parliamentary developments. This may plausibly be counted an outgrowth of enduring Russian concern for the power both of international Jewish finance, exemplified by the Rothschilds, and of the "international kahal." This latter obsession was evident in the attention that the Russian secret police paid to the perceived "encirclement" of Russia by hostile Jewish (relief) organizations, led by the Alliance.

Anglo-Jewry did have a long tradition of intervention on behalf of their Russian brethren, exemplified by the two celebrated visits to Russia of Sir Moses Montefiore.³⁷ On the occasion of the Odessa pogrom of 1871, the Anglo-Jewish Society sent a memorial to the tsar requesting protection for his Jewish subjects.³⁸ It was not surprising, then, that the "great and good" of Anglo-Jewry again went into action. On this occasion, however, it proved difficult to build a consensus or to agree on a common course of action – a situation of which the Russian government was well aware, since Russian diplomats were in close contact with Nathaniel Rothschild

³² Reprinted *ibid.*, 30,411:23/I/1882. ³³ Cited *ibid.*, 30,422:4/II/1882.

³⁴ Cited *ibid.*, 30,411:23/I/1882. ³⁵ Cited *ibid.*, 30,422:4/II/1882.

³⁶ These themes were mirrored almost exactly in the letters from Olga Novikova published in *The Times*. See *The Times*, 30,407:18/I/1882 and 30,431:15/II/1882.

³⁷ Montefiore visited Russia in 1846 and 1872. See Louis Loewe, ed., *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, facsimile of the 1890 edition, introduced by Professor Raphael Loewe (London, 1983).

³⁸ RVIA, f. 970, op. 2, d. 1920 (VII/1871), l. 319.

and other leaders. In retrospect, this made the Russian reaction to the putative intervention of Anglo-Jewry excessive and counterproductive.

Given the delicate nature of its business, the Russo-Jewish Committee resolved to conduct its activities in secret, thus laying itself open in the future to charges of apathy and inactivity.³⁹ The principal difficulty facing the initiatives of the RJC was the disinclination of other European Jewish leaders to participate in vigorous diplomatic intervention. The RJC, which had promised to do nothing without consultation, increasingly had to go it alone. There was particular resistance to the committee's proposal for a delegation to be sent to Russia "to intercede with the Tsar on behalf of his Jewish subjects, to endeavor to procure an abrogation of the laws which at present oppress the Jews in Russia, and generally to take such steps as may be found expedient to improve the condition of the Jews." The RJC envisioned raising the question of emigration "at a later period."⁴⁰ Before much could be done, however, there had to be coordination and cooperation, especially with the American Jewish leadership, who were supposed to receive the bulk of the refugees. The role of the Alliance, already engaged in refugee work, was played down, given the suspicion with which the Russian government viewed this body.⁴¹

The RJC appreciated the importance of publicizing the fate of pogrom victims to the broader English public and appointed a subcommittee with the task of assembling information and placing it in the press. The subcommittee did its job well, producing the raw material for the celebrated series on the pogroms published in *The Times* on 10 and 11 January 1882.

There was sharp disagreement as to what should happen next. The majority of the RJC wished to proceed with discretion and to submit a confidential petition to the tsar through the Russian ambassador in London. A minority sought to pursue a more aggressive approach by organizing a public protest meeting. Even as rebellious RJC members forced the convocation of what would become the Mansion House meeting, the committee proceeded with the petition campaign. It was this initiative that so alarmed Girs and Ignatiev.

In late December of 1881, Russian ambassador Lobanov-Rostovskii advised Girs that he was in communication with Jewish communal leaders Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Sir Nathaniel Rothschild, leading members of the RJC. They had advised him that the Jews of London had prepared a "démarche" for the government, consisting of a proposed delegation to St. Petersburg to intercede for the Jews and to secure

³⁹ See editorial criticism from *JC*, 667:6/I/1882, and *Jewish World*, 468:27/I/1882.

⁴⁰ London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/2712/RJC/1 (28/IX/1881; 30/IX/1881).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30/IX/1881.

authorization for as many of them as possible to emigrate. Even as they acted to undermine the "demarche," Girs and Ignatiev began to formulate policy to satisfy this latter request. Ironically, when Nathaniel Rothschild, in his role as chairman of the RJC, appeared at the embassy on 5/17 January to submit the petition, the emigration question had been dropped from the wording. A request for emigration was perhaps seen as undermining the petition's claim that Jews "are commanded by our sacred books to promote the welfare of the land that shelters them." Instead, the petitioners challenged current Russian policy toward the Jews, exemplified by the charges contained in the instructions to the Ignatiev commissions. The proper remedy for the Jewish Question, the petition urged, was the grant of legal equality to the Jews and the abolition of the Pale of Settlement.⁴²

Despite Rothschild's assurances in his initial approach that he was trying to deflect his co-religionists from more extreme responses and that a refusal to accept the petition would "produce the most unfortunate impression," Lobanov delayed an official response pending instructions from St. Petersburg. By 31 December Girs and Ignatiev had reached agreement that the RJC address was "an interference in our domestic affairs by a foreign power" and could not possibly be accepted. A week later Ignatiev returned to this theme, denouncing the petition as "an insult to Russian honor" and wondering how the British would respond to the creation of a charitable fund in Moscow set up for the improvement of the life of the Irish.⁴³ When Nathaniel Rothschild arrived at the Russian Embassy with the petition in mid-January, he was politely refused. This rebuff led to the publication of the petition in the British press. Ironically, the public mood was now so hostile to Russia that the softly worded document disappeared virtually without public comment.

Russian policy on emigration

Russia's relations with its neighbors and rivals were most immediately complicated by the flow of Jewish refugees abroad and by foreign and domestic appeals for a clear statement by the government on the legality of emigration. Various statements by public officials, such as V. S. Strelnikov's declaration in Kiev that "the western border is open to the Jews," held out hope to those who envisioned formal emigration schemes, just as it terrified others who feared the possibility of a mass expulsion. This was the background to the heated polemic in the Jewish press on the emigration issue, examined in Chapter 9.

⁴² For the complete petition, see *The Times*, 30,440:25/II/1882.

⁴³ AVPRI, f. 155, op. 340, d. 775 (1881-2), ll. 1-9ob.

Ignatiev could not resist the temptation to join in, although in no aspect of the Jewish Question was he so contradictory and inconsistent. At the end of August 1881, he had left the Kiev delegation in no doubt that he was unalterably opposed to emigration.⁴⁴ Yet within a week, receiving a delegation from the first conference of Jewish communal leaders (which included some of the delegates from Kiev), he echoed Strelnikov's implied invitation that "the western border is open to you" and claimed that "proposals are being worked out."⁴⁵ This may have been just another case of Ignatiev's notorious mendacity. But in a more perverse way, Ignatiev's changing attitude may be read as an example of his reliance on "popular politics", which sought out and responded to the opinions of experts. If the Jews wanted to leave, he may have reasoned, let them go. In a note to N. K. Girs on 30 September, Ignatiev asked the minister of foreign affairs for his opinion on "measures he proposed to take in view of the growing desire among our Jews to settle abroad." Ignatiev explained to Girs that there was no reason to value the Jewish population and that the only criterion that Jewish emigration must meet was state interest. Therefore, Ignatiev proposed to permit emigration, subject to a set of provisos: (1) Jewish males of draft age would not be permitted to leave; (2) only entire families might depart, lest they abandon sick or elderly family members unable to fend for themselves; and (3) emigrant Jews would be forbidden ever to return to Russia. Those who did so would be treated as vagrants (an offense punishable by exile to Siberia in imperial legislation).⁴⁶

Girs replied to Ignatiev on 11 November 1881. While declaring himself in general agreement, he doubted whether it would be of much consequence since "the organization of emigration demands not only large, but even enormous monetary resources." Any reduction in the Jewish population would be helpful, since it would reduce the severe economic competition within Jewish communities. That said, Girs anticipated some difficulties with Ignatiev's rules. Emigrant Jews might be forbidden ever to return to Russia but, if they did not actually acquire foreign citizenship, international law would still consider them Russian subjects. How then could they be expelled abroad if they returned? The status of Jews who took foreign citizenship was also unclear.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See Chapter 10, p. 338. It might be noted that the 1835 statute regulating Jewish life in the empire had declared, in Article 11, that "Jews who go abroad without legal permission lose their Russian citizenship and are not permitted to return": *Polnoe sobranie zakonov* (second series), X:8,054 (31/V/1835).

⁴⁵ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1627, ll. 3–3ob.

⁴⁶ RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 132 (1881–2), ll. 9–14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 15. Girs knew of what he spoke, given the contemporaneous Lewisohn affair.

By the end of the year, Girs and Ignatiev were preoccupied with the threat of the Anglo-Jewish petition. Even as they devised a formula for the petition to be rejected, they dealt with one of its requests included in the initial draft: Might Jews be allowed to emigrate? On 31 December, Ignatiev advised Girs that the petition should be rejected but "regarding emigration, while it is against the law (Statute 325 of the Criminal Code) for people to leave the country without authorization, the government will not refuse permission to Jews who wish to settle as complete families that contain no one fleeing military service. They must also have the permission of the communities of which they are members."⁴⁸ In a note that Girs prepared for Lobanov on the petition, which he anticipated would contain an emigration request, the latter was instructed to say only that "the question of Jewish resettlement from Russia is at present under review by the MVD."⁴⁹

Was Ignatiev's interview with Isaak Orshanskii on 16 January 1882 the vehicle that he chose in order to reveal this new policy? Pre-planning seems unlikely. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Ignatiev had actually given instructions to the authorities that Orshanskii not be permitted to leave Ekaterinoslav. Orshanskii's subsequent arrival in the capital was therefore unexpected. The interview that Ignatiev proceeded to give Orshanskii, in the latter's guise as a correspondent for *Rassvet*, represented another example of Ignatiev playing to his audience and speaking off the cuff. He seems to have given no thought to the use that might be made of his words or that they would be trumpeted as official policy. Appended to the report of the interview was a note from the editor of *Rassvet*: "We have heard that, within a few days, a project for the establishment of an emigration committee will be submitted to Count Ignatiev."⁵⁰

Ignatiev continued to make policy by interview, invariably reflecting the priorities of his interlocutors. In his interview with Aleksandr T sederbaum, on 6 February 1882, he delivered a paean to Jewish settlement in Palestine, while to the anti-emigrationist Poliakov he broached the idea of Jewish settlement in Central Asia. Ignatiev kept the pot boiling: It was reportedly at his insistence that the emigration issue was included on the agenda of the second meeting of Jewish communal representatives.⁵¹

What appeared to be a sustained effort to develop a specific policy on emigration at the end of 1881 completely broke down in the new year. It is notable that, at the time of the Orshanskii interview, Ignatiev all but confirmed that the policy, which was agreed with Girs, would be put into place. At the end of the month the two ministries were in the

⁴⁸ AVPRI, f. 155, op. 340, d. 775 (1881-2), ll. 7-8. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 11-13.

⁵⁰ *Rassvet*, 4:22/1/1882. ⁵¹ See Chapter 10, note 71.

process of agreeing the wording of a note to be sent to Lobanov in London on the subject of emigration.⁵² Yet no official public announcement was ever made, at home or abroad. Since the policy development took place in the midst of anti-Russian agitation in Britain, a possible conjecture is that the announcement was delayed because the government was reluctant to appear to make any concession to foreign pressure. It is also possible that the ministries were aware of the deep division on the issue to be found within the Jewish leadership. In any event, official delay produced the vacuum into which poured the rumors and confusion that underlay the independent Jewish efforts detailed in Chapter 8.

In the meantime, the continuing flood of refugees abroad prompted open dissatisfaction among Russia's neighbors. As early as 22 May 1881 NS, the Prussian cabinet had discussed ways of better policing the Russo-German frontier, and of moving refugees as quickly as possible through the country.⁵³ The refugee problem was now discussed in the Austrian parliament and became a major issue in the Hungarian press (see Figure 10).⁵⁴

Small wonder that two of D. A. Tolstoi's early actions when he replaced Ignatiev at the MVD were to ban emigration agitation and to send a ministry official to the Galician border town of Brody to help repatriate refugees. Russia raised no objections when international relief bodies, such as the Alliance and the Russo-Jewish Committee, began to repatriate those who had fled from Russia. Tolstoi also put an end to the expulsion of Jews by restating the provisions of the so-called Makov Circular, which provided the basis for the unhindered residence of "illegally settled Jews."⁵⁵ On paper, Jewish emigration from the Russian Empire remained illegal or at least unsanctioned by law.

Financial complications

The pogroms had a disastrous financial impact upon Russia. This took the form of large-scale property damage, estimated in the millions of rubles, the cancellation of fairs and market days, and the collapse of trade

⁵² GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (30/I/1882), l. 1479; AVPRI, f. 155, op. 340, d. 775 (3/II/1882 and 10/II/1882), ll. 30-2.

⁵³ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1987), 44.

⁵⁴ In sessions on 28 and 29 April 1882, the Austrian parliament discussed possible measures against the influx of Jewish refugees, reported in *NKhV*, 18:1/V/1882, while *Bolond istök* (14/V/1882; see Figure 10) caricatured Hungarian Jewish journalists welcoming this "new Muscovite invasion." I thank Kati Vörös for locating and Michael Miller for helping me to obtain this image.

⁵⁵ *NKhV*, 27:3/VII/1882; 28:10/VII/1881; 34:20/VI/1882; *Rassvet*, 35:29/VIII/1882.



Figure 10. "The new Muscovite invasion" (*Bolond istók*, 14/V/1882).

throughout the southeastern parts of European Russia, where it was largely in Jewish hands.⁵⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the Kiev pogrom, British and Austrian firms stopped shipping goods to southern Russia.⁵⁷ The diverse economic fallout inspired the petition of Moscow-based manufacturers discussed in Chapter 4. The impact of the pogroms on Russia's prestige and credit abroad was widely discussed in the press. Jewish and Judeophile newspapers, including such influential organs as M. N. Katkov's *Moskovskie vedomosti*, persistently attributed every downward slip of Russian issues on the stock market to foreign displeasure at Jewish

⁵⁶ See V. P. Ribins'kii, ed., "Shchodennik O. I. Mikhalevicha," in *Zbirnik prats' evreis'koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1928–9), vol. II, 179–80, for a contemporary diarist's description of the economic suffering caused to non-Jews by the Elisavetgrad pogrom.

⁵⁷ The British vice-consul in Berdiansk noted the impact of the pogroms in depressing local trade" in 1881: *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews*, 1, 1099.

persecution.⁵⁸ Foreign investors did not have to be sympathetic to the Jews to view askance the descent of Russia into mob violence. This was one of the reasons why the government was reluctant to declare martial law in response to the pogroms. There is no question that Russian bonds took a tumble on international markets.⁵⁹ At least one major Odessa firm, the Jewish banking house of Efrus and Co., made a highly publicized move abroad in response to the disorders.⁶⁰ In late summer, Drenteln requested – and received – a detailed report on the local economic consequences of the pogroms from the director of the Kiev Private Commercial Bank.⁶¹ When Ignatiev fell from power, *Birzhevye vedomosti* reckoned that his anti-Jewish policies had caused losses of R152 million in the value of Russian state notes on the stock exchange.⁶²

Not for nothing was N. Kh. Bunge, the minister of finance, Ignatiev's most determined critic during debates within the Committee of Ministers over the proposed May Laws. Bunge was also a principal channel for the receipt and transmission of Judeophile petitions. In a ministerial report about a new issue of Russian gold bonds he complained that the foreign credit of Russia was being harmed by "the unsatisfactory condition of the Jewish Question, which encourages dissatisfaction with Russia within the very highest and most influential group of foreign capitalists."⁶³ In April 1882, he noted that "it is well known that Rothschild recently announced to anyone who would listen that he would not buy Russian state bonds; these words of Rothschild carry very heavy weight on all European stock exchanges, and the consequence was an unusual decline in the value of our issues, and the stock market as a whole."⁶⁴

Bunge's fears were well founded. As early as 17 May 1881 NS, the Austrian, French, and British partners of the Rothschild Bank discussed what practical steps could be taken "on behalf of our unfortunate co-religionists."⁶⁵ The following year, Count Peter Shuvalov, apparently

⁵⁸ See, for instance, *NKhV*, 13:26/III/1882. This article quoted a report from the *Börsen-Courier* of Berlin stating that Russian stocks had fallen on the exchange when news arrived of the proposed resettlement of the Jews from Kiev, and another from *Golos* concerning a scheme to ban Russian paper on the London Exchange. Both *Rassvet* (16:15/IV/1882) and *NKhV* (15:9/IV/1882) quoted a report in *Golos* (7/IV/1882) suggesting that the Balta outrages had led to a drop in the stock market. *NKhV* (11:12/III/1882) also quoted the *Frankfurter Zeitung's* claim that the stock market had fallen because of new restrictions on Jewish druggists and fears of resettlement.

⁵⁹ Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1849–1998* (London, 2000), 376.

⁶⁰ *NKhV*, 26:26/VI/1882. ⁶¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238 (8/VII/1881), ll. 89–90ob.

⁶² *NKhV*, 25:19/VI/1882.

⁶³ V. L. Stepanov, *N. Kh. Bunge. Sud'ba reformatora* (Moscow, 1998), 271.

⁶⁴ B. V. Anan'ich, *Bankirskie doma v Rossii, 1860–1914 gg.*, (Leningrad, 1991) 68, n. 70.

⁶⁵ The Rothschild Archive (London), XI/101/9.

acting on Bunge's behest, approached the Paris Rothschilds through Baron Gintzburg to explore the possibility of lifting the Rothschild "interdict" on Russian financial operations. He was courteously told that "unhappily it can't be done because of the persecution of our co-religionists in Russia."⁶⁶ In London, as noted above, Nathaniel Rothschild was rebuffed when he sought to warn the Russian government of the dangers of a brusque refusal to receive the Russo-Jewish Committee's petition. While Ignatiev and Girs took satisfaction in this victory, it was pyrrhic indeed: The pogroms played an important role in the demise of the once close relationship between the Russian Exchequer and the Rothschild financial empire. The pogroms were proving costly in many different ways.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, XI/101/10 (4/X/1882 NS). The letter also noted the advice of Baron Gintzburg that the promise of improved financial relations might force an improvement in Russian treatment of the Jews. In the words of Alphonse Rothschild, "would that our influence was as great as others make it out to be" [*our thanks to Melanie Aspey for her assistance with this reference – the editors.*]

Part III

8 Jewish responses to the pogroms

I am glad that I have suffered. At least once in my life I have had the opportunity of feeling what my ancestors felt every day of their lives . . . I am their son, their sufferings are dear to me, and I am exalted by their glory.
Moshe Leib Lilienblum (7 May 1881)¹

The immediate Jewish response to the pogroms was local, reflecting local conditions and leadership. Many Jews fled in panic from areas which suffered, or were threatened by, pogroms. Refugees flooded into large centers such as Odessa, and the scale of the flight did much to paralyze regional trade and commerce. Jews crossed the frontiers into neighboring states. Following a pogrom in Volochisk, part of the Kiev wave, refugees moved to its sister town of Podvolochisk in Galicia. Refugees reached as far afield as Königsberg in Prussia. The Galician border town of Brody, only five miles from the Russian frontier, became a magnet for refugees, as rumors spread around the Pale that it was the center for international aid to pogrom victims. Some communities stood their ground and organized patrols and self-defense groups, especially when the local police and municipal authorities allowed it. Jews bombarded officials, high and low, with demands for protection. The religious leaders of many communities decreed fast days and special synagogue services as a way of averting God's wrath.

The years 1881–2 have become recognized as a decisive turning point of modern Jewish history and the “first great internal [Jewish] social and political crisis in the modern era,” in Jonathan Frankel's words. Yet it is important not to overstate the case. Frankel has observed that “very few of the sociological or political trends, institutions or ideas which combined to produce the turmoil of 1881–82 were totally new.”² David Vital and Yaakov Leshchinskii, among other historians, noted that events such as the Odessa pogrom of 1871 had already led thinkers such as Peretz

¹ Cited in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (New York, 1970), 169.

² Jonathan Frankel, “The Crisis of 1881–1882 as a Turning Point in Modern Jewish History,” in David Berger, ed., *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and Its Impact* (New York, 1983), 11.

Smolenskin to reconsider the optimistic hopes of Russian Jewish partisans of acculturation and assimilation. Erich Haberer cautioned that the changes engendered by the pogroms were neither as precipitous nor as universal as they have often been presented. These qualifications notwithstanding, Frankel is right to insist that "the political impact of that year was to prove long-lasting and profound," given the emergence of what he calls "the new Jewish politics."³

New groups emerged out of the crisis to claim a share of communal power and the right to "speak for Israel." In the later historiography, distinct identities were claimed for these groups. Yet at the time the fault lines dividing them were never as precise as many participants would later suggest. Conflicting versions of events subsequently arose from efforts to claim credit or apportion blame, the two often being directly related. These narratives sought to blur or disguise cooperation between groups that later became rivals. A basic division is often made between the activities of the "establishment" and an anti-establishment "new politics." Yet individuals passed easily from one category to the other in the fluid conditions of 1881–2. Where do the religiously orthodox fit in this model, especially as contrasted with the maskilim, who are presented as liberals or acculturationists? How much emphasis should be placed on generational conflict, with the new generation pitted against the old? It is often overlooked that many of the leaders of the new politics, such as the journalists Smolenskin, Rozenfeld, and Gordon, were mature, established figures. Nor can the debate over emigration be reduced to a struggle between nationalists, or proto-Zionists, and their adversaries. Both *Palestinsy* (proponents of Palestine as the destination for emigration) and *Amerikantsy* (those who argued for settlement in America) employed nationalist rhetoric, and even some members of the secular elite leadership in the capitals supported emigration, albeit not as a mass movement. The ideological boundaries were indeed shifting ones.⁴

³ Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge, 1981), 50.

⁴ Frankel cites Louis Namier's attempt to subsume all these diverse groups into three categories: traditional, emancipationist (liberal), and auto-emancipationist (post-liberal) (Frankel, "Crisis," 11). This is one of many efforts to create useful categories for the study of Russian Jewish history. For recent attempts, see Josef Salmon, "The Emergence of a Jewish Nationalist Consciousness in Eastern Europe During the 1860s and the 1870s," *AJS Review*, 16, 1–2 (1991), 107–32, and my own categories of "Old Maskilim," "Young Maskilim," "Russian Jewish Intelligentsia," and "Total Assimilationists" in John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 25–9 (hereafter *IRJQ*). Frankel ("Crisis," 12) points to discrete categories within the Russian Jewish press: "the anti-Mendelssohnian nationalism of Smolenskin in *Ha-Shahar*; the proto-Zionism of David Gordon in *Ha-Maggid*; and the Jewish revolutionary socialism of Aron Liberman in *Ha-Emet* (and, by implication, the Haskalah-inspired ideals of the Russian Jewish press, such as *Vestnik russkikh evreev*)."

It can be said, however, that all groups, without exception, took an active stance on the pogrom crisis. Frankel sees diverse ideologies "suddenly concentrated by the shock of the pogroms into one stream bed."⁵ All Russian Jewry was obsessed by the immediate question, "*chto delat'* – what is to be done?" The initial sense of elemental panic and common purpose, unleashed in 1881, tended to submerge ideological differences. It took some time for clear doctrinal positions to coalesce, and these arose, in part, from bitterness engendered by the failure of cooperation. The churning waters of the stream prevented the calm sedimentation of ideas for many months. There certainly was continuity, but it co-existed with a widespread propensity for improvisation, in reaction to immediate circumstances. Even apparently new movements, such as the emigration movement, incorporated contemporary ideological concerns, such as the need for the economic and moral transformation of Russian Jewry.

The phenomenon of the *selihot* service

A prototypical example of the processes noted above was the calling of one-day (or sometimes two- or even three-day) fasts, accompanied by a special service in the synagogue. The service featured a liturgy, with specific penitential prayers, known as *selihot*, which lent its name to the service as a whole. The *selihot* service had evolved in Jewish communities over centuries as a response to threats and crises. Since, in the eyes of the religiously orthodox, disasters and persecutions were a divine punishment for the sins of the community, appeals for forgiveness might, in the words of believers, "avert the evil decree." Russian Jewry had long followed this practice,⁶ and in the wake of the first pogroms, various religious authorities across the Pale of Settlement declared fasts. The Lubavitcher Rebbe went further, and decreed that all Jewish males should recite ten psalms daily in the synagogue.⁷

David Vital characterizes such responses to catastrophe as extreme displays of political quietism, proof positive of the wholesale political naiveté and apathy of the communal religious leadership. Simon Dubnow described them as "the old medieval form of a national protest,"

⁵ Frankel, "Crisis," 12.

⁶ I. Halpern, "Rabbi Yeshoshua Heshel Opatov and the Anti-Jewish Decrees of Alexander I" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, 27 (1957/8), 372–9, and Halpern "R. Levi Yizhak of Berditchev and the Edicts of His Times" (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz*, 28 (1958/9), 90–8. *NKbV* reported that Jewish agricultural colonists in Ekaterinoslav province declared a fast and held a *selihot* service during a drought: 28:10/VII/1882.

⁷ *Russkii evrei*, 4:22/I/1882.

the only recourse available in the "land of political slavery."⁸ This was a view shared by many contemporaries, who questioned the adequacy of such an outdated response to pogrom violence. One correspondent mocked the Jews of Warsaw for declaring a fast "because of the news from St. Petersburg." Nobody actually knew what that news was, but it was sure to be an "evil decree."⁹ A commentator in *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* (8:19/II/1882) declared that he could understand the fast as a symbolic appeal to a higher idea of justice, but not as "a display of dependency and fear before threatened restrictions." A correspondent for *Rassvet* in Radomysl' complained that local hasidic leaders opposed emigration and viewed the pogroms as divine punishment for education and Westernization (11:12/III/1882).

Examined more closely, however, the *selihot* services were at times more complex and proactive. Although they all featured the recitation of penitential hymns and the psalms, many included a sermon as well. While the communal rabbi was often the speaker, on many occasions this role was taken over by laymen. It was traditional for such sermons to dwell on the sufferings and vicissitudes of the Jews and to hold out the (passive) hope for redemption.¹⁰ From numerous reports, however, it is apparent that these sermons served as a goad to action and that they included at least tacit criticism of the government. In Timkovichaia and Radomysl' (Kiev province), under the influence of the rabbi's sermon, the communities set up charity funds.¹¹ On 4 February 1882, in the main synagogue of Balta, a teacher in the local Jewish state school, L. S. Mashber, gave a Yiddish sermon in which he called upon Jews to provide active assistance to pogrom victims.¹² The sermon of the traditionalist rabbi in Suvalok carried implied criticism of the communal rich.¹³ A correspondent from Zhitomir claimed that "our synagogues have turned into parliaments for a wholesale debate of the Palestine issue."¹⁴ There were bitter complaints when a community was unable to produce a spiritual or lay leader willing or competent to provide such a sermon.¹⁵ In Zhitomir, on 30 January 1882, the congregation listened in respectful silence for two hours while

⁸ David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford, 1999), 352; S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, II (Philadelphia, 1918), 286.

⁹ *NKhV*, 3:15/I/1882.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9:26/II/1882; *Rassvet*, 7:12/II/1882.

¹¹ *NKhV*, 8:19/II/1882. Part of the Radomysl' fund, reportedly R2,000, was designated to assist those desiring to emigrate: *Rassvet*, 11:12/III/1882.

¹² *Russkii evrei*, 8:18/II/1882. Correspondents in the Jewish press began to complain when *selihot* services were not followed by collections for pogrom victims. See the correspondence from Lunna, *ibid.*

¹³ *Rassvet*, 7:12/II/1882. ¹⁴ *Ibid.* ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8:19/II/1882, from Elisavetgrad.

a young *yeshiva bokher* (Talmud student) argued for the need to settle in Palestine.¹⁶

Chroniclers of the rise of the Jewish new politics have noted how, in January and February of 1882, a flurry of fasts and *selihot* services became politicized. The phenomena were so widespread that one non-Jewish newspaper, *Svet*, voiced the suspicion that they were being centrally directed, perhaps as a show of support for the anti-Russian campaign then being conducted in Britain.¹⁷ While the Jewish press indignantly denied that orders had been issued by a "central kahal," towns that did not call a fast were chided for their apathy and inaction. Two episodes during this period were conflated and acquired legendary status: the *selihot* services conducted on 18 January 1882 (10 Shevat 5642) in St. Petersburg and in Kiev on 1 February.

The announcement of the *selihot* service in St. Petersburg was spread by word of mouth. The Choral Synagogue by the Egyptian Bridge was packed on that Monday morning, even in the women's gallery, well before the service started at 10 a.m. The central moment came during the sermon by the state rabbi, Avraam Drabkin. It was based on the Torah portion for the week that recalled how Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt and how, when they next met, "they knew him not." Drabkin broke down in tears, followed by most of the congregation, and the service was delayed for ten minutes. According to one eyewitness, "one cry broke from the hearts of all those who were there."¹⁸ According to the young activist Mordehay Ha-Cohen, who became a leading early Zionist, the moment represented "valuable minutes worth more than entire years" for the movement.¹⁹

The Kiev events were extensively planned. Several days before the festival, a group of students at the St. Vladimir University in Kiev resolved to organize a demonstration at the service. They apparently succeeded in turning out virtually the entire Jewish enrollment of the university. A student identified only as "Deich" prepared a Russian poem, issued without the censor's authorization, which was distributed

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7:12/II/1882. ¹⁷ [The source for this citation could not be verified – the editors.]

¹⁸ For accounts of the service in the St. Petersburg synagogue, see *Russkii evrei*, 4:22/I/1882; *Rassvet*, 4:22/I/1882. Ben Zion Dinur recreates the moment through a letter from Peretz Smolenskin in "Me-Arkhiyono shel Peretz Smolenskin," *Kiryat Sefer*, 1 (1924/5), 80–1. Marc Saperstein, in a private communication, has pointed out that the verse regarding Joseph and his brothers would not have been appropriate for this time of year, while the passage cited by Smolenskin, "The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil'" (Exodus 15:9), would. This may be a comment on the Torah literacy of the correspondents for the Russian-language Jewish press.

¹⁹ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 91.

in both handwritten and printed copies to synagogues and prayer houses around the city. At the largest Kiev synagogue in the Podol, epicenter of the terrible pogrom during the previous May, the service was led by the state rabbi, E. Tsukerman. His sermon was followed by speeches delivered by two students at the university. A celebrated Jewish opera singer, Medvedev, served as cantor.²⁰

Taken together, as these two events usually are, the *selihot* services in Petersburg and Kiev may appear to be linked. Upon closer inspection of the actual details, and placed within a wider context, they do not have the same resonance. In particular they do not always reveal the central role often claimed for the student activists. Nor do they reveal the emergence of discrete groups with a well-developed agenda. The St. Petersburg *selihot* service illustrates this mix. It was a traditional Jewish orthodox religious service, conducted by a Russian-speaking state rabbi (Drabkin) who, having been trained at the Vilna Rabbinic Institute and the Breslau Rabbinic Seminary, neither of which was kosher in the eyes of Russia's orthodox Jewish masses, held a Ph. D. and was a member of the St. Petersburg Jewish establishment, the Gintsburg circle. His congregation included not only students – who were not as numerous as their counterparts in Kiev – but also the local intelligentsia, “many of whom were seeing the synagogue for the first time,” according to a contemporary report, as well as the communal leadership, bedecked in their governmental medals and marks of distinction.²¹ The satisfaction of Mordehay Ha-Cohen arose from his conception of the service as a demonstration of communal unity, a theme which was notable in nearly every *selihot* service conducted during this period within the Russian Empire.

Yet this claim of unity is open to question, according to other versions of the events. Writing in 1917, Azriel Natan Frenk claimed that Drabkin had transmitted a request from Ignatiev to the congregation that they should issue a public protest against the current campaign of British Jews on their behalf and affirm their loyalty to tsar and country. This account stressed generational conflict rather than communal unity. “Fierce arguments broke out in the synagogue, with the students vehemently opposed to acquiescence and the older people largely in favor.”²²

²⁰ *Rassvet*, 7:12/II/1882. ²¹ *Ibid.*, 4:22/I/1882.

²² Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 78. There is no trace of this request, or the spirited response, in any of the contemporary press accounts of this service, although there were analogous accounts of other synagogue services; see *Rassvet*, 8:19/II/1882. In addition, there were contemporary rumors of similar efforts to coerce the Jews into protesting foreign influence: *JC*, 675:3/III/1882.

The Kiev incident is equally interesting, given the element of active planning and the significance often attributed to it. A Kiev correspondent of *The Jewish Chronicle* echoed a familiar theme when he praised it as “an assembly which for the first time united the Jewish students to the body of their co-religionists” (675:3/III/1882). Yet the bare bones of the episode do not seem to warrant the weighty construction placed upon it. The service was again a religious one, led by the state rabbi of Kiev (Tsukerman), who delivered a sermon in Hebrew. The two students reportedly gave their speeches in Hebrew, Russian, and possibly Yiddish.²³ A contemporary critique of a printed poem which was distributed, “From the Intelligentsia of Russian Jewish Youth to Russian Jews, on the Occasion of the Universal Fast Set for 1 February 1882,” characterized it as “weak poetically, but showing the dominant mode of thinking among the Jews at the present time.”²⁴ The “mode of thinking” revealed by the poem did not go beyond any of the themes already associated with the *selihot* service. The author emphasized the alienation and oppressed status of Russian Jewry – “you asked for bread and they handed you a snake” – and promised the help and enthusiasm of the “young generation.” Its message was no more radical than its closing lines: “Let us take up the task – there is still time – and together we will find salvation and escape.”²⁵ On the other hand, the report of the *Jewish Chronicle* (675:3/III/1882) claimed that no fewer than 118 gymnasium and university students had gathered in advance of the *selihot* service and made the decision to attend *en masse*.²⁶

These two episodes did not differ, in any essential way, from identical events throughout the Pale of Settlement, where *selihot* services witnessed the participation of hitherto alienated elements of Jewish society and expressions of unity. They were not always so dramatic. In Kharkov, which also boasted a university, a group of thirty students arrived at the synagogue on the day of the *selihot* service only to find the doors bolted. They awaited the arrival of the first worshippers, delivered a few “deeply felt words,” and then dispersed, without having made much of an impression.²⁷ On the other hand, a number of sources contend that student attendance at the *selihot* service of 10 Shevat was the starting point for the foundation of an important group of *Palestintsy*, the

²³ *JC*, 675:3/III/1882. ²⁴ *Russkii evrei*, 7:12/II/1882; see also *Rassvet*, 9:26/II/1882.

²⁵ *GARF*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4 (1881), l. 27ob.

²⁶ Reports of student speeches in Kiev attributed their importance not to their content, but to the fact that the students “spoke with feeling”: *Rassvet*, 9:26/II/1882.

²⁷ *NKIV*, 7:12/II/1882.

Biluum.²⁸ Accounts of *selihot* services in the provinces repeatedly noted the presence of students, but only in passing. Petersburg, the imperial capital, and Kiev, the so-called Mother of Russian Cities, attracted so much attention because of their joint symbolism. Only retroactively – albeit rapidly – were these two services transformed into iconic events. At the time, taken by themselves, they were not evidence of the legendary emergence of the new politics. Interestingly, given Vital's equation of the Habad tradition with political quietism, the Lubavitcher Rebbe made use of the occasion of the *selihot* service to impose a tax on the Jews of Vitebsk, reportedly to collect funds to bribe Ignatiev.²⁹

Ironically, a central role in the process of turning the *selihot* services of 1882 into political events was played by the Russian police. Alerted by reports from secret agents, press accounts, and the very visible cessation of Jewish trade and commerce which accompanied the services, the authorities began to interpret the fasts and *selihot* services as part of a mass movement – always suspect in official eyes. The *selihot* services were made even more subversive by their presumed linkage to foreign protest movements and their demonstration of the power of the kahal to direct the actions of all Russian Jewry. It is clear from agency reports that the *selihot* services were monitored by the police. The head of the Kiev provincial gendarmerie provided a detailed report on the Kiev *selihot* service to his superiors within days of its occurrence. The head of the Grodno provincial gendarmerie forwarded to the Department of Police in St. Petersburg a similar report describing the *selihot* service in Brest-Litovsk on 2 March 1882. The local rabbi was faulted for delivering a sermon that criticized society's treatment of the Jews.³⁰ In Chernigov province, the no-nonsense governor, S. V. Shakhovskoi, intervened when his agents informed him that local Jews had received an order from St. Petersburg to hold a fast and cease all trade on 4 February. He called in the spiritual (i.e., non-state) rabbi and forced him to give an undertaking that all Jewish shops would be open as usual on the 4th, "or all the prayer houses would be closed." In the event, while a *selihot* service was indeed held on the day, Jewish shops remained open.³¹ In Odessa, a fast and *selihot* service took place on 25 January. A correspondent in the Jewish press complained that the event

²⁸ David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford, 1975), 78. As described by the socialist Ben Ami, one of the most famous examples of the "going to the people" of Jewish students, in Odessa, was not connected with a *selihot* service. See *Volnoe slovo*, 37:15/V/1882.

²⁹ GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175 (1882), ll. 19–20ob (21/II/1882). The police file provides the name of the informer who made this claim, one Ber Abramovich Gittel'son. It would be interesting to establish the possibility that he was a maskilic or mitnagdic foe of the rebbe.

³⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4 (1881), l. 24ob for Kiev and ll. 28–32 for Brest-Litovsk.

³¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 25–6.

had been forbidden by the state rabbi of Odessa, Shimon Shvabakher, because he feared the response of the local administration and the Judeophobe press. Odessa Jews fasted in spite of the interdiction, but were thus not able to participate formally in what the author termed "this nationwide movement."³²

On the surface, the widespread convocation of *selihot* services might appear to justify Vital's critique of the religiously orthodox as unable to envision "a course of action that was other than old, worn-out and . . . irrelevant to the new circumstances." The best that they could recommend was "to hold to Tradition itself in its firmest, most unbending, ritualized form."³³ Yet, an argument can be made that the *selihot* service represented more than political quietism. As demonstrated above, the services were appropriated in many different ways by rival activists in order to express their ideological standpoint. Even the Russian police had a unique perspective on the *selihot* phenomenon.

Moreover, some orthodox religious leaders engaged in political activity that incorporated modern elements. The circle of Rabbi Y. E. Spektor of Kovno (to be discussed below) conducted a sophisticated campaign to attract assistance from abroad. Against the claim that this was an isolated example of a small group stands the fact that the Kovno activists relied on a network of the faithful to gather the information that was dispatched abroad. Some commentators have been puzzled at the apparent cooperation of the orthodox with their habitual foes, the maskilim.³⁴ This ceases to be a paradox if one rejects the assumption that ideological divisions held firm during the general crisis. The *selihot* service phenomenon alerts us to the necessity of looking more closely at chronological detail and of

³² *Rassvet*, 6:9/II/1882.

³³ Vital, *People Apart*, 356, 354. Vital's characterization might be better applied to a putative plan in Vilna to issue, with rabbinic approbation, a warning against economic malfeasance on the part of Jews. Even this "Orthodox" plan, however, was carried out with the assistance of local maskilim, who were assigned to prepare a Russian version for the authorities: A. A. Droujanoff [Druianov/Druyanov], *Ktavim le-toldot hibat-tsiyon ve-yishuv erets yisrael*, I (Odessa, 1919), 1. Such a letter was actually composed by the state rabbi of Chernigov, apparently at the order of the governor, Shakhovskoi: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512 (11/VI/1882), ll. 58–67ob. Also deserving of Vital's critique was the *selihot* service in Dunaberg, on 1 March 1882, during which the rabbi lamented the presence of Jews among the subversives: "They act against our religion, against our coreligionists, and because of this they are not worthy to be called Jews" (*Rassvet*, 10:5/III/1882). Perhaps most indicative of orthodox priorities were the time and effort exerted in 1881–2 by leading rabbis, such as Israel Salanter, to undermine an OPE project to establish a new rabbinic seminary in Russia. See Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem, 1993), 277–8.

³⁴ Israel Oppenheim, "The Kovno Circle of Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor: Organizing Western Public Opinion over Pogroms in the 1880s," in S. I. Troen and B. Pinkus, eds., *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period* (London, 1992), 110–13.

recognizing obvious examples of cooperation amongst the various camps of Russian Jewry between the outbreak of the pogroms in April 1881 and the fall of Ignatiev in May 1882. This was the period before ideological factions crystallized.

The emergence of the new politics

The initial forms of Jewish activity were organized not along strictly ideological lines, but in support of specific goals and objectives. They may be roughly divided into five categories. There was the need to defend the Jews before the government against the charge of "exploitation" as the central cause of the pogroms. This was tied to the broader tasks of combating the public campaign of Judeophobia in the press and public opinion and, presumably, prompting more vigorous defense of the Jews by the local authorities. If this internal and external debate could be won, Jews might gain a third objective, the attainment of greater civil rights. There was also the need to assist the Jewish masses. This took two forms: relief *in situ*, with a view to the continued residence of Jews in the Russian Empire, and emigration, as a means of resolving the Jewish Question by physically removing large numbers of Jews. No group, of course, pursued all these objectives. Moreover, the advocacy of emigration was to a large extent incompatible with the other four activities. Support for emigration was the primary cause of the rise of rival movements and the main generator of the new politics of Russian Jewry.

The justification of the new politics in 1881-2 arose from the alleged failures of the old. The bill of indictment comprised three major charges. The first was the claim that the secular elite leadership, epitomized by the Gintsburg circle in the capital, had failed to recognize the nature and severity of the pogroms and to deal with the crisis in an effective manner. In the crucial areas of welfare and relief, for example, the plutocrats of the capital were found wanting. From all their millions they could find only derisory sums to help the pogrom victims. Far worse was their political naiveté, exemplified by their failure to recognize that the pogrom danger actually came from the regime itself. They pursued a misguided, counterproductive political course of passivity and petition. They sought protection from the same tsar whose agents were if not actually setting the mob on to the Jews, at least viewing the violence with a benign eye. When others tried to suggest alternative courses, of which mass migration appeared the most promising, the leadership in the capital and their provincial minions aggressively opposed them, motivated by narrow self-interest. Their activity throughout 1881-2 was collaborationist and self-serving. Hence, so the argument went, it became apparent to those who had the true good of the Jewish people at

heart that a new, rival political program had to be devised and pursued. The key to the crisis was to be found in the socioeconomic transformation of the Jews. This in turn depended on the relocation of the Jews either within or, preferably, outside the boundaries of the Russian Empire.

Chapter 10 will show the extent to which these accusations, found widely in the secondary literature, were unwarranted and misleading. They were first made by individuals who sought to justify their own claims to power. Jonathan Frankel and others have examined in detail the ideological underpinnings of the new politics. The chief participants have customarily been placed in categories such as the "literary intelligentsia" and "student youth," in opposition to the secular elite leadership. Frankel describes the emergence of "sects" in 1881, particularly Am Olam. A more formal movement emerged in 1882 in the form of the Palestinophile group Bilu, and the Americanist movement that characterized the Am Olam branches in Kiev and Odessa. Frankel demonstrates how firmly these allegedly new ideas were actually rooted in the assumptions of contemporary Russian Populism with its emphasis on action and sacrifice. The ideas were Jewish to the extent that they incorporated maskilic assumptions about the need to regenerate the Jewish people through productive work, particularly agriculture. Added to this diverse ideological brew were the ingredients of Jewish nationalism and proto-Zionism. What emerged were not practical achievements but newly integrated ideologies, buttressed by a set of heroic myths.

This chapter examines the initiatives of these various groups. This survey includes several groups of religious reformers whose activities have usually been dismissed as insignificant, but which nonetheless were a movement drawing upon aspects of contemporary Russian Jewish culture. Most importantly, they attracted widespread attention from Jews and non-Jews alike. The role of the Jewish press in this process is examined in detail in Chapter 9.

The origins of the emigration movement

While Jewish youth pioneered a number of responses to the pogroms, including the "going (or return) to the people" and the advocacy of self-defense, it was the formal espousal of mass, organized emigration that represented their most radical innovation. Although the question of emigration from Russia as a partial solution to the Jewish Question had been broached in the past, as in the aftermath of a crop failure and famine in the northwest provinces of the Pale in 1869,³⁵ such ideas were slow to surface

³⁵ Zosa Szajkowski, "The Alliance Israélite Universelle and East-European Jewry in the 60s," *Jewish Social Studies*, 4, 2 (1942), 158-60.



— Малбрухъ въ приходѣ шибраген....

Figure 11. "Outward bound" (*Bundy'nik*, 1881).

Text on the umbrella: "Ubi bene – ibi patria"; on the backpack: "Capital"; on the document in the coat pocket: "Passport for unimpeded travel in Spain."

"Marlborough sallied out for a campaign" (this is a line from a song that was popular among Russian soldiers, distorted by supposedly Jewish pronunciation; the editors thank Gennady Estraikh for his help in solving this riddle).

in 1881. For example, only one Jewish communal report to Count P. I. Kutaisov, from Odessa, even mentioned the possibility.³⁶ The issue was first raised in the press in a mischievous way by the Judeophobe *Novoe vremia*, in what was probably the most notorious editorial published on

³⁶ K-A, 240-1 (10/VII/1881).

the pogroms, "To beat or not to beat."³⁷ Since the Jews throughout history had been guided by the principle of *ubi bene ibi patria*, the editor proposed "to make the Jew's life inconvenient, and he will resettle there, where it seems more lucrative." At the time, most commentators, though not all, considered this a joke in very poor taste (see Figure 11).

However, it was fear rather than ideology that caused most Jews to take to the road in the summer of 1881. Besides the movement from small towns into big cities, Jewish refugees from the province of Volynia (which, ironically, witnessed very few pogroms) crossed the lightly controlled Russian–Austrian frontier. The Galician town of Brody was very close to the border and also lay on the railroad connection to Lemberg (today Lviv), and had an established Jewish community that sought to assist the first mass of refugees. At the same time, international and national bodies swung into action. On 26 May 1881 NS, in the aftermath of the Kiev pogrom, the Alliance Israélite Universelle issued a worldwide appeal for assistance to pogrom victims. When, at the end of August, Alliance representatives on their way to Russia discovered 600 refugee families in Brody (see Figure 12), they began to concentrate relief efforts on the city. When some refugees refused repatriation to Russia (see Figure 13), it was decided to send them to the United States. The outcome of this episode is examined in Chapter 11.

In this way, the mass migration of Jews from Russia began to appear as a genuine possibility. This was even more the case when the well-publicized involvement of the Alliance in the Brody refuge triggered extraordinary rumors in Russia. Newspapers, Jewish and non-Jewish, reported the departure of would-be emigrants from towns throughout the Pale. Circular letters from the Alliance warning Jews against emigration merely confirmed the belief that the Alliance was involved and was distributing help. In early August, newspapers in the Pale were already printing credible-sounding articles explaining to prospective emigrants the procedures for securing Alliance assistance.³⁸ A phenomenon, fed by journalistic rumor and hearsay, which might best be described as "emigration mania," consumed Russian Jewry for the better part of eighteen months. Reports of international conferences designed to assist Russian refugees in Berlin and Vienna in 1882, Ignatiev's contradictory statements regarding emigration, as well as the renewed outbreak of pogroms in the spring of 1882, precipitated

³⁷ *Novoe Vremia*, 1857:1/V/1881. On this episode, see also Chapter 4, p. 139.

³⁸ Other saviours were also mooted, as in a letter circulated in Podolia province under the name of Sir Moses Montefiore – long an icon for Russian Jewry. It promised land, livestock, and tools for settlers in America, even for young men who had not fulfilled their liability for military service. A speedy response was required, the article proclaimed, for those who wished to benefit: *Podol'skii listok*, 200:10/IX/1881.



Figure 12. "Interned Jewish Refugees in Brody Waiting to Be Repatriated to Russia." Drawing by Frederic de Haenen from a sketch by Pawel Merwart (*Le Monde Illustré*, 1338:18/XI/1882, 320). Courtesy of the British Library.

another influx of Jews into Brody, which became a Shangri-La for would-be emigrants. Emigration was a reality. The question of the day centered on how leaders and would-be leaders should deal with the problems it created.

Emigration as ideology

Most Jewish emigration from the Russian Empire in 1881–2 was unplanned, disorganized, random, and entirely *ad hoc*.³⁹ Faced with the growing refugee crisis, however, all contenders for leadership within the Jewish community had to consider possible options. The most dramatic impulse came from a widely reported speech given by the prosecutor of the Kiev Military District, Major-General V. S. Strelnikov, during a trial of some of the Kiev *pogromshchiki* which began on 18 May 1881. Strelnikov denied that socialist agitation was the cause of the pogroms (the preferred Jewish explanation), attributing them rather to Jewish vices such as the evasion of civil obligations and economic exploitation. If the Jews were unable to live without exploiting their neighbors, Strelnikov proclaimed, “the western frontier is open to them.”⁴⁰ This was the decisive moment in bringing the debate over emigration to a mass audience. If a state official could speak so casually about emigration, and have it widely and uncritically reported in the press, publicists could assume that emigration was a concrete reality and a legitimate matter for public debate. The stream of contradictory statements issuing from Ignatiev at the MVD did nothing to quiet popular excitement.

As Frankel and others have noted, the ideological foundations of Jewish responses to the pogrom crisis were already in place before 1881–2. For thinkers such as Peretz Smolenskin, who had been advocating the settlement of the Jews in Erets Israel as a means of strengthening Jewish national identity, the development of a full-blown program was not a difficult task. A number of individual initiatives, already under way before the Elisavetgrad pogrom, were easily transformed in light of the new situation. For example, a mixed Jewish–gentile group that was intent on founding an agricultural colony in Russia based on collectivist principles smoothly evolved into the movement that became the foreign-emigration-minded

³⁹ This point is made in a *Rassvet* article in 17:27/IV/1882. A correspondent observed in 1881: “The majority of them depart without any resources, without any predetermined plan, without any organization, in a word, they go, as it were, wherever their eye falls, thoughtless of tomorrow” (*Rassvet*, 48:27/XI/1881).

⁴⁰ See summaries of the speech in *Novorossiiskii telegraf*, 1911:3/VI/1881; *Golos*, 138:20/V/1881; and the trial transcript in *Russkii evrei*, 23:4/VI/1881, where he was also quoted as saying: “Had I the power, I would furnish the Jews with the resources to leave the area, only not to the East, but to the West – abroad.”



Figure 13. "The Repatriation of Jewish Refugees. The Waiting Hall of the Nordbahnhof in Vienna at the Moment of Departure." Drawing by Frederic de Haenen from a sketch by Pawel Merwart (*Le Monde Illustré*, 1328:9/IX/1882, 165). Courtesy of the British Library.

Am Olam. Religious reformers, already at work in Elisavetgrad and Odessa, modified their rhetoric to embrace a commitment to make the Jews more "productive."

Jewish students, like their Russian counterparts, were immersed in the ethos of Populism. Populist doctrine preached loyalty to "the people," as exemplified by the long-suffering Russian peasantry, and demanded that "critically thinking individuals" lead them to a better life through both concrete action and the example of self-sacrifice. Amidst the trauma of the pogroms, some Jewish ideologues in 1881–2 shifted their loyalties from the Russian peasantry to the victimized Jewish masses. However, they could not shake off the romanticized conception of the Russian peasantry that inspired the Populists. Consequently they were especially prone to solutions that envisioned the transformation of Jews into peasants, which, conveniently, was also a long-established maskilic aspiration. The words of one provincial activist in 1882, in a letter intercepted by the police, made this connection clear: "We will be Populists [*narodniki*] . . . to the grave. Our happiness is tied to the happiness of the masses. To think of education, enlightenment, and self-improvement is sinful now, when it is not intellectual activity that is valuable, but bread."⁴¹ Another group declared their conviction that the masses would risk emigration and forgo material benefits rather than "continue to suffer their shameful moral slavery."⁴² In a solemn declaration "From Jewish Students at St. Petersburg University to Jewish Society," the authors promised "to take up the cause of emigration, as the guarantee of the future happiness of our people."⁴³

Partisans of emigration differed on the ultimate destination for the Jewish masses, but they all envisioned some form of agricultural colonization, usually based on socialist or communal principles. As one student activist put it, the Jews would be transformed through "the school of agricultural labor."⁴⁴ Ironically, the belief that Russian Jews could be transformed into productive citizens only through the pursuit of agriculture was a fundamental assumption of the plutocratic founders of the Society for the Spread of Productive Work Among the Jews, such as S. S. Poliakov, precisely the leadership that was so disdained by student youth.⁴⁵ In the legends that

⁴¹ GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1227, ll. 10–12. See also *YIVO*, Tcherikower Collection, 74362–4v.

⁴² *Rassvet*, 11:12/III/1882.

⁴³ Viktoriia Khiterer, ed., *Dokumenty sobrannye evreiskoi istoriko-arkheograficheskoi Komissiei Vseukrainskoi akademii nauk* (Kiev and Jerusalem, 1999), 196. The authors considered America and Palestine as equally appropriate targets for emigration: *ibid.*, 195.

⁴⁴ *Russkii evrei*, 17:23/IV/1882.

⁴⁵ For the creation of ORT, see Leon Shapiro, *The History of ORT* (New York, 1980). See Ben Ami's denunciation of Poliakov as a "pretend-benefactor, the Jewish Derunov": *Volnoe slovo*, 38:29/V/1882.

later grew up around the young activists of 1881–2, their initiatives flowed logically one from another. There was the preparatory symbolic “going (or return) to the people,” followed by emergency, short-term activism in the form of organized self-defense, and the subsequent search for long-term solutions to the Jewish Question through emigration and productivization on the land.

Frankel has emphasized the importance of the literary intelligentsia as a new phenomenon among East European Jews. This small circle of editors and writers – not all as young as legend envisions them – encapsulated the emigration movement. They produced the leading personalities, helped to create and encourage emigration mania, and sought to pressure and manipulate the secular elite leadership and, ultimately, to blacken the latter’s historical reputation. They served as spokesmen and expeditors for those endeavors that were actually brought to fruition. They were able to accomplish so much precisely because they were “literary,” i.e., they had the columns of newspapers at their disposal. Newspapers made it possible for Jews, in Russia and abroad, to engage in a public debate of unprecedented scope and immediacy, exemplified by the special supplement of *Rassvet*, which carried Dr. Isaak Orshanskii’s famous interview with Ignatiev in January 1882.

The service of the Jewish press was invaluable. The first emigration groups were organized along the lines of the student study circle or *kruzhok*. They were able to grow and expand only through contact with like-minded circles. Ordinarily such contacts depended on the use of the post or personal emissaries. These methods brought the circles to the attention of the police. Emissaries were stopped by police agents and interrogated.⁴⁶ The post was routinely monitored, and the police files are replete with intercepted appeals and reports from emigration societies.⁴⁷ Interception of the mail was not always necessary. Hoping to find sympathizers, emigration societies sent hectographed appeals to state rabbis, asking for their support. The hectograph, the preferred vehicle for illegal literature, was of necessity a small-scale endeavor, capable of producing fewer than a hundred copies at a time. Even these endeavors fell foul of the police, always on the lookout for any source of illegal agitation. The police were further helped by rabbis who turned the appeals over to them. In short, there was simply no substitute for a mass circulation periodical, the more so when, contrary to conventional wisdom, the censorship did little to hinder debates on emigration.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18 (30/V/1882), l. 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 7 (1882), ll. 8–10.

⁴⁸ Vital, *Origins*, 66, exaggerates, in my opinion, the extent to which the censorship prevented the press from fully playing its representative or mediating function. A cursory

correspondence of activists is filled with references to this or that number of a Jewish newspaper (usually the emigration-minded *Rassvet*) and praise for one publicist or another. One young activist reported that students had read the article that announced that “the western border is open” in the synagogue.⁴⁹

Finally, there was the problem of fundraising. Even when emigrant groups pooled their resources, there was seldom enough to fulfill their ambitions. The notoriously impecunious students had no funds at all. The effort of one emigration society to sell copies of its charter for 40 kopeks was no more than symbolic.⁵⁰ The failure of communal worthies to support their efforts, to say nothing of the hostility of the oligarchs in the capital, helps to explain the extreme bitterness in many newspaper attacks. Occasionally the aggravation went beyond rhetoric: There were contemporary accounts of threats and intimidation used to pry funds from reluctant donors.⁵¹ A number of student groups, most notably the founders of Rishon l’Zion near Jaffa, repeatedly appealed in the Jewish press for financial assistance.

In short, without the easy availability of the Jewish press, emigration would never have progressed beyond panic and flight; still less would it have metamorphosed into anything resembling a mass movement. Not even elite groups, such as the Alliance and the Anglo-Russian Committee, would have been able to pursue their activities on such a scale. The contemporary Jewish press thus serves as an invaluable source for the birth and growth of the emigration movement, in both its *Amerikantsy* and *Palestintsy* incarnations.

Emigration to America

Most of the Jewish refugees who eventually arrived in America were the playthings of fate. They had little ideological motivation, but only a desire to escape the violence and destruction of the pogroms and to find economic opportunity in a new land (see Figure 14). The exception to this rule were small groups of student idealists, known collectively after the name of one of their groups, Am Olam – “the Eternal People.” In a sense, the pogroms were a godsend for these groups. They had a

glance at the Jewish press in Russia will demonstrate the extent to which it successfully fulfilled precisely such functions. The press could play this role because the censorship itself was not provided with strong guidance from the center, given Ignat’ev’s contradictory statements on emigration. Although D. A. Eliashevich points to the fierce level of repression against the emigration movement in the press, most of his examples pertain to a later date: *Pravitel’svoennaiia politika i evreiskaia pechat’ v Rossii, 1797–1917. Ocherki istorii tsenzury* (SPb and Jerusalem, 1999), 459.

⁴⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1227 (1881), ll. 10–13ob.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18(8/III/1882), l. 9ob. ⁵¹ *Rassvet*, 19:11/V/1882.



Figure 14. "The Modern Moses." Caricature by Joseph Keppler and Frederick Burr Opper (*Puck*, 30 November 1881). Courtesy of V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The following excerpts from the editorial that this caricature accompanied and the exchange with the *Jewish Messenger* that it occasioned are taken from John J. Appel, "Jews in American Caricature: 1820–1914," *American Jewish History*, 71, 1 (1981), 103–33.

"Uncle Sam, as the modern Moses . . . says to the persecuted race of Europe, whether Jew or Christian, believer or unbeliever, . . . 'You are welcome to America.'

. . . We do not mean to say that the Jews are the greatest race that ever existed, but they . . . are a practical and sensible people, and it is more astonishing that they should be so when the superstitious belief of a large majority of even the modern Jews is considered." (*Puck*, 30 November 1881).

"The latest *Puck* cartoon will only confirm the opinion of many readers that with Mr. Keppler fun and ridicule are synonymous. Any artist who seeks occasion to use the shameful persecution of the Jews of Russia as an opportunity for exciting derision against the victims of persecution – is worthy of being classed among the Henrici and Stoecker [i.e., the antisemitic] crowd" (*Jewish Messenger*, December 1881).

"Our Hebrew friends must not be so sensitive . . . If they do not wish to be made fun of, they should not intensify the traditional peculiarities that so often make them the subject of ridicule. They are clannish, and cling to their antiquated puerile Oriental customs and mummeries as a Chinaman clings to his pigtail. They should become American" (*Puck*, 14 December 1881).

preexistence as small circles resolved to make a living through agricultural colonization within Russia, such as that organized in Odessa by Monye Bokal.⁵² This was no more than a utopian dream before the pogroms. Then came the news that refugees were being dispatched to America from Brody. Odessa Am Olam sent a representative to Paris to seek the assistance of the Alliance and dispatched an advance party of seventy persons to Brody.⁵³ After two months, the Brody group succeeded in securing passage to the New World. Alliance delegates at Brody were pleased to encounter dedicated young intellectuals quite unlike the negative stereotype widely held of East European Jews. Educated and articulate, with an apparently clear plan of what they wanted to do, Am Olamtsy made a favorable impression upon representatives of the Alliance. Arguably less in need of assistance than the humble craftsmen ruined by the pogroms, they were given favored treatment. The writer Karl Emil Franzos, on a visit to Brody, took a group of Balta Am Olamtsy under his wing and assisted them on their way.⁵⁴ During their passage, Am Olamtsy were feted by student groups and Jewish communal notables, receiving gifts as well as good wishes.⁵⁵ The Am Olam group was singled out for special treatment when a body of 500 emigrants passed through Breslau.⁵⁶ A Kiev Am Olam group, with their own special flag and lapel pins, received a rousing send-off from the Lemberg station.⁵⁷ The train of one such group was serenaded out of the station by a military brass band that happened to be present.⁵⁸

Before departure from Russia, some proponents of Am Olam sought to organize their activities more widely. In March 1882, the police raided the rooms of a student at the St. Vladimir University, Zelman Rotmin. They found a hectograph and letters inviting delegates to a meeting in Kiev on 25 April 1882 where they were to participate in the activities of the "Russian Jewish Emigration Society 'Am Olam.'" The police also found Hebrew-language copies of a set of draft regulations for the society. The stated aim of the activists was to use emigration "to achieve a radical turning point in the fate of the Jewish people by means of the creation of an autonomous center which will attract all Jewry." The choice of ultimate destination was left to the decision of the assembled delegates. The colonies to be sponsored by Am Olam would be run on cooperative

⁵² There are many variant accounts of Bokal and his circle. See the best English-language overview of the movement in Abraham Menes, "The *Am Oylom* Movement," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 4 (1949), 9-33.

⁵³ The emissary was Ben Ami (M. Ia. Rabinovich), who publicized the cause through articles in *Volnoe slovo* and *NKhV*.

⁵⁴ *Russkii evrei*, 19:7N/1882. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20:16N/1882. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25:23VI/1882.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 19:7N/1882. ⁵⁸ [We were not able to identify a reference for this episode - the editors.]

principles.⁵⁹ In general, Am Olam groups were not characterized by political radicalism or hostility to religious orthodoxy. Indeed, some groups took Torah scrolls along with them, and one group boasted a kosher butcher as a member.⁶⁰

Transported to America, Am Olamtsy sent back to the press periodic, and overly optimistic, reports of their progress. How much more effective was their journalistic boosterism than other methods of spreading the message! A typical technique of seeking recruits was to distribute hand-copied letters to potential members. A much broader and more sympathetic audience was reached as soon as this letter was published. Potential recruits could read the student declaration that

It is not material need that drives us from Russia – no! Every one of us recognizes that we could live better in our native land . . . We are moving to a new country, not in search of gold, not for luxury and wealth, but to seek an opportunity to direct our mental and physical strength to honest and useful work . . . Our objective is to broaden out our community by a permanent stream of fresh energy so that, in the event of the repetition of misfortunes, our brothers, spiritually linked to us, will know that across the ocean is a handful of people to whom they may turn for advice.⁶¹

Public announcements could also have their negative side. It was a common practice for would-be emigrants to send delegates to link up with these apparently more organized groups. Newspaper accounts provided reports of such delegates wandering the streets of Odessa, Kharkov, or Kiev in a vain effort to find the colonization committees whose activities were so loudly trumpeted in the press.⁶²

Prior to and after their arrival in America the Am Olamtsy adopted grand-sounding names, such as “the First Agricultural Colony of Russian Jews in America.” Invariably, they produced impressively elaborate constitutions or regulations which were to govern their colonies.⁶³ The best-known groups, both Am Olamtsy and analogous bodies, excelled at self-promotion. The ceremonial opening of the colony at Sicily Island, Louisiana, included the state governor among the guests.⁶⁴ Their apparent success spurred on others, and the press was filled with reports of similar

⁵⁹ The moderate tone of the society’s aims convinced the authorities that it had no political objectives, and Zel’man and his associates were charged only with a violation of the censorship rules, rather than a political crime: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 289, ch. 8 (15/IV/1882), ll. 5–6.

⁶⁰ *NKhV*, 5:6/II/1883; *Russkii evrei*, 25:23/VI/1882.

⁶¹ *Rassvet*, 48:27/XI/1881. ⁶² *NKhV*, 21:22/V/1882.

⁶³ See *Russkii evrei*, 7:12/II/1882, for the regulations of the “First Colony” and 14:2/IV/1882 for those of the “New Odessa Community of Farmers.”

⁶⁴ *Russkii evrei*, 47:18/XI/1881. The Sicily Island colony, while similar in all but name, was not formally an Am Olam group.

expeditions. In the end, these optimistic schemes shared a common outcome: They were all utter failures. "New Odessa" (Oregon), "Cremieux," "Bethlehem Judea," "Bet Lechem" (all in Dakota Territory), and "Ber Sheva" (Kansas) failed to last more than a few years.⁶⁵

The Sicily Island experiment – by no means the most radical – may stand as an example. It reportedly received \$1,800 from the New York Emigration Committee and \$2,800 from the Alliance, and collected \$3,000 from prospective members. Spring floods in 1882 destroyed all the efforts of the community. Its members dispersed with a reported loss of \$20,000.⁶⁶ The utopian visions and hopes of the Am Olamtsy were all submerged in the realities of emigrant life in the United States, among the destitute flood of refugees far less well supported than them. Nor were the difficulties of settlement and colonization helped by the propensity of the intelligentsia to demand a leading role in enterprises in which they had absolutely no experience. Ben Ami had warned against such an outcome even as the first Am Olam group departed for America: "One must only fear that the students who have joined the colony will not clash with the doctrine of these simple, honorable workers by advancing theories which they have only read about in books . . . The dictatorial instincts of the young can spoil the best idea."⁶⁷ On the other hand, Ezra Mendelsohn argues that there was a significant afterlife for the ideals of the approximately 1,000 young intellectuals who participated in Am Olam. He argues that they channeled their idealism in new directions, and that "the Am Olam pioneers became, in time, pioneers of the American Jewish labor movement."⁶⁸

Emigration to Palestine

All historians have noted the influence of the 1881–2 pogroms on the birth of the early Zionist movement. The first organized movement, Hoveve Zion (Lovers of Zion), provided the ideological underpinning for plans to create a modern Jewish state. It created a reservoir of potential adherents both for Theodor Herzl's political Zionism and for his critics, such as Ahad Ha'am. The First Aliyah planted the Jewish agricultural colonies that served as an important symbol of the determination of Jews to return to Erets Israel. Yet these historical accomplishments in the pre-history of

⁶⁵ For a short description of these colonies, see *Russkii evrei*, 45:12/XI/1882.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:22/I/1882 and 7:12/II/1882. ⁶⁷ *Volnoe slovo*, 38:29/V/1882.

⁶⁸ Ezra Mendelsohn, "The Russian Roots of the American Jewish Labor Movement," in Deborah Dash Moore, ed., *East European Jews in Two Worlds: Studies from the YIVO Annual* (Evanston, IL, 1990), 267.

the modern state of Israel should not obscure the simple fact that Jewish resettlement in Palestine was a safety valve and a symbol of hope rather than an immediate solution to the crisis of 1881–2. As Simon Dubnow, whose own brother went to Palestine, wrote at the time, “it is a shame, truly a shame, that so many useful efforts are spent entirely on something which deserves only such energy as is commensurate with its results, i.e., an extremely small quantity.”⁶⁹

Emigration projects had, of necessity, to look to the future, for the settlement of a few hundred refugees in colonies dependent upon foreign charity was of little use to Jews facing forced resettlement, expulsion, or intensified legal restraints. In some ways, the activities of the pioneers did the movement more harm than good. They confirmed to potential donors, such as the Alliance, the Mansion House Committee, or Baron Hirsch, the impracticality of mass settlement. Donors who did take a positive interest often had underlying missionary intentions.⁷⁰ Grand colonization schemes alarmed the Ottoman government and caused it to raise legal obstacles to future Jewish settlement in Palestine. The proto-Zionists failed to build any national consensus for the desirability of colonization, especially among the majority of the population that was religiously orthodox. Leading orthodox and hasidic leaders openly declared themselves against the movement.⁷¹

David Vital divides the would-be settlers of Erets Israel in the period 1881–2 into three broad categories, united by certain common principles. They shared a desire to find an escape from the immediate crisis; they pursued a national agenda, designed to serve the Jewish people; all of them accepted the regenerative properties of agricultural labor. Their diverse social objectives were tinged with the messianic hopes chronicled by Frankel. Vital’s first category includes the student activists, whose foremost motivation was ideological, and who fall into the general category of the Biluim discussed in the next section. The second category comprises the various emigrant societies in Russia who were motivated by more practical objectives. They alternately imitated and joined pre-existing resettlement initiatives pioneered by groups of Romanian Jews. These activities were exemplified by the meeting of Russian and Romanian communal representatives in the Moldavian town of Focsani in December 1881 to discuss common action. These groups pooled resources, sent delegates to investigate the terrain, brought building materials with them,

⁶⁹ S. Dubnov, “Kakaia samoemantsipsatsiia nuzhna Evreiam,” *Voskhod*, 7–8 (1883), 30.

⁷⁰ *NKhV*, 22:29/V/1882.

⁷¹ For hasidic opposition, see *Rassvet*, 11:12/III/1882 and 19:11/V/1882; the obvious exception was the rabbi of Radom, Shmuel Mohilever, who collected R13,000 to support colonization in Palestine: Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 39–40.

and cooperated on a wide basis. The third group was made up of non-ideological pragmatists, exemplified by Z. D. Levontin.⁷²

The basic distinction between *Amerikantsy* and *Palestintsy* is useful but fluid. There is the phenomenon of *Amerikantsy* Am Olamtsy groups turning into Palestinophile groups – and vice versa.⁷³ Any effort to differentiate the proto-Zionists on the basis of the practicality of their schemes ignores their most important common features.⁷⁴ All the *Palestintsy* were, almost without exception, driven by utopian belief in the redemptive quality of agriculture as pursued in Erets Israel. They shared the Am Olamtsy's confidence that they could attract external assistance, and thus became equally reliant upon fortune and the favors of a plethora of adventurers, religious eccentrics, romantics, and philanthropists of obscure background. The ideological concerns that drove the first proto-Zionists have been fully chronicled by scholars such as Vital, Frankel, and Klausner. Less studied, but equally fascinating, were their methods of operation, carried on under the wary eye of the Russian police.

Bilu

In 1882, a would-be emigrant to Palestine wrote to the editorial offices of *Rassvet* to request a map of the region. The editors replied unapologetically that they did not have one in their possession (42:4/IV/1882). Yet this was the very newspaper which had been energetically espousing the settlement of Erets Israel and assuring its readers that the land was fertile, well-watered, and safe, "flowing with milk and honey" (11:12/III/1882).⁷⁵ Such nonchalance was typical of the Palestinophile movement in its early stages. It combined highly symbolic and dramatic national imagery with a neglect of practical realities. Yet the group's emphasis on national identity ensured that the movement endured as a symbol after the bright hopes of youthful idealists burned themselves out.

The movement that took the name "Bilu" exemplifies this phenomenon.⁷⁶ The underlying motive of the movement was the determination of

⁷² Vital, *Origins*, 74–108.

⁷³ See a Palestinophile Am Olam group in Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 19–21, Frankel (*Prophecy and Politics*, 88) for a Palestinophile group which emigrated to America; and the open-ended decision of a Kiev group, GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7 (1881), ll. 8–10.

⁷⁴ Frankel (*Prophecy and Politics*, 89) identifies two camps among the Palestinophiles, the romantic wing and the utilitarian wing.

⁷⁵ Some of this information was taken from a Baedeker guide. The advice of specialists, such as Élisée Reclus, whose evaluation of the possibility of mass settlement had deterred Aksel'rod from supporting the idea, was not well publicized: Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 106.

⁷⁶ The name is an acronym from "Bet Yaakov, lekhu ve-nelkha" ("House of Jacob, come, let us go" – Isaiah 2:5).

young Jewish students that they must do something – anything – in the face of repeated pogroms, the mass movement of refugees, and dispiriting signals from the government, especially Ignatiev's interview with Orshanskii. The preliminary activity took the form of discussions within the traditional student circles. These prompted much larger meetings of Jewish university students throughout the empire.⁷⁷ At the end of February 1882, a group of St. Petersburg students formed a secret society which they named the "Brotherhood of Zion" (Hebrew: Ahavat Zion; Russian: Bratstvo Siona) and which conducted its propaganda in Hebrew. They produced a "Manifesto of Jewish Student Youth in St. Petersburg," which decried the willingness of the Jews to sit passively on their hands, "tossed by the fatalistic currents of time, which leads us from one ruin to another." It was useless, they declared, to wait for help from the traditional political leadership in St. Petersburg, since they were "more concerned about their wealth and their presumed honor than their people." Emigration was the only answer, because even if the Pale were abolished tomorrow, Jews would still remain "caught in a vice, and we would know no peace." But there was cause for hope: "We firmly believe that Israel is straightening up, lifting its head high, and setting about the restoration of the ruins of its natal hearth." Despite this imagery, the St. Petersburgers were not yet a Zionist group. They wavered between Palestine and America as the best destination for emigrants. What they did seek was a national conference to decide how best to direct Jews to a central point for agricultural colonization.

The students may have hoped that the forthcoming meeting of communal representatives would undertake this task, somewhat naively in the light of their criticism of the secular elite leadership. They sent hectographed copies of the manifesto to state rabbis throughout the Pale, with the pious wish that they "help us to make our ideal a reality," presumably by supporting the call for an emigration committee. Instead, several of the addressees, for example in Bathmutsk and Nikolaev, turned the manifesto over to the police, complete with a Russian translation.⁷⁸ A similar effort, undertaken by students in Kiev in mid-February, was intercepted in the post by the Chernigov provincial authorities. A search was initiated in Kiev for the author, a certain Iarskii, who had produced "a program for the organization of emigration circles."⁷⁹

The Palestinophile group known as Bilu had its origins in study circles of Jewish students in Kharkov, who resolved to emigrate to Palestine and

⁷⁷ See Vital (*Origins*, 75–6) for a description of the meeting of Moscow students.

⁷⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4 (23/IV/1883), ll. 11–12ob; ch. 7 (1882), ll. 8–10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, op. 77, d. 1227 (1881), ll. 46ob–47.

pursue agricultural colonization. They were very aware of their status as privileged *intelligentsy*, "the flower of our youth," within the Jewish community. They were convinced that their loudly proclaimed willingness to sacrifice their promising careers for the cause of the people would inspire the masses to imitate them and the communal rich to support them – two assumptions which proved disappointingly vain. In early March, they prepared a manifesto entitled "From Jewish Students to the Jewish Intelligentsia," which proclaimed the arrival of a decisive moment that would determine the fate of the Jewish people.⁸⁰ Faced with persecution in the past, the Jews had lacked the mental or moral qualities of resistance. Now they were served by a contingent of people who possessed both a higher education and strong moral convictions. It was true that this elite had been tempted by the lure of assimilation and had sought to spread Russian language and culture among their people. Events in Russia – and also in Germany – now demonstrated their mistake. Judeophobes claimed that both the pogroms and antisemitism were responses to Jewish exploitation. This was demonstrably untrue. "They beat us because we are *Jews*, who despite various sorts of persecution, degrading laws, the Pale of Settlement, have nonetheless remained true to our religion, our national traditions, which are sanctified by age-old suffering." The Judeophobe press accused the Jews of every conceivable sin, ranging from ritual murder to usurping the places of Christians in the schoolroom. When the Judeophobes incited the crowd to beat the Jews, the government was silent, thus demonstrating that such attacks were permitted.

The student youth now recognized the error of serving the Russian people to the neglect of their own:

Do we have a moral obligation to work and labor in support of a people who not only fail to utter a word of thanks in the person of their best representatives, but never give to our people, to our brothers and sisters, to our fathers and mothers, the benefits of their own labor, the chance to breathe fresh air outside the ghetto of the Pale, the opportunity to sleep securely without fearing the arrival of some *bashi-bazuks* from Kaluga or Tula, come to despoil and beat them?⁸¹

The decisive question was not whether, but whither. America was cultured and cultivated but too large to permit concentrated Jewish settlement. Moreover, if Jews settled in the midst of the native population, they would recreate the problems they faced in Europe. "Instead of Russians, we would be beaten by Yankees." In contrast, Palestine was a virtual

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18 (8/III/1882), ll. 9–13ob.

⁸¹ The *bashi-bazuks* were irregular forces that carried out terrible atrocities, the so-called Bulgarian Horrors, during the Bulgarian revolt against Ottoman rule in 1876. Kaluga and Tula were Russian towns outside the Pale.

arcadia, with productive soil and a mild climate. The Ottoman government would welcome Jewish settlement, the manifesto announced, blithely ignoring a restrictive Ottoman decree published in November 1881. The Ottomans would grant freedom from military service and impose light taxes. Transport was cheap and access easy, while cultural centers were nearby.

The moment must not be lost. "All Europe, the whole world, looks on, ready to help us not only with sympathy, but with money. If the best people among the Jews do not use the moment to show the world that we are people with human hearts, ready to rejoice in the word 'motherland' [*rodina*], then the masses won't follow, but will turn away from us while the world leaves us to the wild caprice of our despoilers. And Israel will perish . . . We will perish because of personal egotism." The task was clear. The intelligentsia must spread the word, create emigration committees, found colonies, and set an example for the masses.⁸²

In March, Kharkov Bilu dispatched twenty delegates around the Pale to propagate their ideas and establish links with like-minded groups. The Russian secret police kept such activities under observation, concerned that they might be political.⁸³ Similar groups were formed in Minsk, Warsaw (where the driving spirit was Shmuel Mohilever, the orthodox rabbi of Radom), Nikolaev, Kiev (which styled itself "Am Olam," but was Palestinophile), Moscow, and many other towns. In May, delegates transferred their headquarters from Kharkov to Odessa in anticipation of a move to Palestine. Although the movement generated considerable excitement in Jewish communities, it never was a mass movement, and the financial support it received was meager.⁸⁴ It was against this background of disappointed hopes that one must view the hostility with which the Palestinophiles viewed the St. Petersburg leadership and their provincial allies. Frustration turned to a sense of outright betrayal when the capital leadership not only rejected emigration (to *any* destination), but even began to work actively against it.⁸⁵

A prominent exception was the active support of the publisher of the Russian Jewish newspaper *Rassvet*, Iakov Lvovich Rozenfeld. He not

⁸² GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18 (8/III/1882), ll. 10–13ob.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, op. 1881, d. 1227 (1881), ll. 8–9ob.

⁸⁴ See *Rassvet* for donor lists. A collective appeal to the Moscow group raised only R200: Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 59–60.

⁸⁵ Tolstoi's circular forbidding instigation to emigration was attributed to the influence of the Petersburg leaders S. S. Poliakov and N. I. Bakst: Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 51–2. The "Russian-Jewish conservatives" were also accused of undermining the Palestinophile newspaper *Rassvet*. See A. F-r, "Dela minuvshikh dnei. (*Rassvet*)," in *Palestina. Sbornik statei i svoedenii* (SPb, 1884), 140.

only provided editorial support, but also attracted a contribution of R1,200 from a group of Moscow Jewish merchants to buy land in Palestine. He was also tireless in touring the Pale to meet with activists, cooperating with Bilu groups, and traveling to Constantinople in support of the Palestinophile cause.⁸⁶ His assessment of the potential of resettlement schemes and their supporters appeared on a regular basis in *Rassvet*.⁸⁷

Excitement within the movement reached a fever pitch with the sudden intervention of an Englishman, Sir Laurence Oliphant. Oliphant was an extravagant mixture of religious crank and mystic, hardheaded businessman, and diplomatic adventurer such as might have stepped out of a Victorian novel.⁸⁸ In 1879, Oliphant had floated a scheme to colonize Ottoman Palestine with Jews, in the (publicly undeclared) hope of establishing a British protectorate in the region. He had traveled to the Middle East in order to survey appropriate territory, had sought out potential colonists among Romanian Jews, and had personally negotiated with Sultan Abdul Hamid. The project came to naught, although Oliphant's book describing his adventures, *The Land of Gilead*, received widespread publicity in the Jewish and non-Jewish press.⁸⁹

In February 1882, with the refugee crisis in Brody much in the international news, Oliphant reappeared on the scene with a letter to *The Times* of London in which he argued that the Jews at Brody should be directed to Palestine, rather than America. He was promptly coopted onto the Mansion House Committee and appointed as one of three delegates to travel to Berlin, Vienna, and Brody to organize and coordinate relief. Even before his resignation from the Mansion House Committee in April 1882, Oliphant's name was linked to schemes for Jewish settlement in Palestine. While in Vienna, he met with Smolenskin, the veteran proponent of proto-Zionist ideals and an early and ardent supporter of Oliphant's Gilead scheme.⁹⁰ As soon as Oliphant arrived

⁸⁶ Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 34–5.

⁸⁷ See Ia. R., "S Bosfora," *Rassvet*, 28:11/VII/1882; 29:18/VII/1882; 30:25/VII/1882.

⁸⁸ Scion of a well-connected English family, Oliphant had access to the elite of British society. He served in Parliament, and displayed his entrepreneurial talents as manager of the Direct US Cable Company. He engaged in diplomatic intrigues in India and Egypt. Simultaneously he was involved in a bizarre Christian cult headed by Thomas Lake Harris. It is not entirely clear which guise – hardheaded businessman, international intriguer, or religious mystic – motivated his involvement with the movement to settle Jews in Palestine. Oliphant's biographer, Anne Taylor, suggests that his use of religious mysticism was designed to attract the support of British Protestants of millenarian inclinations: *Laurence Oliphant, 1829–1888* (Oxford, 1982), 191. See his sensible and realistic letter on colonization in *JC*, 698:11/VIII/1883.

⁸⁹ For a Russian review of *Land of Gilead* (London, 1880), see *Russkii evrei*, 22:28/V/1881.

⁹⁰ *JC*, 684:5/V/1882.

in Brody, he was visited by a delegation of Biluim, who sought his assistance. In May, he proceeded to Jassy in Romania, his progress reported as "a march of triumph," where he attended a conference of would-be Palestinian emigrants.⁹¹ In June, he established himself in Constantinople, where he received a stream of delegates from Palestinophile societies in Russia and Romania and activated his network of connections in the Ottoman capital. He sought to reopen negotiations with the sultan. All of Oliphant's movements were extensively reported in the European and Jewish press.

A number of factors worked against Oliphant's scheme and Jewish colonization in general. The Ottoman government was alarmed by foreign designs on Palestine. The Ottoman Empire was plagued by extraterritorial rights that it had been forced to cede to citizens of foreign powers, the so-called Capitulations, over the course of the nineteenth century. The Capitulations were a standing pretext for foreign intervention, and most of the proposed settlers would be, at least initially, foreign citizens. Worse still, many would be subjects of the traditional Ottoman enemy, Russia. Thus, when an English-German consortium, headed by Edward Cazalet, submitted a project to build a Smyrna-Baghdad railroad and to settle Jewish colonists along the right-of-way, the Porte responded in November 1881 not just with a refusal, but with a declaration barring organized Jewish settlement in Palestine.⁹² Although well reported at the time, the declaration was either ignored by the proponents of colonization or explained away.⁹³ The restatement of the ban on concentrated settlement was publicized by Ottoman consulates in May 1882, creating a momentary crisis for the Palestinophile movement.⁹⁴ A greater problem was a full-blown

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 688:2/VI/1882.

⁹² Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), 1-5. The exact wording was: "[Jewish] immigrants will be able to settle as scattered groups throughout the Ottoman Empire, excluding Palestine. They must submit to all the laws of the Empire and become Ottoman subjects" (*ibid.*, 2). For the Reuters report, see *JC*, 660:18/XI/1881. The railway project was reported *ibid.*, 650:9/IX/1881, and *NKbV*, 16:15/IV/1882.

⁹³ There was some ambiguity over exactly what was meant by "Palestine," since the area now covered by that term was never a single administrative unit under Ottoman rule. In 1881-2, it was part of a wider unit, the *vilayet* of Sam (Syria). The region west of the River Jordan was divided into the three sanjaks of Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre. See Mandel, *Arabs*, xix. Oliphant, who knew the region as well as any foreigner, was given to geographical imprecision when defending his scheme. See *JC*, 694:14/VII/1882.

⁹⁴ Here again, some Palestinophiles were nonchalant in their response, dismissing the announcement as a "dubious document": *Rassvet*, 17:27/IV/1882. Lilienblum, quoting Oliphant, did his best to soften the impact of the decree, by suggesting that large parts of Palestine ("Syria" in Ottoman parlance) remained open to settlement: *Rassvet*, 21:23/V/1882.

international crisis centered on the Middle East. On 12 June 1882 NS, at the very moment that Oliphant was entertaining Bilu delegates, anti-European riots in Alexandria, Egypt, claimed fifty lives. The crisis culminated, on 11 July 1882 NS, with the naval bombardment of Alexandria by a British fleet. This was hardly the opportune moment for an Englishman to intervene at the Sublime Porte for groups of nationally minded Russian Jews. Fate further conspired against the Biluim at home, where the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a circular on 21 June 1882 that appeared to criminalize emigration activities. This latter blow undermined plans for a meeting of supporters of emigration that was planned for Kiev.⁹⁵

None of this deterred the Biluim from pressing ahead. Although their delegates in Constantinople were advised by Oliphant to await better times, they insisted in sending their first party of settlers to Jaffa, evading an instruction from the Ottoman government forbidding their landing.⁹⁶ Without money, official status, or even internal unity, the first Biluim pioneers simply ignored the realities of their situation. A split soon occurred between some of the delegates in Constantinople (M. Mints and Ia. Berliavskii) and the group headed by I. Belkind that had proceeded on to Palestine. The Jewish press was filled with their bickering. I. Rabinovich attacked Oliphant as a covert Christian missionary.⁹⁷ Mints and Berliavskii savaged Rozenfeld's efforts in a letter that the anti-Palestinophile Jewish press was only too happy to print. This feud required the cautious intervention of M. L. Lilienblum, who defended Rozenfeld from the "youthful ardor" of these "schoolboys."⁹⁸

Their status as heroic pioneers – and the role that many Biluim later played in the life of the Yishuv – overshadows their failure once they actually arrived. To support themselves and to acquire agricultural experience, they worked as laborers at the Jewish colony of Rishon l'Zion. They found the work difficult and unrewarding, and some transferred to the colony of Mikveh Israel, an agricultural settlement funded by the anti-Palestinophile Alliance and headed by an open opponent of their settlement schemes, Charles Netter. They were confident that, having proved their worth to Netter, he would assist them to acquire land of their own. It was only in November 1884 that the Biluim finally acquired land for the colony of Gederah. No more than fifty Biluim ever actually settled on the land.

⁹⁵ Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 51–2, 66. ⁹⁶ *JC*, 695:21/VII/1882.

⁹⁷ There is some irony here, because that is what he himself became. See below.

⁹⁸ M. Mints and Ia. Berliavskii were two of the most active Bilu organizers; the cause of the split within Bilu is unclear.

The Biluim never took responsibility for failure upon themselves. Instead, it was always a malign fate, or the hostility of the established leadership, or treachery on the part of those they had trusted. One after another, idols were constructed, only to be demolished. They included Oliphant, the American consul Lew Wallace, Osman Pasha, the former Ottoman commander at Plevna, who had been a prisoner of war in Kharkov, the mysterious Count Kommodo, "the richest Jew in the Ottoman Empire," the British railway contractor Edward Cazalet and his reputed backer, the German-Jewish financier Gerson Bleichroeder.⁹⁹ There was a special sense of betrayal among Palestinophiles when Charles Netter, the veteran activist, expressed his doubts about the prospects of settlement.¹⁰⁰ Yet, as failure followed failure, Biluim publicists continued to issue dispatches to the Jewish press. They confidently promised that today another group was being dispatched to Jaffa, that tomorrow another powerful sponsor would be located, and that in the near future they would breach the walls that surrounded the sultan and win him to their cause.¹⁰¹ Appeals for funds were filled with reproaches that might best be described as emotional blackmail.

Emigrant societies

The first Biluim settlers in Jaffa were rescued from their most immediate wants – a roof and a crust – by the prior existence of a Jewish agricultural colony, Rishon l'Zion, which was able to employ them as laborers. This colony was part of the broad colonization movement of Romanian and Russian Jews and it lacked the carefree utopianism that characterized Bilu. Most of these settlers had organized their finances in order to buy land in Palestine, and some even brought building materials with them. They sent representatives ahead to investigate conditions. Besides setting an example, they resolved to provide practical advice. In June 1882, Kiev delegates joined with their Romanian counterparts to announce the formation of a committee to advise potential settlers on the purchase of land. By far the most effective representative of this approach was Zalman David Levontin, a native of Kremenchug who had experience as a banker. In January he departed Russia for Palestine with a mandate and money to secure land in Palestine for a colony. He not only accomplished

⁹⁹ Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ See Netter's letter to the *YC*, 678:24/III/1882. The hopes of Biluim that they might demonstrate their abilities while working in an existing colony also came to naught when Netter died suddenly at the end of 1882.

¹⁰¹ See a typical example in *Russkii evrei*, 51:23/XII/1882.

this assignment, but also maintained a constant flow of information to the Jewish press, invariably accompanied by an appeal for funds. He also founded a committee "to establish the colonization of our brothers in the Holy Land on a rational basis."¹⁰² Levontin's fundraising was hardly more successful than most of the other proponents of Palestinian colonization until a wealthy relative gave him funds to buy land for his colony, which was named "Rishon l'Zion – the First in Zion". He evaded Ottoman prohibitions on land purchase by securing the land through the British consul in Jaffa. Once established in Palestine, he provided information and advice to the Jewish press throughout Europe. Levontin's advice to would-be colonists was hard-headed: He advised those without funds or practical skills not to risk emigration.¹⁰³ In the case of the Biluim, he assisted a group that had failed to heed this sound advice. It is a telling fact that even the practical Levontin, who displayed "something of the daring and clear purpose of the Biluim *and* the resources to put them to good effect,"¹⁰⁴ was unable to make agricultural colonization a viable concern. His colony, close to economic collapse, quickly passed under the financial patronage of Baron Rothschild – hardly the noble self-sufficiency that had underlain the colonization dream.¹⁰⁵ This was a further melancholy demonstration that out-migration, to any destination, was not the answer to the crisis of 1881–2. As Vital summarizes these early proto-Zionist efforts, "for many years to come it was the affair of a minority, too small and too incoherent to become a major influence on the mass of Jews, let alone represent them in any simple, parliamentary sense."¹⁰⁶

Religious reform

As in the West, maskilim in Russia took an interest in the question of religious reform in Judaism. Lilienblum, who established his literary reputation as an exponent of religious reform, was sensitive to the risk that animosity between reformers and traditionalists might undermine Palestinophile objectives.¹⁰⁷ A new group of young religious reformers appeared on the very eve of the pogroms. As Frankel has observed, in more normal times they could have expected a warm welcome from radical Jewish youth.¹⁰⁸ The Jewish press would have given them a

¹⁰² *JC*, 684:5/V/1882.

¹⁰³ See *Rassvet*, 29:18:VII/1882, and *JC*, 691:23/VII/1882. ¹⁰⁴ Vital, *Origins*, 98.

¹⁰⁵ See Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (New York, 1978), 62–3.

¹⁰⁶ Vital, *Origins*, 66.

¹⁰⁷ See discussion on this score in *Rassvet*, 31:1/VIII/1882, and *Ha-Melits*, 14:12/IV/1882.

¹⁰⁸ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 56–7.

respectful hearing and at least applauded their good intentions. In the context of 1881–2, however, they were disowned and denounced as traitors to the Jewish people in a time of crisis. Historians have generally dismissed them as a minor, unimportant phenomenon.

These movements nonetheless deserve at least a brief survey, not least because they attracted enormous interest from both non-Jewish and Jewish observers. The reception they received exemplifies the changing mood of acculturated Russian Jewry. Their fate also serves to mark the limits of acceptable accommodation of Jews to Russian society in the aftermath of the pogroms. They did represent an authentic, albeit minority, Jewish response to the crisis. Indeed, in their early stages, the reform movements shared objectives, such as the return of Jews to the land, that were considered praiseworthy in other movements.¹⁰⁹ As Steven Zipperstein summarizes, this was a moment in Jewish history “when cranks (like Oliphant), marginal, powerless intellectuals (like Lilienblum, Mordecai Ben Hillel Ha-Cohen and many others), and political visionaries (like the members of Am Olam and Bilu) assumed unusual prominence.”¹¹⁰

The Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood

The Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood (Dukhovno-bibleiskoe bratstvo) was organized in Elisavetgrad in 1880 by a 27-year-old journalist, Iakov Mikhailovich Gordin.¹¹¹ The movement was an eclectic blend of ideas that were very much in the air. Gordin rejected both the petrified practices of traditional Judaism and the religious indifference of Western Jewry. He was also influenced by ideals of religious rationalism that were associated with Christian sectarians in Ukraine, the so-called Stundists.¹¹² Drawing on the values of the Berlin Haskalah, the Brotherhood sought a

¹⁰⁹ Iakov Priluker first appeared in the Jewish press as a progressive educator defending Jews from Judeophobic attacks from the state educational bureaucracy. See his articles, largely dealing with educational issues, in *Rassvet*, 36:4/IX/1881; 46:13/XI/1881; 10:5/III/1882; and 13:26/III/1882. Iosif Rabinovich was an early participant in the Palestinophile movement. All the principal religious reformers, Gordin, Priluker, and Rabinovich, fall into my category of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia or Frankel's category of the “literary intelligentsia.”

¹¹⁰ See Steven J. Zipperstein, “Heresy, Apostasy, and the Transformation of Joseph Rabinovich,” in Todd M. Endelman, ed., *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York and London, 1987), 225.

¹¹¹ Gordin would subsequently acquire fame as one of the foremost Yiddish dramatists of the early twentieth century and the author of a classic of the repertoire, ‘*Mirele Efros*.’

¹¹² For the Stundists, see *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, XXXVII (Gulf Breeze, FL, 1984), 243–6; Hans Brandenburg, *The Meek and the Mighty* (New York, 1977); John Shelton Curtiss, *Church and State in Russia* (New York, 1940).

return to Judaism's pure Mosaic core, in the form of a rationalist natural religion that would link together all humanity, in contrast to the particularism that they believed scarred rabbinic Judaism. A further ingredient of this Jewish Stundism were the ideas of the Russian Populist movement, including the perception of the Jews as exploiters of the peasantry through usury and tavern-keeping. The Brotherhood was determined to reject exploitation and earn an honest living from the soil. They envisioned a cooperative community resembling Stundist patterns of social organization. The creation of a community based on purified religious principles and a productive way of life would, they believed, resolve the Jewish Question.¹¹³

The reformers began to publicize their efforts in both the Jewish and non-Jewish press, the former an indication that they considered themselves to be operating within the Jewish tradition and likely to receive the support of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia.¹¹⁴ Their efforts coincided with the first pogrom, ironically in their home base of Elisavetgrad. The response of the Brotherhood to this event made their efforts a *cause célèbre*. In June 1881, Gordin published a group manifesto in the Kharkov newspaper, *Iuzhnyi krai*. He discerned the roots of the disorders not in external factors, but in the Jews themselves. "We Jews have a moral illness that causes us greater sorrow, torment, and suffering than the worst physical misfortune: our bad habits that have taken root deeply in our lives." Reflecting on the recent pogroms, Gordin asked how it was possible that, when such events happened, nobody sympathized with the Jews or offered them assistance. Why was every stratum of Russian society united in their hatred of the Jews? Jewish spokesmen attributed this to religious hatred, but this was a serious misdiagnosis:

Our greed, insatiability, covetousness, cupidity, our persistence, pushiness, our extreme willingness to flaunt ourselves, our extravagance, our slavish and stupid imitation of proud and unbridled Russian haughtiness, our usury, tavern-keeping, go-between activity, and similar shortcomings arouse the Russian people against us, stirring up the envy of the merchant and the contempt of the noble.

Gordin's prescription was for Jews to reject dishonorable undertakings such as usury and tavern-keeping and to imitate the reformed economic and spiritual life pioneered by the Brotherhood. "Come to us, beloved brothers, come! . . . Awaiting you impatiently is a spiritual family which is

¹¹³ See the program set out in *Odesskii vestnik*, 254:1882 and 255:1882.

¹¹⁴ See *Russkii evrei*, 16:15/IV/1881; *Rizhskii vestnik*, 90:24/IV/1881; *Novoe vremia*, 1847:21/IV/1881; *Glasnost'*, 5:19/IV/1881.

good, sympathetic and responsive . . . We love you warmly and deeply, although sometimes we tell you the bitter truth."¹¹⁵

Gordin's manifesto simultaneously won the plaudits of many Russian newspapers and the derision of the Jewish press, which accused the Brotherhood of sympathizing with the pogroms or even of inciting violence by their intemperate talk. This hostility forced the Brotherhood into temporary eclipse. Gordin used this period to place his principles into practice by moving to the countryside to farm. Many of his closest associates emigrated to the United States. The Brotherhood received additional publicity when it was discussed at length in Ben-Sion's *Jewish Reformers* (discussed below) and when it merged with the Odessa-based reform movement, "New Israel." Later in the decade, the Brotherhood was recognized as a free-standing sect by the Russian authorities, but lost its support when it evolved into an agricultural commune based on Tolstoian principles. It attracted the attention of the police as a potentially subversive organization.¹¹⁶

New Israel

"New Israel" (Novyi Izrail) was founded in Odessa in late 1881 by a young Jewish schoolteacher named Iakov Priluker. Priluker was born into a religiously orthodox family in Pinsk and received a traditional Jewish education. In 1877 he broke with his roots to enroll in the Zhitomir Rabbinic Institute (by then a teacher training institution), imbibing the contempt for the traditionalist Jewish masses found there. At the same time, he absorbed the dissident ideals of Russian Populism. Priluker left the institute in 1880 to accept a teaching position at a state Jewish school in Odessa. He followed the well-trodden path of many a maskil by writing for the Russian Jewish press. Filled with the confidence and optimism of a young Russian Jewish intellectual, he dreamed of making his own contribution to the merger of Christians and Jews by devising a homegrown reform of Jews and Judaism.¹¹⁷ Perhaps emboldened by the public

¹¹⁵ Reprinted in *Russkii evrei*, 27:2/VII/1881, from *Iuzhnyi krai*.

¹¹⁶ See John D. Klier, "From Elisavetgrad to Broadway: The Strange Odyssey of Iakov Gordin," in Marsha Siefert, ed., *Extending the Borders of Russian History: Essays in Honor of Alfred J. Rieber* (Budapest and New York, 2003), 113–25.

¹¹⁷ Shaul Ginsburg, *Meshumodim in tsarishn Rusland* (New York, 1946), 90–2. In his memoirs, Jaakoff Prelooker [Iakov Priluker], *Under the Tsar and Queen Victoria* (London, 1895), 25, Priluker claimed that he had held, from the beginning, a secret aspiration "to unite a reformed synagogue with the reforming dissenters from the Greek Orthodox Church, the Molocans, Stundists and Dukhoborzies." As Ginsburg points out (*Meshumodim*, 95) Priluker was not entirely forthcoming in his memoirs, and this claim may have been an *ex post facto* rationalization.

attention given to the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood, Priluker used *Odesskii listok* (25:31/I/1882) to announce the creation of New Israel. The movement claimed to base itself on the rational principles of the Mosaic Law in order to reform contemporary Jewry, to turn Jews into "productive and useful sons of the Fatherland" and ease their rapprochement with the Christian population. Priluker presented a list of fifteen essential dogmas, a naive blend of serious concerns and ludicrous trivialities:

- (1) Rejection of talmudic interpretations of the Pentateuch.
- (2) Designation of Sunday as the Sabbath.
- (3) Rejection of the rite of circumcision.
- (4) Compilation of a reformed prayer book written in Hebrew.
- (5) Renaming "shuls" as "churches."
- (6) Acceptance of a printed Torah which fully spelt out the name of God.
- (7) Abandonment of the rules of *kashrut*.
- (8) Celebration of all (non-talmudic) Jewish holidays.
- (9) Obligation to learn and use the Russian language.
- (10) Obligation to obey all state laws, including those on military service.
- (11) A ban on members practicing usury or keeping houses of prostitution.
- (12) A request for official recognition of the sect.
- (13) Upon formal recognition of the sect, all members would be obliged to name their first-born children either Aleksandr or Aleksandra.
- (14) A request for the grant of full civil rights and official approval of mixed marriages.
- (15) All members to be allowed to wear a distinguishing mark to differentiate them from rabbinic Jews.¹¹⁸

Priluker followed the *succès de scandale* occasioned by the appearance of this article with the publication of a pamphlet, issued under the pseudonym of E. Ben-Sion, entitled *Jewish Reformers (Evrei-Reformatory)*.¹¹⁹ Yehuda Slutsky characterized *Jewish Reformers* as a "violent attack on the Talmud and traditional Judaism, thus supplying material for anti-semitic propaganda."¹²⁰ Whatever the uses to which the pamphlet might ultimately have been put, it did attempt a balanced discussion of the pogroms and a more serious, albeit hostile, analysis of traditional Judaism. Priluker adopted the curious literary device of posing as a neutral observer of the movement, thus allowing himself to conduct a discussion

¹¹⁸ This latter "dogma" was omitted from Priluker's English-language memoirs.

¹¹⁹ According to Yehuda Slutsky, it was published with governmental assistance: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972), XII, 1027.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

with "Mr. Priluker" as a separate person. He added realism to this pose by criticizing several of the very dogmas that he had promulgated in *Odesskii listok*, specifically numbers 14 and 15. (Interestingly, these were the very points that were criticized, in a review, by Priluker's fellow reformer Iakov Gordin.)¹²¹ The pamphlet was a convenient compendium of the beliefs of the two sects and was extensively reviewed in the Russian press.¹²² In 1883 the small New Israel group of Odessa merged with, and disappeared into, the numerically superior Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood.¹²³

Both New Israel and the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood remained nominally Jewish entities, unlike the movement of the "New Testament Israelites in the Savior's Name," founded in Kishinev in 1883 by the Jewish religious reformer, journalist, and early Palestinophile, Iosif Rabinovich. This body quickly evolved into a stalking horse for Protestant missionaries in Russia.¹²⁴

The Russian Jewish press was initially mildly sympathetic to the sectarians and played a major role in disseminating their doctrines. *Rassvet*, already engaged in exploring religious reform as promulgated by Lilienblum, wondered in early 1881 if the moment for genuine religious reform among Russian Jews had finally arrived (15:9/IV/1881). *Russkii evrei* cautiously welcomed the appearance of people who proposed to live by honest toil (16:15/IV/1881). This sympathy ended abruptly after Gordin's intemperate attack on the Jews following the first pogroms. The Jewish press treated it as a declaration of war, and *Ha-Melits* called for the Brotherhood's "moral death."¹²⁵ A *Russkii evrei* editorial described Gordin's letter as "filled with banal phrases, like those teeming in *Kievlianin* editorials; this is no more than a cloying morality, available for rent." The anti-talmudic rhetoric was designed to gain the support of a "certain kind of newspaper," but it exposed the members of the Brotherhood as either fools or rogues (27:2/VII/1881). *Rassvet* denounced Gordin's statements as the prologue and epilogue of the pogroms, which the Brotherhood had manipulated for its own selfish purposes (25:19/VI/1881). Both newspapers soon reported rumors designed to blacken the reputation of the Brethren: They were alleged all to be kulaks, they

¹²¹ *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, XI, 770; *Nedelia*, 45:4/XI/1884.

¹²² See the articles listed in the bibliography *Sistematicheskii ukazatel' literatury o evreiaikh na russkom iazyke* (SPb, 1892), 180, no. 2496.

¹²³ I have found no evidence to support Tcherikower's claim that the remnants of New Israel joined Rabinovich's Christianizing movement: *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, XI, 770.

¹²⁴ For the literature devoted to Rabinovich, see Zipperstein, "Heresy", and Kai Kjaer-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids, MI, 1995).

¹²⁵ A. S. Prugavin, "Dukhovno-bibleiskoe bratstvo," *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 18, 11 (1884), 401.

themselves had participated in the pogroms, Gordin had joined a committee that assisted the families of arrested *pogromshchiki*.¹²⁶ For A. Landau, the editor of *Voskhod*, "these saviors of the Jews have nothing but a flashy nickname, sparkling, high-flown phrases, which disguise moral and intellectual emptiness" (7:VII/1881). In response, the public statements of the Brotherhood began to include ritual condemnations of the Jewish press.¹²⁷

Given their prior experience with the Brotherhood, it is hardly surprising that the Jewish press gave Priluker's New Israel short shrift. Many commentators, Jew and gentile alike, remarked on the sect's pragmatic willingness to trade the essentials of Judaism for civil rights. For the Jewish press, engaged in its vigorous campaign to ascribe the violence to the lack of Jewish civil rights, such pragmatism was a mark of "faint-heartedness and moral emptiness."¹²⁸ Special scorn was reserved for the request of the New Israel leadership that its members be given a special mark to distinguish them from other Jews. Critics recalled that this had been the demand of the Christian persecutors of the Jews in the Middle Ages.¹²⁹ Concerns were voiced that the statements of the sectarians would prove useful to the enemies of the Jews. "The goal of our Judeophobes is clear. First they have an excellent opportunity available to tell us: Look how well-intentioned Jews speak about their co-religionists; then they have a fine opportunity to show how dispassionate they are: Look how correctly we act towards 'proper' Jews."¹³⁰

These fears were realized when the Judeophobe press welcomed the sectarian movement (giving preference to the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood which appeared larger, more viable, and less naive). *Novoe vremia* praised the Brotherhood as "more important than all the commissions and committees," offering as it did a more radical solution to the Jewish Question. The sectarians, with their criticisms and rejections of the Talmud, were merely confirming what Judeophobes had been saying for years (2991:27/VI/1884). On 21 January 1882, *Odesskii vestnik* headlined an article written by one of the Brotherhood as "The Jews Themselves Recognize the Necessity of Regeneration and Self-Development." *Volyn* applauded the declared intention of the sectarians to achieve internal reform *before* they received full civil rights, since it contradicted the Judeophile claim that discriminatory legislation itself was the major factor in creating the Jewish Question (31:22/IV/1883). The Russian Orthodox

¹²⁶ *Russkii evrei*, 29:15/VII/1881; *Rassvet*, 26:26/VI/1881, 28:10/VII/1881, 29:17/VII/1881.

¹²⁷ *Elisavetgradskii vestnik*, 77:22/VII/1881.

¹²⁸ *Russkii evrei*, 7:12/II/1882; *NKhV*, 8:19/II/1882. ¹²⁹ *NKhV*, 51:21/XII/1882.

¹³⁰ *Russkii evrei*, 27:2/VII/1881. This complaint echoed the scandal surrounding a well-publicized letter chiding rabbinite Jewry for their shortcomings, allegedly issued by the Jewish sect of Karaites. See *JC*, 670:27/1/1882; *Jewish World*, 465:6/1/1882.

journal *Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi vestnik* used a four-part review of Ben-Sion's *Jewish Reformers* to lovingly chronicle the many faults of the Jews that had to be removed before they could be given equal rights. Ben-Sion had confirmed the proposition that the Talmud made the Jews "our enemies as a result of the basic principles of their lives" (140:21/X/1882, 141:23/X/1882, 147:4/XI/1882, 148:6/XI/1882).

The debate over the sectarians provided literary Judeophobes with yet another cudgel to beat an old opponent, the Russian Jewish intelligentsia. This form of discourse had begun in the early 1870s, when Jewish publicists had refused to accept Brafman's claim that the kahal, "a secret, municipal, talmudic government," was the underlying cause of the Jewish Question. Their rejection of Brafman was taken as a demonstration that acculturated Jews were themselves part of the problem.¹³¹ The Russian press eagerly gave a rostrum to educated Jews, the founders and supporters of the sects, who were willing to turn on their fellows. A long-time Jewish critic of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, V. Portugalov, condemned the Jewish press "for closing its eyes before true but bitter reality, before the imperfect moral physiognomy of Russian Jewry."¹³² Priluker, writing under his Ben-Sion pseudonym, branded the Jewish press as modern Pharisees who hurled libelous falsehoods at the sectarians.¹³³ Gordin condemned Jewish journalists as a clique who were completely apathetic to the interests of the Jewish masses and intent only on increasing the number of their subscribers.¹³⁴

The Russian press shared this perspective. *Nedelia* asked why the Jewish press was so hostile to the reformers, when they were merely repeating the recommendations that Jewish journalists had been making for years (43:24/X/1882). The Judeophobe *Russkii kur'er* complained that the Jewish intelligentsia, through its house organ *Rassvet*, "sows not peace but hostility between Russians and themselves" (42:13/II/82). The paper returned to its favorite theme, that Jewish publicists were incapable of accepting any criticism of the Jews. "The sun has spots. The Jews have shortcomings... It follows that the more attentive and objective of the Jews should examine the most crying of their shortcomings which stand between them and the local population in the areas where they live." The absence of self-criticism seriously delayed the ultimate resolution of the Jewish Question (315:15/XI/1882).

The sectarian episode during the pogrom crisis was significant primarily for the extensive coverage that it received in the Russian press. This

¹³¹ Klier, *IRJQ*, 366-9. ¹³² *Odesskii listok*, 264:25/XI/1882.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 12:20/III/1883. ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 45:4/XI/1884.

coverage was a reminder of the ability of Judeophobes to turn the most diverse phenomena in the Jewish world into an attack on the Jews in general and the Jewish intelligentsia in particular. This chameleon character of Russian Judeophobia was not unique to the years 1881–2, but served as a painful reminder of the difficulties which Jewish publicists faced in fighting their corner. The importance which the Russian press attributed to the small band of totally unrepresentative sectarians suggested that the pogrom crisis, which had begun in tragedy in 1881, was concluding in farce in 1882.

9 The Jewish press and the emigration crisis

We're not a nation, not a faith, but only a flock.

Judah Leib Gordon, "The Flock of the Lord"¹

The emigration movement represented the coming of age of the modern Jewish press. Never before had the Jewish press been able to claim such a leadership role, which in itself was a marker of the ongoing modernization of East European Jewry. Jonathan Frankel has highlighted the significance of the literary intelligentsia within Russia and the prophetic role that its members exercised through the press. The archives are replete with letters from Jewish activists, urging their correspondents to read this or that article in the Jewish press. It is telling that, in 1881, the members of the Anglo-Jewish Association in London felt the need to subscribe to the St. Petersburg-based *Ha-Melits*.² This was, indeed, an international phenomenon, with Jewish newspapers in London playing as vital a role as the press in the Russian capital.³ The period witnessed pioneering efforts to use the Jewish press for propagandistic purposes. As noted in Chapter 8, the proponents of emigration proved particularly skillful in this regard. Very influential too were the widely reprinted exhortations of the Memel rabbi Dr. Yitzhak Rülff, who emphasized Russian atrocities in order to mobilize an international relief and protest movement.

¹ Cited in Michael Stanislawski, *For Whom Do I Toil?* (Oxford and New York, 1988), 197.

² Parkes Archives (Southampton) AJ/95/ADD/1: p. 402 (15/IX/1881).

³ Their general caution on the emigration issue meant that the Jewish press in Germany, Austria, France, and Russian Poland played an insignificant role in the international debate, in contrast to the *Jewish Chronicle*. See Itta Shedletzky, "Die Reaktion der jüdischen Presse in Deutschland auf die Judenpogrome in Russland, 1881–1882," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 59 (1981), 3–28. The most frequently cited German-language Jewish press organs were *Jüdische Presse* and *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*. See Sonja Weinberg, *Pogroms and Riots: German Press Responses to Anti-Jewish Violence in Germany and Russia (1881–1882)* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010). The Warsaw Jewish press, *Ha-Zefirah* (Hebrew) and *Izraelita* (Polish), were almost never cited in the Russian Jewish press, with the exception of *Russkii evrei*, which took a special interest in the Jews of the so-called Vistula Provinces.

Newspaper editors were themselves remarkably committed, especially those in the Palestinophile camp: Iakov Rozenfeld went to Constantinople in support of the Biluim; Peretz Smolenskin risked his health to consult personally with Laurence Oliphant and defended him as “if not a Messiah, then a Samson”;⁴ Aleksandr Tserderbaum met on several occasions with N. P. Ignatiev; David Gordon traveled extensively in support of the Palestinophile movement and conducted a campaign on their behalf in the *Jewish Chronicle*. The famous interview between Ignatiev and Dr. Isaak Orshanskii, published in *Rassvet*, was the most symbolic – perhaps even decisive – event in the entire emigration campaign. The two conferences of Jewish communal representatives both made use of the press. The editor of *Rassvet* was demonstratively *not* invited to the second conference in March 1882, and Aleksandr Tserderbaum created a scene when he was denied admission.⁵ The second conference published transcripts of its deliberations, no doubt to counter the negative press campaign to which the delegates were subjected.

The influence of individual press organs can be quantified through content analysis. Such an examination confirms that most newspapers monitored both their allies and their rivals and quoted them at length when responding, irrespective of the language in which they were published. Some writers, such as Moshe Leib Lilienblum, contributed to a variety of newspapers. Thus, diversity of language (Russian, Hebrew, English, Yiddish) presented no hindrance to a fully rounded debate. From a less seemly perspective, editors did not shy away from aggressive polemics and personal attacks, while always quick to defend their own journalistic honor.⁶ It should be stressed, however, that all members of the Jewish press were diligent in publishing divergent points of view.

The leading participants in the press campaign of 1881–2 may be identified by language: the Russian-language weeklies *Rassvet*, *Russkii evrei*, and *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* (and its thick-journal sister, the monthly *Voskhod*); the Hebrew-language *Ha-Melits* (St. Petersburg), Gordon's *Ha-Maggid* (Lyck), and Smolenskin's *Ha-Shahar* (Vienna); Tserderbaum's Yiddish *Dos Yudishes Folksblat* (St. Petersburg); and the

⁴ *Russkii evrei*, 25:23/VI/1882.

⁵ Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002), 191–2.

⁶ Aleksandr Tserderbaum went so far as to denounce the rival newspaper *Rassvet* to the censorship authorities, for what he took to be its intemperate attacks on his *Ha-Melits*. See *Rassvet*, 49:5/XII/1882.

English-language *Jewish Chronicle* (London).⁷ Curiously, the latter's London rival, the *Jewish World*, was not as frequently cited, notwithstanding its importance in publicizing pogrom atrocity reports.⁸ Aside from the monthly bulletin of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, no French newspaper was widely quoted.

All these papers did their share of straightforward reporting, but they also offered editorial comment on events, especially on emigration, helping to make it the major issue of the day. Was emigration possible or realistic? What should be the destination of the emigrants? Whether one was for or against emigration, should some attempt be made to organize and direct what was, after all, a *de facto* phenomenon?

A number of individual Jewish newspapers can be differentiated by a strong editorial stand on these issues: *Rassvet*, *Ha-Shahar*, and *Ha-Maggid* were resolutely in favor of emigration to Palestine; *Voskhod* and *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* were just as determined in their opposition to emigration in any form. Other newspapers, such as *Ha-Melits*, tried to balance between positions, while the *Jewish Chronicle* shifted its editorial position over time. Indeed, one of the most fascinating moments in the emigration debate occurred when the *Jewish Chronicle* was briefly gripped by the messianic emigration mania that swept the Pale.

The Palestinophile press

Rassvet was launched in September 1879 in St. Petersburg by the veteran of Jewish journalism, Aleksandr Tsederbaum. In 1880 the editorship was transferred to Ia. L. Rozenfeld, an attorney, and G. I. Bogrov, a prominent Russian-language Jewish novelist. As the inaugural issue noted, it was published on the 150th anniversary of the death of Moses Mendelssohn, the central figure of the Haskalah. It adhered to a maskilic agenda, advocating the acculturation of the Jews into Russian society, as well as their economic transformation through settlement on the land. It proudly declared that, "ceasing to be 'Yids' [*zhidy*], and not wishing to be 'Yids' in the future, we will yield to nobody in our love of Russia, and this love for

⁷ See Joel Geffen, "Whither: To Palestine or to America in the Pages of the Russian Hebrew Press *Ha-Melits* and *Ha-Yom* (1880-1890)," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, 59, 1-4 (1969-70), 179-200.

⁸ The editor of the *Jewish World* was irate that the paper's pogrom reports, which formed the basis of articles in *The Times*, were not credited (466:13/I/1882). He noted with pleasure (436:17/VI/1881) when *Ha-Maggid* reprinted correspondence from the *Jewish World*, authored by the Christian proto-Zionist H. W. Monk. Monk's continuing correspondence represented the paper's major contribution to the emigration debate. It called Netter's negative evaluation of Palestine colonization a "singularly lucid epistle" (476:24/III/1882).

our great fatherland will impel us to act to help the mass of Russian 'Yids' to become her worthy sons" (1:13/IX/1879). Given this background, the conversion of the paper to the Palestinophile cause offers a prototype of the analogous journey made by other Russified Jews.

The initial editorial response of *Rassvet* to the pogroms was to blame the rightless position of the Jews for making them targets (21:23/V/1881) and to prescribe "equality, announced by the Throne in timely fashion," as the remedy (18:2/V/1881). The paper looked askance at V. S. Strelnikov's notorious courtroom speech in which he directed Jews to the "open border" and *Novoe vremia's* "To beat or not to beat" article (22:30/V/1881; 24:12/VI/1881). For the next month the paper clung to its founding tenets that the solution to the Jewish Question lay in the spread of productive work (26:26/VI/1881; 27:3/VII/1881). The emigration issue could not be avoided, especially when some Russian newspapers began to attack the spontaneous emigration movement as unpatriotic (30:24/VII/1881). In August, the editor finally took the leap, with an exploration of the legal aspects of the situation. Government officials and the press were urging Jews to depart, and some were following this advice. But Russia, unlike Germany or Britain, did not offer its subjects the legal right to emigrate freely. Emigrants were violating Article 325 of the Criminal Code. This situation should be resolved, the more so because of the economic logic behind emigration: The western provinces would be freed from a surplus Jewish population unable to make a living. Properly organized emigration committees would eliminate human suffering (32:7/VIII/1881; 33:14/VIII/1881). *Rassvet* initially placed its hopes on the Kiev Relief Committee and the first conference of Jewish communal representatives. The failure of the latter to undertake any substantive action led to a strong rebuke:

What is done about the emigration movement by that part of society from which people have the right to demand and expect direction of the initiative? Nothing – exactly nothing. While different foreign "unions" actively and energetically bustle about the organization of the lives of new and prospective emigrants, at a time when various states openly provide guidance for them, when hundreds and thousands of magical rumors play upon the confused minds of three million Russian Jews – the so-called leading classes unconcernedly look at the movement, as if it were a passing amusement of the moment, or a game without any social significance. (36:4/IX/1881)

Once the paper focused on the mechanism of "how," the question of "where" could not long be avoided.

The article that was credited with raising the Palestinophile banner in the Russian press was "Whither," by M. Sh. (M. G. Shliaposhnikov) in

September 1881.⁹ The author argued for the desirability of Palestine over America as the target destination. Although he noted the tradition that linked the Jews to Palestine, his arguments were primarily economic and social: Palestine was closer to Europe and commercially well situated. There was an absence of competition from other farmers, the environmental conditions more closely resembled Russia, and the Ottoman government might be expected to assist emigrants. The controversy generated by this article prompted an intervention from the pen of Moshe Leib Lilienblum, which was to serve as an early Russian-language manifesto of the Palestinophile movement.¹⁰ Since Lilienblum also published extensively in the Hebrew- and Yiddish-language press, and was cited in the English press as well, he has a superior claim to be considered the literary father of the Palestinophile movement. His greatest contribution at this juncture was to move the debate beyond the messy practical details of emigration by providing an ideological underpinning which set forth several of the basic premises of modern Zionism.

The key for Lilienblum's analysis, as it would be for all Zionist thinkers, was the universality and inevitability of the persecution of the Jews in the *galut*. Hostility arose because they were in competition, be it with the elite or the mob, "for the air they breathe." Any European state that currently ignored the Jewish Question would inevitably discover it. "Antisemitism and pogroms are only the first flowers of the newly born national movement in Europe, and its fruits lie further ahead." Some Jews responded to this phenomenon by advocating total assimilation (*shianie*). Such a tactic, he argued, was not only base and hypocritical, but would rob the Jews of all their best and most unique characteristics. It would be nothing less than national death – and no people could be expected to die of their own free will.

There were consequences if European society chose to brand the Jews as aliens and to demand their departure. Jews had not left their promised land by choice. They had been exiled to Europe by force and from there driven out into Poland. Moreover, the Jews had a legitimate right to a continued existence: "we are the oldest of cultural peoples who still exist, and while we are no less the carriers of European civilization, we have suffered more." The Jews were entitled to their own little scrap of land, where they might repair over time, where they could be masters rather than aliens. That scrap of land could only be Palestine.

⁹ *Rassvet*, 38:18/IX/1881. Shliaposhnikov, a 23-year-old student at the time, later became a medical doctor and was a major publisher of Zionist literature; *Evreiskaya entsiklopediya*, XVI, 50–1.

¹⁰ See Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge, 1981), 85–6.

Lilienblum's vision of Palestine was highly eccentric. True, he valued it as "the land of our forebears, to which we have an historic right." Yet Lilienblum denied that the Jews required national independence or even the historic capital of the Jewish kingdom (to the surprise of the editor, who punctuated the article with question marks). "We do not need the walls of Jerusalem, nor the Jerusalem temple, nor Jerusalem itself, a city far from being central, and which became the capital only because it belonged to the Tribe of Judah, from which sprang the dynasty of David." Alone of all commentators, Lilienblum advocated Palestine as a place where the Jews would be able to continue their traditional pursuits as traders and craftsmen.

While Lilienblum urged Jews to take up the task, *Rassvet* editorials were limited to periodic exhortations to the Jewish intelligentsia to take a leading role in the emigration movement. They were accompanied by straightforward reporting of various emigration schemes. Orshanskii's interview with Ignatiev, in which the minister restated his claim that the western frontier was "open to the Jews," and the manner in which it was published – as a special, midweek supplement – created a national sensation. The emigration issue became the leading topic of the day. The paper was showered with criticism for publishing the interview as though it were something urgent and new. Orshanskii himself was reportedly denounced in *Russkii evrei* as a "false messiah" (4:22/1/1882). The article undoubtedly found an enormous resonance among the Jewish intelligentsia and student groups, though less so among the masses (few of whom were readers of *Rassvet*). Numerous contemporary accounts testified that Ignatiev's words, as presented by *Rassvet*, served as a spur to action.¹¹ They confirmed the malevolent intentions the Russian government presumably had toward the Jews and thus forced both friends and foes of emigration to declare themselves and to act. For example, this article led *Rassvet*'s coeditor Bogrov to break his ties with the paper. The secular elite leadership viewed the article with outright alarm.

The subsequent evolution of *Rassvet*'s editorial policy is easily charted: The Orshanskii interview established it as the leading emigrationist newspaper, and its columns were soon filled up with the plans and activities of the Am Olamtsy, Biluim, and Z. D. Levontin, accompanied by growing criticism of the elite leadership. In particular, its editorials argued for the creation of a legally chartered, central emigration committee, with provincial branches. This would resolve the legal ambiguities that still surrounded emigration – Ignatiev's rhetoric

¹¹ See GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1227, l. 13ob.

notwithstanding – while safeguarding the interests both of emigrants themselves and of those who remained. (The unregistered, illegal departure of Jews, especially those liable for the military draft, threatened to exacerbate the chronic problem of alleged Jewish draft evasion.)¹² Yet the traditional Jewish leadership was rejecting its role. The cries of the people, their fasts and prayers, were met with the “frozen indifference of the bourgeois Pharisees, by the chorus of skeptics who are self-satisfied, confused and Jesuitical” (9:26/II/1882). The Jews of the capital were decried as the worst offenders on this score. Such rhetoric led *Rassvet* into extended polemics with its newly fledged rival, *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda*, which was staunchly anti-emigrationist.

While pro-emigration, *Rassvet* only gradually declared itself Palestinophile. Indeed, over the course of the Orshanskii affair, it carried a series of influential anti-Palestinophile articles by “Gamzefon” (Lazar Zamenhof, later the creator of Esperanto). While arguing that the Jews must be gathered together in one place in order to maintain their national unity, Gamzefon argued against Palestine, which he characterized as an “artificial remembrance” linked to practices, such as patriarchy and the temple cult, which were no longer necessary for Jews (3:15/I/1882). Externally, Jewish Palestine would be a weak state surrounded by strong Islamic ones; internally, it would become the battleground for parties and sects. (It was for precisely this reason that Lilienblum, though long a partisan of religious reform, specifically eschewed religious issues as fatal to unity and cooperation.) America, where the Jews might form a separate Jewish “state” (in the American sense), was preferable (5:1/II/1882). Gamzefon invoked for his readers the picture of “your native huts on the free banks of the Mississippi!”

Gamzefon’s writings demonstrated the process of rapid changes of mind by emigration activists that is so well chronicled by Frankel. Examples demonstrate that newspaper editors could dramatically change their editorial policies, without recrimination, precisely because they were linked in a symbiotic relationship with young readers who were undergoing exactly the same process. Within two months Gamzefon revealed himself transformed into an ardent Palestinophile, in an article headlined “Under a Common Banner.” He used the forthcoming Passover festival to set his theme: The people had decided, breaking the pots that tied them to Egyptian slavery and taking the staff in their hands. They had answered the decisive question, “Whither?” “This question must now be given a decisive answer – home! To the old fatherland! Raise the banner of Israel

¹² John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 347–9 (hereafter *IR’Q*).

and let all gather under it, old, young, armed by a *common* ideal, sanctified by age-old traditions and hopes." The goal of unity could be attained in America, he admitted, but the task of national resurrection was possible only in the "land of our fathers." While the practical difficulties of settlement in Palestine were greater than those encountered in the United States, "they can be more than overcome by the strength of unity, by the strengthened consciousness of working for the common good of the people, inherited from our forefathers." Jewish settlement in Palestine must proceed like bees building a hive, bit by bit. All practical difficulties were dismissed with a flourish: "Pay the Arab double or triple, and he will sell you any land that you need; a golden key can easily unlock any Turkish chancellery" (13:26/III/1882).

Events forced the pace. The press was filled with reports of atrocities during the Balta pogrom of 29–30 March. The second meeting of communal representatives (8–20 April) not only failed to back emigration, but even publicly rejected it, an act widely seen as a betrayal of the national cause. It was a telling blow that the editor of *Rassvet* was not invited to the conference.¹³ The journal was increasingly critical of the failure to act. The emigration movement would certainly fail, it warned, if it remained in the hands of foreign philanthropic organizations such as the Alliance, which were entirely ignorant of the needs and wishes of Russian Jews themselves. Aid was being distributed to "a ruined and indigent mass of paupers, from whom nothing is to be expected, or to the morally excited youth, who can no longer bear all these insults and remain in a state of excitement like people ready to go wherever you wish, as long as it is outside Russia." The net result was the random dispersal of Jews, who were left to wander homeless in the streets of Brody, Lemberg, and Berlin, or were being sent, willynilly, to Texas or Canada or back to Russia. Events demonstrated once again the necessity of an emigration committee, as was functioning in Romania, and which could inform would-be emigrants and direct them to a proper destination. Russian Jews must take their fate in their own hands (19:11/V/1882).

Rassvet branded the efforts of the Alliance "a complete fiasco" (21:23/V/1882). The Alliance's working principle of shipping the young and able to the United States and returning the wretched proletariat to Russia was "worse than the strictest military recruitment." In the aftermath of a letter of Charles Netter to the *Jewish Chronicle* rejecting emigration to Palestine (see below), a *Rassvet* editorial lamented: "O wait, our unhappy brothers!

¹³ *Rassvet*, 16:18/IV/1882.

The Alliance now seeks a way, at your expense, to make a constructive example of you for all other Jews so that nobody will ever again disobey its all-powerful administrator, M. Netter, and think about colonizing the old land of our fathers, to the great displeasure of the French bankers" (24:13/VI/1882).

In the aftermath of the May Laws, *Rassvet* formally declared its Palestinophile loyalties in two lengthy editorials which openly acknowledged a debt to Lilienblum.¹⁴ This was a decisive moment in Jewish history, explained the first of these editorials (22:30/V/1882), because it posed the ultimate question: "what is the significance of these people, who have long ago lost the ground under their feet and still claim the right to live, irrespective of torture, suffering, and persecution?" The medieval Christian mind had seen the Jews' endurance as divine punishment for their sins, a view shared by the Jews themselves, in their conception of the *galut*. In more progressive times, some Jewish thinkers located the significance of the Jews first in their role as preservers and transmitters of the great idea of the unity of God and abstract religion, and second as disseminators of higher European culture. That mission accomplished, they would dissolve into the great family of Aryan nations. Abandoning their nationality (*natsional'nost'*), such thinkers sought to join the dominant elements of European civilization, becoming Frenchmen, Germans, Poles, or Russians. These assimilators, while strengthening the culture of European nations, weakened that of their own people. They did not realize that this nation, which had struggled to survive for more than four thousand years, did not propose to be the first to abandon its nationality. Indeed, such an objective was impossible, seen in the light of the great scientific discovery of the nineteenth century, the struggle for survival of individuals, species, and races, "an inescapable law of nature and history." The clear answer to the question of the significance of the Jews was "first of all, to live and survive." For forty centuries the Jews fought bravely for the right to live, even as the nations that had suppressed them disappeared. "The unusual harmony of our nation gives us every right to trust in its internal spiritual strength, and to value it as much as any of the contemporary great powers of Europe."

An awareness of the law of struggle for survival also explained the appearance of antisemitism in an age of progress. Given a combination of unique political and social conditions, independent of the Jews themselves, they could become the object of persecution. "The Medusa-like face of tribal and racial hatred" could "declare open war against an alien,

¹⁴ Frankel (*Prophecy and Politics*, 108) sees the May Laws as having a calming effect; for *Rassvet* editorialists, they were almost irrelevant.

defenseless race which also eats bread, drinks water and breathes the air." But what was the means of escape?

As the second editorial explained, the Jews could hope to survive only when motivated by a common ideal that drew them together in a way that was stronger than life itself. That ideal was the return to Erets Israel. "The Jewish people must discover a vacant corner where a part of it may quietly build themselves an independent existence, remaining true to their cult; we will not cease to proclaim that the only such land is Palestine, which ties the Jews to so much that is holy and glorious . . . The self-centered and cowardly will proclaim this to be a dream and a fantasy. But they cannot provide a straight answer as to how they themselves would provide for the future of the Jewish people without this fantasy, thus revealing their true hypocrisy." The returning pioneers, declared *Rassvet*, filled with great spiritual and moral strength, universal fervor, and a willingness to sacrifice for great ideals, resembled those Jews who returned to Jerusalem at the end of the Babylonian captivity, "to again revivify their orphaned homeland."

This was an attainable dream. The alleged hostility of the High Porte was more apparent than real. Turkish opposition unquestionably arose as an effect of the improper, uncoordinated approaches to the sultan (which editor Rozenfeld would presumably put right during his visit to Constantinople). How could the Turks possibly reject the settlement of able, energetic, industrious, and loyal subjects, especially when they came to understand that the Jews had no aspirations for the full political independence of Palestine? "The Jews yearn only to build a peaceful, quiet life on the foundations of productive agricultural labor." Since this great objective was spurned by the elite leadership, the responsibilities of leadership must pass to the middle classes. They should join together to create a national organization, free from the intervention of ill-intentioned foreign benefactors. Russian Jews must help themselves (23:6/VI/1882).

Editor Rozenfeld was as good as his word, and embarked on a tour of the Pale to drum up support among pro-emigration groups before traveling to Constantinople in pursuit of the "sacred national goal." His reportage of the political situation and interviews with Laurence Oliphant were buttressed by enthusiastic Palestinophile editorials. Apparent setbacks were explained away or meticulously dissected in search of a silver lining. This was the case with the circular of 21 June 1882, from the new minister of internal affairs, D. A. Tolstoi, outlawing the work of foreign Jewish emigration agencies. The circular was justified as necessary to protect victimized Jews who were returning to Russia "disappointed in their hopes . . . often completely ruined, or at

least suffering irreplaceable losses."¹⁵ *Rassvet* welcomed the circular as a vindication of its warning against the failure to provide organization and discipline to what had begun as an elemental movement. In the absence of proper organization, which was a consequence of the criminal rejection of emigration on the part of the national leadership, the government was justified in stepping in, as many had warned it would do (28:11 VII 1882). *Rassvet* continued to argue that the circular was really directed against false rumors and agitation which drove the masses on to the ruinous course of unprepared flight. The paper remained convinced that a properly organized emigration to Palestine and Syria remained a realistic possibility (30:25/VII/1882). While the paper continued to carry copious correspondence from and about the colonists in Palestine, Rozenfeld himself, perhaps chastised by his confrontation with reality in Constantinople, and bearing the scars of the attacks of the Biluim M. Mints and Ia. Berliavskii, ceased his ardent Palestinophile editorials. The closure of the paper at the end of the year – the victim, some claimed, of the antipathy of the secular elite leadership – served as a fitting symbol for the failure of the movement in 1881–2.¹⁶

The anti-emigration press

Nedel'naiia khronika Voskhoda was a weekly newspaper launched in 1882 by A. E. Landau, the editor of the thick journal *Voskhod*. It established itself as the premier Russian Jewish periodical of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Once a student at the Vilna Rabbinical School, Landau had also studied in the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg University before pursuing a career as a journalist on a number of prominent Russian newspapers.¹⁷ He was an archetypal example of the group I have identified as the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, who were completely at home in the wider Russian world, but who maintained a strong commitment to the fate of their co-religionists.¹⁸ In Landau's case, this was represented by his enduring battle for equal rights for the Jews of the Russian Empire, a legacy, no doubt, of his legal training. His commitment to equal rights, however, made him extremely unsympathetic to the Palestinophile movement and Zionism.

Landau's hostility to Zionism became more pronounced as the movement itself grew in size and scope in the late nineteenth century. Skepticism rather than outright hostility marked his attitude toward

¹⁵ *Golos*, 178:4/VII/1882. ¹⁶ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 112.

¹⁷ *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, X, 17–18. ¹⁸ Klier, *IRJQ*, 26–7.

Palestinophilism in its early guise. His attacks in print were more personal and polemical than ideological, especially when directed against the chief sponsors of the emigration movement, Tserderbaum (whom Landau considered a ridiculous, amateur shtadlan) and Rozenfeld (portrayed as a self-important boaster), who also happened to be rival publishers. Landau's editorial policy was to publish a full range of articles about all aspects of the emigration movement, *pro et contra*, while refraining from extensive editorial comment, which he preferred to devote to the major legal issues of the day.¹⁹ Landau did apparently feel it was the duty of *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* to inform his readership of debates within the Hebrew and Yiddish press, since he published numerous articles translated from *Dos Yudishes Folksblat*, *Ha-Maggid*, and *Ha-Melits*. At the same time, Landau enjoyed putting the cat among the pigeons of the Palestinophile camp, as detailed below. Finally, he was against emigration in general, not just to Palestine.

Landau was particularly censorious of those whose actions he judged to be harmful to the general task of defending the position of Russian Jewry, especially against the backdrop of new pogroms in the spring of 1882 and the ominous rumors emerging from the Gotovtsev Committee. For example, the paper's editorial comments devoted to the second meeting of communal representatives was focused entirely upon the question of renewed pogroms, with hardly a word about emigration (16:15/IV/1882; 17:23/IV/1882). Unsurprisingly, Landau was sharply critical of Orshanskii's interview with Ignatiev. The Jews were living on a volcano, he declared, threatened both by the physical violence of the pogroms and the legal threats of the Gotovtsev Committee. Yet all Orshanskii could think to ask about was emigration, which was a minor, secondary issue. Having extracted a statement from Ignatiev – which merely repeated comments he had made at other times – the editor of *Rassvet* rushed them into print in a special supplement, as if it were an extraordinary new policy. In a jibe which Landau employed more than once in 1882, he asked Orshanskii who had chosen him as Russian Jewry's representative to deal with high officials (4:22/I/1882; 5/29/I/1882).

Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda's first editorial statement on the emigration issue came in the course of presenting a scoop: a lengthy letter from the former coeditor of *Rassvet*, G. I. Bogrov, announcing that he had broken all ties with the paper because of its irresponsible patronage of the

¹⁹ For example, in 1882, see *NKV*, nos. 11, 18, 20, 22, 38, for Lilienblum; 17 for Levontin; and 6 for Ben Ami.

idea of resettlement as the solution of the Jewish Question.²⁰ The editorial condemned as quixotic *Rassvet's* call for the creation of a national resettlement committee, whose chief activity would be to pay the debts of those who were considering emigrating. Such a committee would be a parody of what was really necessary to help the victims of ill-considered flight, who were now in a destitute state. It would merely promote more emigration. That sort of committee would play into the hands of "clever people" (perhaps a veiled reference to Ignatiev?), who had already demonstrated their economy with the truth where the Jews were concerned. They would use the committee to demonstrate to Europe the lack of patriotism manifested by Jews, who were ready to leave at the slightest adversity (9:26/II/1882).

In August 1882, *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* targeted Rozenfeld, in his capacity as Palestinophile activist. It published a letter from two disillusioned Biluim, M. Mints and Ia. Berliavskii, lamenting their "betrayal by the would-be benefactors of the Jews" (see Chapter 8.) A Landau editorial was the definitive statement of those who argued that the struggle must be devoted to winning equal rights in Russia, rather than abandoning it for an uncertain future elsewhere. The plight of the student refugees in Constantinople, he declared, was eloquent demonstration of the folly of those who sought to create an extravagant phantasmagoria – "to build a Jewish kingdom on the backs of ignorant, uneducated, totally unprepared and, on top of that, ruined and despoiled Russian Jewry! Excellent material for the creation of a new, independent political organism!" This phantasmagoria was propagated among hundreds of immature young people, who should be at their desks, learning to be good citizens and to serve themselves and others. Instead, they had thrown it all away and were plunged into material want and moral suffering. They were joined by hundreds of families, lured to a fantastical paradise painted by journalist-agitators. They had now lost what little had survived the pogroms.

The proponents of this course – Populists yesterday, leaders of the Jewish masses today – had failed to see the danger of "Greeks bearing gifts" in the person of those "standing at the head of the state administration [who] from the heights of ministerial armchairs" propagandized emigration – an action punishable under terms of the Criminal Code – and specifically advocated emigration to Palestine. The allusion to Ignatiev was clear. The naiveté of activists could perhaps be excused amidst the crisis generated by the first pogroms. But now the consequences of ill-considered emigration were clear for all to see:

²⁰ S. Tsinburg (*Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, IV, 734) claims that Bogrov broke with *Voskhod* because of its hostility to the Spiritual Biblical Brotherhood, but this is contradicted by his own words in this letter.

We can't understand how anybody who takes the part of their co-religionists in Russia could, after such a terrible lesson, continue with this fatal agitation, especially now when its victims, fallen into terrible poverty and with desperation in their breasts, follow the paths of various rascals who use popular misery for their personal criminal aims. Still less are we able to understand such agitation continuing in a newspaper which calls itself the "organ of Russian (note – Russian!) Jews." With what objective do they seek to bring Russian Jews under the scepter of the Sublime Porte in a kingdom – itself a complete anachronism! The task of the real "organ of Russian Jews" should be to oppose the slogan of the Judeophobes "to make Jewish life here unbearable" with the aim of making it bearable and possible, of asserting and defending their rights as far as they can, and of expanding these rights – while at the same time striving for the improvement of the internal life of Russian Jewry and their social revival on Russian soil. (32:7/VIII/1882)

The waverers

While the Hebrew-language press was in general enthusiastic in its support for emigration, with Palestinian settlement being the preferred option, the rest of the Jewish press was divided. *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* was, as we have seen, unrelenting in its skepticism toward emigration; other Jewish press organs might best be described as waverers, uncertain in their editorial positions and liable to be caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment. *Russkii evrei* was the third of the trio of Russian-language newspapers that debated the fate of Russian Jewry in 1881–2, and the one least able to maintain a consistent policy. In part this was because of the close links which the editors had with the elite establishment in the capital: L. Ia. Berman, a native of Kurland province, for example, had founded the first Jewish school in St. Petersburg, in 1867, under the sponsorship of the official community. His collaborators, G. M. Rabinovich and L. O. Kantor, were both establishment figures (the former a skilled mathematician who used statistics to acquit Jews of the charge of evading military service, the latter the future state rabbi of Vilna). Criticism of the oligarchs was always muted in *Russkii evrei* (see 25:23/VI/1882). The paper's preferred solution to the crisis of 1881–2 was the strengthening of ORT, S. S. Poliakov's project to make Russian Jewry more productive, and the acculturationist OPE. The paper agreed with Landau's insistence that the Jews must demand their civil rights. Nonetheless, the editors found it hard to resist the insistent public call for the proper organization of emigration, especially to Palestine. Like all the Russian-language press, *Russkii evrei* was conscientious in presenting diverse points of view on the issue.

Russkii evrei took up the issue of emigration almost from the first moment that it was raised by *Novoe vremia*. Reflecting the paper's

expertise in statistics, editorials consistently emphasized how impractical migration would be. Even the emigration of 100,000 Jews would necessitate impossible sums of money. What was required was to solve the problem of the poverty of the Jews living in Russia. Their salvation was in the hands of ORT, which alone could hope to transform the "half-craftsman-half-trader proletariat" into productive farmers. As a final consideration, there was no chance that the government would permit the legal mass migration of Jews (24:18/VI/1882; 31:4/VIII/1882; 36:9/IX/1882).²¹ By the end of the year, *Russkii evrei* editorials were inching toward a greater toleration for emigration, especially if it were conducted on an individual, informal basis. The publication of the Ignatiev interview with Orshanskii hardened its position once again (4:22/I/1882): "What is this resettlement without the right of return for which Russian Jewry authorized Mr. Orshanskii to plead?" Jews lived in, served, and shed their blood for the Russian state. They did not require some special right to leave. "We, it seems, have already suffered enough from various false messiahs and self-styled representatives. Is it really possible now, at such a serious moment, that anybody who wishes can take upon himself the right to speak in the name of his people?"

This event convinced the editors to offer a definitive statement on the emigration question. An editorial addressed the question of those emigration committees that *Rassvet* and other partisans of emigration were demanding in the hope of imposing some order on the chaotic process of emigration. Proponents were challenged to say what they really wanted: "the resettlement of a given number of Jews to a place where they might hope for a calmer and happier life, or 'to play at emigration.'" If the former, then they should provide charity and assistance on a private basis, without wasting time and resources on resettlement committees. The appropriate model was Germany, where over three million people had emigrated to America since 1815, as individuals, without any broader framework. A formal, organized movement held real dangers for Russian Jewry. "Even without it, there are many people who already characterize us as 'aliens,' 'transients,' and it is in no way desirable that the departure of several tens of thousands of Jews from our homeland should place all Russian Jews in a false position – or to put it more precisely, in a completely impossible position" (9:26/II/1882). The implications here were clear: Formal requests for organized migration might be used by the foes of the Jews to urge forced migration. As it was, the Jewish press was filled with reports of expulsions of Jews from Kiev, Orel, and other centers.

²¹ See two articles on the legal status of emigration by M. Mysh (10:4/III/1882) and P. Levinson (11:12/III/1882; 12:19/III/1882)

Rumors from the Gotovtsev Committee continued to hint that peasant communities would be given a statutory right to expel "harmful" Jews from their villages. "To play at emigration" was to play into Ignatiev's hands.

The deteriorating situation, alongside criticism of the apathy of newspapers such as *Russkii evrei* to the presumed needs of the people, eventually nudged the cautious editors along. The Balta pogrom pushed them over the edge. An editorial following Balta declared that it was criminal to artificially stir up emigration. "But it is no less criminal to remain apathetic toward the fate of those whom evil and wild violence have driven out of their natal nests and forced to flee wherever their glance might fall, if only a little bit farther from this shameless persecution, a little bit farther from these demons of destruction." *Russkii evrei* was still not convinced that millions of Russian Jews could be moved over the seas, but refuge had to be provided for the immediate victims.

The relatively small scale of the ongoing emigration led the editors to another unexpected decision. If there was indeed to be emigration, it should be to Palestine. Not because of its historical memories, nor the quality of the soil, but because resettlement would cost less. Whatever the price of relocating tens of thousands of poor Jews to the United States, the same amount could settle more Jews in Palestine and give them the necessary resources to found agricultural colonies. This was a modest concession, very much a product of the moment when the press was filled with optimistic reports of Palestinian colonization (16:16/IV/1882). This mild dose of Palestinophilism could not and did not last long. Even when faced with the May Laws, so obviously directed against the residence of Jews in the countryside, *Russkii evrei* reverted to the old nostrums: support for the agricultural colonization projects of ORT as the best way forward (38:22/IX/1882).

The *Jewish Chronicle* was published in the capital of a thriving empire, which considered itself the embodiment of Western civilization and humanitarian values. It was the voice of well-established, middle-class Jewry, which had largely won the battle for emancipation and integration.²² It could count among its elite members of Parliament, who were not reticent about raising the issue of the Russian treatment of Jews. The community served by the *JC* was at the very center of the international protest and relief movement. Financially stable, the paper had the resources to cover the Russian story, boasting a number of correspondents in or near Russia who were able to provide prompt and extensive news and commentary. This also ensured that the *JC* was an assiduous reporter of

²² For a history of the paper, see David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994).

rumors, and much of its Russian reportage must be used with caution. The paper's prize columnist on Russia was David Gordon, the editor of the Hebrew-language *Ha-Maggid*, published in the Prussian border town of Lyck, and a leading light of the Palestinophile camp. Indeed, in his own paper he declared that the colonization of Palestine was not "a sweet hope and a pious longing, but a matter of urgent and practical necessity."²³ The *JC* industriously combed other newspapers, in a variety of languages, for stories of Jewish interest. Its letters page was an important source for debate and information. Laurence Oliphant and Charles Netter, for example, were frequent correspondents.

At the outset of the pogrom crisis, the *JC* could already point to a long tradition of intervening for persecuted Jewish communities in general and East European Jewry in particular. This was often done from a paternalistic perspective, tinged with what might be called Jewish Orientalism, which noted with embarrassment traits of backwardness and fanaticism that were considered typical of Jews in less-enlightened lands. As an editorial put it: "each nation gets the Jews it deserves."²⁴ Indeed, the *JC* could hardly hide its relief when reports from Brody portrayed Russian refugees without sidelocks or caftans, but with higher education and the knowledge of foreign languages: "The men are handsome, tall and intelligent . . . As for the women, they are almost elegant" (660:18/XI/1881).

The proponents of the various emigration and colonization schemes, such as the Alliance and Levontin, were very well represented in the *JC*'s pages. Their contributions invariably drew editorial comment. It is thus particularly noteworthy that, in the excitement of the spring of 1882, even the *JC* abandoned its Olympian aloofness and briefly became an ardent supporter of Palestinophilism. The prophetic mantle could be donned, it transpired, on Fernival Street in the City of London, as surely as on Petersburg's Nevskii Prospekt.

From late 1881 to early 1882, the *JC* was filled with information about the growing emigration debate. Editorially it remained non-committal, more concerned with the questions of protest and relief that would culminate in the creation of the Mansion House Committee. In the first issue

²³ *Ha-Maggid* quoted from *Rassvet*, 42:17/X/1882. Gordon's authorship of the continuing series in the *JC*, "Narrative from the Borders," is confirmed by an entry in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, VI, 689. It is less certain that Gordon was "our St. Petersburg correspondent," or the author of the periodic "Letter from St. Petersburg," who appears to have been a Russian subject.

²⁴ The *JC* was particularly unsympathetic to the Old Yishuv (the Jewish settlement in Palestine), comprised of "these narrow-minded men from the heart of Russia" (695:21 VII/1882). It had little sympathy for the "swarm of Polish Jews . . . with their narrow and rigid ultra-Orthodoxy" (644:29/VII/1882).

for 1882, the paper finally took a resolute position. Emigration, an editorial announced, was the only "practical utility," especially if "discriminating in its application but as thorough as circumstances will permit." The obvious destination must be America, "almost the only country in the world where the feeling predominates that there is room for every one." The assumed success of the Jewish colonists in Louisiana was a favorable portent. Emigration would relieve pressure on the Jews who remained in the Pale, and the Irish precedent suggested that the emigrants would be happier in emigration than at home. There were those who feared the opposition of the Russian government. "Why be paralyzed by a possible contingency? Wait til the Russian government do attempt to stop emigration but up to that time set free as many Jews as possible from the house of bondage and death, in which they are not now living but existing" (667:6/I/1882).

It is difficult to explain the *YC*'s dramatic volte-face. It was almost as if the editor felt the need finally to intervene as the debate reached one of its sharpest points. In late March, the Palestinophile cause was rocked by the sudden intervention of Netter, who had served as the Alliance agent at Brody. In addition, he oversaw the Alliance-supported agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, outside Jaffa and thus could be reckoned the leading expert on the possibilities of colonization. In a letter to the *YC*, he provided a depressingly long list of reasons why the settlement of Russian Jews in Palestine would be impossible. Arable land was in short supply, the Arab population could not be considered friendly, the would-be colonists rarely possessed agricultural skills, and there were few resources for construction, livestock, implements, and seed (678:24/III/1882). In short, it was an accurate prediction of the conditions that would shortly undermine the optimistic assumptions of the Biluim. Yet also on display in the same issue of the *YC* was an article by David Gordon, whose optimism illustrated the ease with which enthusiasm could overwhelm rational considerations.

Gordon painted a glowing picture of the role of students in the Palestinophile movement. Their activities represented repentance for their neglect of their own people, while they had pursued the advantages on offer for "sacrificing their faith on the altar of nationality." During the days of the recent *selihot* services, "many of these young men spoke in enthusiastic terms of the colonization scheme, by means of which numerous families would secure a safe asylum and which would also improve the condition of those who remained in Europe. Nor is the expression of their sympathy confined to mere words."

In the very next issue, the editor made his new choice: "All the difficulties argued by Mr Netter might be made to disappear by the exercise of a little

energy directed in the proper quarters... The New Exodus... is evidently to take place." Moving into the prophetic mood referred to above, the editorial declared that "the movement is irresistible. If we cannot stem the tide, let us at least guide it into fruitful channels. We cannot suffer ourselves to stand by with folded hands when this New Exodus is taking place." All the resources of modern organization should be applied to the task. "The return of a small body of Jews to the Holy Land brings to mind the possibility and practicality of the larger Return to which all Jewish history and all Jewish aspirations have hitherto pointed" (679:31/III/1882). Best of all, proper organization appeared to be at hand, with the announcement of a conference in Berlin to explore the refugee question. In general terms, the *JC* expressed the hope that the conference would transform itself into a "Jewish International Alliance," which would help Jewish communities in any period of crisis. But there was a more specific objective that the delegates should address: assistance to "the present movement of strong and enterprising Russian agriculturists towards the fertile plains of the Jordan" (681:14/IV/1882). As its pages carried colonization projects from Edward Cazalet and others, announcements from Levontin and his followers, and reports of the activities of Oliphant, the editorials of the *JC* grew ever more messianic. The influx of sturdy Russian agriculturists, with their "manly independence," would erode the superstition and backwardness of the Old Yishuv. And Palestine represented something more: "the Russian Jews, who are to-day urged by this ideal, clasp hands across the ages with the noblest spirits of our race." Some might dismiss this as mere romantic dreaming. "Romance has at least the power of arousing enthusiasm, and before enthusiasm all obstacles fall away." Jewish "home-sickness" – and the ideal of Return – were the main elements keeping Judaism alive throughout the ages (685:12/V/1882). America, where religious observance and tradition were being eroded, where the Judaism of the emigrants was being "'civilised' off the face of the earth," was not the appropriate place for this great moment in Jewish history. "The Return must inevitably be initiated by some such process as is now commencing" (686:19/V/1882).

This moment of prophetic enthusiasm soon passed in Britain, as it did in Russia. The failure of the Berlin conference to consider the Palestinian project, the outbreak of the Balta pogrom, and the announcement of the May Laws placed the issue of Palestine on the back burner. Although the *JC* continued to devote copious attention to settlement projects, as well as the ongoing debate between the pro- and anti-Palestinian camps, it did not again address the issue editorially

in 1882. Nor did the editor query the verdict of his St. Petersburg correspondent that

we must regret that owing to the irrational and nihilistic colouring which has been given to the Palestine question, its promoters have done it more harm than good and have not only rendered useless the sums which they have contributed and have induced others to contribute in aid of the movement, but by deceiving themselves with unfounded expectations and impossible promises, they discredit the plan and prepare the way for an easy triumph on the part of its opponents.

This grim verdict notwithstanding, the seeds were sown, and in future years the *JC* would prove receptive to other Palestinophile movements, be they the gradualist efforts of Hoveve Zion or the more dramatic political Zionism of Theodor Herzl.

Auto-emancipation

Lev Pinsker's pamphlet, *Auto-Emancipation!*, has usually been considered for its impact upon the rise of the proto-Zionist movement, Hoveve Zion. It might, with equal accuracy, be seen as the closing act of the crisis of 1881–2. Although published abroad in German, in September 1882, with an intended audience of Western Jewry, it had its greatest resonance in the Russian Empire. *Auto-Emancipation!* became well known, being immediately translated into Russian and Hebrew, and within two years appearing in a Yiddish version prepared by no less a master than S. Y. Abramovich (Mendele Mokher Sform). The Jewish press in Russia reviewed it with far more sympathy than its West European audience.²⁵

From the perspective of 1881–2, *Auto-Emancipation!* was a *cri de coeur* in which Pinsker questioned most of the cultural values which he had espoused throughout his long career as a Moscow University-educated medical doctor, a Jewish communal activist in Odessa, and the editor of a pioneering Russian-language Jewish newspaper, *Sion*. These values included a mild political liberalism, acculturation, Russification, moderate Haskalah, and religious reform, although they all left visible traces in

²⁵ Leo Pinsker, *Autoemancipation! Mahnruf an seine Stammesgenossen von einem russischen Juden* (Berlin, 1882). Vital's suggestion (*Origins*, 126) that there was "no question of getting his essay past the Russian censorship" is untenable. While Pinsker complained of publishing delays caused by the Russian censor, he noted that a Russian translation was being published in *Rassvet* (41–6/1882). A Hebrew version appeared in *Ha-Maggid* in 1882–3, translated by S. L. Tsytron, and as a separate pamphlet in Vilna in 1884. Abramovich's Yiddish translation appeared in Odessa in 1884. See Julius H. Schoeps, ed., "Briefe Leon Pinskers an Isaak Rülfi," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 34, 3 (1982), 236–7. The potentially objectionable aspect of the pamphlet was not its assertion of Jewish nationalism, but its criticism of the restrictive policies of the Russian state toward the Jews.

Auto-Emancipation! These solutions to the Jewish Question in Russia and elsewhere were replaced by advocacy of a generalized form of Jewish nationalism, focused on the demand for a unified, independent Jewish state.

The bulk of *Auto-Emancipation!* is a sweeping criticism of the state of modern Jewry, with the blame placed first and foremost on the dispersion and second upon a collective refusal to rectify this state of affairs.²⁶ The Jewish Question derived from the fact that the Jews were destroyed as a physical nation, but succeeded in surviving in exile as a spiritual one. A nation without its own land was unique, and Jews constituted a "wandering corpse" in the midst of the living. The human fear of ghosts produced a subconscious fear, a psychosis known as Judeophobia. To justify this irrational fear, imagined reasons were offered for it: The Jews killed Christ, were wizards, drank Christian blood, engaged in usury, exploited the peasantry. Since these explanations masked an irrational fear, they were not open to reasoned refutation (41).

Another ingredient in the Jewish Question was the human struggle for survival. Unlike other nations, the Jews could not repay hospitality or protection received abroad in their own land. Consequently, toleration could only be an undeserved gift, and the Jews were obliged always to be foster children. In the struggle for existence, the native was preferred to the stranger, and the Jews were always begrudged any success. To survive, the Jews had been forced to carry on a "partisan war with all the nations of the world." Unfortunately, the struggle was not for a great national goal, but to defend the "vegetative existence of Jewish petty traders." As Pinsker summarized: "for the living, the Jew is a corpse; for the native – an alien; for the poor, a millionaire exploiter; for the indigenous – a wanderer; for the patriot – someone without a homeland; for all classes – a hated competitor." Such a people could expect nothing better than pity (42).

Their lack of statehood was the key reason why the Jews were universally despised as a people. "Our fatherland – a foreign land; our unity – dispersion; our solidarity – universal hostility; our weapon – humility; our resistance to opposition – flight; our originality – a talent to adapt; our future – tomorrow. What a shameful role for a people who once produced the Maccabees." It was no surprise that a people was scorned when they allowed themselves to be crushed for the sake of their bellies and even kissed the feet that trampled them. Worse, they produced "ultra-patriotic fanatics" who rejected their own identity for the sake of any other nationality, be it higher or lower on the human scale. Events had shown how far they were deceiving themselves (43).

²⁶ Citations indicate the issue number of the Russian text in *Rassvet*: 41:12/X/1882; 42:17/X/1882; 43:24/X/1882; 44:31/X/1882; 45:7/XI/1882; 46:13/XI/1882.

Yet these same events had also given cause for hope. "National consciousness . . . has emerged before our eyes, among the mass of Russian and Romanian Jews, in the form of an inchoate yearning for Palestine." However fruitless the actual results, it testified to the true instinct of the people, its need for its own national hearth. Moreover, Jews throughout the world had appeared to help their brothers, in a display of national solidarity. At a time when many other smaller and less cultured nations were being given their national independence, the Jews had a right to make the same claim for themselves. The very act of demanding and creating their own independent statehood would raise the Jews in the eyes of the other nations of the world. They might even be willing to assist, but only if the Jews took the lead themselves (43).

It is noteworthy that a work that became a foundation stone for modern Jewish nationalism was so lacking in many essential features of the future movement. Beyond the demand for a Jewish "national hearth," the pamphlet was not prescriptive in any meaningful way. Pinsker spoke vaguely of a joint stock company run by a directorate of Jewish worthies who would acquire the land and organize its distribution (46).²⁷ His focus was not *klal Israel*; he envisioned the in-gathering not of *all* the Jews of the world, but only of the surplus population of countries such as Russia and Poland. Social welfare was a component, since emigrants to the independent Jewish state would presumably find more dignified means of earning a living than in the lands of their previous settlement. The well-integrated Jews of countries such as Germany, Pinsker made clear, could remain where they were (44). Unlike the majority of responses to the crisis of 1881-2, *Auto-Emancipation!* was extremely gradualist, offering a project for the long term. Pinsker repeatedly emphasized that he envisioned only a first step, that it must be pursued with moderation and caution, and that it was likely that only future generations would see its achievement (46).

Most significantly, *Auto-Emancipation!* was not Zionist. It sought not the reestablishment of the "Holy" land, but of the Jews' "own" land. Rather than attempting to reconstruct Jewish life on the territory in Judea where it had been crushed and destroyed, the Jews should seek a corner of the earth which would be forever, indisputably, theirs. It was not the Jordan or Jerusalem that made a land the Jews' own, but the "holy, soaring idea of God and the Bible which has sustained us amidst the wreckage of our previous native land" (44). While Palestine need not be

²⁷ Compare the more detailed projects raised in the letters column of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 672:10/II/1882 (Guedalla and M. Cohn), 692:30/VI/1882 (Cazalet), and 694:14/VII/1882 (Veneziani). Pinsker was equally vague about how the members of the directorate might be chosen.

totally ruled out, it was much more likely that the choice of the Jewish directory would fall on North America or a suzerain *pashlik* in Asiatic Turkey (45).

Perhaps it was the very vagueness and lack of ideological specificity that allowed the early adherents of the Palestinophile movement to annex *Auto-Emancipation!* and to capture Pinsker and place him at the head of Hoveve Zion and its agency, the Odessa Committee. Pinsker's generalized attack on all Jewry, after all, meant that no specific faction – neither the old nor the new politics, neither the religiously orthodox nor the integrationists – were singled out for opprobrium. Every side could agree with his ardent rhetoric and concluding exhortation to “Help yourselves, and God will help you!”²⁸

The Jewish press, in Russia and abroad, commented extensively on *Auto-Emancipation!*, each organ remaining true to its own principles.²⁹ The eminent rabbi of Vienna, Adolf Jellinek, was quoted as telling Pinsker: “I would have to deny my past and all I had ever preached and published in the course of over thirty years . . . We are at home in Europe and we feel that we are sons of the country in which we were born and brought up . . . We are Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Magyars, Italians, and so on, down to the marrow of our bones . . . We have lost the sense of Hebrew nationality.”³⁰ *Russkii evrei*, true to its name, disputed the claim of German and Austro-Hungarian Jews that they were merely a religious community (42:21/X/1882). “Jews are distinguished from others by their origin, type, and racial peculiarities which have been preserved by them with rare purity; they may be recognized amongst others; and in addition to all this, there exists among them a strong consciousness of their unity, their individual existence . . . If the Jews aren't a nation, who is?” The Jews should always be enlightened citizens of those countries which have given them refuge, “but they cannot be dissolved and vanish in these surroundings, should they wish it a thousand times.” But siding with Pinsker on the issue of Jewish nationality and identity did not mean that the Jews could or should attempt to reconstruct a national home in the near future, especially in Palestine. *Russkii evrei* ignored both Pinsker's gradualism and his rejection of Palestine as a likely “hearth.” “Our mass is extremely poor and ignorant and prone to a

²⁸ For other analyses of *Auto-Emancipation!*, and Pinsker's dealings with Hoveve Zion, see David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford, 1975), 126–32.

²⁹ The pamphlet, and the ensuing debate, was followed in the Russian press as well. For representative examples, see *Russkii kur'er*, 327:27/XI/1882, and *Odesskii listok*, 240:28/X/1882.

³⁰ Vital, *Origins*, 135ff. for other responses to Pinsker. See also Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford, 1989), 243–8.

thousand prejudices. On the other hand, the Promised Land lies in ruins, in terrible confusion, with everything there destroyed, broken, and a desert; everything that is worth something is in the hands of Germans and Arabs." Moreover, the political situation was hopeless. "Due to our indiscreet noise, the government has decided to ban the settlement of Jews there . . . The land at present cannot support half the Jews living there. How is auto-emancipation possible there? In the best of circumstances it would take decades to settle tens of thousands of Jews in Palestine; what would happen to the rest of them? No fine phrases can overcome this reality." The mordant judgement of the paper was that, in the case of the Jews, pessimism was always more warranted than optimism.

The Warsaw-based Polish-language Jewish newspaper *Izraelita* sponsored a program of Jewish acculturation in Poland. It accepted *Auto-Emancipation!*'s assumption that the poor should emigrate, while prosperous communities that had attained equal rights should stay where they were. But the paper disputed Pinsker's central assumption that the Jews were the targets of eternal hatred because they lacked their own territory. Quite to the contrary, the cause lay in "our separation from other nations, in our religious-racial [*rasovoi*] alienation from the whole world." At one time this isolation was necessary to preserve the Jews' pure faith, but over time "it imposed a uniquely exclusive imprint upon all our physical and moral essence – and from this flows the hatred and dissatisfaction from the side of other nations."³¹ A reader of *Izraelita* hardly needed reminding that, in Poland, the problem would be resolved when the Jews became "Poles of the Mosaic Persuasion."

Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda applauded *Auto-Emancipation!* specifically because it was *not* Palestinophile. The paper used the opportunity to fire off a volley of insults against "the many youths and childish old men who are now preaching resurrection on Palestinian soil," people who yesterday were considered by the religiously orthodox "hardly to be Jews" (41:9/X/1882). Pinsker himself was faulted for indulging in fantasy and exaggeration. No practical details were provided, allowing the author, moved by emotion, to ignore the enormous labor and grandiose sacrifices which would be required. *NKhV* preferred to make great sacrifices to attain general humanitarian goals and an elevated human awareness of right and wrong, which had as much chance of being achieved, in the fullness of time, as an independent Jewish state. Unlike the pessimistic *Russkii evrei*, *NKhV* saw ample evidence of the growth of human progress, exemplified by the role played in German political life by National Liberal Party leader

³¹ Quoted in *Russkii evrei*, 52:30/XI/1882.

Eduard Lasker. A hundred years ago he would have been fortunate to operate a small stall in the Frankfurt ghetto, and yet now he was one of the leading lights of German politics. *NKhI*, with its longstanding commitment to the principles of Russian liberalism, optimistically hoped for similar progress in Russian life.

NKhV's sister publication, the monthly *Voskhod*, published two critiques of *Auto-Emancipation!* that merit attention because their authors were two of the foremost theoreticians of Jewish national identity, one toward the end and the other at the beginning of his career. The poet and communal activist Judah Leib Gordon was the embodiment of the liberal solution of the Jewish Question in Russia through political emancipation and internal reform. Indeed, he appropriated the famous maskilic slogan that one should "be a man in the streets and a Jew at home" in his famous poem, "Awake, My People!" (1863).³²

While welcoming Pinsker's *cri de coeur*, Gordon disputed his claim that the national awareness of the Jews had been eroded and lost during the long road of exile. Rather, the change had taken place as the nationally minded Jews of the biblical era were transformed by the rabbis into a community governed by the precepts of the Talmud. The Jews ceased to be a nation and became a people "bearing a religious idea." This was a concept Gordon described poetically as "the flock of the Lord." A determination to fulfill the 613 *mizvot* (rules of faith) was the focus of the Jews' present existence. They would be satisfied with any ghetto or Pale that afforded them this freedom. To recreate the Jews' national self-awareness could not be accomplished artificially by settlement projects, but only through a process of reeducation that would take generations. Gordon consciously challenged Lilienblum's call in "Do not confuse the issues" to subordinate religious reform (and the inevitable disputes) to the task of returning to Erets Israel. Such a return would be impossible, argued Gordon, because the present religious sensibility of the Jews meant that they would only agree to be led "by a messiah seated on a donkey."³³ As Michael Stanislawski has summarized, Gordon envisioned national rebirth as possible only via "a thoroughgoing transvaluation of Judaism based on the philosophical tenets and cultural norms of modern Western civilization."³⁴

Simon Dubnow's article, "What Kind of Self-Emancipation Do the Jews Need?," appeared in *Voskhod* exactly a year later and is as much a

³² See Stanislawski, *For Whom*, 49–50.

³³ Mekkaver [J. L. Gordon], "Literaturnaia letopis'," *Voskhod*, 7–8 (1882), 91–5.

³⁴ Stanislawski, *For Whom*, 196. For a subtle interpretation of Gordon's two "pogrom" poems, "The Flock of the Lord" and "My Sister Ruhamah," see *ibid.*, 196–9.

critique of the Palestinophile movement as its prooftext, *Auto-Emancipation!*³⁵ Its arguments owe much to Gordon, and it would not be of much interest save for Dubnow's subsequent career as the ideologue of Jewish life in the East European diaspora. None of his later ideas – save possibly his love of history – is present in Dubnow's 1883 work, written when he was still under the spell of Positivist ideas. Indeed, the article serves to confirm the extent to which he viewed the events of 1881–2 as a temporary aberration in the march of human progress. He saw the Palestinophile movement as a response to the unique crisis of the pogroms; when they disappeared – as they surely would – the movement would collapse.

In seeking to escape the crisis, the partisans of Palestinophilism had misread the “spirit of the age.” They misinterpreted the emergence of national feeling among small nations such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia and misunderstood the appearance of chauvinism in international affairs. These were abnormal phenomena, generated by the “temporary anomaly” of Europe-wide militarism. They must not be taken as a guide to action. Nor were Jews equipped for the task of nation-building. Following Gordon, Dubnow attributed only a religious unity to the Jews, exemplified by their adherence to external rites and customs. “Religion, in the most depraved sense of the word, governs everything in the life of a Jew and directs his every step.”³⁶

The Palestinophiles substituted pathos for reality and dreamed of a spiritual-cultural renaissance once the Jews were returned to their native soil. Yet talmudic Judaism, predicted Dubnow, transplanted to the land of Israel, could no more engender a creative cultural ideal than contemporary Greeks, established in their ancient homeland, could recreate the glories of the Hellenic age. “‘The future in the past’, proclaim the Palestinophiles. No, not in the past, but in the future of all humanity... Let them reform themselves, eliminating from their midst anti-progressive elements and a religious-social rebirth will be prepared for a humanity-wide development.”³⁷ For Dubnow in 1883, the pogroms were an anomaly, and Jewish nationalism no more than an unattainable anachronism. There was no hint here of the roles he would assume as the foremost historian of Jewry of his age, the father of Jewish Autonomism,

³⁵ Dubnow's brother Zeev (Vol'f) emigrated to Palestine in 1882 with the Biluim; this article could be seen as a form of dialogue with his brother. See S. M. Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni* (Jerusalem and Moscow, 2004), 107 (where Zeev is described as an “extreme idealist and thinker”), and *ibid.*, 131, describing debates over cosmopolitanism and nationalism.

³⁶ S. Dubnov, “Kakaia samoemantsipatsiia nuzhna evreiam?,” *Voskhod*, 7–8 (1883), 27.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 30. Dubnow did not reject colonization, but rejected it as a general solution to the Jewish Question in Russia: *ibid.*, 29.

linked to a Yiddish-based secular culture. He was to suffer much disappointment in the "march of progress" before he was ready to assume these roles.

Rassvet, the journalistic antithesis of Landau's publications, reprinted Pinsker's entire brochure translated into Russian, and provided a detailed commentary. The paper applauded the author's call for national regeneration on the basis of national independence since it offered, in concentrated form, "all that had appeared in our paper in recent months" (47:21/XI/1882). Likewise, it concurred with his assumption that it was necessary to build a coherent plan on practical commercial foundations. It was Pinsker's plan that the paper found wanting. It lacked two essential items, which alone could guarantee its success: a focus on Palestine and a democratic element.

By neglecting Palestine, the paper complained, Pinsker was ignoring an essential aspect of Jewish national consciousness and a key ingredient of its *Heimweh* (homesickness). Those Jews, for whom a desire for assimilation had not yet driven out true Judaism, were linked, not by some unconscious, sentimental feeling, "but by that psychologically real attraction which arises from the spiritual ties of a people to a territory." America for Jews was something in the nature of an El Dorado, attracting Jews by "need or greed." But it was not "theirs." Pinsker's evaluation of the situation derived from a dry formula, a path drawn with mathematical logic. "But it is not logical or mathematical precision alone which determines the way of resurrecting a nation [*natsiia*]; closely tied to it are moral considerations and stimulants which are preserved in the people themselves and which must be used."

For a paper that was in the forefront of attacking establishment politics, the undemocratic nature of Pinsker's proposal was anathema. He assigned the leading role to the same narrow, elite group, the Central Committee of the Alliance, which had so signally failed to deal with the crisis. "The people – please note, we said 'the people' [*narod*] and not 'the masses' [*massa*] – should comprise the majority of activists, and not just the *soi-disant* notables . . . The author relies on commercial considerations because he completely ignores the aspirations and sympathies stirring up the people, expecting them to leave everything to the 'elders' who may freely operate on this inert mass, and sees 'elders' only in the guise of practical men, who will view it only as some sort of enterprise." There were many other shortcomings, the paper observed, but they were worth considering only if *Auto-Emancipation!* elicited a broader response. Ironically, *Rassvet* had disappeared from the scene at the same time as Pinsker was being won over to its Palestinophile vision, if not its more democratic brand of politics.

This review of the role of the Jewish journalism in 1881–2 serves to confirm the proud boast made by the editor of *Russkii evrei* that the Jewish press, whose mission heretofore had been confined to the defense of Jewish interests before the court of public opinion, had taken up the new role of exploring all the questions of Jewish internal and national life (35:31/VIII/1882). More than this, many of these questions of national life had actually been created by the Jewish press.

10 Politics without prophecy

The voice of the congregation of Israel . . . came to our ears: "Save us! Help us!" And there was no savior and there was nobody to help.

Letter to Baron Goratsii Gintsburg, 10 April 1882¹

The historiography of the New Politics is unanimous that it grew out of the perceived failures of the old. As Jonathan Frankel summarizes the situation, "the crisis of 1881–2 necessarily undermined the authority of the groups most clearly identified with Jewish adaptation to Russian life."² The "literary intelligentsia," the student youth, and the religious reformers all justified their right to "speak for Israel" by emphasizing the deficiencies of the elite secular Jewish leadership, especially in St. Petersburg. As articulated by a student in the provinces: "The people should know that our false prophets, who assure them 'Peace! Peace!' are deceiving them; they should know that our wealthy, living in the capital, are more concerned about their wealth and their apparent honor than about the people."³ Those who have chronicled the deeds of the young activists have frequently taken these complaints at face value.⁴ The resulting picture is often a caricature of the actual situation. Yet history has been kind to the critics: There are Jerusalem streets named after Moshe Leib Lilienblum and Lev Pinsker, but neither a Gintsburg Boulevard nor a Poliakov Avenue.

An argument can be made that the New Politics actually threatened the best interests of Russian Jews. The activities of the new generation of would-be leaders unintentionally played into Ignatiev's hands, enabling him to claim that his various muddled resettlement schemes represented the Jews' own wishes. Naive and utopian emigration projects, devised

¹ Cited in A. A. Droujanoff [Druianov/Druyanov], *Ktavim le-toldot hibat-tsiyon ve-yishuev erets yisrael*, I (Odessa, 1919), 13–14.

² Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge, 1981), 97.

³ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7 (1882), ll. 10–10ob.

⁴ For a restatement, see Lloyd P. Gartner, "The Great Jewish Migration: Its East European Background," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 27 (1998), 115: "No country-wide Russian Jewish leadership existed after the failure of the St. Petersburg notables."

without consideration of resources or the political situation at the time, put the Jews at risk economically. They contributed to a refugee crisis that uprooted thousands of indigent Jews and dumped them on the shores of the United States or in non-viable agricultural colonies in Palestine. Many emigrants ended up repatriated to Russia. At the same time, these schemes threatened to undermine the political course that was being pursued by the elite secular leadership. With good reason did one contemporary brand the New Politics as "a snare and a delusion."⁵

The Jewish "establishment" in 1881

Who specifically were the partisans of this discredited, elite politics, against whom the young activists raged? The group I have characterized as "the Gintzburg Circle" in St. Petersburg can be considered "the establishment" or, better, the elite secular leadership of Russian Jewry. In 1881 the Circle comprised the partners, allies, and employees, direct or indirect, of Baron Goratsii Gintzburg in St. Petersburg, as well as business associates and collaborators in the provinces. The influence of the Circle derived from its members' privileged social status achieved through their economic services to the Russian state. Given their proximity to the seats of power, they were a logical source of information and expertise for the government on any issue touching on the Jews. Circle members were proactive as well: From the 1850s on, they repeatedly lobbied for the relaxation of restrictive legislation on the Jews.⁶ The secular status of the Circle's members differentiated them from the religious authorities – such as prominent rabbis or hasidic leaders – whose leadership, often only symbolic, was of local or regional scope. As regards communal leadership, Russian Jews – like their non-Jewish counterparts of every class and station in the empire – lacked central institutions or authorized representatives. Noting the informal nature of their activities, scholars have often described the activities of the Circle as *shtadlanut*, a term traditionally applied to intervention with the gentile authorities by Jewish intermediaries. By its very nature, the politics of intercession was secret and undemocratic, conducted out of the glare of publicity, and heavily reliant upon the good will of the ruler.⁷

⁵ [The source for this quotation could not be verified – the editors.]

⁶ The most recent examination of these activities is found in Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002), 45–79.

⁷ See Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (New York and Oxford, 1989), 19–21. This variety of *shtadlanut* was associated with the so-called Court Jews of Central Europe in the early modern period. Polish-Jewish *shtadlanim*, in contrast, were formally

While this concept of shtadlanut provides a colorful shorthand for scholars, it does not constitute a satisfactory description of the actual state of affairs in 1881–2.⁸ The political skills of Russian Jewry – the legacy of centuries of political life in the old Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth – were more sophisticated than is generally appreciated. While they willingly deployed informal shtadlanut when the chance presented itself, Jewish communities were assiduous in using any political opportunity that arose to institutionalize their relationship with the Russian government.⁹ It is convenient to view the activities of the Gintsburg dynasty – a family concern which originated in tax-farming the state liquor monopoly and evolved into an international banking house with close links to the imperial court and the state – as stereotypical shtadlanut. Russian Jewry certainly regarded them in this way. The three Barons Gintsburg were recipients of an unending flood of petitions and supplications from Jews throughout the Pale.¹⁰ But over the course of the nineteenth century, the Gintsburgs and their associates developed a role which went beyond the shtadlanut of legend.

If theoretically Russia was an autocracy, in reality it was a bureaucracy. Fully as important as access to the sovereign's ear was the ability to navigate the world of ministerial cabinets and state committees. This was a skill the Gintsburgs and their associates mastered. They helped Jews win a successful outcome to the deliberations of the Vilna

commissioned by their communities to represent them in dealing with the national government, resided at the royal court, and represented Jews before Polish courts. See Jacob Goldberg, "The Jewish Sejm: Its Origins and Functions," in Antony Polonsky, *et al.*, eds., *The Jews in Old Poland, 1000–1795* (London and New York, 1993), 147–65; Gershon Hundert, *Jews in Poland–Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004). While conceding that the Jews were adept at lobbying centers of power in Poland, Hundert argues that "such endeavors . . . were reactive and defensive": *ibid.*, 11. Norman Davies, in *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. I (Oxford, 1981), 338, notes the resemblance of Polish-Jewish shtadlanut activity to that of the incorporated Polish cities. For a popular treatment of the phenomenon in the Russian Empire, see S. L. Zitron, *Shtadlonim* (Warsaw, 1926).

⁸ What follows is a reconsideration of earlier work in which I viewed the activities of the Gintsburg Circle in terms of stereotypical shtadlanut. See my article "Krug Gintsburgov i politika shtadlanuta v imperatorskii Rossii," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 3, 10 (1995), 38–55.

⁹ Only with the opening of the archives have scholars become wholly aware of the extent of Jewish communal political activism under tsarist rule. See the revised version of my first book, published as *Rossia sobiraet svoikh evreev* (Moscow and Jerusalem, 2000), and E. K. Anishchenko, *Cherta osedlosti. Belorusskaia sinagoga v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II* (Minsk, 1998).

¹⁰ See the David Gintsburg archive in the Otdel Rukopisei, fond 183, in the Russian National Library (RNB) in St. Petersburg. See telegrams to Baron Gintsburg reporting the pogrom in Pereiaslav, GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (1881), l. 130, and a telegram from David Gintsburg to Count Tolstoi reporting to him on the Okny pogrom, *ibid.*, op. 39 (1882), d. 280, ch. 3 (15/VI/1882), l. 37.

Commission of 1869.¹¹ They were always willing candidates to sit on institutions such as the Rabbinic Commissions of 1861 and 1879 and served as consultants for the committee which drafted the military reform law of 1874.¹² *De facto*, the status of the Gintsburgs as representatives of Russian Jewry became institutionalized. Their growing official duties ensured that the family could not operate alone. In the capital itself the Circle recruited and employed a variety of talented young men, who were needed to join intellectual muscle to the economic power of the businessmen and bankers who comprised its inner core. But the elite in the capital had, of necessity, to rely upon the cooperation of like-minded allies in the provinces. This situation ensured that the perspective of the Circle reflected that of Jews in the empire as a whole, not just in the capital. While the Gintsburg Circle usually operated through consensus, divergent voices also made themselves heard. The partisans of the New Politics emphasized the importance of their democratic and Populist nature. The decisive criterion for the activities of the Gintsburg Circle, on the other hand, was not how "democratic" they were, but how effective.

The history of the period 1881–2 can best be understood as a duel between the Gintsburg Circle and N. P. Ignatiev and his minions at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Whatever motives drove Ignatiev – conviction, opportunism, venality – he represented a sharp break with the past. He rejected the century-old consensus within Russian officialdom that the Jews were not only in need of reform but also capable of it. Ignatiev questioned the effectiveness of the established desiderata of merger/rapprochement (*sliianie/sblizhenie*) as the solution to the Jewish Question.¹³ He sought to isolate the Jews and exclude them from the empire's economic life. Even his apparent conversion to the principle of emigration in 1882 was merely another expression of this objective. A fully balanced and informed account of the struggle of 1881–2 reveals that the Gintsburg Circle and its provincial allies fought a vigorous campaign against this new trend of official Judeophobia. Even allowing for apparent failures, such as the inability of the Circle to block the May Laws, it is apparent that the elite secular leadership conducted a sophisticated campaign.

¹¹ See John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, 1996), 173–81 (hereafter *IRJQ*); Lederhendler, *Road*, 142–4; Nathans, *Beyond*, 174–80.

¹² The Rabbinical Commissions were official bodies convened by the Russian government in 1852, 1857, 1861, 1879, 1893–4, and 1910 to discuss issues of Jewish religious life. Gintsburgs served on the third and fourth, *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, XIII, 233–8; see also ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover and London, 2002); for Baron G. O. Gintsburg's service on the commission that drafted the military recruitment law of 1874, see Klier, *IRJQ*, 335, and Iokhanan Petrovskii-Shtern, *Evrei v russkoi armii, 1827–1914* (Moscow, 2003), 176–85.

¹³ For the complex history of these terms, see Klier, *IRJQ*, 66–122.

They secured sources of information from within the government, and identified and communicated with sympathetic officials. They collected information and statistics – so beloved of the Russian bureaucracy – in order to provide a plausible foundation for their arguments. They employed a wide range of strategies to influence the government, not the least of which was the use of the press to sway public opinion. Even their eventual failure to prevent the enactment of the May Laws was not a foregone conclusion, nor was it a total defeat. They were able to ensure that the original proposals were significantly watered down. Once the May Laws were in force, they initiated a campaign to ensure their mildest legal interpretation in the Senate. At every stage in the struggle, the Gintzburg Circle revealed a sophisticated appreciation of the shifts and changes in official thinking and modified their own approach in turn.

To complicate matters, they simultaneously had to deal with new claimants to leadership, the partisans of the New Politics. This group justified their own claims to lead by denouncing the actions of the established leadership. Through the vehicle of the Jewish press, the New Politics produced its own leading personalities and advanced a rival program, most dramatically in their vigorous support of emigration. The new leaders were relentless in their demands for immediate action, at times simply for its own sake, to show that something was being done. Their recurrent criticism of the old elite leadership focused on its apparent apathy and inactivity (apparent because most of its work took place behind the scenes.) Whatever the traditional leaders did publicly was invariably condemned as misconceived and self-serving.

The historiography of the New Politics has sought to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the elite secular leadership by emphasizing its internal disagreements (chiefly over emigration) and positing a sharp division between the center (the Gintzburg Circle) and the provinces, such as the Kiev Relief Committee under Dr. Maks Mandelshtam. This was despite the fact that this same historiography provides copious examples of a close working relationship between center and periphery. Such cooperation was only to be expected, for the elite leadership comprised like-minded individuals, who were linked by commercial ties and a commitment to the agenda of Jewish acculturation and integration. They cooperated to raise and distribute aid to pogrom victims. They organized an informational campaign that generated Judeophile submissions to Count P. I. Kutaisov. They coordinated the activities of the Jewish members of the Ignatiev committees. They arranged the collection and dispatch of information abroad. They conducted an energetic campaign against the May Laws. They sought to build consensus within the communities of the Jewish Pale by convoking meetings of communal representatives. In the chronicles of

these diverse activities, the same individuals – linked in some way or another to the Gintzburg Circle – appear time and again.

Convinced that the government was the active foe of the Jews, the so-called literary intelligentsia saw no reason to maintain any connection with Russian officialdom. Indeed, one of the most distinctive features of the New Politics was its autonomous, decentralized nature, resembling the traditional student circle. Were it not for the role of the Jewish press, the New Politics could scarcely have existed at all. Their scorn for the government meant that the practitioners of the New Politics were oblivious to the specific danger posed by Ignatiev and his policies. They were skeptical and dismissive of the campaign in defense of Jewish rights conducted by the elite leadership, characterizing it as the selfish policy of the Jewish oligarchy to defend or extend their own rights – as if Baron Gintzburg required higher status or greater privileges. Obsessed with emigration issues, the leaders of the New Politics ignored the tactical danger their own espousal of emigration posed for the Jews. Not even considering the fact that their activities were technically illegal, they ignored the risk that their demands would be used to justify expulsions or resettlement of Jews to the fringes of the empire.

Due to the pressures imposed by the New Politics, members of the Gintzburg Circle found it impossible to conduct their preferred brand of private politics in the corridors of power, where they could claim to speak for all Russian Jewry. Instead, they found themselves forced to appease a Jewish public opinion which had been created by a small group of newspaper correspondents. It was no accident, for example, that representatives of all the leading Jewish newspapers – except for the hypercritical *Rassvet* – were invited to the second meeting of communal representatives in 1882.¹⁴

The elite secular leadership would probably have been forced to use journalism in their struggle with Ignatiev, even in the absence of the New Politics. As part of his own "popular politics," Ignatiev made frequent forays into the periodical press. He even took the trouble to recruit a Jewish newspaper to his use when Ignatiev's ministry gave Aleksandr Tsederbaum's *Dos Yudishes Folksblat* approval to publish.¹⁵ If somewhat reluctantly forced into the journalistic arena, the Gintzburg Circle proved adept at mastering the rules of the game, including leaks, suborning the press, and the strategic placement of rumors. Their campaign in support of expanded Jewish rights repeatedly forced the issue into the columns of the non-Jewish press.

¹⁴ *Rassvet*, 16:18/IV/1882.

¹⁵ D. A. Eliashevich, *Pravitel'stvennaia politika i evreiskaia pechat' v Rossii, 1797–1917. Ocherki istorii tsenzury* (SPb and Jerusalem, 1999), 446–8.

In the wake of the Elisavetgrad pogrom, the rupture between old and new, like the debate over emigration, lay in the future. The first task of the Jewish leadership in the capital was to provide assistance to the victims. The second was to quell the panic that arose in the wake of the first pogroms, especially as they became epidemic. Contrary to the claims of the partisans of the New Politics, the traditional leadership carried out the task of relief with skill and success, due to the coordinated activities of the Gintsburg Circle in St. Petersburg and its provincial allies, particularly in Kiev.¹⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the Elisavetgrad pogrom, Baron Gintsburg sought the permission of Governor-General A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov to send R5,000 to the victims through the local administration.¹⁷ In response to the Kiev pogrom, on 29 May a number of local leaders secured the permission of Governor-General A. R. Drenteln to create a Kiev Jewish Committee for Assistance to the Victims of the Disorders of 26 and 27 April. It provided food and shelter for thousands of refugees. By 1 October 1881, the committee had raised R218,482. Of this, R72,965 was received from abroad, including 40,000 French francs from the Alliance. The capital financiers were not as stingy as has been claimed: By March 1882, Baron Gintsburg alone had contributed R82,000.¹⁸

The accomplishments of the so-called Kiev Committee are even more impressive because it never received official permission to engage in activities beyond the provision of aid to local pogrom victims. Its chairman, the Kiev oculist Dr. Maks Mandelshtam, explained to his contacts in the Alliance Israélite Universelle that the committee could not risk attracting the attention of the government because of its "quasi-legal status."¹⁹

¹⁶ For contemporary criticisms of the ineffectiveness of the "big shots" (*gvirim*) in the center, see the account of Mordehay Ben Hillel Ha-Cohen who claimed that because the Kiev Committee was made up of "maskilim" like Mandelshtam, rather than *gvirim* like Brodskii, it was easy to work with and acted honestly and fairly. He also reported that, while the Kiev municipal дума voted relief funds, it was the niggardly amount of R3,000: *Ha-Melits*, 56:26/VII/1885. I thank Natan Meir for this reference.

¹⁷ Dondukov-Korsakov advised Gintsburg to send the funds to the municipal council or directly to the leadership of the Jewish community: *K-A*, 26.

¹⁸ *Rassvet*, 11:12/III/1882. For a dissenting view of these activities, by Yehalel, who claimed to speak for Mandelshtam in asking aid to be directed to the Palestinophile movement, see Israel Oppenheim, "The Kovno Circle of Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor: Organizing Western Public Opinion over Pogroms in the 1880s," in S. I. Troen and B. Pinkus, eds., *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period* (London, 1992), 113-14. The formation of the committee is described by Mandel'shtam in a letter to the Alliance dated 3/15 June 1881: AIU, URSS, IC 1-2, "Kiev. D. Mandelstamm." For a typical rhetorical complaint about the "unfeeling heart of our financial aces," see the article by the Palestinophile V. Ia. Aizman, "Palestinskoe dvizhenie," *Rassvet*, 21:23/VI/1882.

¹⁹ AIU, URSS, IC 1-2, "Kiev. D. Mandelstamm," 30 July 1881.

Despite its tenuous position, the committee succeeded in providing assistance for communities outside the immediate geographical area and to victims of arson attacks as well as pogroms. Its ability to launder foreign funds was a special achievement.²⁰

All shades of Jewish opinion initially saw symbolic gestures as necessary in order to reassure the panicked Jewish population threatened with continued violence. This task was accomplished by well-publicized meetings with figures close to the court, such as the tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich (4 May), and with the emperor himself (11 May).²¹ These meetings were presented in the Jewish press as a visible demonstration of official concern and solicitude at the plight of the Jews. They also marked the beginning of systematic lobbying by the leadership to establish an interpretation of the pogroms that would be favorable to the Jews.

Partisans of the New Politics later claimed that the first meeting with Emperor Alexander arose from pressure from the young journalists around *Rassvet*. They allegedly forced the convocation of a meeting of communal notables at the house of Baron Gintzburg by sending out invitations in the name of a fictitious "society." The resultant meeting reportedly accepted the agenda which had been produced by the "society": to take up a substantial collection for pogrom victims; to send a delegation to the tsar with a demand for protection of the Jews and the abrogation of discriminatory legislation; and for the convocation of a meeting of communal representatives from the Pale in order to discuss

²⁰ The very existence of the Kiev Committee was a victory, because the Russian government was notoriously loath to permit any sort of uncontrolled or unofficial philanthropic activity. This was even more the case with Jewish communities in the Pale of Settlement, who had more than once been the targets of official investigations following accusations of illegal collections. When such collections were discovered, they were invariably confiscated by the authorities, as was the case in some areas in 1881–2. For the investigation of illegal collections in Grodno province, see LCVA, f. 378, op. 173, d. 53 (1882), l. 1; see also the extensive investigation in Kiev province of alleged secret Jewish fundraising in 1883, in TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 833, d. 6 (1883), ll. 1–6. In 1883, the Department of Police specifically forbade the Jewish victims of a pogrom in Ekaterinoslav province from seeking assistance from other Jewish communities: GARF, f. 102, op. 1883, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 68–70. See the complaint of the Alliance on the difficulty of sending funds to Russia in *Bulletin Mensuel*, 9, 6 (VI/1881), 102–3. On the other hand, there is a note in the archives from ORT officials, dated "May 1881," which thanks Ignat'ev for permitting a committee of ORT to collect funds for pogrom relief: RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 131 (1881), l. 7ob.

²¹ The Austrian consul, Kalnoky, identified the delegation as Baron Goratsii Gintzburg, the director of the Escmptbank, A. I. Zak, the attorneys A. Ia. Passover and E. B. Bank, and M. I. Berlin. See N. M. Gelber, "Di rusishe pogromen onheyb di 80-er yorn in shayn fun estraykhishe diplomatisher korespondents," *Historishe shriftn*, II (Vilna, 1937), 469. The *Jewish Chronicle* (635:27/N/1881) reported that it was through the meeting with Grand Duke Vladimir that an audience was arranged with the emperor.

the plight of the Jews in Russia and ways of assisting them. It is ironic that this same meeting with the emperor, which the young activists claimed to have inspired, was later ridiculed by them as ineffective shtadlanut activity.²²

The Jewish press at the time widely praised Alexander's declaration that he held all his subjects in equal regard, irrespective of origin or religious confession. They applauded the imperial verdict that the disorders were the work of the "seditionists." There was no suggestion here that the Jews were to blame, and it seemed as though the restoration of peace and order for the Jewish population would become an integral part of the ongoing struggle against the revolutionary movement.²³

The negative side of the meeting was the emperor's observation that "there were economic causes, to which the Jews themselves contributed through the exploitation of the peasant by the Jew." But far from supinely accepting this accusation, the banker A. I. Zak vigorously defended the Jews. "The Jews are industrious, but not finding opportunities for work as artisans due to the poverty of the peasants, they are forced to take up tavern-keeping as a means of survival." "This is true," the emperor conceded, before raising another Judeophobe canard that "they evade military service, and this makes them hated in the eyes of the peasantry." Zak continued the debate, accepting that there was some truth to the emperor's complaint, but that the Jews' reluctance to serve was shared by other groups, such as the Russian merchantry, and that the Jews' anti-military prejudice was slowly being worn down. The delegation departed after the emperor invited them to submit a memorandum on the subject to the minister of internal affairs.²⁴

The invitation – a not insignificant boon – was duly carried out by M. G. Morgulis.²⁵ Within ten weeks a 44-page report, privately printed, was submitted to Ignatiev (who ignored his promise to forward it to the tsar). Replete with statistics, drawn largely from official sources, the report

²² While this meeting at Gintzburg's undoubtedly took place, its role in forcing the notables to meet with the tsar probably belongs in the category of retrospective myth. The notables had already begun a campaign of meeting with high officials with their reception by Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich through whom they arranged the meeting with the emperor. See Mordehay Ben-Hillel Ha-Cohen, *Olami*, I (Jerusalem, 1927), 164–5. For Dubnow's description of the meeting, see S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1918), 261. For a similar attempt to convoke a meeting to discuss emigration at the home of an Odessa notable in the name of a fictitious "league," see *NKhV*, 19:8/V/1882.

²³ Gelber, "Di rusishe pogromen," 469.

²⁴ For a rather different description of this meeting, see David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789–1939* (Oxford, 1999), 293.

²⁵ *JC*, 645:5/VIII/1881.

argued that the wretched state of the Jewish population – resulting in the invidious impact of the Jews' economic activities upon the non-Jewish population – grew directly out of legal restrictions, exemplified by the Pale of Settlement. The obvious solution was the abolition of the Pale. This would have dual consequences, equally useful. Russia as a whole would benefit from the freeing up of a Jewish population that was energetic, entrepreneurial, competitive, and able to offer credit. The movement of Jews into the Russian heartland would expedite their assimilation with the dominant Great Russian population. This was the first salvo in what quickly became a concerted campaign by the Jewish leadership to transform the crisis provoked by the pogroms into a crusade for civil rights.²⁶ In parallel with this effort to win over the tsar, the Gintsburg Circle also prepared a short memorandum that was designed for circulation to high state officials.²⁷

The Kutaisov investigation

Shortly after the Jewish delegation's meeting with the tsar, perhaps as a counterstroke to its projected memorandum, Ignatiev proposed the appointment of Count Kutaisov, an experienced senior official, to investigate the pogroms on the ground. Upon his appointment, Kutaisov was ordered to visit areas which had suffered pogroms in order to prepare a report which would serve as "a detailed sketch of all the events which had the character of an anti-Jewish movement." Kutaisov was ordered to prepare "an explanation of both the general social causes which serve to create hostility between Christians and Jews in southern Russia, but also the conditions which were the immediate pretext for the disorders, which gave rise to the suspicion that they were carried out under the direct influence of elements hostile to the government, perhaps wishing to test in the present circumstances the inclination of the population for unrest, as well as the ability of the authorities to suppress them."²⁸ With this command, the initiative for efforts to influence the development of official policy shifted from the capital to the provinces. Kutaisov traveled widely

²⁶ *Zapiska po evreiskomu voprosu podannaia Ministru vnutrennikh del vo ispolnenie vysochaishei voli Gosudaria imperatora, vyrazhennoi pri prieme deputatsii ot evreev 11-go maia 1881 goda* (SPb, 1881).

²⁷ The author of this document, according to S. M. Dubnow, was E. B. Levin, Gintsburg's secretary. See "Zapiska ob antievreiskikh pogromakh 1881 goda," *Golos minuvshogo*, 4, 3 (March 1916), 243–53. Aronson (*Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* [Pittsburgh, 1990], 240), assumed that this was an early version of Levin's longer memorandum, discussed below.

²⁸ *K-A*, 47–8; *GARF*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2 (1881), ll. 46–8.

and met with Jewish delegations at almost every stop, receiving a host of detailed memoranda. These were, without exception, provided by the Russian-speaking communal Jewish leadership, including state rabbis, professional men, and well-to-do merchants.²⁹ They were in close contact with the Gintsburg Circle in the capital, and a number of them participated in the two meetings of communal representatives in St. Petersburg in September 1881 and April 1882. Men such as Morgulis in Odessa and Mandelshtam in Kiev played very active roles in defending the Jews in the debates of the Ignatiev committees. Some of their reports were excerpted in the press or appeared as separate publications.³⁰

The reports submitted to Kutaisov bespoke a coordinated campaign. All without exception met the charge of Jewish exploitation head on. Odessa Jews noted that exploitation was hardly restricted to the Southwest, while most of the *pogromshchiki* were vagrants who could hardly be described as victims of Jewish exploitation (233). Elisavetgrad Jews examined the role of Jews in the local economy to demonstrate the absence of exploitation. If unproductive, exploiting Jews were the target, asked the state rabbi (228, 302), why had the Jewish agricultural colonies also been raided? Kiev Jews noted that *all* Jews, rich and poor without exception, had been attacked by the *pogromshchiki* (425). The Elisavetgrad rabbi further noted that, within days of the local pogrom, the peasants were begging Jewish traders to return to the grain market, because prices had fallen so much in their absence, and Christian traders were using the opportunity to profiteer (301). Odessa rabbi S. L. Shvabakher attributed the disorders to poverty, hunger, and – with looted taverns in mind – “thirst” (305).

The root cause of the disorders, all agreed, was the rightless position of the Jews. Elisavetgrad Jews recalled how the early Reform Era had brought greater toleration from Christians and a corresponding desire for rapprochement from Jews, a process which had been completely reversed by the introduction of new restrictions (229). The law kept Jews separate and apart, complained Odessa Jews, and placed them in a lower social and legal position (233–4). How could Christians respect Jews, argued Kiev Jews, when the law classed Judaism as a “false religion” and illegal prayer

²⁹ The one exception was the state rabbi of Odessa, S. L. Shvabakher, a German Jew who never mastered Russian.

³⁰ The following analysis is based upon the memoranda of the Elisavetgrad (*K-A*, 226–32), Odessa (*K-A*, 232–41), Kiev (*K-A*, 425–9) and Khar'kov Jewish communities (*K-A*, 312–21), and reports submitted by the state rabbis of Elisavetgrad (*K-A*, 298–304), Odessa (*K-A*, 304–12), and Kherson (*Rassvet*, 27:3/VII/1881). A number of individuals also submitted reports; see RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 126 (1881), ll. 1–43. Shvabakher's report, in considerably expanded form, was published as *Zapiska prichinakh bezporiadkov na iuge Rossii, predstavleniia Ego Siatel'stvu grafu Kutaisovu* (Odessa, 1881). Citations within the text are quoted from *K-A*.

houses were treated in the same way as illegal taverns? Nor should Jews be classified as "aliens" (*inorodtsy*) as if they were pagan herdsmen in Siberia (426).³¹ Kharkov Jews objected to being called "unclean, unbelievers" (*poganye, nevernyye*) and treated as transients who could be grudgingly tolerated but never indulged (312). In a word, said the Jews of Kiev, Judaism was treated as a disease for which conversion was the only cure (428).

Small wonder, these reports concluded, that the benighted masses saw Jews as a harmful people, outside the law. An intelligent person, knowing the Jews only on the basis of the laws that were designed to control them, would have to assume that, as a group, they were morally depraved. It was understandable that the masses believed the worst about them and were firmly convinced that Jews could be beaten and despoiled with impunity, complained the Kharkov report (303).

The authorities offered confirmation of such views, through the lackadaisical manner in which they responded to the pogroms. The lesson of the Odessa pogrom of 1871, complained that city's Jews, was that violence would go unpunished. This assumption was confirmed by the apathy and inactivity of the armed forces in the most recent disturbances (235-6). For Elisavetgrad Jews, prejudice explained the "inactivity, cowardice, and indecision" of the local authorities when they confronted a pogrom. It was revealing that, after suffering the horrors of a pogrom, they had had to endure an hour-long harangue by the governor of Kherson province, who sought to blame them for provoking hatred and violence (302).

The reports further complained that the authorities had taken no action against a major source of pogrom agitation, the provincial press, and reserved special opprobrium for *Kievlianin* and *Novorossiiskii telegraf*. The press, after a year of relentless agitation against the Jews, might now hypocritically seek to escape responsibility, but the damage had been done. Condemning *Novorossiiskii telegraf*, Elisavetgrad Jews claimed that it "systematically and persistently pursued only one goal: to inflame, as much as possible, the passions and hatred of Christians against the Jews, refraining neither from distortion of the truth nor from slander" (230). The Kharkov report directly linked the attack upon the Jews of Nezhin to an article, "Khokhladskie zhidy" (roughly, "Jews playing the big shots"), which appeared in the Jew-baiting *Novoe vremia* in St. Petersburg (320). Since the censorship passed such articles, complained Odessa Jews, they carried the aura of authority, the more so when the same censor hindered the Jews from effectively defending themselves in the press (235).

³¹ For this legal motif, see John D. Klier, "The Concept of 'Jewish Emancipation' in a Russian Context," in Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson, eds., *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), 132-3.

This was a dangerous game, all the reports warned. When the *pogromshchiki* shouted "these are the people's goods, they belong to us," as they looted Jewish property, they were merely mouthing socialist slogans (231). The forces of disorder, whatever their role in the pogroms might have been, could see how easy it was to spread riot and lawlessness by directing the masses against the rightless Jews. While the lesson inculcated was that the Jews might be attacked with impunity, who could ensure that the movement would stop with them? In any case, the continued denial of basic rights to the Jews was guaranteed to perpetuate hatred, discord, and civil disorder.

The remedy was correspondingly simple: Grant to the Jews complete civic emancipation. If such an action was impossible at this precise moment, then at least the Pale of Settlement should be abolished. This was the logical conclusion derived from the words of the emperor, who professed to hold all his subjects in equal regard (429). Jews would immediately be viewed by the rest of the population as equal citizens under the full protection of the law. Jews would become steadfastly loyal to the regime (309). The economic anomalies created by isolation and overcrowding would disappear. The process of rapprochement and assimilation would proceed apace.

The efforts of Jewish spokesmen to influence Kutaisov's conclusions enjoyed some initial success, especially when contrasted with his subsequent judgement that "there is no sphere that is not penetrated by this evil" and that the Jews themselves were the cause of the popular hostility against them.³² Under the initial impact of their submissions, his view was notably more balanced. He forwarded the reports to Ignatiev, professing himself unable to evaluate them, since they pertained more to the future organization of Jewish life (i.e., the call for full equal rights, which Kutaisov did not reject out of hand) than to the immediate causes of the pogroms. He did note that hostility toward the Jews, while universal, "had arisen under the influence of the most diverse economic and other causes." He recommended a comprehensive review of the Jewish Question, as one of the most pressing issues of contemporary domestic politics. "Thus the Jewish disorders bring into view the weak sides of various areas of the administration of the empire, the abnormal relations between the civil and military authorities, and the shortcomings of administration at the provincial and district levels, and have indicated the real need to review several legal measures which are either ineffective in practice or offer broad scope for circumvention of the law" (385-6).

³² See Chapter 3, p. 126.

Such a perspective did not rule out a relaxation of the legal strictures on the Jews.

The first meeting of communal representatives

By the late summer of 1881, the emigration issue was added to the list of community concerns. Rumors abounded about the intentions of the Alliance, while the refugees in Brody attracted worldwide attention. The Jewish press, most notably *Rassvet*, began to editorialize in support of organized emigration abroad.³³ It was especially a preoccupation of the provincial leadership, where emigration was a tangible reality. Concerns about emigration prompted a delegation to the capital, led by the sugar magnate Lazar Brodskii, the respected oculist and leader of the Kiev Committee, Dr. Maks Mandelshtam, L. A. Kupernik, a prominent local attorney and communal activist, and three others.

Contemporary accounts vary as to the objectives and the consequences of the Kiev delegation. The Judeophobe newspaper *Kievlianin* complained that the delegation intended to indict the local administration before the central government for its ineffectiveness in dealing with pogroms and its strict application of restrictive laws on the Jews. Presumably the group would also issue a formal complaint against the Jew-baiting editorials of *Kievlianin* (187:25/VIII/1881). Jewish sources were united in their belief that the ultimate objective of the delegation was to gain official approval for an organized program of Jewish emigration. The *Jewish Chronicle* announced, regarding emigration, that "this question will, under any circumstances, be examined in all its bearings" (651:16/IX/1881). According to the memoirs of Mordehay Ben Hillel Ha-Cohen, who was in the thick of the activity, the capital magnates deeply resented this initiative from the provinces. It finally forced them to do what the mysterious "society" had urged them to do: to call an assembly of communal representatives from all over the Pale. Even then, Ha-Cohen complained, the selection process was entirely undemocratic. Baron Gintsburg and S. S. Poliakov simply sent invitations to "people like themselves."³⁴ In any event, the assembly met from the end of August to 7 September 1881.

³³ *Rassvet*, 34:19/VIII/1881.

³⁴ Ha-Cohen, *Olami*, I, 167-8. There is a problem with the chronology of this account, and the extent to which it reveals that the men of Kiev were "bypassing the Jewish establishment in St. Petersburg," as Frankel (*Prophecy and Politics*, 62) puts it. The Kiev delegation left the city before 25 August, and the meeting of Jewish communal representatives opened on 30 August. Given the time required to organize the latter meeting, it could

At every stage the hopes of the emigration camp were dashed. When the Kiev delegation met with Ignatiev, according to a contemporary report, he "jumped up and swore that as long as he was minister of internal affairs, it [emigration] would never occur."³⁵ In the meetings of the notables, "by the advice of the president [Gintsburg], the emigration scheme was entirely ignored, in order not to excite the opposition of the government."³⁶ *Rassvet* published a parody of the deliberations and bitterly complained about the failure of the notables to address the emigration issue (38:18/IX/1881; 39:25/IX/1881). According to Frankel, "the delegates returned home in a mood of foreboding, aware that the conference had achieved nothing and that the government had given the St. Petersburg leadership a deliberate slap in the face."³⁷

Was the first meeting of communal representatives really a wasted effort, without practical consequences? Frankel describes the delegates as "thunderstruck" by the disastrous news of the convocation of the Ignatiev commissions that emerged while they were in session. In fact, the news of the new initiative emerged *before* the sessions commenced, and it was placed on the official agenda. The assembly itself consisted of sixty members, drawn from the two capitals, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and twenty-six cities within the Pale. Most cities, including Moscow, sent two delegates; Kiev had six and Petersburg had twelve, including Baron Gintsburg, who was elected president of the assembly. The delegates were a mix of wealthy merchants, state rabbis, and professional men who were active in communal affairs. The proceedings wandered far afield, but in the end nine committees were appointed to examine a number of questions. Some dealt with the pogroms, including the need to petition the government to protect the Jews from violence more effectively. The question of the press was raised, confirming *Kievlianin's* fear that it would be denounced to the authorities. The assembly sought to institutionalize its activities, petitioning the Ministry of Internal Affairs to include Jewish members on all governmental committees which dealt with Jewish affairs. In particular, instead of passively

not have been provoked by the arrival of the Kiev delegation. It is conceivable, but unlikely, that the preparations of the Kiev delegation prompted the calling of the meeting. It is also possible that the Kiev delegation went to the capital in the first instance to participate in the meeting of communal representatives, but its size and activities argue against this. A striking feature of the St. Petersburg meeting was the attendance of at least three newspaper editors, Ia. L. Rozenfel'd (*Rassvet*), O. K. Notovich (*Nedelia*), and A. Tsederbaum (*Ha-Melits* and *Dos Yudishes Folksblat*).

³⁵ Droujanoff, *Ktavim*, I, 2. ³⁶ *JC*, 652:23/IX/1881.

³⁷ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 65. Frankel maintains that this was a product of disappointed hopes, since the meeting had received "official sanction." Ignat'ev's comments during his meeting with the delegates suggest that there was not, in fact, any official approval.

accepting the “disastrous news” of the appointment of the new committees, the assembly sought to ensure that Jews would be included in their composition. Traces of the now despised “old politics” were manifested as well: The assembly recommended that the moral and religious condition of Jewish youth be improved, that means be found to reduce Jewish evasion of the military draft, and that measures be adopted to promote agriculture and crafts among the Jews. This, of course, was the tried and true agenda for advancing the Jewish claim to equal rights. There was no discussion of emigration.³⁸

At the conclusion of the discussion, a delegation of participants was received by Ignatiev. (The Kiev delegation was later presented to Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich.)³⁹ The press reports of the first meeting were on the whole positive. Ignatiev was quoted as saying that the Jews were regarded on equal terms with all other Russian subjects. He promised to assist in the project of agricultural colonization.⁴⁰ The reality of the reception, as presented in the archival record, was quite different and bears out Frankel’s contention that the delegates were “thunderstruck.” In his opening remarks, Ignatiev denied even the authority of the delegation to speak for Russian Jewry, rejecting any solidarity of interests of “Russian subjects of the Mosaic Law” who lived in different cities. He had received them as a delegation, he announced, only so that he would not have to repeat himself to each individual group.

Following the lead he had given to the newly announced committees, Ignatiev placed the blame for the pogroms squarely on the Jews themselves. The disorders did not spring from religious intolerance or desire for loot. “Surveying the causes of the disorders, studying them dispassionately, it is impossible not to recognize that in many cases they were stirred up by the Jews themselves; long coexistence with Jews has firmly rooted in the local population the conviction that there is no law that the Jews can’t evade.” The Jews must abandon their favored occupations of tavern-keeping and usury, which made them the target of popular hatred. In the midst of this indictment, Ignatiev dropped a completely unrelated remark. “The western border is now open to you; proposals are being worked out that will allow your removal from the region.” He then expressed his support for Jewish agricultural colonization and productivization, and it was this part of his speech which was printed in the press.⁴¹ “I will

³⁸ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1628, l. 3.

³⁹ *Rassvet*, 36:4/IX/1881. The grand duke was quoted as attributing the pogroms to the efforts of revolutionaries.

⁴⁰ *Russkii evrei*, 37:9/IX/1881.

⁴¹ *Rassvet*, 38:18/IX/1881; *Russkii evrei*’s coverage of the Kiev delegation and the meeting of communal representatives was brief and uninformative, 36 and 37:3/IX and 9/IX/1881; a

close as I began," announced Ignatiev. "While you preserve your kahal organization, your solidarity, and your determination to gather everything into your hands, violating the law of the land – it will be necessary to protect your safety, but you can certainly not count on any privileges, on the enlargement of rights or place of residence, which would only create new difficulties."⁴²

For the assembled delegation, this was a worst-case scenario. Ignatiev was openly accepting the extreme Judeophobe perception of Russian Jewry as an alienated minority, joined together in a secret, illegal government, intent on exploiting the non-Jewish population. His comments on the "western border" were completely out of context and echoed the controversial words of the Kiev military prosecutor, V. S. Strel'nikov, which had done so much to trigger the emigration crisis. Dropped into the middle of his remarks in this way, they gave no hint, pro or contra, of the government's position on the emigration movement or of the nature of the proposals that were being worked out. They directly contradicted his anti-emigration declaration to the Kiev delegation. To the disappointment of all sides, matters remained as before, confused and unclear, albeit now tinged with menace.

In the course of a fortnight, Ignatiev had openly proclaimed his Judeophobe position. Yet far from achieving nothing, as its critics claimed, the first meeting of representatives did secure one signal victory: They obtained Ignatiev's agreement that Jews would be invited to serve on the Ignatiev commissions. At least five of the delegates to the first meeting of communal representatives served in that capacity.⁴³ The battle with Ignatiev now shifted to the provinces, where local leaders conducted a concerted campaign to ensure that the Jewish voice was heard and that participants in the commissions were fully supported. Thus, even the critical Ha-Cohen admitted that the office of Baron Gintsburg was the central point from which boxes of material were sent to Jewish members of the committees.⁴⁴ As noted in Chapter 5, the Jewish representatives, often under great difficulties, were able to articulate a spirited defense of the Jews in the committee meetings and even to influence their final reports.

hint of the true nature of Ignat'ev's speech was carried by the *Jewish Chronicle* (653:30/IX/1881) whose reporting of the activities of the St. Petersburg leadership was generally accurate.

⁴² GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1627, ll. 1–4.

⁴³ These were Mandel'shtam (Kiev), A. Dynin (Kishinev), Ratner (Mogilev), Aizenshtein (Poltava), Rubenshtein (Khar'kov), and possibly A. Lur'e (Pinsk?). For the full list of participants in the first meeting of communal representatives, see GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1628, ll. 1–3ob.

⁴⁴ Ha-Cohen, *Olami*, I, 171.

The appeal to European opinion

The open hostility of Ignatiev's ministry, with its determination to blame the violence upon the Jews themselves, inspired another approach – the transmission of information abroad in order to create an international campaign in support of Russian Jewry. There is an ongoing debate in the historiography as to which groups should receive the paean for this undertaking.

One of the strongest claims is that of the circle surrounding the spiritual (i.e., not the official, state-confirmed) rabbi of Kovno, Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor. The moving force in this enterprise was the rabbi's assistant, Yaakov Halevi Lifshits, who published his memoirs in the 1920s, detailing the operations of the circle. His objective was to demonstrate that, contrary to the claims of the maskilim, the traditional religious leadership had played a decisive role in the defense of Russian Jewry in 1881–2, especially in contrast to the political and party struggles that characterized the New Politics.⁴⁵

The partisans of the New Politics, led by the poet Yehuda Leib Levin (Yehalel), also made an assertion of priority.⁴⁶ Their vehicle was the Kiev Committee, which collected information about the outrages visited upon the Jews. Frankel characterizes the Kiev endeavors as “more important” than those of Kovno and sees these activists as exemplars of the literary intelligentsia.⁴⁷ Both groups claimed the decisive role in recruiting the efforts of the rabbi of Memel, Dr. Yitzhak Rülff. Dr. Rülff served as an important intermediary for the transmission of atrocity reports abroad and for building a campaign of support in various European states.⁴⁸

Yet another claim was put forward in 1935 by the journalist Nahum Sokolow, who was a contributor to the Warsaw-based Hebrew periodical *Ha-Zefirah* in 1881. According to his account, a group of Warsaw lawyers and editors organized the dispatch of information, based largely on material that had appeared in *Ha-Zefirah*, to a member of staff at the London *Times*.⁴⁹ Sokolow advanced his claim in opposition to the

⁴⁵ Oppenheim, “Kovno Circle,” 117. Oppenheim argues that the circle's activities should be seen as combining old, shtadlanut-activity and a sophisticated modern use of mass communications.

⁴⁶ Yehudah Slutsky, *Zikhronot ve-hegyonot*, ed. Judah Leib Levin (Jerusalem, 1968).

⁴⁷ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 61.

⁴⁸ There is correspondence between Rülff and both Kiev and Kovno in his file in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. I appreciate the information on Dr. Rülff supplied by François Guesnet.

⁴⁹ Oppenheim, “Kovno Circle,” 115, citing *Haint*, 11:15/I/1935.

impression created by Lifshits' memoirs that the Kovno circle alone was responsible for the effective communication of information abroad.⁵⁰

There is no need to choose from among these rival versions of events. Only a view that sees Russian Jewry as politically inert, isolated, and naive could fail to accept that the idea of an appeal to foreign aid might appear simultaneously among different factions, especially given the well-remembered intervention in the past of foreign agents such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle or Sir Moses Montefiore. The sharp divisions which have been attributed to the various camps, and which did indeed emerge in 1882 out of disagreements over the emigration issue, are anachronisms if projected to 1881. From their own accounts it is obvious that the campaigners worked closely together and cooperated in the collection and dispatch of information. It simply will not hold to assume that groups subsequently characterized as "ultra-Orthodox," "radical maskilim," "literary intelligentsia," or "the St. Petersburg plutocrats," were working in opposition or at crosspurposes. No matter who might have made the first contact, Dr. Rülff worked with a number of different groups. The "radical maskil" Yehalel and the Kiev Committee collaborated closely with the Kovno circle. If Spektor and Lifshits failed to fully inform Baron Gintsburg in St. Petersburg when they launched their endeavor, it was not because of disillusionment with his leadership, but in order to give him plausible deniability should the authorities grow too inquisitive about the source of the information flowing abroad. It is also apparent, from contemporary documentation, that Gintsburg was ultimately given specific information about the Kovno initiative.⁵¹ Russian telegraph officials intercepted a number of attempts to inform members of the Petersburg leadership of the details of individual pogroms.⁵² Nor was the Kovno activity as conspiratorial and unknown as Lifshits was later to describe it. Well before the first compilation of information was dispatched, disguised as a rabbinic responsum, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that "the Committee has also been in communication with the Rabbi Spektor of Kowno who will send to them the details of the misery and suffering in his province about which he has written to many persons in England" (651:16/IX/1882).⁵³ In addition, the

⁵⁰ In his memoirs, the poet and communal activist Judah Leib Gordon claimed credit for convincing Baron Gintsburg to transmit news of the Ignat'ev-Orshanskii interview to *The Times'* Russian correspondent: Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *Kirvei Yehudah Leib Gordon: Prozah* (Tel Aviv, 1960), 313-15.

⁵¹ Oppenheim, "Kovno Circle," 126, n. 136.

⁵² For one example, see an intercepted telegram to Baron Gintsburg from Pereiaslav: GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3 (1881), l. 130.

⁵³ The committee referred to was the Central Committee headed by Baron Gintsburg in St. Petersburg which helped to dispense foreign relief funds to pogrom victims.

Gintsburg Circle itself was involved in the collection of material about the pogroms for its own internal use, such as the "Levin Memorandum," which will be discussed below. Thus, activism based on the sophisticated use of the European press cannot be credited to any one group. Moreover, a close examination of the famous articles in *The Times* of London in early 1882 that helped spark the protest movement in England, indicates that, while in the main they were based upon reports that appeared in the *Jewish World*, they drew from other reports as well. Finally, when the veracity of the *Times'* account was challenged by the Russian government, all groups assisted in the collection of evidence to support the claims of atrocities, as shown in the Epilogue.

The struggle with the Gotovtsev Committee

As the Ignatiev committees completed their work, the contest with Ignatiev shifted back to the capital. The creation of D. V. Gotovtsev's new Jewish Committee within the MVD, charged with using the committee reports to devise new legislation, was universally – and correctly – recognized as a threat to the existing status of the Jews. Confirmation came when the deliberations of the Gotovtsev Committee were widely leaked to the press. Inconveniently, at the very moment when all energies were required to combat the new regulations, the disagreements between the partisans of the New Politics and the elite secular leadership crystallized. The literary intelligentsia – with some support from the provincial leadership in Kiev – became convinced that emigration would provide a partial solution to the crisis. At the very least, some order and discipline had to be introduced into the panicked flight of refugees. The situation in Brody was a warning against a failure to act.

The Gintsburg leadership, on the other hand, gave full priority to the defense of Jewish rights, especially at a time when they were under such threat from Ignatiev's minions. They reasoned that any open support or assistance for emigration placed the Jewish population in danger. On the practical side, past experience had shown that any talk of emigration, no matter how reasonable or responsible, generated rumors and sparked a flood of badly planned flight. With thousands of refugees already marooned in Brody, it would be the height of irresponsibility to flirt with a policy that might add to their numbers.

Jewish demands for emigration threatened to undermine the campaign for civil rights by confirming their status as "aliens" or "transients." Worse, a campaign might be used by the unpredictable Ignatiev to justify expulsions from the countryside or even from the Pale itself, as a series of his public statements soon confirmed. Too vigorous a demand for emigration

might induce Ignatiev to legalize it, as a response to the Jews' own wishes. The archives reveal that he was thinking along these lines. As J. L. Gordon warned Baron Gintzburg, after the Ignatiev–Orshanskii interview discussed below, “it is clear that, if the minister is allowing these things to be published in his name, he could propose and get the tsar’s approval for an expulsion in our own days that would be twice as severe as that from Spain.”⁵⁴ Moreover, how could widespread emigration be carried out? Where were the necessary resources to be found? What country would provide refuge? At a time when existing Jewish rights were under attack, the elite leadership saw it as nearly criminal to collude in putting them further at risk.

Ignatiev did nothing to make matters clearer, as he indulged his penchant for grand gestures and public poses. He gave permission for a new meeting of Jewish communal representatives and then proceeded to obstruct it from behind the scenes. At the beginning of 1882, he gave a series of interviews which spread confusion far and wide. The most notorious of these was the conversation, on 16 January 1882, with Isaak Grigorevich Orshanskii, the communal activist from Ekaterinoslav and delegate to the first meeting of communal representatives. The interview is worth quoting at length:

Several months ago, when I received you along with other Jewish representatives, I told you that the western frontier was open for the Jews. Since then Jews have widely used this right and their resettlement has in no way been restricted, as long as whole families departed, and their numbers did not include many young people who had not completed military service. Only those were restricted who either left their older members to the responsibility of their communities or who had not satisfied their governmental obligations. As regards the resettlement of the Jews within the empire, the government, of course, will avoid anything that may complicate relations with the native population and therefore, preserving inviolate the existing Jewish Pale of Settlement, I have already suggested that the Jewish Committee point out areas which are lightly populated and in need of colonization in which we may permit the settlement of the Jewish element, subject to their desires and advantage, and without harm to the native population.

Orshanskii stressed that emigration was not a mark of the Jews' lack of patriotism, but a response to their “wretched situation,” and requested that Jews themselves be permitted to organize the emigration movement. Ignatiev replied that an emigration society must satisfy all the requirements of any newly founded group. He also noted that Jews who emigrated would be forbidden to return.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Gordon, *Kirvei*, 314.

⁵⁵ This interview was published as a special supplement to no. 3 of *Rassvet* and reprinted in *Rassvet*, 4:22/1/1882.

On 31 January, Ignatiev invited the state rabbi of St. Petersburg, Avraam Notovich Drabkin, for a conversation. Ignatiev's ostensible purpose was to ask Drabkin to help staunch rumors that were raging through Russian Jewry, but his words served only to fan the flames.⁵⁶ He declared that he himself did not want to encourage Jewish emigration, but if the Jews really did wish to emigrate, as he could conclude from recent discussions, this was possible, albeit under strict official control. On 6 February, Ignatiev met with Aleksandr Tsederbaum, the editor of *Ha-Melits* and *Dos Yudishes Folksblat*. Tsederbaum raised a plan to found Russian Jewish colonies in Palestine, with the assistance of the Russian government. Ignatiev professed himself most pleased with such a proposal, and he promised that the government would permit a committee created for that end. He declared that, while the government had no plans to drive the Jews from Russia – thus was the subject broached! – it would do all in its power to assist them, if that was their intention. He preferred colonization in Palestine to efforts in America, because the former “was their sacred land, where they would work with a will.” Emigration had to be properly organized. In particular, Ignatiev expressed himself concerned that the Jews were secretly collecting money to support emigration, monies which might easily fall into the hands of the Nihilists.⁵⁷ This flurry of interviews concluded with an interview given to a reporter for the London *Daily News* on 9 February. He quashed any hopes of equal rights for the Jews “while they stood apart in language, dress, social organization, etc.” The government, he assured the reporter, would not prevent the departure from Russia of entire families.⁵⁸ Thus, in less than a month, Ignatiev set forth a quasi-official policy which apparently granted Jews the right of free emigration, in response to their own requests.

As noted in Chapter 8, these public declarations gave a substantial boost to the partisans of emigration and triggered a wholesale campaign in the pages of *Rassvet*. Yet these interviews also generated a good deal of

⁵⁶ Ignat'ev complained of the organised fasts, supporting my contention, in Chapter 8, that they were seen to have a political connotation (*NKhV*, 6:5/II/1882). He was also quoted as criticizing the local authorities for their lack of action in combating the pogroms. Although these statements were later officially denied, it was not the last time that Ignat'ev would try to place responsibility for the pogroms and anti-Jewish actions on other authorities (*Rassvet*, 8:19/II/1882). In the interview Ignat'ev also complained of the participation of Jewish youth in the revolutionary movement and assured Drabkin that the Jewish Committee would not adopt any measures without consultations with Jewish representatives – a promise he had no intention of honoring.

⁵⁷ *NKhV*, 8:19/II/1882. Tsederbaum reported only that the interview was with a “high state official,” but from the internal evidence it was clearly Ignat'ev. In passing, Ignat'ev also explained that, when approached by “Jewish leaders,” he treated them as private individuals, not as representatives of the whole nation.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

concern. Ignatiev's insistence on governmental oversight of any committee, including its funding, was viewed with skepticism by prominent supporters of emigration. Even more seriously, in every interview Ignatiev raised the question of internal dispersal of Jews to "sparsely settled" areas of the empire, while at the same time offering his assurances that the government had no plans for forced resettlement. The readers of Ignatiev's words found it disquieting that he had even thought of the possibility. In Lilienblum's words, "nothing is impossible these days."⁵⁹ A young activist in the provinces offered his own simple interpretation of the *Rassvet* interview: "They mean to persecute us, to resettle us."⁶⁰ Matters were hardly improved by the fact that such suggestions had originally been received from the Jews themselves, such as Odessa rabbi Shvabakher, and could be presented as "subject to their desires." The situation was compounded by attacks in the Russian press, accusing Russian Jews of lacking patriotism and encouraging attacks on Russia by the defense committees in Britain.⁶¹

Finally, the well-informed members of the Gintsburg Circle were undoubtedly aware of discussions within the Gotovtsev Committee that envisioned the wholesale expulsion of Jews from the countryside. It was being argued within the committee that these refugees be settled in Asiatic Russia, because "it is also highly likely that resettlement would receive the material support of Jewish capitalists."⁶² It was essential to undermine such schemes before they acquired too much support.

While the partisans of emigration set about their fruitless quest for legalized committees, the Gintsburg Circle took preventative action of a different sort. In February, the *bête noire* of Ignatiev, the "Representatives of the Jews in Petersburg," submitted a memorandum to the minister. They noted his comments about the open western frontier and the possible creation of emigration committees. This latter proposal appeared to forecast the change in the fundamental laws of the land, Articles 325 to 328 of the Criminal Code of 1866, which essentially made emigration from the empire illegal. Worse, this change was apparently being offered only to Jews. "We must tell your Excellency what a dire impression this announcement makes on the majority of Russian Jews. Speaking for ourselves, we cannot find words to describe this insult to our feelings of loyalty to throne and fatherland." Even though qualifications and explanations had sought to soften the impression that had been conveyed by

⁵⁹ Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 76.

⁶⁰ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 1227 (1881), l. 11ob.

⁶¹ Shvabakher's book, based on his submission to Count Kutaisov, proposed that Jews be used to colonize Russia's Central Asian territories. See *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* (30/1 1882) for official condemnation of the foreign agitation campaign.

⁶² GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1618 (1881-2), l. 21ob.

Ignatiev's words, the Jews were still deeply agitated by assumptions that were circulating about emigration. To help quiet minds, the representatives sought permission for a conference in the capital comprised of representatives from the main Jewish communities of the Pale of Settlement.⁶³ Refusing to grant any mandate to the representatives, Ignatiev could not resist this appeal to "popular politics" and gave his assent in a letter to Rabbi Drabkin dated 10 February.⁶⁴ The second meeting of communal representatives met from 8–20 April in St. Petersburg.

The battle of memoranda

With the press publishing ominous leaks from the Gotovtsev Committee on a daily basis, the leadership in the capital adopted a parallel strategy. On 22 March, Baron Gintsburg submitted a memorandum to the emperor.⁶⁵ This was exactly the kind of direct approach that Ignatiev was determined to prevent. Despite his promise to do so, he had failed to present the memorandum generated by the May meeting of the Jewish delegation with the tsar. But the baron's close ties with the court made it impossible to prevent the memorandum from going forward, so Ignatiev had to combat it in other ways. It is quite clear that he took the challenge seriously, the more so because it was clearly directed against the draft laws that Gotovtsev had almost completed. Ignatiev took the time to offer a point-by-point refutation of the memorandum and to follow it with another report designed to discredit Gintsburg and the elite secular leadership in the capital. Ignatiev's demonstrable concern offers further proof that the efforts of the Gintsburg Circle to block hostile initiatives cannot be dismissed as doomed from the start.

The Gintsburg memorandum was short and to the point, with the busy emperor in mind. While it invoked the Jews' long residence in the Slavic lands and their military service as partial justification for full civil rights, the main thrust of the argument was pragmatic: How might future pogroms best be prevented?⁶⁶

⁶³ *Ibid.*, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3, (1881), ll. 1492–3.

⁶⁴ He did insist that the representatives were to meet "in a private capacity." In mid-February Drabkin sent letters to communal leaders asking them to draw up lists of potential invitees to the conference: *ibid.*, l. 1491.

⁶⁵ The Gintsburg Circle was skilled at submitting memoranda at strategic moments to the appropriate officials. A number of these were composed by Emanuel Levin. See Nathans, *Beyond*, 45–79.

⁶⁶ The documents to be discussed here are found in GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1622 (22/III/1882) and d. 1623 (IV/1882). They were reprinted in V. L. Stepanov, ed., "Na shryk mozhno operet'sia, na nego nel'zia sest'," *Istochnik*, 3 (1993), 54–69.

Gintsburg challenged the explanation of the pogroms – economic exploitation – which had already triumphed within the Gotovtsev Committee. There was no question of popular hatred against the Jews, he argued. The disorders were the work of “dark forces,” who had instigated a rabble of vagrants against the Jews, a tactic which might be used against the non-Jewish well-to-do in the future. The Jews served as the particular target of the *pogromshchiki* because they were perceived as an alien, outcast people who were denied fundamental human rights. They served as a convenient target for illegal and violent acts, which would be self-evidently forbidden against other parts of the population.

The authorities did nothing to remedy the situation. Despite copious verbal and newspaper warnings that disorders were in preparation, the local authorities failed to take proper preventative measures before the outbreak and afterwards refused to act with sufficient energy and speed. They were now proceeding to make matters worse. Instead of combating “artificially engendered racial antagonism,” they were provoking it by treating the Jews ever more severely. Jews were being forcibly expelled from various towns and locales, as well as from the fifty-verst frontier zone of Volynia province.

In a direct challenge to the plans being formulated by Ignatiev’s underlings, Gintsburg asked rhetorically how state security would be strengthened by filling up the towns with an indigent Jewish proletariat. This would only encourage the belief of the ignorant masses that the government itself was hostile to the Jews. To make matters worse, rumors now predicted that the civil rights of the Jews would be further circumscribed and half a million Jews expelled from the countryside. As it was, the Jews were overconcentrated within the Pale of Settlement. This situation forced them, as a matter of life and death, to evade restrictive laws and to seek survival in the degrading professions that were left to them. Thus, the Jews, on bended knee, asked the emperor if not to give them equal rights, then at least to leave their current legal position unchanged. Only this could prevent the outbreak of future pogroms.

The commentary that Ignatiev appended was as long as Gintsburg’s memorandum itself. The minister was greatly assisted by his ability to cite – selectively, to be sure – the findings of the provincial committees and secret reports of governors and governors-general. (Turnabout was not considered fair play: In a subsequent memorandum, Ignatiev complained of Gintsburg’s ability to cite unpublished official documentation, which he could only have secured through breaching the security of official channels.) Ignatiev correctly understood that the debate turned on the question of public order: What were the most efficacious measures to

prevent future pogroms? The analysis of the primary causes led directly to the selection of the best countermeasures. He was thus insistent that the causal agent should not be attributed to "dark forces," as Gintsburg contended, but directly to Jewish economic exploitation. Appealing to the reports of Kutaisov and the provincial commissions, he insisted that the pogroms were the work of local people, who were convinced that they were destroying the property of those same blood-suckers who despoiled them. This reality, not the incompetence of the local authorities, was why it was so hard to prevent pogroms or to repress them once they had broken out. Was the army to be on perpetual call to protect every single Jewish tavern? Even when troops and police were deployed, the Jews only made matters worse by displaying their typical insolence and engaging in insulting behavior toward the peasantry.

The Jews loved to represent themselves as a downtrodden minority, Ignatiev observed, and they complained of their official designation as "aliens" (*inorodtsy*) in Russian law. This allegedly degraded them in the eyes of the common people and placed them outside the protection of the law. In fact, the Jews were a privileged group, due to their unsurpassed ability to evade every law and regulation. For example, the rate of draft dodging for the peasant population of the Pale of Settlement in 1881 was less than 6%; for the Jews it was 34%. Jews evaded the law and misused the court system, even as they demanded special protection from the authorities. The dark, ignorant masses knew nothing of the law, so their view of the Jews was shaped not by legal theory, but by their daily experience with Jewish exploitation.

Did the authorities aggravate the situation through a stricter enforcement of the laws? Rather, countered Ignatiev, many more innocent Christian migrant workers had been ordered back to their home villages as a precautionary measure than the small number of Jews who were forced to leave their places of illegal settlement. As Gintsburg himself admitted, Jews evaded the law and engaged in unseemly occupations. What the authorities were doing was restricting their ability to use these practices to enrich themselves at the expense of the hapless peasant population. "If, in agreement with the petition of Baron Gintsburg, the Jews were left in their present situation, it would be impossible not to anticipate the outbreak of disorders during which Jewish property and Jewish lives would be in danger."

Having countered Gintsburg's arguments, Ignatiev then proceeded to blacken his opponent's reputation, giving full vent to anti-Jewish prejudices concentrated within his ministry. In April he sent a memorandum to the emperor, designed to buttress his negative, but still general comments. Baron Gintsburg, he informed the tsar, was the St. Petersburg representative

of the Alliance Israélite Universelle.⁶⁷ In this capacity he considered himself the representative of the Jews, authorized to speak to the ruler in their name. He resorted to the usual methods of the Jews, especially those who enjoyed a high social position, strong ties to the community, and a leadership role within it. The Jews used every method to evade the law and take advantage of the weakness of the authorities. When events finally attracted the attention of the higher authorities, leading them to enforce the law more rigorously, the Jews sent up a wail about persecution and the violation of their rights, while demanding special exemptions.

It was history that demonstrated the continued antipathy of Russians and Jews, ranging from the pogroms of 1027 CE in Kievan Rus' to the present day. At every point, there was bloody retribution visited upon the Jews. The decisive point in the modern period was the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Prior to the acquisition of personal freedom, the peasants had the protection of the feudal system, which at least safeguarded their personal property. Now, the livestock, tools, and the very homes of peasants were threatened by Jewish depredations. This was especially the case where the Jews put down roots in the countryside. Then peasants watched with hatred as Jewish malefactions went unpunished. The explosion of 1881 was a direct consequence: The peasants destroyed Jewish property because they saw it as goods stolen from them. A stricter enforcement of the law and the removal of illegally settled Jews would not spark pogroms, as Gintsburg warned. The danger was that actions of this nature, taken to prevent pogroms, had still not cleared the Committee of Ministers. Ignatiev warned that promises alone might not be sufficient to satisfy the peasantry and keep the peace.

What were the ultimate aims of the Gintsburg petition, which relied on leaked information, spoke in the name of all Jews, and demanded if not greater rights, at least the retention of the status quo? The "international kahal" recognized that the present government was determined not to give greater scope to its endeavors, as it had once hoped. The aim of its leaders was therefore to keep the Jewish Question in its present, chaotic state, in anticipation of better times. "These aspirations of the Jews and their illegal representative," Ignatiev concluded, "are the best possible demonstration of the need to firmly and unwaveringly seek the path under the direction of Your August Majesty and, as quickly as possible, to deliver (as far as this seems possible) the native population from the Jewish yoke."

⁶⁷ Gintsburg was, in fact, an early supporter of the Alliance in Russia, but his participation was conditional upon absolute secrecy. This allowed the police to make his role seem more sinister. See Zosa Szajkowski, "The Alliance Israélite Universelle and East-European Jewry in the '60s," *Jewish Social Studies*, 4, 2 (1942), 155.

It was against this background that the second conference of Jewish communal representatives opened on 8 April. It helps to explain its tactics, some of which were inexplicable to contemporaries. The capital leadership was well aware, for its part, that the deliberations on the temporary laws were nearing a final decision. The danger of forced expulsions was a growing possibility. Ignatiev was warning the tsar against the machinations of the "international kahal." To make matters still worse, the state security issue again appeared in the wake of the horrendous Balta pogrom of 29–30 March. Despite these very real dangers that loomed for the empire's Jews, the partisans of the New Politics, then and since, judged the meeting solely on the basis of its attitude toward emigration.

The second conference of communal representatives

The wonder is that the conference ever took place at all. True to form, having authorized the meeting, Ignatiev worked behind the scenes to undermine it. When he received a report from the governor of Chernigov province that the local community had elected two deputies to the meeting, Ignatiev instructed him to forbid their departure.⁶⁸ The Ekaterinoslav authorities were instructed to block any local effort to send a list of potential attendees to St. Petersburg.⁶⁹ A number of important communities, including Moscow, were not represented. Ignatiev continued to stir the pot by granting interviews to selected delegates, St. Petersburg rabbi Drabkin and the industrialist Poliakov, in an effort to influence (or perhaps confuse) the deliberations. The result was a highly contentious atmosphere.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6 (1882), l. 2. The two Chernigov representatives nonetheless managed to attend the meeting. Despite complaints of the undemocratic procedures of the elite leadership, contemporary newspaper accounts suggest that at least some of the delegates were elected by their communities. See *NKhV*, 14:2/IV/1882, for Khar'kov; *NKhV*, 15:9/IV/1882, for Zhitomir; *Rassvet*, 39:28/IX/1882, for Khar'kov. At least fifteen of the approximately thirty-three deputies were participants in the first conference.

⁶⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3 (1881), l. 1484.

⁷⁰ The protocols of some of the sessions were published by the Russian Jewish press in 1882. The published proceedings are not complete, nor were the resolutions of the conference published at the time. Dubnow cites them from a hectographed copy in the archives of the Jewish Historico-Archeographical Society (in Russian, in "Iz istorii vos'midesiatykh godov," *Evreiskaia starina*, 9 [1916], 1–30, and in translation in *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II, 304–8). I have also used an undated and unheaded statement from the conference which is located in the archives of the Chancellery of the Ministry of Justice: RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241 (1882), ll. 16–18ob (cited as MinJus Protocol). The published protocols are cited from *Russkii evrei*, 32:11/VIII/1882; 33:19/VIII/1882;

There was no question of avoiding the emigration issue.⁷¹ The agenda offered five points for consideration:

- (1) What are the causes of the present emigration movement among Russian Jews?
- (2) Given the present state of the emigration movement itself, and the attitudes of Jewish communities and the government, should the movement be expected to wax or wane?
- (3) What measures on the part of the government or Jewish communities might weaken the movement?
- (4) What aspects of Jewish life give those who wish the Jews ill grounds to claim the existence of the kahal and secret brotherhoods?
- (5) Should the conference consider the Prussian law that assigns liability to communities where there is damage from rioting?

The first day of the assembly was filled with procedural questions and agreeing the agenda. In order to free up time for discussion of the first three items, a general resolution was adopted that the issue of the kahal would not be discussed in detail, but that a general declaration denying its existence would be issued in the name of the assembly. Many commentators, without access to Ignatiev's private memoranda, ridiculed the waste of time any discussion of this phantom entailed.⁷² The decision was made to admit, as non-voting members, a delegation from the Jewish community of Novoaleksandrovsk which, in the absence of a formal invitation, sent delegates on its own responsibility.⁷³ The way was thus cleared for an extensive discussion of emigration, with both opponents and proponents well represented in the assembly.

Those who have complained about the cowardly or supine nature of the conference clearly failed to read its proceedings with any sympathy or understanding.⁷⁴ Even accepting that the proceedings were made public only after the fall of the disgraced minister, their comments are extremely scathing about Ignatiev, his policies, and the authorities in general. A

35:31/VIII/1882; and *NKhV*, 31:31/VII/1882; 33:14/VIII/1882; 36:4/IX/1882; cited by title and issue number. The *Jewish Chronicle* (684:5/V/1882) carried an English version of the resolutions of the conference.

⁷¹ According to the convener of the meeting, Rabbi Drabkin, the emigration issue was included in part because of the demand of the Ministry of Internal Affairs: *Russkii evrei*, 32:11/VIII/1882.

⁷² *NKhV*, 39:25/IX/1882. Dubnow (*History*, vol. II, 308) saw the repudiation of the kahal as a "degrading renunciation of national rights." The issue of the kahal had reentered public debate because of the publication of a new edition of Iakov Brafman's *Kniga kagala* and the enthusiastic support given it by Ivan Aksakov's periodical *Rus'*. See Klier, *IRJQ*, 282-3.

⁷³ *NKhV*, 31.

⁷⁴ Dubnow (*History*, vol. II, 304-5) berated the "mixed element of tragedy and timidity in the deliberations of this miniature congress, at which neither the voice of the masses nor that of the *intelligentsia* were given a full hearing." He complained that the most influential delegates, especially from the capital, "were looking about timorously, fearing lest the

memorandum prepared by the conference, which made its way into official chancelleries, constituted an extended critique of Ignatiev. It complained that his "western border" statement had compromised the status of Jews as Russian subjects and made the situation more volatile. His efforts to use collective guilt to blame all Jews for sins such as exploitation and draft evasion was nothing less than a tendentious and ill-intentioned accusation. His analysis of the pogroms as a rural phenomenon, which made necessary a policy of expulsions from the countryside, was demonstratively wrong: The pogroms began in the cities and spread to the countryside as a result of the weak response of the authorities. A major cause of the pogroms was the unrelenting attacks on the Jews by the press. "These attacks are all the more harmful because everyone knows that the press falls under the vigilant supervision of the administration [i.e., Ignatiev's ministry], and this attack appears to have the approval of the authorities." This atmosphere of accusation and condemnation encouraged the outbreak of pogroms. Only a clear demonstration of the equality of the Jews would discourage violence. Instead, the administration was leaking rumors about further restrictions to be imposed upon Jewish residence and occupational rights. These were no less than a threat to the "peace and well-being of our country."⁷⁵

The bitterness of the delegates against Ignatiev was provoked still further by statements he made in meetings with Rabbi Drabkin, the organizer of the conference, and Poliakov, the industrialist founder of ORT. Both men reported these discussions to the conference during the session of 8 April. Rabbi Drabkin informed the meeting that he had asked the minister to support an imperial declaration that pogroms were unacceptable and that the rights of the Jews would be extended, as a demonstration that they were protected by the state. Ignatiev responded with a tirade about the ways the Jews brought the pogroms upon themselves. In Balta, the pogroms arose from a false rumor that the Jews were planning to undermine one of the city's churches – the implication being that the masses were ready to believe the worst about the Jews. From the government's point of view, the Jews made themselves unpopular by their involvement in the revolutionary movement – one of the first times this particular charge had been made against the Jews by a high-ranking official. When Drabkin rejected this claim, Ignatiev ascribed another cause – the widespread propensity of the Jews to evade the law. He concluded with a reproach to the Jews for criticizing their treatment by

Government suspect them of lack of patriotism." Vital (*People Apart*, 362) argues that the conference participants "having nothing to offer, nothing to propose, and nothing of substance to say . . . were condemning themselves to irrelevancy."

⁷⁵ MinJus Protocol, ll. 16–18ob.

the administration.⁷⁶ The assembly was clearly aghast at this unpromising news, and Baron Gintsburg, in the chair, announced that the minister's comments were not for debate.⁷⁷

Poliakov's report created a sensation. Of all the Petersburg magnates he was probably the most outspoken foe of emigration, castigating its supporters as "fomenters of rebellion." He presented this view in his discussions with Ignatiev, arguing that, since the right to emigrate did not exist for any Russian subject, it did not exist for Jews. "Once a committee for foreign resettlement was created, by such a measure the Jews will be considered non-Russian inhabitants." Ignatiev retorted that the Jewish population of the Pale had to be thinned out. Poliakov agreed, calling for free emigration into the Russian interior. Instead, Ignatiev made a stunning proposal, which he authorized Poliakov to submit to the judgement of the assembly. The Jews should be settled in large numbers in the newly conquered regions of Central Asia, in Tashkent or Akhal-Teke. The Jews would develop trade and commerce in the region and constitute a bulwark against British influence in nearby India.

The leading advocate of an emigration program, Dr. Mandelshtam from Kiev, took the floor in a rage. The proposal raised by Poliakov was beyond any serious consideration. "They trample on our human dignity, they plunder us, they outrage the honor of our wives and daughters. We are not slaves: We are either given human rights, so we go wherever our gaze leads us . . . We do not enjoy the rights which are given to any animal, and suddenly they permit us to go to Tashkent, no doubt to finish us off there." When Gintsburg again tried to end the debate by assigning the proposal to a committee, he was shouted down. Professor N. Bakst, a leading figure in the capital, not given to extreme statements, denounced the Ignatiev proposal, which he decried as tantamount to an official recognition that the Jews were criminals, for whom a new place of exile was required. A century earlier the Jews had been invited to settle in underpopulated New Russia to develop the economy. Now they were being asked to leave. No doubt the same history would be repeated in Tashkent. He had been an opponent of resettlement committees, announced Bakst, because he did not see in them a long-term solution to the Jewish Question. "But if all our troubles now conclude with an order to settle in Akhal-Teke, then I consider it a solemn obligation to assist with all my strength the emigration of Jews from Russia . . . Our

⁷⁶ The complaints had been raised against the MVD's decision – later overturned by the Senate – that Jewish pharmacists did not have the right to maintain pharmacies outside the Pale. See *Russkii vrevi*, 49:10/XII/1882.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

people are restricted enough. They do not require new chains, nor do they need a more distant prison." Other delegates, heretofore opposed to emigration, such as Ia. Bruk of Chernigov and G. Rabinovich of Dinaburg, concurred: If this was the choice which the government offered the Jews, then they must plan to leave. Although a few voices supported the project as an extension of the Pale, the session ended in an atmosphere of acrimony and foreboding. Undecided delegates were now leaning toward support for emigration.⁷⁸ Ignatiev's quixotic intervention had again provoked a crisis.

The first speaker on the following day (10 April), I. M. Kaufman, forced the meeting to confront the emigration issue head on, by introducing a resolution calling upon the government to decriminalize emigration, so that assistance could be properly organized. In a lengthy preamble Kaufman explained that this step was made necessary by the complete loss of faith by the Jews in the state's ability to defend them from pogroms or to provide relief once they had been ruined by them. The rumors of new restrictions plunged the Jews into hopelessness and despair, before which even the horrors of the pogroms appeared to pale.

Kiev's Mandelshtam supported Kaufman's proposals, but most other delegates spoke against them, convinced that they lay beyond the realm of physical or economic possibility. Indeed, encouragement of emigration was part of the anti-Jewish policies of the higher administration. N. B. Segal complained that "the higher administration itself desired the growth of emigration in order to throw reproaches in our face and confirm that we deserve pogroms and restrictive measures which they plan to take against those of us who remain in Russia." Such hostile characterizations of the government were voiced by others, including Professor Bakst, who noted sarcastically that "the real reasons for the pogroms are well known to the minister [i.e., Ignatiev]." What was required was "a categorical protest against the general character of the relations of the ministry [the MVD] toward the Jews in the last year. At this time it is necessary to announce to government officials that the position of the Jews of late has reached the point that official statements alone are now insufficient to quiet minds and that it was now necessary to accompany official words with a fundamental extension of the rights of the Jews."

A consensus emerged that the meeting should seek permission to organize formal relief operations for pogrom victims, that agricultural colonization be once more pursued, and that communities be made collectively responsible for losses incurred during pogroms. There was a

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

unified demand for the extension of civil rights (except for the partisans of emigration, who saw this as a lost cause). Above all, there must be no extension of restrictive legislation. In this heated atmosphere, one speaker, Sh. L. Shmerling (of Mogilev), arose to demand another innovation that had hitherto been only softly mooted: that the Jews be permitted to organize self-defense against the pogroms. The emotional evening reached a grim conclusion when Shmerling, having completed his speech, collapsed and died.⁷⁹

The next meeting of the assembly was delayed until 20 April, by which time both Kaufman and Mandelshtam were absent. Despite a rearguard action by I. I. Ratner, who presented a Palestinophile proposal (the only one of the conference), and some lingering support for the *de facto* reality of emigration, Baron Gintsburg again steered the discussion away from the topic. Instead, the assembly agreed on the need to approach the emperor directly to explain all the injustices that had been worked against them. This would require some organization, "since there are enemies who try to keep us from access to the Throne," whose identity they all knew.⁸⁰

No protocols are available for the subsequent deliberations of the assembly. What did emerge was a declaration that reflected support for a campaign in support of civil rights. The declaration completely rejected emigration, to the outrage, as seen in Chapter 8, of the partisans of the New Politics. Instead, the assembly adopted the following resolution:

First, to reject completely the thought of organizing emigration, as being subversive of the dignity of the Russian state and of the historic rights of the Jews to their present fatherland.

Second, to point to the necessity of abolishing the present discriminatory legislation concerning the Jews, this abolition being the only means to regulate the relationship of the Jews with the native population.

Third, to bring to the knowledge of the government the passive attitude of the authorities which had clearly manifested itself during the time of the disorders.

Fourth, to petition the government to find means to compensate the Jewish population which had suffered from pogroms as a result of inadequate police protection.⁸¹

Shortly thereafter, to a skeptical Russian audience and a bemused Jewish one, the delegates issued a formal declaration, bolstered by a solemn oath, "that there exists neither an open nor a secret kahal administration among the Russian Jews."⁸²

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33. ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁸¹ Dubnow, *History*, vol. II, 307. This is a slightly modified version of Dubnow's English text, following his Russian version in "Iz istorii," 13.

⁸² Dubnow, "Iz istorii," 13-14.

Virtually all historians of these events have portrayed the Jewish notables as, at best, displaying "a failure of imagination and spirit"⁸³ and, at worst, acting as traitors to the people. In this, they were following the judgements of many contemporaries.⁸⁴ In advance of the meeting, a number of emigration partisans sent a letter to Baron Gintsburg warning that "if the notables fail to listen to the voice[s] calling to them and continue to stand apart from the public, why they will have as good as admitted that they have no part in it, that they are not saddened by its afflictions, and that they do not share in its joys – upon which the people will see plainly what it is that confronts it, namely that salvation will have to come to the Jews from some other quarter."⁸⁵ David Gordon, writing in the *Jewish Chronicle*, derided "some opulent Jews" in St. Petersburg not only for their indifference toward their poor brethren, but also because of their audacity "to close against them the only door of deliverance now open to the sorely-trying Jewish population of Russia" (678:24/III/82). After the close of the conference, he observed that:

it appears to be unintelligible why several rich Russian Jews, with Baron Günzburg at their head, should seek to prevent a general emigration, the only remedy against the general destruction which threatens our poor coreligionists from all sides. These individuals who do nothing themselves, are endeavouring to paralyse the efforts of others in behalf of the oppressed Jews, by prating about the expected concession of equal rights and privileges to all the Russian Jews. To tell the truth they, themselves, do not believe in their predictions. Their attitude can only be dictated by hard-hearted indifference; more shame, therefore, to these men who sit quietly by the side of their money, whilst their brethren in faith are exposed to the most terrible sufferings.⁸⁶

The Jewish Populist Ben Ami was equally scathing about "these terrible betrayers" who pretended to the outside world that all was well with Russian Jewry and that emigration would harm their position. "Even from these scoundrels, even from these devourers of the blood of the Jewish people it was hard to expect this. But there it is: Efrusi, Poliakov, and Gintsburg took refuge in this vile lie."⁸⁷

⁸³ Vital, *People Apart*, 362.

⁸⁴ Note the important observation of Nathans (*Beyond*, 193) that "many if not most of the pro-emigration intellectuals were in fact former partisans of integration," although he also notes the diversity of intellectual responses to the pogroms.

⁸⁵ Vital, *People Apart*, 362. ⁸⁶ *JC*, 682:21/IV/82.

⁸⁷ *Vol'noe slovo*, 38:29/V/1882 NS. Leon Efrusi was the head of a well-known Jewish trading concern in Odessa. For further contemporary criticisms of the Gintsburg Circle, see Nathans, *Beyond*, 189–95, which includes criticism directed specifically against Emanuel Levin, whose activities are discussed later.

Rassvet editorialized:

Where are the rich who so love to speak in the name of all the Jewish people? Why don't we see them when so many people are suffering? They are silent, and the suffering moans are powerless before the union of egotism, frivolity, heartlessness, and personal self-love, and at the moment when our people needed an Abravanel and a Menasseh ben Israel, their representatives are financial aces whose souls are cold and hermetically sealed, like a humidior, where they isolate weighty ideals . . . Sooner or later the people will pass judgement on them and make them pay for their crimes against Jewry. And these crimes are very, very many. 24:13/VI/1882

If the activities of the conference are viewed less as the self-serving opportunism of the communal elite, and more in terms of the ongoing duel between the communal representatives and Ignatiev, events appear in a quite different light. The former were not unrealistic in their rejection of the immediate utility of emigration, to say nothing of it as a long-term solution to the Jewish Question. Emigration was clearly not a meaningful solution to the crisis of 1881–2. The resources, at home and abroad, simply did not exist to resettle tens of thousands of people in the United States, let alone in Erets Israel. The creation of emigration committees would undoubtedly have made the situation worse, by creating false hopes and encouraging further disoriented flight. Moreover, there were political consequences, as was clearly recognized by the participants in the debates. Nothing Ignatiev said, be it about “western borders” or “Central Asia,” could be trusted, and to rise to his bait was to enter a trap. The real need was to block or attenuate the discriminatory measures he was determined to impose upon the Jews, especially those that would have allowed peasant communities to expel their Jewish neighbors from the countryside.⁸⁸

For the safety of Russian Jewry, the link between pogroms/exploitation and expulsions/emigration had to be broken. This needed to be the focus – not illusory dreams of new lands. To their opponents the mantra of “equal rights” may have seemed a naive dream, but it was a realistic objective worth pursuing in 1882. If the abolition of the Pale was unattainable, the blocking of the May Laws was not. It would seem to be no accident that the declaration setting out in detail the weaknesses of the putative temporary rules – noted above – should find its way into the Ministry of Justice, or that some of its points were made by the justice minister himself in the debates within the Committee of Ministers. The elite secular leadership

⁸⁸ See Chapter 6, pp. 216–17. A further coincidence is worth noting. At exactly the same time that the assembly was meeting in St. Petersburg, the governor of Petrovskii province reported to the MVD that workers in Lodz were planning a pogrom on the basis that, when they had occurred in other cities, many Jews had fled the town. At least some were coming to see pogroms as a device to force Jewish out-migration: GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2 (24/IV/1882), ll. 2–3.

was well aware of who their enemy was and how he might be blocked. Their final hope rested in bypassing “those who try to keep us from the Throne” and winning over the emperor.

The Levin Memorandum

In the capital, therefore, another effort was made to win the emperor and the upper bureaucracy over to the Circle’s interpretation of the pogroms. A lengthy memorandum was prepared by Emanuel Levin, a close associate of Baron Gintsburg who served as a member of the secretariat of both the first and the second meeting of communal representatives.⁸⁹ Indeed, the memorandum very much reflected the discussions of the April meeting of the representatives: While it discussed the kahal at some length, it offered only a passing, dismissive reference to the emigration movement. The document is a fully developed version – over 250 handwritten pages – of the Gintsburg Memorandum of 22 March. Indeed, it so closely follows that work’s line of argument that the latter might plausibly be attributed to Levin as well. The composition of the Levin Memorandum can confidently be dated to between May and June 1882. According to Levin’s biographer S. Gol’dshstein, the memorandum originated from a suggestion of a member of the State Council, Count Baranov, to the banker A. I. Zak, another prominent member of the Gintsburg Circle. A small number of copies were hectographed and given to Baranov and other high officials.⁹⁰

The Levin Memorandum continued the contest of memoranda with Ignatiev begun in March – indeed, it is a root-and-branch condemnation

⁸⁹ For a biography of Levin and a discussion of his memorandum, see Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 11–13, 239–40, and S. Gol’dshstein, “Emmanuil Borisovich Levin (1820–1913). Po avtobiograficheskim zametkam,” *Evreiskaia starina*, 8, 2–3 (1916), 253–75.

⁹⁰ A complete copy of the memorandum, with a dedication from Levin, is located in the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem: “Evreiskii vopros i anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1881 i 1882 g.” The dedication reads: “To the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem. From the author E. Levin. St. Petersburg, 8/21 XII 1902g.” Citations in the text are taken from this version. This copy has handwritten additions which date to 1886, but from internal evidence the core text can be firmly dated to 1882. Reference is made to the fifteen months since the outbreak (i.e., May 1882); there is a reference to “this year” in the context of 1882; an extended discussion of the Balta pogrom implies that it was a recent event; and there is a close examination of the Tolstoi circular of 21 June 1882. Perhaps most crucially, the author calls for the replacement of the Gotovtsev Committee – which in fact happened with the appointment of the Palen Commission, on 4 February 1883. Dubnov, who was not involved in the preparation of the memorandum itself, claims that the document that he published had been prepared in part earlier and was then updated for submission to the Palen Commission. See S. M. Dubnov, ed., “Anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1881 1882 gg.,” *Evreiskaia starina*, 1, 1 (1909), 89–90. I have failed to locate a copy in the materials of the Palen Commission, although Benjamin Nathans (*Beyond*, 195) found a copy in the Russian National Library.

of the entire Ignatiev system in regard to the Jewish Question. Levin's effort was expedited by what was his apparently free access to the protocols of the Ignatiev commissions, transcripts and position papers produced by the Gotovtsev Committee within the MVD, and even to the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Ministers that debated the implementation of the May Laws. It goes without saying that these were all confidential state papers that were not in the public domain, which illustrates the Gintsburg Circle's access to the highest levels of state officialdom. The most controversial contention of the Levin Memorandum, which will be discussed in detail in the Epilogue, was that Ignatiev's policies were part of a high-level conspiracy to make the Jews the scapegoats for the failings of state policy.

The memorandum faulted the Ignatiev committees for their "capricious character, almost without precedent in modern times," from the point of view of their membership, working methods, and conclusions. They had clearly been designed not to provide objective, reasoned conclusions, but to confirm preexisting prejudices (149-69). Even then, Levin noted, the committees did not provide what their creator had demanded. With the committee protocols to hand, he was able to challenge Ignatiev's oft-made claim that they had been unanimous in advocating the basic measures contained in the draft May Laws. Not only was this specific claim untrue, Levin argued, but there was in fact no clear consensus for a policy of legal repression against the Jews. Quite the contrary - by Levin's count, no fewer than twelve committees had rejected the continuation of the Pale of Settlement in its existing form (170-7).

Levin carried out a similar demolition job on the guiding principles of the Gotovtsev Committee. He demonstrated the inaccuracies contained in the committee's claims about the history of Russian legislation on the Jewish Question and in official policies designed to promote "merger" (*slīanie*) of the Jews with the Russian population. In one sense, of course, the battle was already lost, since the Committee of Ministers had accepted the watered-down proposals that became the May Laws. The memorandum nonetheless offered a *coup de grâce* to the proposals that had not been implemented, lest they reappear in the future. Indeed, the committee and all its works were repudiated: "We have discussed the central committee and its deliberations at length in order to give a clear understanding of the character of this institution, its one-sidedness, and its tendentiousness. Reading its fearsome philippic, which lacks any foundation, one would imagine that one was reading not an official document, but an article in the Judeophobe press" (202). The memorandum advised the abolition of the Gotovtsev Committee and its replacement with one that included personnel, including Jews, who possessed broader and more humane political views (248).

The memorandum also questioned the effectiveness of the May Laws, making a number of dire predictions as to their effect: a decline in the value of real estate in the Pale, a rise in the cost of rural credit, and a significant wastage of peasant time necessary to bring goods to the marketplace. All of these phenomena would have a deleterious impact on state revenues. Indeed, Levin quoted an estimate in *Birzhevye vedomosti* that the anti-Jewish movement had already cost Russia 152 million rubles (208–10).

The steps that had been taken to prevent pogroms, Levin predicted, would ultimately prove unsuccessful. The May Laws merely reinforced the popular assumption that Jews were outside the law. The ukase issued at the same time warning against pogrom violence was a mere “resolution of the Senate,” as opposed to the “imperially confirmed” May Laws, and would carry far less weight. While Count Tolstoi’s restatement of the Makov Circular on 21 June 1882, which put an end to the capricious expulsion of Jews by many local authorities, was welcome, it was not the decisive step by the government that was required. The Makov Circular, like Tolstoi’s restatement, was only a ministerial decision, the weakest form of Russian legislation. What one minister could do his successor could easily undo (220–7).⁹¹

It was obvious that the Ignatiev system of repression, palliatives, and confused and contradictory signals offered no remedy for the Jewish Question. The way forward was to be found in a correct formulation of the Jewish Question. Were the Jews human beings? Since the answer was “yes,” they were entitled to all human rights. Were the Jews Russian subjects? Were they members of various social estates (*soslovie*)? An affirmative answer mandated that personal rights must be added to the innate, natural rights possessed by the Jews. The most fundamental of these was the right to freely choose one’s place of residence and occupation. The only logical solution to the Jewish Question was the simple and unambiguous statement that “all Jews are equal to Russians in rights and obligations according to the social estate of which they are a member.” Such a declaration by the state would put an end to the anti-Jewish movement, both as an intellectual campaign of the Russian intelligentsia and as a movement of the streets. “Against citizens with complete equal rights, a movement like the present one would be as impossible as one directed against any other nationality” (245–7).

⁹¹ For continuing debates about the Makov Circular, see the literature cited in Nathans, *Beyond*, 185. A brief excerpt from the memorandum devoted to Tolstoi’s policies was published as Y. Slutsky, ed., “Mitokh tazkir al ha-praor b’shnot 1881–2,” *He-avar*, 9 (5722/1962), 78–81. The memorandum does not so much criticize Tolstoi’s actions as argue that they have not gone far enough.

Given that the Gintzburg Circle was accused at the time and afterward of pursuing its own narrow self-interests, to the detriment of the Jewish population as a whole, it is useful to note that the Levin Memorandum specifically did *not* ask for "political or service rights." The movement of Jews into the broader spheres of Russian life, including education, state service, and the professions, had engendered the hostility and envy of the Russian intelligentsia, Levin explained. Therefore, this was not the moment to demand additional prerogatives, such as admission to state service, for the well-off stratum of the Jewish population. "It is unimportant for the Jewish masses whether or not they have a few bureaucrats on state service in their midst." Let the Russian state itself decide when it wished to utilize Jewish talents. "Jews can get along without these rights until the Russian intelligentsia reaches the conclusion that any subject of the Russian ruler, any citizen of the Russian land, irrespective of religious confession, has the right and obligation to contribute their spiritual strength and knowledge to the general good of his fatherland" (245-6). In short, Levin's memorandum proposed "Jewish emancipation" *à la Russe*.

The judgements of history

It was said of Upton Sinclair's muckraking exposé of the meat industry, *The Jungle*, that it "aimed at America's heart but hit it in the stomach." The Levin Memorandum aimed at the tsar's heart, but instead aroused the spleen of world opinion. As will be seen in the Epilogue, it became the most influential work in shaping the most widely accepted view of the origins and nature of the pogroms. Since it was the last major initiative of the elite secular leadership in 1882, it perfectly encapsulates their strategy and methods. The memorandum confronted critics and Judeophobe ministers on their own grounds, by offering reasoned arguments, bolstered by statistical evidence of official provenance, with a leavening of appeals to principles of fundamental human rights. The memorandum remained firmly focused on two central objectives, the security of the Jewish population in Russia and the necessity of equal rights, rather than the distractions of ephemeral solutions such as mass migration. The secular elite leadership directed its efforts toward the real centers of power, including ministers both sympathetic and unsympathetic, as well as the emperor at the top of the system. They sought to make use of officials well disposed toward their cause – and they succeeded, as their access to official documentation reveals. Despite copious rumors to the contrary, the elite leadership in the capital relied on reasoned argument and influence, rather than crude monetary bribes. All this

activity went well beyond the activities that are usually associated with *shtadlanut*.

The subsequent history of the Levin Memorandum demonstrates that the methods and strategies developed by the traditional leadership were sustained over time. It was given to members of the State Council and other high officials and then apparently updated for submission to the Palen Commission. The Gintsburg Circle kept up a continual campaign to gain access to policymakers, either as formal members of the Palen Commission or as invited specialists and consultants. Against the background of the development of a modern political life in the Russian Empire, these tactics and procedures were no less innovative, and to a large degree were more effective, than the activities that have been lauded as the "New Politics."⁹²

The judgement of contemporaries on these efforts was never kind. At the close of 1882, *Rassvet* decried the "old-fashioned politics" as haphazard and uncoordinated (52:25/XII/1882). The writer described a process whereby the submission of memoranda to the government was conducted by self-appointed leaders, without any organization. The memoranda were composed

at the behest of this or that rich individual, at the recommendation of a friend, and simply assigned to a personal secretary whose chief qualification is that "he writes Russian well," and understandably all these productions are nothing more than paraphrases of publicistic articles or excerpts from the work of [the historian Il'ia] Orshanskii . . . We don't need secretarial reports or meetings of people, gathered for trade or an exhibition, who take time off from their undertakings in order "to consult in St. Petersburg about the Jewish Question"; what is needed is a *permanent commission*, with a carefully selected staff, drawn from specialists in statistics, law, social economy, Jewish theology, and history.

While this is a superficially accurate description of the lobbying efforts of the secular elite leadership, it does not take into account either the difficulties which they faced in "consulting in St. Petersburg about the Jewish Question" or the quality of the argumentation contained in their reports. Nor was there much chance that the Russian government would allow any sort of permanent Jewish commission. The criticism voiced by *Rassvet* remains, nonetheless, the stereotypical interpretation of the "old politics."

⁹² See Nathans (*Beyond*, 195) for a contrary interpretation of the Levin Memorandum. He argues that, given its formulation of a conspiracy theory, it was not intended for submission to the powers that be and instead represented "the beginning of a decisive shift in the way Jewish notables understood their position vis-à-vis the imperial state."

Hans Rogger, in explaining the failure of the Russian state ever to approach the reform of Jews with the same commitment and enthusiasm which it brought to its efforts to transform Russians, has noted the absence of a pro-reform coalition, such as that which forced the emancipation of the serfs. "The Jews were not a constituency that was sufficiently powerful or vocal, and instead of allies they had, with few exceptions, only benefactors or protectors in government and society."⁹³ In the main this characterization is true and was recognized as such by the elite secular leadership. And that is precisely why, in the activities described above, they attempted to build such a constituency, but they were forced to do so in a climate of growing political reaction. To reverse the famous words of Shakespeare, their failure lay more in their stars than in themselves.

⁹³ Hans Rogger, "Reforming Jews—Reforming Russians," in Herbert A. Strauss, ed., *Hostages of Modernization: Studies on Modern Antisemitism 1870–1933/39* (Berlin and New York, 1993), 1226.

11 The pogroms as humanitarian crisis

It has been well said that philanthropy is no longer a moral luxury to be safely indulged in according to the chance inspiration of the benevolent. It is recognized by modern thinkers as a difficult science only to be properly applied by carefully trained minds and skillful hands.

Emma Lazarus¹

"*Tsedekah* [charity] saves from death!" was the traditional cry of Jewish beggars to their well-off brethren. Charity, both individual and communal, was a core value of the Jewish tradition. This remained an essentially religious obligation until the founding of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The AIU secularized the concept of *tsedekah* into a generalized call to help poor or victimized Jews anywhere in the world. One of the first such emergencies faced by the AIU was a famine affecting the Jews of Kovno and Grodno provinces of the Russian Empire in 1870. Part of its remedy had been to assist the limited emigration of victims to the United States. One of the collaborators of the Alliance in this effort was Dr. Yitzhak Rülff, the rabbi of Memel, who spent much of his life as an unappointed spokesman for the needs of Russian Jewry. There thus existed precedents in the West for assisting embattled Russian Jewry.

Unsurprisingly, Rülff was one of the first to raise the alarm, publishing a call for international assistance, on 22 May 1881 NS, for the "hundreds of thousands . . . without possessions, breadless and roofless . . . hastening across the boundary to their Austrian brethren and flooding the cities."² Shortly thereafter, on 26 May, the Alliance published its own appeal for pogrom victims.³ Wider concerns were already evident with the creation of the first relief committees. Jewish leaders were very keen that committees have a mixed membership, so that the crisis could be presented as

¹ Cited in Ronald Sanders, *Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration* (New York, 1988), 113.

² Elias Tcherikower, "Jewish Immigrants to the United States, 1881-1900," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 6 (1951), 157. For Rülff's role in circulating atrocity reports, see the Epilogue.

³ Tcherikower, "Jewish Immigrants," 156-7.



Figure 15. Depictions of the pogroms in the Western press: “Assault on a Jew in the Presence of the Military at Kiev” (*Illustrated London News*, 78:2,194:4/VI/1881, 549). Courtesy of UCL Library Services, Special Collections.

“humanitarian” rather than “Jewish.” According to David Feldman, the delay in organizing a public appeal in England was occasioned by fears that a campaign without the support of non-Jews would culminate in an embarrassing public failure.⁴

The nature of public appeals varied. There was disagreement as to whether calls for humanitarian aid should be accompanied by denunciations of “Russian barbarism” and public protests which focused on the sins of omission or commission of the Russian authorities (for the highly charged depiction of the event in Western print media, see Figures 15–18). The Jewish leadership of France, whose government was in the midst of a political rapprochement with tsarist Russia, was reluctant to engage in rhetoric that might bring the loyalty of French Jews into question. Jewish leaders in Berlin were aware that denunciations of Russian Judeophobia might appear hypocritical in the extreme, given the emergence of Pastor Adolf Stoecker’s noisily antisemitic “Berlin Movement.” British Jews

⁴ David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven and London, 1994), 128–9.



Figure 16. Depictions of the pogroms in the Western press: "Plundering a Brandy Shop at Kiev" (*Illustrated London News*, 78:2,194:4/VI/1881, 549). Courtesy of UCL Library Services, Special Collections.

were reluctant to be drawn into political debates between the Russophile Liberals of Prime Minister William Gladstone and the Russophobic Tory opposition.

Deciding on the specific forms that relief might take was also problematical. While the Alliance took the lead in providing assistance over the next eighteen months, various national relief committees were also formed, some purely Jewish and some with mixed membership, all with differing goals. A major challenge posed to charitable agencies was deciding how and for what purposes relief should be distributed. The lack of policy consensus was reflected in a decision of the Central Committee of the Alliance on 20 July 1881 to support two rival plans. It allocated 100,000 francs in order to send some Jews to the United States while helping others to relocate within the Pale of Settlement.⁵

Realities on the ground often forced the hand of the AIU leadership, for example regarding its initial intention to provide relief *in situ*. AIU

⁵ Zosa Szajkowski, "How the Mass Migration to America Began," *Jewish Social Studies*, 4, 4 (1942), 295. This combined the precedent of relief operations in 1870 and the aspirations of the recently founded ORT.



Figure 17. Depictions of the pogroms in the Western press: "Persecution of the Jews in Russia: Scene Inside the Arsenal at Kiev" (*Illustrated London News*, 78:2,196:18/VI/1881, 616). Courtesy of UCL Library Services, Special Collections.

"Three thousand families at Kiev were placed for shelter in the Arsenal, but it is not to the credit of the Russian authorities that for forty-eight hours they were without medical succour or food. In the end some compassionate Russians exerted themselves, and subscriptions were freely given by the educated classes to furnish them with the necessaries of life" (*ibid.*, 610).

delegates were dispatched to Russia, but having stopped in the town of Brody, on the Russo-Austrian frontier, they found a crowd of destitute refugees and paused to assist them. This caused Brody to become the center for international relief efforts and a magnet for would-be emigrants. When refugees adamantly refused repatriation, the question of emigration forced its way onto the agenda. In addition, relief agencies did not work in a vacuum – they had to coordinate their efforts with regional and national governments. Concerns that borders might be closed, that concentrations of refugees moved on, or that the flood of refugees might promote antisemitism were not idle fears.⁶

⁶ To take only one example, the Berlin Jewish Committee of Assistance to Victims of the Pogroms threatened to suspend cooperation with the Alliance if it continued to encourage Russian Jews to pass through Berlin (29 December 1881): Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron* (Harmondsworth, 1987), 526.

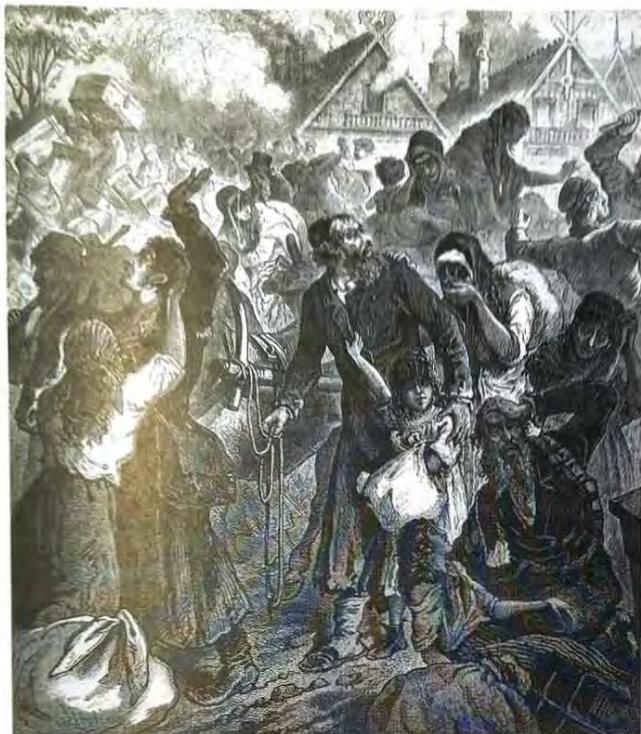


Figure 18. Depictions of the pogroms in the Western press: The flight of Jews from a Podolian settlement. From a sketch by G. Broiling (*Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung*, 2029:20/V/1882, 399). Courtesy of the British Library.

Beyond the fundamental problem of raising enough money to assist pogrom victims, the emigration issue created the most difficulty. The Alliance decided early on that, if refugees could not be returned to Russia, Palestine was not a suitable destination for them.⁷ Since all national committees were determined to prevent the settlement of large numbers of refugees on their own soil, other destinations had to be found. The United States, to which refugees of the Lithuanian famine were dispatched in 1870, remained the preferred choice. On 14 August 1881, the Alliance contracted with the

⁷ According to a statement by the AIU Central Committee, "Palestine is a poor country which cannot maintain the Jews already living there ... The arrival of Russian Jews in Palestine under these conditions could have no other effect but that of augmenting the misery of the people in that country," *AIU Bulletin Mensuel*, 9, 7 (VII/1881), 116–17.

Antwerp agency Henri Strauss to dispatch 500 refugees to America.⁸ The Alliance's agent, H. Schafier, who arrived in Brody at the end of August 1881, began to sort and send the refugees he found there. Schafier's *ad hoc* activities were placed on a more formal foundation with the arrival of the Alliance's experienced agent, Charles Netter, on 6 October 1881.⁹

Netter, a veteran of AIU relief initiatives, sought to develop precise criteria to catalogue and dispose of the Brody refugees. But these too often clashed with reality. His first task was to divide refugees into those who could be repatriated and those who should be sent on. Those who fell into the latter category raised additional problems: "we had decided to send over only young men, then, on second thought, to favor the fathers of families. But I believe that you cannot adhere strictly to one rule or another, but must take on people as they come."¹⁰ This accorded to the signals that began to emerge from the Russian government at the end of the year that only families would be allowed to emigrate, not just the able-bodied alone.

But even the issue of the able-bodied remained problematic. It is clear that the Jews of Western Europe had very low expectations of their brothers from the East.¹¹ Thus, the appearance of articulate young men without caftans and sidelocks was an immense relief. Not only were the male refugees "handsome, tall and intelligent" and their female counterparts "almost elegant," Netter also reported from Brody that "perhaps one-half . . . of the young men there . . . had been educated in the Gymnasia."¹² This latter observation is key. Netter was undoubtedly describing not the

⁸ Szajkowski, "Mass Migration," 296. This was the same firm that had carried the emigrants of 1870. The firm was accused of encouraging emigration out of business considerations: Mark Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800* (Philadelphia, 1948), 44.

⁹ Netter was joined by Hermann Magnus of the Leipzig Relief Committee, and Moritz Friedländer, the secretary of the Viennese Israelitische Allianz. Under Netter, emigration was better organized and speeded up.

¹⁰ Cited in Sanders, *Shores*, 50–1.

¹¹ The phenomenon of the "Ostjuden" has been well surveyed in the scholarly literature. See Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison, 1982), and Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1987).

¹² *JC*, 660:18/XI/1881. See almost identical sentiments on Jewish refugees passing through Liverpool: "the Russian Jew . . . stands erect, has no mannerisms at all, dresses entirely in a European manner, and has few Oriental traits of physiognomy. The majority have light hair, blue eyes, and are really good-looking men; their wives, however, betray Oriental types" (*JC*, 659:11/XI/1881). After a year of dealing with Russian immigrants, American relief workers were less enthusiastic: "The mode of life of these people in Russia has stamped upon them the ineffaceable marks of permanent pauperism, only disgrace and a lowering of the opinion in which American Israelites are held . . . can result from the continued residence among us . . . of these wretches." See Gilbert Osofsky, "The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States (1881–1883)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 49 (1959/60), 183.

typical destitute pogrom victim, but the young men driven more by ideology than need, the Am Olam groups described in Chapter 8. The well-presented dreams of the Am Olamtsy enabled them to secure immediate assistance from the Brody relief workers. Yet the very features that made them so sympathetic – ideology and cultural polish – also disqualified them for the type of life they proposed to pursue as agricultural colonists in the New World. And if young, highly motivated idealists failed at schemes that had significant financial support, such as the settlement at Sicily Island, Louisiana, then what hope was there for the destitute and less educated masses that followed them? Jewish farmers in Eastern Europe were, metaphorically and physically, thin on the ground. The majority of refugees sent to the United States were tradesmen and poorly skilled craftsmen. It is not surprising that the American authorities began to complain sourly that the majority of refugees were unaccustomed to heavy labor, and desired to take up peddling although “we are overrun with peddlers already.”¹³

The refugees themselves often had exaggerated expectations of the help they would receive. Eastern Europe was rife with apocryphal announcements attributed to the AIU promising free passage to America, together with free land and financial support upon arrival. Small wonder that refugees continued to flock into Brody. The frequent denials issued by the Alliance, local relief committees, and the Mansion House Committee did little to deter westward movement.¹⁴ Relief funds that were set up to assist pogrom victims became the target of appeals from what would be called, in contemporary parlance, “economic migrants.” A group of Elisavetgrad refugees, for example, praised the Alliance for supposedly undertaking the mission of “removing all Jews from the Slavic countries in general, and from Russia in particular,” and “transferring them to the United States of North America.”¹⁵ The desire of some emigrants to assert their status as pogrom victims may also account for the exaggerated tales of atrocities that they told. Certainly the American authorities charged with dealing with refugees expressed their skepticism about the authenticity of some self-proclaimed victims.¹⁶

¹³ Zosa Szajkowski, “The Attitude of American Jews to East European Jewish Emigration (1881–1893),” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 40 (1950/1), 265.

¹⁴ Szajkowski, “Mass Migration,” 298.

¹⁵ Zosa Szajkowski, “Materialn vegen der yiddisher emigratzye keyn Amerike in 1881–1882,” *YIVO Bleter*, 19 (1942), 277.

¹⁶ *The Jewish Chronicle* (688:2/VI/1882) complained in June 1882 that “other persons come now in considerable numbers who are unable to produce the smallest amount of evidence, except their verbal statements, which are generally far from concise and apparently very unreliable, even of the districts from which they are, as they assert, fugitives. There have also been some cases which bear on the face of them a strong probability of being those of wife-desertion.”

Remembering the precedent of 1870, when the Alliance had sent Jewish famine victims to the United States, the leadership of the United Hebrew Charities there created a Russian Relief Committee in May 1881. A plan to regulate emigration was submitted to a meeting of the Council of American Hebrew Congregations on 12 July 1881. The plan envisioned close cooperation with agencies in Europe, the dispersal of refugees throughout the country, the creation of employment registries in provincial centers such as Chicago, St. Louis and Galveston, Texas, and the raising of sufficient funds to carry out resettlement and colonization.¹⁷ Unfortunately, none of these sensible preparations had been made when the first Russian refugees arrived in the United States, quite unannounced, on 9 September 1881.¹⁸

The American Jewish leadership was vaguely aware of the Alliance plans and had in mind to accept as many as 500 refugees, but with the assumption that those dispatched would be "healthy and strong, able and willing to perform hard work, and . . . possess knowledge of some handicraft." A charity appeal for refugees assured donors that "many . . . are persons of education, and held good positions in society at home."¹⁹ Despite these optimistic words, and assurances that the Alliance would undertake a "judicious selection," the initial shipment from Europe took place without any real consultation, and still less with a formal agreement, with the American side. An agency to deal with Jewish refugees from Russia, the American Jewish Russian Emigrant Relief Committee (RERC) was only founded on 18 September 1881. As the influx reached greater proportions, a more permanent body, the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society, was formally incorporated early in December 1881.²⁰ The Americans and Europeans then entered into a period of almost unending contention and recrimination.

The Americans quickly became disenchanted with the quality of the refugees dumped on their doorstep and complained to Paris on this score.²¹ In early October 1881, S. H. Goldschmidt, the vice-president of the Central Committee of the Alliance, wrote a letter of justification to

¹⁷ Wischnitzer, *To Dwell*, 41-2.

¹⁸ Osofsky, "Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society," 174. The first refugees to America traveled via Antwerp. Between 18 September and 9 November the AIU delegates in Brody dispatched 1,424 people to the West via Hamburg: *JC*, 660:18/XI/1881.

¹⁹ Szajkowski, "Attitude," 262.

²⁰ Osofsky, "Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society." Significantly, one of the organization's declared aims was "to check pauperism by discouraging the emigration of persons incapable of labor": *ibid.*, 186.

²¹ While defending its own methods of selection, the Alliance admitted that "there have also been sent from several quarters emigrants not specially selected and little fitted to obtain a living from their own work": *JC*, 658:4/XI/1881.

M. S. Isaacs, the president of the US Board of Delegates. He claimed, somewhat disingenuously, that "you must not believe that the Alliance has called forth this desire for emigration. It existed and was spreading. Mr. Strauss, the emigration agent in Antwerp, told me that his company alone had forwarded about two thousand Jewish emigrants from Galicia, Hungary and southern Russia since the beginning of the year."²² Since the Alliance was not guilty, in this analysis, Goldschmidt could offer a warning and an admonition. "We foresee the emigration from Russia, where there are two-and-a-half to three million Jews, will go on for years, and rather increase than diminish, and the situation of American Jewry may be deeply influenced, for better or for worse, according to the manner in which they behave in this emergency."²³

The American response was contained in a letter to Goldschmidt, dated 31 October 1881, from M. A. Kursheedt, the secretary of the Russian Emigrant Relief fund. Its overall thrust was straightforward: "We are compelled to state that we cannot agree with you, that emigration to America is the great panacea for the woes of the Russian Jews. The number of persons whose condition can be bettered in this way is comparatively small."²⁴ Kursheedt directly contradicted the claims made by the Alliance. Regarding "judicious selection," he observed that "fully one-third of those who arrived thus far possess none of the requisite qualifications, and that their unfitness must have been apparent to your agents, if they exercised any discrimination whatever, and that not over one-third are really desirable emigrants." Indeed, some of the arrivals were not even Russian refugees at all. "Among those who have arrived here under your auspices, are Austrians and Galicians who could have been easily detected by proper efforts." This led to the belief on the side of the Americans that "many of these are sent over here purposely, merely to relieve the European Communities; then there are constantly arriving, widows with small children, and also deserted wives and children seeking their husbands and fathers, but without any definite idea where to find them." Far from following an elemental urge to migrate, as Goldschmidt claimed, many of the refugees had been lured by extravagant promises of assistance and "glowing accounts of America given them by persons interested in inducing them to emigrate" (the aforementioned Mr. Strauss being a case in point). Therefore, advised Kursheedt, no more than 50 people should be sent in any one week and not over 150 per month. "You must consider that the more we do for the emigrants, the

²² Cited in Wischnitzer, *To Dwell*, 44-5.

²³ Cited *ibid.*, 43. The letter, dated 2 October 1881, was printed in the *Jewish Messenger* (11/XI/1881).

²⁴ Szajkowski, "Attitude," 264.

faster they will rush over here, so that we are well nigh compelled to resist our humane impulses, and check the tide of emigration at the cost of much human misery.”

The American complaints forced a temporary pause, and then a more restricted dispatch of emigrants to the United States. The onset of winter was also a contributing factor. All the AIU personnel departed Brody, save for Schafier, who was assigned to bring fifty-two abandoned children to – *mirabile dictu* – an agricultural school at Mikveh Israel, near Jaffa. The Alliance itself, “recognizing the impossibility to continue for the moment the work of emigration, has voted . . . 100,000 francs, with the view of assisting the fugitives either to return to Russia or to repair to neighboring countries, where it is expected that they will be able to obtain employment.”²⁵

But matters were not so simply ended. In Britain, members of the elite leadership, disgruntled at the apparent inactivity of the Russo-Jewish Committee, sought to force the plight of Russian Jewry back into the limelight. Led by Oswald John Simon, they contrived an appeal in the names of the “great and the good,” led by the well-known philanthropist, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the Anglican bishop of Oxford. Ironically, the publication of the atrocity reports which the much derided Russo-Jewish Committee succeeded in placing in *The Times* helped to swell public outrage. On 21 January a petition, signed by Shaftesbury, the Roman Catholic cardinal Manning, and leading public figures such as Charles Darwin, asked the Lord Mayor of the City of London to convoke a public meeting at his official residence, the Mansion House, to protest the Russian atrocities.²⁶

The public meeting was held at the Mansion House on 1 February 1882, fulfilling its objective of expressing public opinion “upon the outrages inflicted upon the Jews in various parts of Russia and Russian Poland.” The meeting unanimously adopted the resolution put to it by the Earl of Shaftesbury: “That in the opinion of this meeting, the persecutions and outrages which the Jews in many parts of the Russian dominions have for several months past suffered, are an offence on Christian civilization, and to be deeply deplored.” In addition, the meeting created a committee to raise and disburse relief funds for pogrom victims, the Mansion House Committee (MHC).²⁷ Thus was created a four-sided equation:

²⁵ *JC*, 665:23/XII/1881.

²⁶ There were precedents: Meetings had been held at the Mansion House to protest the Damascus Blood Libel in 1840 and the mistreatment of the Jews in the Balkans in 1872. See Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair* (Cambridge, 1997), 222.

²⁷ A full transcript of the Mansion House meeting is found in a special supplement to the *JC*, 671:3/II/1882.

New York/London/Paris/Berlin–Vienna. In the shadow of these major players was a variety of smaller private initiatives, some of which sent groups of refugees to America, but the bulk of which were devoted to some form of Jewish colonization in Palestine.²⁸

New York, the largest Jewish community in America and a major port of entry for trans-Atlantic emigrants, was the logical representative for the American side. Yet its leadership role in this regard was always tenuous. It could not hope to command the obedience of smaller communities with their own desire to help.²⁹ Its principal body, the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society (HEAS), was plagued by a number of systemic failings, as delineated in Gilbert Osofsky's history of the organization. It was hastily created in response to a flood of refugees sent over without its knowledge or consent. It had no stability, with three presidents and four secretaries in the course of its year-long existence. It attracted lukewarm support at best and frequent criticism from the press, in contrast to the favorable publicity accorded the Mansion House Committee by the British press. It lacked the financial and psychological support of the Jewish community and of New York society as a whole. Most importantly, neither HEAS nor any other American body had any standing among the international relief committees. Instead, American spokesmen were often cast in the guise of querulous outsiders, offering nothing but carping criticism of European initiatives.³⁰ HEAS itself was a special target of the *Jewish Chronicle*, which described its agents as "unworthy of confidence" and "distinguished by inefficiency or dishonesty," while calling for its dissolution.³¹ Nonetheless, HEAS did succeed in creating an advice bureau, a restaurant, and a shelter at Ward's Island. It sponsored agricultural resettlement schemes, such as those at Sicily Island, Louisiana, Vineland, New Jersey, and Cotopaxi, Colorado.³² HEAS operations ceased at the end of March 1883.

The Mansion House Committee was an active organization, albeit one whose aspirations were undermined by its lack of funds. While it developed a working relationship with the Alliance, it pursued its own initiatives as well, reflecting the priorities of its coopted partners, such as the Conjoint Committee. For example, in mid-February 1882, it

²⁸ These latter included the Christian-dominated Society for Colonization of Syria and the various proto-Zionist activities described in Chapter 8. In a report of 31 July 1882, the MHC reported that it had dispatched 8,500 people to America, while 13,000 had sailed under the auspices of other bodies: Szajkowski, "Mass Migration," 300; *JC*, 697:4/VIII/1882.

²⁹ Osofsky, "Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society," 176, lists twenty-four local committees in North America in addition to New York. HEAS raised approximately \$100,000 in individual contributions.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 184–5. ³¹ *JC*, 71:10/XI/1882.

³² Osofsky, "Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society," 178–9; *JC*, 698:11/VIII/1882.

sent its own delegates, Laurence Oliphant, Dr. Asher Asher, and Samuel Montagu, to Brody to sort and dispatch emigrants.³³ The MHC assigned funds to the Jewish Board of Guardians to assist refugees already in Britain. It was represented at the two major meetings of European relief committees, at Berlin and Vienna. Its delegates met with regional leaders, such as Count Potocki, the Habsburg governor of Galicia.³⁴ As late as 1884, the MHC was still exploring the possibilities of agricultural colonization in America.³⁵ One of the most striking features of the MHC was its distrust of, and complicated working relationship with, the American HEAS.

The AIU made the early running in the provision of relief to Russian pogrom victims and played the leading role throughout 1881–2. It made the crucial decisions regarding the sponsorship of emigration to the United States and the refusal to assist colonization schemes in Palestine and, in the end, accepted the need to repatriate many would-be emigrants. The AIU created a special subcommittee to deal with the issue of the Russian refugees, chaired by Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, with Netter serving as secretary. The Alliance was eager to pursue cooperation between relief agencies and was instrumental in convoking the Berlin and Vienna meetings. It maintained correct relations with HEAS in the United States.

The Jewish communities of Berlin and Vienna are best noted for staging conferences rather than playing a leading role in providing relief. While both communities raised funds, created relief committees, and assisted activities at Brody,³⁶ they were reluctant to play leadership roles. When invited to play a more active part, they invariably declined. Bleichroeder in Berlin was loath to join the initiative proposed by the Anglo-Russian Committee for concerted action. In response to suggestions from the MHC, “at Berlin there was found to exist a disinclination to form a Central Committee to act in concert with the committees of Paris and London. On the contrary, the leaders of the Jewish community in Berlin suggested that the seat of the Central Committee should be in London.”³⁷ On the part of the Germans there was apparently a fear that the settlement of Russian Jewish emigrants would provide ammunition to the emergent antisemitic movement. Habsburg Jewry also feared the impact of the crisis on the antisemitic movement, but were additionally concerned at the problem of Brody. While the attitude of the Galician authorities was, on the whole, sympathetic, problems of sanitation and public order lurked

³³ *JC*, 681:14/IV/1882. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 688:2/VI/1882.

³⁵ American Jewish Historical Society Archives (New York), Zosa Szajkowski Collection, 01/02, 168–73.

³⁶ The Viennese Israelitische Allianz sent its secretary, Moritz Friedländer, to Brody; German Jewry was represented by Hermann Magnus of Leipzig.

³⁷ *JC*, 678:24/III/1882.

in the background, not helped in the least by fears of epidemic disease and an outbreak of rioting among the refugees. A special conference had to be held in Brody on 2 June 1882 to sort out disagreements that had arisen between the relief committees of Brody and of Lemberg.³⁸

The varying agendas of the would-be benefactors, and their mistrust of each other's intentions, bedeviled efforts at coordination and cooperation throughout 1882. For example, on the eve of the Mansion House meeting, a delegate of HEAS, Moritz Ellinger, arrived in London carrying a set of proposals to be submitted to the AIU, the Anglo-Jewish Committee, and the relief bodies of other European capitals. The proposal was an ambitious one, envisioning the settlement of 10,000 refugees. Reflecting the plan submitted to the Council of American Hebrew Congregations, it envisioned the careful selection of would-be emigrants and their dispersal throughout the United States, and other countries as well. The proposal also called for agricultural colonization, for which the sum of one million dollars was to be raised.³⁹

Unlike the Alliance, the newly formed Mansion House Committee appears to have paid no attention to the Ellinger proposals and proceeded on its own course of funding the dispatch of Brody refugees to the United States. A pattern emerged. British relief institutions became extremely skeptical of the competence and intentions of the American agencies, and relations between them turned increasingly hostile. The Alliance, meanwhile, had fewer problems with their US counterparts and tried to moderate. In March 1882, Schafier, Moritz Friedländer, and Hermann Magnus returned to Brody, which continued to attract refugees despite the periodic warnings published in newspapers and broadsides. As the flow to the United States resumed, HEAS sent a cable to the Conjoint Committee (not, it should be noted, to the MHC) cryptically stating: "Only young unmarried refugees should emigrate hither. Send neither families nor farmers. Cable receipt hereof."⁴⁰ Matters were explained only when Lionel L. Cohen, the president of the Jewish Board of Guardians, received a detailed letter from Manuel Kursheedt, the secretary of HEAS. Kursheedt pointedly noted that HEAS had been induced to act upon reading of the proposals made by the MHC and the Board of Guardians, without, of course, any consultation with the Americans. He explained that it was unrealistic to send whole families to the United States, whose members had to rely on public charity until they mastered the English

³⁸ Wischnitzer, *To Dwell*, 47.

³⁹ The Central Committee of the AIU discussed Ellinger's proposals on 7 February 1882: Szajkowski Collection, 12-14.

⁴⁰ Sanders, *Shores*, 97.

language and American ways. Single men and women had a better chance of finding employment as factory-workers and domestics. As for farmers, most of those who had arrived claiming to have been farmers in Russia had no real experience and no understanding of the difficulties in farming virgin soil in America. They had been misled by unrealistic promises in Europe. Most cutting was Kursheedt's complaint that "there is no doubt that a large portion of the emigrants are merely the dregs of the populace" already living in London at the time of the pogroms. Kursheedt also highlighted mistakes made in sending refugees to the wrong address, confusing Atlanta, Illinois, with Atlanta, Georgia, in one instance. The lesson of this was clear: "unless there is the fullest co-operation between the European Committees and ourselves . . . we have every reason to fear that the result of the movement will be disastrous not only to the refugees but to the Jewish race through and through."⁴¹

The Londoners did not take kindly to such criticism. Even while the Alliance was sending a circular letter to its members declaring that "the Central Committee [of the AIU] believe it to be the duty of the European Jews to further to the utmost of their power the proposals made by the Emigrants' Aid Society of New York for the settlement of the Russian Jews arriving in the United States,"⁴² a draft proposal of the Conjoint Committee to the MHC declared that "the Committee being without sufficient information as to the nature and extent of the organization of the Hebrew Emigrants' Aid Society of New York, and the telegrams from that society, contained in Mr Ellinger's [portfolio], not being of a reassuring character, are not prepared at present to forward to that society any further funds." The Conjoint proposal recommended sending refugees directly to towns in the interior of the United States and Canada, bypassing New York entirely.⁴³ Calmer heads instead prevailed, and the Londoners agreed to participate in a conference called by the AIU for Berlin to develop plans for future action.⁴⁴

In advance of the Berlin conference, which met on 23–4 April 1882, the *JC* voiced the optimistic hope that "we shall at least have, after its conclusion, the Jews of Germany, France, England and America working in full accord with one another."⁴⁵ On the basis of the conference resolutions, this confidence appeared warranted. Each participant at Berlin was given a task to expedite emigration from Russia. The Viennese

⁴¹ *JC*, 681:14/IV/1882. ⁴² *Ibid.*, 680:7/IV/1882.

⁴³ This proved to be only a draft proposal, and was never actually submitted to the MHC. See *JC*, 683:28/IV/1882.

⁴⁴ This was the conference which inspired the brief episode of Zionist enthusiasm on the part of the *Jewish Chronicle*: see Chapter 9.

⁴⁵ *JC*, 682:21/IV/1882.

Committee was authorized to make the selection of potential emigrants from the refugees found in the Habsburg territories. The Mansion House Committee was to coordinate the dispatch of the selected migrants across the Atlantic, having worked out with HEAS the rules to govern settlement in the States. The AIU was charged with locating other places of possible settlement. Although Palestine was not specifically excluded, the past statements of the AIU ensured that it would not be taken seriously as a place of refuge. The conference confronted the problem of economic migrants by specifying that assistance would go only to those who had suffered, directly or indirectly, from the excesses of the mob or from government oppression. This criterion was to be publicized, although it was never explained exactly how the deserving wheat was to be separated from the undeserving chaff. The conference also responded to the concerns of some participants by specifying that emigrants were to be enabled to live in accordance with their religious convictions – an indirect warning to the Americans, perhaps, who had in the past stressed the impossibility of living a fully pious life in the States.⁴⁶

Given past experience, the key to implementing the conference decisions was for the Mansion House Committee to develop a good working relationship with HEAS. To this end, the MHC dispatched a representative, George Yates, to New York. Yates reported in a telegram to the MHC in late May that the “aid society enjoys confidence and cooperation of leading Jews. Am personally favorably impressed. Influential Committee formed. Organization rapidly developing on sound basis. New York should control dispersion of emigrants. Delegates from principal cities meet here next month to arrange concerted action throughout States. Send to New York 200 selected emigrants. Remit funds to Society.” The meeting took place on 4 June, with Yates in attendance. HEAS and the MHC were later to differ on what was agreed at the meeting, but it represented the high point of cooperation.

In the annals of the pogrom-inspired trans-Atlantic migration, June was the cruelest month. Early in that month the MHC announced that, having sent 6,994 emigrants to America, at a cost of £11 per head, it was running short of money. The Habsburg authorities were increasingly dissatisfied with the state of affairs at Brody: The more refugees were dispatched abroad, the more crossed the border from Russia. There were rumors that they were prepared to expel all refugees. The Austrian army reportedly escorted new arrivals to Brody back to the frontier and handed them over to Russian border guards.⁴⁷ Matters were not at all helped by

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 686:19/V/1882.

⁴⁷ Leo Shpall, ed., “The Diary of Dr. George M. Price,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 40 (1950-1), 176-7.

reports in late May from Reuters of a riot among the Brody refugees. As funds from Europe dried up, HEAS announced that it would no longer be responsible for refugees.

The mounting tensions began to appear in print. A *JC* editorial on 30 June denounced HEAS, especially its alleged failure to respect the religious sensibilities of the refugees. Instead they were given employment that required them to work on the Sabbath and to ignore the rules of *kashrut*.⁴⁸ The *JC* was also critical of the Americans' incessant demands for funds. "There is no reason why it should have had one penny of European money, much less of English money, seeing that the American Jews are fully eight times as numerous as the Jews of Great Britain." It would be no loss "if the Hebrew Emigrants' Aid Society were to expire of inanition tomorrow."⁴⁹ At the end of July 1882, the MHC announced that it was no longer sending emigrants to America.

The potential closing of the American door made the situation of the 12,000 Brody refugees more critical than ever. The problem was taken in hand by Emmanuel Veneziani, who represented both the Alliance and the Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice Hirsch at Brody. On 29 June 1882, he sent a proposal to the president of the AIU. He recommended raising a substantial sum of money to complete the final evacuation of Brody.⁵⁰ At the same time, he raised the question of a remedy for the situation that was becoming increasingly popular in the deliberations of relief committees: repatriation. Although the pogroms had not ceased, they appeared to be on the wane. The replacement as minister of internal affairs of Ignatiev, widely blamed as the instigator of the pogroms, by the nonsense conservative D. A. Tolstói, was taken as a harbinger of better times for Russian Jews. Tolstói not only issued tough-sounding instructions to local authorities, but also ordered the cessation of emigration activities. In addition, he sent a police official, Captain Debil', to Brody to assist the Russian consul with the repatriation of refugees. Since few of the Brody refugees possessed passports, Debil' oversaw the issuance of transit visas which permitted a return to Russia. A special office was established at Brody to verify the identities of refugees who desired to return to Russia.⁵¹ Even those committees which had been loath to promote emigration abroad, and still less to permit a concentration of refugees in their

⁴⁸ *JC*, 692:30/VI/1882. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 694:14/VII/1882.

⁵⁰ The MHC considered the sum to be unrealistic; reflecting the growing disillusionment of the charity with the refugees, Julian Goldsmid of the MHC, in a letter to Baron Edmund de Rothschild on 11 July 1882, expressed concern that more spending would merely attract large numbers of anxious people "to obtain a share of such liberality." The MHC offered only £10,000 to support the Veneziani scheme: Szajkowski Collection, 113-15.

⁵¹ *Rassvet*, 35:29/VIII/1882; *JC*, 701:1/IX/1882.

midst, had been ambivalent about returning Jews to areas where their lives appeared to be in danger. The stabilization of the situation in Russia permitted them to consider this option with a clearer conscience, reinforced by the fact that a new type of refugee problem was being created by the return to Europe of some refugees who had been sent to the United States. This was the background to another international conference that met in Vienna, from 2 to 4 August 1882, to consider Veneziani's plan to evacuate Brody, which had come to symbolize the refugee movement.⁵²

The Vienna meeting sought to gain control of the situation by stipulating, in no uncertain terms, that no refugee at Brody would be assisted in any way if they were not registered with the local relief committee before 31 July 1882. The methods for clearing Brody were prioritized as (1) repatriation and (2) dispersion, which served as a catch-all term for the settlement of refugees outside Russia. While the majority of participants do not seem to have shared the Mansion House representatives' opinion that "only a very small minority cannot be repatriated," it was agreed during the discussions that "recourse will not be had to dispersion where repatriation is in any way possible." The conference also provided the opportunity for some recriminations. The British delegates observed pointedly that refugees were appearing in London from the United States, where they had been sent, without consultation, by some European relief committees, even after they had been instructed by the Americans to send no more. Moreover, the huge sum of 4,000,000 francs promised by Paris (by the AIU and the Comité de Bienfaisance) in advance of the Vienna conference had been reduced to 400,000 francs under the pretext that the dispersion of Jews from Brody would bring several hundred Jewish refugees to France, "who would be a costly and permanent burden on the funds of the committees there." As regards dispersion abroad, the conference specified that the Brody committee was "to place itself in accord with the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of New York," which was represented at the conference by Edward Lauterbach.

The generalized sympathy of the West toward the victims of the pogroms of 1881-2 had waned considerably by the end of 1882, faced with the numbers of refugees and the very real human problems they brought with

⁵² A French version of the resolutions of the Vienna meeting is found in Szajkowski Collection, 116-18. The *JC*, 701:1/IX/1882, carried an English-language version, as well as the report of the British delegate, B. L. Cohen, to the Mansion House Committee, which gives some insights into the nature of the deliberations. All the following quotations from the conference are taken from Cohen's report in the *JC*.

them. The delighted discovery of refugees who were "handsome, tall, neat and intelligent," accompanied by their "elegant women," gave way to complaints that the refugees were miserable paupers, some with made-up stories that could not be verified, wife-deserters, and a permanent drain on the benevolence of their host communities. A nadir was reached when a group of refugees were engaged in a violent confrontation with the administration of the Ward's Island refuge in New York. The *London Daily News* condemned the rioters as "idle, worthless people."⁵³ The *Jewish Chronicle* used the occasion for another attack upon its old enemy, HEAS: "recent intelligence received from America fully justifies the strong feeling of distrust of the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of New York entertained by the Mansion House Committee." Its shortcomings were exemplified by the Ward's Island refuge, where Russian Jewish immigrants "were maintained in idleness, semi-starvation and filth, and were lapsing into a condition of chronic pauperism."⁵⁴

The reverse stream of migration was also unsettling. Jonathan Sarna has identified "the myth of no return," based on the idea that "Jews came here to stay," as a common assumption of American Jewish history. In fact, there was a continual stream of disappointed returnees to Europe.⁵⁵ In 1889, the Russian Jewish emigrant George Price reported in *Voskhod* that 7,580 emigrants had returned to Eastern Europe with the help of the United Hebrew Charities.⁵⁶ Whatever the numbers may actually have been, the contemporary press gave the impression that they were considerable. For example, reports in the *Jewish Chronicle* in October reported the arrival of 500 returnees to Berlin and 260 returned by the Mansion House Fund (706:6/X/82 and 709:27/X/1882). The United States appeared to be losing its status as the *goldene medine*.

The crisis of 1881–2 offered bitter lessons for Jewish groups resolved to assist their victimized Russian brethren, some of which were learned and some of which were ignored. The most important was that the Jewish Question in the Russian Empire could not be solved by out-migration. The paltry numbers who left the empire in 1881–2 were insignificant. Even the million and a half who left between 1881 and 1914 had no decisive impact, given the sharp upward demographic curve of East European Jewry. Organized emigration schemes had proven ineffective, not least because

⁵³ *JC*, 708:20/X/1882.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 711:10/XI/1882. For an objective, contemporary account of the Ward's Island incident, Leo Shpall, ed., "The Memoir of Dr. George M. Price," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 47, 2 (1957/8), 105–10.

⁵⁵ Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Myth of No Return: Jewish Return Migration to Eastern Europe, 1881–1914," *American Jewish History*, 71, 2 (1981), 256.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.

the Russian government proved unable to develop a definitive policy in this regard. This situation would be confirmed in the future by the relative failure, given its resources and objectives, of the Jewish Colonization Association. And while the pogroms may have inspired proto-Zionist schemes, the crisis demonstrated that Erets Israel would not successfully be colonized by idealistic students without experience or resources.

The crisis revealed the difficulties underlying the cooperation in welfare provision of European Jewish communities for whom a major priority was that they not become the permanent home of impoverished refugees. The expedient of dumping the refugees in North America also proved ineffective and threatened an outright rupture between European and American Jewish communities. Emigration would continue, but it would be a private matter for the emigrants themselves. Yet the failures of 1881-2 should not obscure the willingness of established European and American Jewish communities to defend their co-religionists in the Russian Empire. This was a commitment they would not easily abandon in the future.

Epilogue: legends of the pogroms

Mr Arthur Cohen: "As far as he could judge, there was no evidence proving that the Russian government had instigated these persecutions."
Baron Henry de Worms: "Oh, oh!" Hansard

There is not the slightest doubt that agents of the government and various elements of the Christian bourgeoisie, not only directly supported the anti-Jewish movement, but in many places triggered and led it.

Pavel Akselrod¹

A central finding of this study is that Russian officials neither desired, encouraged, nor tolerated pogroms. In both 1881 and 1882 the authorities took extensive precautions to anticipate and prevent pogroms, repress them when they occurred, and punish the perpetrators. (The *impact* of official policies toward the Jews is another matter.) It is not necessary to seek out the motives or the conspiratorial mechanics underlying government-inspired pogroms, since they never existed. How, then, did the legend of official complicity become so firmly embedded both in the collective consciousness of Jews and in the scholarly literature? To choose only one example, David Vital, one of the most widely read historians of modern Jewry, asserted as late as 1999 that "the one central, more than merely adequately documented feature of virtually all the pogroms in all the provinces of southern Russia and the Ukraine was the extreme weakness of the official response, the well-nigh universal refusal of the authorities to take steps to inhibit mob violence when it was impending, and, in very great numbers of cases, to stop it when it had already begun."²

Certainly when popular violence persists for almost two years under a regime widely regarded as a police state, it is not surprising that observers should look for a hidden hand. Contemporaries of the pogroms were quick to do so, with Jews in the lead. In the words of L. Schloss, at a meeting of the Anglo-Jewish Association in May 1881, "it was impossible

¹ *Hansard*, 3/III/1882, 58; "O zadachakh evreisko-sotsialisticheskoi intelligentsii," in *Iz arkhiva P. B. Aksel'roda* (Berlin, 1924), 224.

² David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford, 1999), 285.

that outrages could take place, and last in some instances more than 24 hours, in a country which bristled so with police and soldiery as Russia, without the authorities winked at them for their own purposes."³

In Russia, as we have seen, the Jewish leadership initially sought to attribute the pogroms to the machinations of the Nihilists, as the surest means of encouraging the government to strike hard at the *pogromshchiki*. When Jews themselves were accused of creating the conditions for pogroms by exploitation, the strategy of Jewish spokesmen shifted. They transferred the blame onto national and local authorities. These accusations varied: The authorities were negligent in anticipating the outbreak of pogroms and in combating instigation, especially Judeophobe agitation in the press. The police and the army were guilty of dereliction of duty for failure to use maximum force to repress the pogroms at their first appearance. Local officials, governors, and governors-general made matters worse by blaming the Jews for popular antipathy in order to justify their own failures at quashing mob violence.

Prior to 1881, Jews in the Russian Empire had seen the state deal ruthlessly with outbreaks of violence and criminality, from whatever quarter. Troops were called out to repress peasant disturbances and were not slow to resort to deadly force; Poles and other dissident minorities were punished with execution, exile, and confiscation of property; common criminals were publicly flogged. Jews themselves paid for violations of the law: Illegal residents of Kiev were rounded up and marched back to the Pale of Settlement in chains under military escort. Yet, as seen by Jewish critics, in April and May 1881 the authorities were reluctant to act, a failure made more glaring as the pogroms became a mass movement. Any comfort that the Jews might have drawn from official statements, such as the sympathetic words of the emperor during his May 1881 audience with Baron G. O. Gintsburg, was quickly dissipated by the hostile rhetoric of Count N. P. Ignatiev.

Against this background, it is easy to understand how the events of one outbreak, in Kiev, were shaped into the paradigmatic pogrom, its features attributed to most other pogroms. This paradigm asserted that the ground for the pogroms was prepared by systematic anti-Jewish agitation in the press, given free rein by the censorship. In particular, the press was alleged to have harped on the role of Jews in the assassination of Emperor Alexander II. While pogrom violence was well advertised in advance, the authorities refused to take any preventative measures, even when it was requested by threatened Jewish communities. Pogroms broke out

³ *Jewish World*, 433:27/V/1881 NS.

simultaneously in widely scattered areas and at a set time, and lasted for three days, until the authorities finally acted to curb the violence. A curt instruction that the permitted period was over was usually sufficient. This paradigm was so firmly established that observers routinely ignored the absence of simultaneity or the fact that major pogroms were not ended by the simple announcement of the authorities, but by the application of deadly force. Given the plethora of rumors that surrounded the pogroms, critics found ample evidence that pre-pogrom organization was open and widely known. It mattered not at all that no "outside instigator" was ever apprehended or identified, or that no copy of the apparently ubiquitous "lists of Jewish apartments and shops" was ever found. The red-shirted instigators simply melted into the crowd, along with the illusive *pogromshchik* who played airs from "Faust" on a looted piano, in both Elisavetgrad and Kiev.

Michael Aronson has effectively refuted the basic assumptions underlying the conspiracy theory of the pogroms of 1881. It was not his objective to explain the genesis and development of the myths that grew up around the events. This chapter undertakes that task by exploring the construction of some of these pogrom myths, how they came into being, and how they buttressed widely held assumptions about the Russian state and its treatment of its Jewish population. This process took place both within and outside the Russian Empire itself. It went through three basic stages: Claims of official incompetence gave way to charges of malfeasance, which in turn developed into full-blown conspiracy theories.

The development of the myth within the Russian Empire

Ironically, members of the government were the first to voice the basic assumptions of the pogrom myth, that there was a conspiracy in which local officials colluded. I have noted the initial concern of the central authorities that the pogroms were part of a revolutionary conspiracy. The highest authorities also expressed disappointment at the performance of the forces of law and order. A meeting of the Committee of Ministers voiced complaints about "the absence of timely efficiency, resourcefulness, and capability" on the part of local officials.⁴ During the debates in this same body over the draft May Laws, State Comptroller D. M. Solskii roundly condemned the failure of the MVD to restrain Jew-baiting in the press and condemned the performance of the police as "scandalous."⁵

⁴ GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1618 (1881-2), l. 31ob. ⁵ See Chapter 6, p. 218.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs demanded lists of those who had failed in their duties, as well as those who had acquitted themselves well.⁶ The tsar himself was outraged at what he perceived to be the lenient conduct of officials, officers, and the courts.⁷

Local officials found themselves attacked in public and in private. The public prosecutors in at least two pogrom trials, at Romny and Balta, singled out the local authorities for their passivity which, it was alleged, had implied approval of pogroms.⁸ The newly appointed governor of Chernigov province, S. V. Shakhovskoi, rallied the local police of the province to act against pogroms. He reminded them that disorders had spread in the past "due, in large part, to blunders and to the absence of energy and attention to their obligations on the part of the district police."⁹ In an effort to deflect criticism from himself, Ignatiev reportedly blamed the reoccurrence of pogroms on a lack of resources and the deficient actions of the local administration.¹⁰

To some extent, the outbreak of pogroms should not have come as a surprise to Orthodox Jews: It was seen as an established fact of life in the *galut*, where the malevolence of the non-Jewish population was assumed. In Vital's words, "anti-Jewish riots . . . had never ceased to be a feature of the lives of Jews anywhere."¹¹ The proto-Zionist thinker Peretz Smolenskin claimed to have predicted the pogroms and asserted that they were "long prepared," arising from the "anti-Jewish venom which has filled most of the Russian press and periodicals for the last twenty years."¹² The eve of Easter in 1881 had been marked, as in the past, with numerous requests for holiday protection from Jewish communities throughout the Pale, often without any response. Jews throughout Russia easily believed the widely reported claim that, with Kiev threatened by pogroms, Governor-General Drenteln had refused "to trouble his

⁶ See Chapter 3, nn. 91–2.

⁷ The tsar was disturbed at the light sentences that were mandated by the Criminal Code. It was for this reason that the state intervened either illegally (the mass flogging of peasants) or quasi-legally (the use of military courts and the priority given to pogrom cases). Kutaisov was very critical of the light sentences handed out by the Kiev Military District Court to rioters: *K-A*, 410.

⁸ *Rassvet*, 42:16/VIII/1881, for Romny; *ibid.*, 30:25/VII/1882 for Balta, where the local authorities were attacked for "the shameful phenomenon of indifference to their responsibilities."

⁹ GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512 (1882), l. 35ob.

¹⁰ *NKhV*, 6:5/II/1882. Typically, within a fortnight he denied ever having discussed the conduct of the authorities at all: *ibid.*, 8:19/II/1882. *Rassvet*, 7:12/II/1882, reprints the official denial published in *Pravitel'svoennyi vestnik*.

¹¹ Vital, *People Apart*, 289–90.

¹² Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York, 1959), 149.

soldiers for a pack of Jews."¹³ A belief in the inevitability of pogroms in the existing conditions of Russian life underlay the arguments of ideologues of all stripes. The partisans of the New Politics sought to demonstrate the impossibility of a normal life within the Russian Empire; their liberal opponents had to justify their demand for equal rights for the Jews.

The initial description of the pogroms, in the Jewish and non-Jewish press alike, pointed to the difficulties encountered by the police and the military in restoring order to pogrom-wracked areas. Critical comments tended to focus on confusion and incompetence rather than ill-will or collaboration. When the Jews began to present formal interpretations of the violence, they emphasized the preparatory role of the press, and this became one of the most commonly accepted features of the pogrom legend. All of the reports to Count Kutaisov stressed the incendiary role of the press, particularly the empire's three preeminent Judeophobe publications, *Novorossiiskii telegraf*, *Kievlianin*, and *Novoe vremia*. Speaking of the former, the Jews of Elisavetgrad complained that "it systematically pursues only one goal: to arouse, as much as possible, the passions of Christians against Jews, not shying away from distortions of the truth or slander."¹⁴ The Jews of Kharkov accused an article in *Novoe vremia* of provoking the Nezhin pogrom.¹⁵ Kiev Jews decried the fifteen-year long campaign of the "theoretical economists" of *Kievlianin* against "Jewish exploitation."¹⁶ The Jews of Odessa stressed the inflammatory nature of the notorious article in *Novorossiiskii telegraf* that had urged the population to resist Jewish exploitation with the ruble rather than with fists. They complained that this article had asserted that there were many Jews, both male and female, among the regicides. The fact that the censorship permitted such articles to appear, it was claimed, gave them credence. "The hostile organs assail the Jews unfairly with special malice, but the censorship, in spite of the law, does not ban articles with a wholly incendiary character, and in the case of a response from the Jews, it restricts their defense, relying on various circulars and pronouncements."¹⁷ These complaints contained the kernel of the legendary claim that the press conducted a sustained campaign against the Jews in the wake of the assassination of Alexander II and that it spread the charge that "the Jews have killed the tsar." Thus, with official approval and collusion, the press helped to provoke the violence.¹⁸

¹³ See Chapter 2, n. 66. ¹⁴ *K-A*, 230. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 320. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 235-6. The article in question (20/III/1881) had quoted a group of butchers who had assaulted Jews with the cry that "there are many Yids, male and female, among the troublemakers in Petersburg."

¹⁸ See S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1918), 247. Dubnow provides the classic account in English of the principal myths surrounding the Russian pogroms: *ibid.*, 243-83.

By the beginning of 1882, therefore, a number of the essential ingredients of the pogrom myth were in place. They were hardly a secret, and were neatly summed up in the New Year's editorial of *Russkii evrei*, which is worth quoting at length. Under the influence of resurgent anti-Jewish agitation in Germany, it claimed, Russian Judeophobes began a campaign for further restrictions on Russian Jewry:

Three newspapers, one in the capital and two in the provinces, were especially distinguished by such activities. They eschewed no lie, no slander, no distortion of the facts in order to arouse minds against the Jews. And these efforts were not in vain. The popular masses, extremely unsettled by the catastrophe of 1 March, soon followed the advice of their well-wishers and on 15 April in Elisavetgrad there occurred the debut, in crude but completely clear language, of the unattractive behavior arising from the hints and promptings of the above-mentioned publicists. Subsequent pogroms followed. The usual pattern was that after several days of street quarrels and minor clashes, a crowd appeared from who-knows-where, usually comprised of vagrants and one fine day, usually on a holiday, they flooded the streets, attacking Jews' shops, stores, factories, taverns, homes, destroying, with unheard of ferocity, everything Jewish. This mass continued their destructive action, even in the presence of troops, often in large numbers, and order was restored only on the second, third, or even fourth day. Who armed or who commanded the crowd remains to a large degree unknown, but everywhere the crowd was under command, and in some places was even highly organized. (1:1/I/1882)

If there is a conspiracy, there must be conspirators. In Jewish eyes, no one was better cast for the role of conspirator-in-chief than Ignatiev, especially after his fall from power. Early on the foreign press pointed a collective finger at him, and the Russian Jewish press followed suit.¹⁹ Greeting a pronouncement by the new minister of internal affairs, Count Dmitrii Tolstoi, that local officials would be held to account if disorders occurred in their bailiwicks, *Rassvet* offered its first comment on the "glad news" of ministerial changes. The language was extremely convoluted, but the message was obvious:

One has to take into consideration what the course of this last, ill-fated year has demonstrated, that there is an important, fatal significance for the fate of our people in the relationship, real or potential, to the Jewish Question of the individual who is in charge of the MVD, as well as the circumstance that, in view of this direct pronouncement of the government, newspapers hostile to the Jews will no longer be able to hint that beating and despoiling the Jews correspond to the views of the government. One can conclude that one of the most important causes that contribute to the rise of the disorders and that influences their intensity has been removed. (25:20/VI/1882)

¹⁹ See, for example, the condemnation of Ignat'ev in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, 19:9/V/1882.

Recalling the pogrom era in 1909, M. L. Lilienblum noted to Shaul Ginzburg in 1909 that, at the time of the pogroms, "all of the more thoughtful people attributed their contrivance [*izobretenie*] to Count Ignatiev."²⁰

It was against this background that the Levin Memorandum, discussed in Chapter 10, was prepared.²¹ The Gintsburg Memorandum, submitted to the tsar on 22 March 1882, had already established a template for attacks on the MVD. It emphasized the failure of local officials – responsible to Ignatiev – to anticipate and prevent pogroms, despite ample evidence that disorders were imminent. It claimed that anti-pogrom measures proposed by the ministry were ill-considered and dangerous.²² It was a short step from incompetence to conspiracy. Indeed, the very first sentence of the Levin Memorandum conjured up the specter of conspiracy: "Last year dark forces raised up against the Jewish population of Russia crowds of the rabble, who in many places perpetrated bestial violence against the person and property of the Jews" (1). It was necessary to identify these dark forces, and the dangers they presented to public order, with Ignatiev's ministry in order to discredit the fallen minister's entire approach to the Jewish Question. In particular, if it could be shown that the peasants were not hostile to the Jews because of Jewish exploitation, but were the cat's-paw of agitators and instigators, the entire edifice of restrictive legislation built on this premise would crumble. Consequently, the pogroms were presented as

the result of an artificially provoked anti-Jewish movement, completely organized down to the smallest detail, and with the preparation of all the means necessary to achieve this desired goal. There is not the slightest doubt that in Russia, in imitation of Germany or, more specifically, Prussia, there was concluded something in the nature of an anti-Jewish accord, whose adherents included persons of various estates, including many representatives of the state power, at both the provincial and central levels. This secret, but authorized union undoubtedly possessed the fiscal means without which nothing could have been done. (123)

This was not a fantasy, argued Levin. Everything pointed to organization and collusion. Consider the preliminaries to the pogroms. The censorship

²⁰ JNL (Jerusalem), S. Ginzburg Collection, F4o 1281 A 11/3. Lilienblum goes on to say that, when challenged on this score years later by a Jewish acquaintance, Ignat'ev made the weak defense that it was "the government" that was to blame. Lilienblum also reports a number of contemporary rumors seeking to show that Ignat'ev had foreknowledge of the Balta pogrom and that he helped perpetrators of the Warsaw pogrom to escape punishment. I thank Professor Viktor Kel'ner for bringing this material to my attention.

²¹ The pagination in the main text follows Levin's "Evreiskii vopros i anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1881 i 1882 g." See Chapter 10, n. 90.

²² See Chapter 10, pp. 347–8.

under the control of the MVD allowed Judeophobe publications such as *Novoe vremia*, *Novorossiiskii telegraf*, and *Kievlianin* (the latter recipient of a state subsidy) to carry on a long campaign of accusations and threats against the Jewish population. Their activity was in flagrant violation of Article 1036 of the Criminal Code, which forbade incitement of one part of the population against another. In the throes of the pogrom, agitators read articles from these self-same newspapers, assuring the mob that there were decrees to beat the Jews (124–5, 128).

The pogroms all conformed to a uniform model. They were preceded by rumors that often named the exact day. When Jews approached the authorities, they were assured that all would be well, even though no precautions were taken. On the appointed day, drunken Great Russian hooligans would arrive by train, with their tickets and their liquor clearly paid for by someone else. Guided by leaders who possessed ready-prepared lists of Jewish shops and homes, they began the pogrom. Jews were not permitted by the authorities to defend themselves, while the agitators and ringleaders were given a free hand, and nowhere arrested. Emboldened by this example, the local population began to join in. In no way could this be called “the people’s vengeance against exploitation” (126–9).

There was only one conclusion to be drawn from the inactivity of the army and the police. “If so many of the representatives of power, even at the highest levels, had not themselves been involved in the anti-Jewish movement, it would not have been possible that in a well-ordered state, for such a long period of time, an administration, which knew all about the pogroms in advance, would sit about and take no preventative measures.” One had only to look to the governor-general of the Northwest, Count E. I. Totleben, whose stern announcement to his officials that he would not permit pogroms had been sufficient to keep the region free of disorders (129). The role of local officials in the Balta pogrom, which Levin described in detail, was the definitive example of official collusion in the pogrom process (131–42).

How did the authorities respond to these misfortunes of the Jews? The courts were lenient in the extreme to the rioters. Rather than imposing heavy penalties as a deterrent, officials of the court announced that “the western border is open to the Jews.” When the Austrian authorities protested against the wave of refugees pouring over the border, the pogroms momentarily ceased, although no special official measures were taken. The pogroms gave way to a wave of arson. Tellingly, upon the replacement of Ignatiev with Count Tolstoi, both pogroms and arson lost their epidemic character (142–4). The Jews received no state aid, although at least symbolic assistance would be given to any Russian village that suffered a fire or

a flood (145). Worse, the authorities turned on the Jews, and used a variety of pretexts to expel them from areas where they had long been resident. There followed the Ignatiev commissions, the machinations of the Gotovtsev Committee, and the imposition of the May Laws. Levin did not need to spell out who was the responsible official in all these cases.

These were the effects, but what were the ultimate motives of the anti-Jewish movement? Why, in particular, should high state officials be eager to plunge the empire into violence and rioting? Who were these dark forces that had whipped up the bestial passions of the mob against the Jews, and where did they come from? Levin pointed to the emergence of a new movement in Russia's internal politics in the 1870s. Known as the "national" (*natsional'noe*) movement, it was dominated by the Slavophiles. It was hostile to all other nationalities and even to non-Orthodox Slavs (i.e., the Poles). This ideology was inherently antipathetic to the Jews and helped to spread negative prejudices against them throughout Russian society (211–12). Levin's readers did not need reminding that Ignatiev was a prominent member of this group, especially in its Panslav incarnation.

At almost the same time, Jews began to emerge from their traditional isolation and backwardness and to play a much greater role in the Russian economy and in the wider society. Some gained prominence as bankers, factory-owners, or railway contractors, while others followed intellectual pursuits and entered the professions. Many members of the Russian intelligentsia came to view the Jews as dangerous rivals. Unable to accept the idea that Jews could prosper on their own merits, they attributed the emergence of the Jews to a secret, unifying Jewish power, identified as "the kahal." Thus, envy and self-interest cultivated the soil for anti-Jewish hatred and intolerance (212–14).

In the last years of Emperor Alexander's reign, dissatisfaction arose in Russian society against the existing order, exemplified by malfeasance and corruption in higher administrative circles. In the aftermath of the assassination, on 5 April 1881, the Holy Synod decried the lawlessness of those "governors and judges who dishonor their name, have weakened the [state] power, failed to enforce the law, have not defended the innocent nor punished the guilty." An Imperial Manifesto (20 April 1881) reproached both the administration and the public for "falsehood and rapine." In early May 1881, an MVD circular attacked "the inactivity of the authorities who improperly carried out their obligations, and were indifferent toward the common good" (215–16).

The murder of the tsar stirred up the common people, and the mal-factors in high places feared that they would be called to account for their misdeeds. They hatched a plan to distract attention from their own

activities by finding a scapegoat toward which the people could direct their wrath and momentarily forget their woes. The Jews constituted the perfect scapegoat. They were outsiders (*"ne svoi"*) who lacked legal rights and thus constituted the ideal target for agitators. "The diversion, unfortunately, succeeded as nothing better. The cunning instigators and ring-leaders never stopped to consider that the very first obligation of the government is to preserve the security of the population from any violence or wild caprice, and when this obligation is ignored, it plays right into the hands of the revolutionaries and anarchists. They failed to foresee that, once they had aroused the bestial instincts of the crowd, they would find it difficult to master them" (217).

In the aftermath of these shameful events, it was necessary to explain their occurrence to the higher powers, to Russian society, and to the civilized world. The initial response was to blame the pogroms on the revolutionaries, but such a claim created the conundrum as to why the authorities had not acted more energetically to repress sedition or why the Jews were now being subjected to repressive measures. "That is why a signal was given to all the like-minded publicists to place all the blame on the Jews themselves, on various 'economic conditions,' so that the resentment of the common people could be attributed to 'Jewish exploitation'" (218). At this point Levin proceeded to critique the Ignatiev system for dealing with the Jewish Question, as has been discussed in Chapter 10. The identity of the dark forces behind the pogroms was obvious: the minister of internal affairs and his minions.²³ The implication of Levin's narrative was that, even if Ignatiev was not personally responsible for organizing pogroms, he belonged to that Slavophile milieu that was to blame. Moreover, his policies served to create an atmosphere that engendered pogroms. He and his ministry actively advanced the Judeophobe cause through what critics called his "administrative pogroms."²⁴

The Levin Memorandum, in various guises, enjoyed a remarkably long life and decisively shaped the pogrom narrative in the West, where it was not substantially challenged until Hans Rogger's pioneering article of 1971.²⁵ The secret of the memorandum's longevity lay in its use by

²³ Elsewhere in his memorandum, Levin gave a specific example of pogrom-mongering by the authorities. The Warsaw pogrom, he claimed, was organized in order to discredit the claim that legal equality (which the Jews enjoyed in the Kingdom of Poland) would prevent disorders (184).

²⁴ Compare the short report submitted to the authorities that claimed that "dark forces" were using the railway network to spread the disorders: *K-A*, 40-1 (no date, but 1881).

²⁵ Hans Rogger, "The Jewish Policy of Late Tsarism: A Reappraisal," *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 3 (1973), reprinted in his *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (London, 1986), 25-39.

S. M. Dubnow. As the preeminent historian of Russian Jewry, his interpretation of the pogroms was extremely influential and shaped accounts in the secondary literature for over half a century. The durability of Dubnow's history, in a variety of languages, made this both the definitive pogrom account and the major carrier of pogrom legends.²⁶ Before the revolution, Dubnow reprinted parts of the memorandum with commentaries that emphasized the knowledge and reliability of its author. Yet, for whatever reason, Dubnow did not reveal Levin's identity.²⁷ A cursory reading of Dubnow's first published account of the pogroms reveals that Levin was his principal source and that he uncritically accepted all of Levin's claims.²⁸

The pogrom paradigm created by Levin was to serve Dubnow well in the future. In 1903 a brutal and lethal pogrom took place in Kishinev, in Bessarabia province. Dubnow relates in his memoirs that before any details of the pogrom were publicized, he "knew" the principal features: There was official collusion at the highest levels, virulently Judeophobic newspaper agitation unchecked by the local censor, a lack of adequate preparations, and complete passivity on the part of the police and military once the pogrom had started. This is the version that Dubnow presented in his history of Kishinev: "The goings on in Kishinev on the eve of Easter bore the earmarks of an energetic activity on the part of some secret organization which was hatching an elaborate fiendish scheme... The triumvirate Krushevan [the antisemitic publisher]—Ustrugov [the local censor]—Levendahl [a "mysterious envoy" from St. Petersburg, and emissary of the political police] was evidently the soul of the terrible anti-Semitic conspiracy."²⁹ The debt this account owes to Levin's paradigm is obvious.

The Jewish revolutionary Left in 1903 never doubted that the government, "our bloodthirsty autocratic government, this loathsome monstrosity," was behind the pogrom. It employed the ignorant masses as a blind tool

²⁶ Dubnow's only rival as the definitive historian of Russian Jewry, Iu. I. Gessen, authored the entry on the pogroms that appeared in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia* (1908–13). He presented the rival interpretations of the Russian government (economic causes) and the Levin Memorandum's conspiracy claims without making an effort to choose between them: *ibid.*, XII, 611–18.

²⁷ See the publishing history of the Levin Memorandum in Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh, 1990), 239–40.

²⁸ This was crucially so, because Dubnow, although a contemporary, was not an eyewitness to the events he describes. Nor, as he admits in his memoirs (*Kniga zhizni* [Jerusalem and Moscow, 2004], 241), did he pay much attention to the pogroms until they became endemic. For Dubnow as historian of the pogroms, see J. D. Klier, "S. M. Dubnow and the Kiev Pogrom of 1881," in Kristi Groberg and Avraham Greenbaum, eds., *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnow* (Minneapolis, 1998), 65–71.

²⁹ S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. III (Philadelphia, 1920), 71.

against “the revolutionary fire that was consuming all Russia.”³⁰ These assumptions meshed neatly with the revolutionary events of 1904–6 which witnessed the worst pogroms yet seen in the Russian Empire. Now Jewish victimhood could be fully incorporated into the revolutionary context: Violence against the Jews was a form of violence against the revolution; the Jews were the official scapegoat of the government for its own failings. As Dubnow described it in a famous article, “Lessons of the Terrible Days”:

In 1881 the anti-Jewish pogroms were officially called (from the lips of Minister N. P. Ignatiev) “the justice of the people” [*sudom narodym*], and in 1905 they are justified as “patriotic manifestations,” taking place under the national flag and the royal portrait. Then, they were justified with economic reasons, now as political vengeance for the revolutionary activities of the Jews. They have changed the motives, they have changed the practices of the pogrom inquisition – for the worse. Earlier there was the inactivity of the authorities, now – open or secret support in the organization of pogroms; earlier there were pogroms and from 1903 slaughter and butchery; along with the dogma of inviolability of thugs and murderers in the fulfillment of their “professional responsibilities,” confirmed by the practice of repression of Jewish self-defense, which hindered these duties, so that in the end we have a situation of a fraternal merging of soldiers and police with the murderers, cannibals, and plunderers from the ranks of the population during the October days. The further aspects of the pogrom inquisition have become known to us from recent practice: deceitful governmental announcements, false police-court activities, transferring responsibility to the victims, culminating in the shameful comedy of “justice.”³¹

Echoing the words of Dubnow’s response to Kishinev was an account of the pogrom in Belostok (Bialystok) in 1906 published in the Yiddish-language daily *Der fraynd*:

We don’t yet know any details. But why are they important? From our vast, sad experience gained from pogroms to date we know the details with precision. It is enough to hear the word “pogrom” in order to imagine the hellish picture: rivers of blood, murdered and desecrated bodies, torn-apart children, ripped-up books, bodies intentionally destroyed; the whole of hell, with all of its suffering and anguish.³²

Subsequent events appeared to confirm all these existing assumptions. During the Great War, the Russian army achieved notoriety for the

³⁰ Flysheets of the Odessa Social Democratic Organization, “The Bund,” April 1903, reprinted in Ia. M. Kopanskii, ed., *Kishinevskii pogrom 1903 goda. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kishinev, 2000), 60–2.

³¹ S. M. Dubnov, “Uroky strashnykh dnei,” *Voskhod*, 47–8:1/XII/1905. See also John D. Klier, “Solzhenitsyn and the Kishinev Pogrom: A Slander Against Russia?”, *East European Jewish Affairs*, 33, 1 (2003), 49–59.

³² Cited in Sarah A. Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2004), 117.

mistreatment of civilian Jewish populations, encompassing forced resettlement and pogroms, against Russian and non-Russian subjects alike.³³ The Bolshevik Revolution and the ensuing Russian Civil War saw Jews as a common target for both sides.³⁴ A Bolshevik propaganda pamphlet summarized the widespread belief on the Left that “pogroms have never sprung up spontaneously; heretofore they have always been organized by the government, and now they are organized by the remnants of the former ruling groups.”³⁵

In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1917, Dubnow was appointed a member of a commission to investigate the pogroms, an initiative that produced two published collections of documents. The commission had relatively free access to the archives of the MVD that dealt with the pogroms. Dubnow's team found no evidence of official collusion in 1881–2. Quite to the contrary, the archives contained ample evidence of energetic action against the violence. Dubnow was too good a historian to deny the clear message of his archival sources, although he remained sharply critical of the government. In his introduction to the first book of the series, he explained that “the government always tried to use towards its own ends the inexhaustible supply of pogrom energy, flowing in the depths of the Russian masses, and periodically appearing like a volcanic eruption. Sometimes it directed the flow of lava straight towards the Jews in order to deflect popular passions from itself and at the same time offer justification for its repressive politics.” Nonetheless, he backed away from a direct claim that Ignatiev, or any agent of the government, had instigated the pogroms: “Earlier [i.e., before the Balta pogrom] the ministry of Ignatiev, calling the pogroms ‘popular lynch law’ [*samosud*], wavered between this court of the violent street and police punishment of the Jews, but the succeeding ministry of D. Tolstoi put a decisive end to the wavering. It was decided to monopolize or nationalize the pogrom, transferring it from street violence to legal repression.”³⁶ Ignatiev's guilt, as depicted here, was real, but indirect. In his introduction, Dubnow's coeditor G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni

³³ See Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens During World War I* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2003); Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington, 1999); and John D. Klier, “Kazaki i pogromy. Chem otlichalis ‘voennye’ pogromy?,” in O. V. Budnitskii, et al., eds., *Mirovoi krizis 1914–1920 godov i sud'ba vostochnoevropetskogo evreistva* (Moscow, 2005), 47–70.

³⁴ Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), and Oleg Budnitsky, “Jews, Pogroms, and the White Movement: A Historiographical Critique,” *Kritika*, 2, 4 (2001), 759–60.

³⁵ See O. V. Budnitskii, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdru krasnymi i belymi* (Moscow, 2005), 127.

³⁶ S. M. Dubnov and G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, eds. *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii*, vol. 1, *Dubovarskoe i Kishinevskoe dela 1903 goda* (Petrograd, 1919), ix–x.

confirmed this conclusion. Differentiating between the pogroms of 1881–2 and those of 1903 – which he described as officially organized – he declared that “we can now say with complete confidence that in the rise and subsequent development of the pogroms of the '80s, the Russian government can be considered guilty only indirectly – primarily because it did not take, promptly upon their first appearance, strict measures for their suppression.”³⁷

In 1923 the second volume of the series was published by Krasnyi-Admoni alone.³⁸ His introduction offered a Marxist interpretation of the pogroms but, reflecting the content of the published materials, backed away from the claim that the government had any role in instigating the violence. Rather, he criticized the interpretation that the government placed on the pogroms, seen as a response to the economic domination of the Jews. “All its age old ‘wisdom’ pointed to one thing alone: To stamp out the pogroms and to calm the aroused popular passions, it sufficed to render the Jews economically powerless, dragging them down to the economic level of the *muzhik*.”³⁹ Krasnyi-Admoni attributed increased anti-Jewish hostility in Russia to the rise of a Russian bourgeoisie, which was unable to compete with Jewish economic skill, enterprise, and risk-taking. Instead of engaging in fair competition, they turned the government against the Jews, under the pretense of defending the hapless peasants from their depredations. Growing peasant poverty and destitution were not the fault of the Jews, of course, but of the deficiencies of the peasant emancipation of 1861 and of the inability of nascent Russian capitalism to provide employment to the starving masses who fled to the cities.

The Jews served as the perfect victim: for a government devoid of any solution to Russia’s social and economic problems, for an impoverished peasantry that was hungry and embittered but without a clear conception of the true situation, and for a rival bourgeoisie. The assassination of Alexander II gave rise to dark forces who used the situation to turn the mob against the Jews. This mission was carried out by the regional press, which began the campaign by blaming the Jews for the assassination of the tsar. “Everywhere, throughout the length of European Russia, wherever there was a Jewish population and a hungry, unemployed crowd foraging about – everywhere the press made it its business to stir up one part of the population, on the strength of its anger and hunger, against another, weak

³⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

³⁸ G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, ed., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii*, vol. II, *Vos'midesiatye gody (15 apreliia 1881 g.–29 fevralia 1882 g.)* (Moscow and Petrograd, 1923). Dubnow had by then left the Soviet Union and was nowhere mentioned in the second volume.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, iv–v.

and unarmed, in the name of destroying the economic power of Jewry and for the clearing of the path for a purely Russian capital."⁴⁰ Krasnyi-Admoni's introduction represented an amazing retreat from the consensus about the pogroms that had developed among Russian Jewry. The dark forces that provoked pogroms were reduced to the "bourgeois press." The government itself was innocent of provocation – even the recurrent complaints that the accused papers received a government subsidy and were benevolently treated by the censor were missing. There were no mysterious envoys and agitators from Slavophile or Panslav circles in Moscow. Impersonal economic forces, more than anything else, explained the events of 1881–2.

Soviet historical literature increasingly accepted this interpretation of the pogroms. V. P. Ribins'kii published a detailed study of the Kiev pogrom, supplementing Krasnyi-Admoni's materials with documents from the Kiev archives. He examined the Levin Memorandum and the conclusions that Dubnow drew from them, and found them wanting. He explained the events of 1881–2 purely in terms of class struggle. The years preceding the pogroms had been marked by the worsening situation of the Ukrainian peasantry, as a consequence of the inequities of the peasant emancipation. Poor harvests drove up the price of grain from 78 kopeks a *puđ* in 1879, to R1.14 in 1880, and R1.24 in 1881, with serious consequences for the urban masses. Non-Jewish capitalists, alarmed by the strength of their Jewish competitors, waged a relentless campaign against them in the press as exploiters. In this climate of crisis and scapegoating, it was easy to turn the dissatisfaction and misery of the masses against the Jews.⁴¹

By an ironic conjunction, at the very moment that Jewish scholars in Russia and the Soviet Union, faced with archival evidence, were backing away from assumptions of conspiracy and complicity at the highest levels of government, these beliefs achieved canonical status in the West.

The development of the myth outside the Russian Empire

Western audiences required no encouragement to think the worst of Russia, widely seen as the land of autocracy, serfdom, and the knout. *The Times* of London habitually described it as "a backward country, which has not yet worked its way to the level of European life" (29,794:3/II/1880). The paper had begun a low-level campaign against

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xxx–xxxii.

⁴¹ V. P. Ribins'kii, "Protivreis'kii rukh r. 1881-go na Ukraini," in *Zbirnik prats' evreis'koi istorichno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, 2 vols. (Kiev, 1928–9), 167–71.

Russian mistreatment of the Jews even before the outbreak of the pogroms. It placed fault on the Russian government, not the ignorant and credulous peasantry:

Where, then, are we to look for a plausible ground for the unjust accusations against the Jews? We must answer boldly, the Government is responsible. The Russian Government, in maintaining in the law and the administration the sort of *diminutio capitis* to which it condemns the Jews, solely on account of their origins, maintains also among the people the superannuated prejudice against the Jews so frequently manifested in this country, and which has almost disappeared in more enlightened countries. (29,830:16/III/1880)

With the outbreak of the pogroms, the paper faulted the government for making the Jews the scapegoat for sedition and unrest:

Feeling blindly for means to rally the nation against a spirit it cannot quell by its legions of soldiers and police, it falls upon the Jewish religion, as sufferers by pestilence in the Dark Ages fell upon imagined witches and wizards. The prejudice with which Russian rulers thus tamper is preparing for them a terrible perplexity throughout the Empire. They may find in the savage fanaticism countenanced by their own attitude towards native and foreign Jews a difficulty only second to the more impalpable plottings of socialists. The Russian peasant, when he stones or pillages a Jew, indulges all the passions which it ought to be the first aim of a Government like that of Russia to quell. (30,202:24/V/1881)

Its point made, *The Times* continued to cover pogrom events and Ignatiev's initiatives throughout 1881, but with minimal editorial commentary. The Jewish-owned *Daily Telegraph* was much more severe in its judgement: "These Russian atrocities are only the beginning. . . There is reason to believe that the officials themselves countenance these barbarities . . . Kiev officials reportedly said: 'You Jewish hogs only get what you deserve.'"⁴²

In continental Europe, Rabbi Yitzhak Rül of Memel, just across the Russian-Prussian frontier, established himself as an intermediary between Russian Jews and the West. He served as a conduit of information from the Kovno circle, discussed in Chapter 10, and possibly others as well. Throughout 1882 he periodically issued circular letters devoted to the pogrom crisis. Some of his information was accurate, such as his reports about the Gotovtsev Committee,⁴³ but he also spread sensationalized accounts of mass rape.

London hosted two Jewish newspapers, the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World*. The former was essentially the paper of the Anglo-Jewish establishment, measured and restrained in its reportage and

⁴² Reprinted in *JC*, 634:20/V/1881. ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 677:17/III/1882.

judgements.⁴⁴ The *Jewish World* was very much the outsider, combative, feisty, and much more given to outright criticism. Their differing perspectives were visible in their respective editorials on the assassination of Alexander II. The *Jewish Chronicle* was mildly sympathetic towards the late emperor, while the *Jewish World* declared that the tsar had received his just due: "it must be remembered that he elected to be and to remain the only visible representative of a system which endeavored to crush out every liberal movement in the Empire, and which maintained in all their foulness, tyrannous and corrupt methods of provincial government and all the horrible cruelty of the Siberian mines" (423:18/III/1881). Certainly, the paper declared, Russian Jews had no reason to feel indebted to Alexander or to mourn his passing (424:25/III/1881).

Both papers devoted enormous coverage to the pogroms and official treatment of the Jews. While the *Jewish Chronicle* employed David Gordon, the *Jewish World* accomplished a greater coup: On 17 June 1881 it announced that it had dispatched a gentleman, "for many years connected with the London daily press," to visit areas that had suffered from pogroms and to furnish details. He was described as a man who knew the area and the requisite languages. His reports, eighteen in all, appeared between 1 July and 28 October 1881. His byline in the 11 November issue was that of "Former Special Correspondent."⁴⁵

The reports of the Special Correspondent raise intriguing problems for the historian, especially since his version of events provided the enduring outline of the pogrom legend, ranging from the "pack of Jews" quote attributed to Count Drenteln,⁴⁶ to claims of a multitude of rapes and murders. On the one hand, his itinerary of travel through pogrom sites is entirely plausible. He apparently spoke Russian and Yiddish, and read Hebrew. He excelled at creating a *mise en scène*, such as his detailed description of the Great Synagogue in Elisavetgrad, which suggests a true eyewitness (444:12/VIII/1881). His reported informants were identifiable local personalities, such as Rabbi E. Tsukerman and Dr. Maks Mandelshtam in Kiev, and Odessa Rabbi S. L. Shvabakher. (The frankness and daring of the words attributed to them might have been expected to create difficulties with the local authorities, but I have found no repercussions in the printed or archival record.) Some of his details are

⁴⁴ See David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁴⁵ *Russkii evrei* noted the visit to Russia of an émigré journalist named Meier Bankarovich, who may possibly have been the Special Correspondent [the reference for this report could not be identified. The editors].

⁴⁶ See Chapter 2, n. 66.

uplicated in contemporary published accounts, but there is much that appears only in his narrative.

On the other hand, many of his claims, such as the enormous number of rapes, are unconfirmed or flatly contradicted by the archival record. For example, it is demonstratively untrue that in Odessa more than twenty *pogromshchiki* were shot dead by Jewish self-defense units, a claim that he puts in the mouth of Shvabakher (446:26/VIII/1881). Likewise, twenty rioters were not killed in Kishinev – there was no significant pogrom and no fatalities (451:30/IX/1881). Most dubious of all is his account, told in penny-dreadful style, of sneaking off a train in the middle of the night to witness, from a hiding place, the summary execution of a group of peasant convicts (445:19/VIII/1881). His account is filled with minor inaccuracies: *Odesskii vestnik* was never suppressed by the authorities because of its sympathy toward the Jews, and *Novorossiiskii telegraf* was not the official organ of the governor of Kherson, nor did it receive a subsidy (445:19/VIII/1881). Precautions were taken in advance of the minor Odessa disturbances, despite his claim to the contrary (446:26/VIII/1881). His account most resembles a compilation of hearsay evidence, very little of it collected from first-hand observers. His atrocity reports, in particular, must be viewed with extreme caution.

The Special Correspondent portrayed the pogroms dramatically, as great in scale and inhuman in their brutality. He reported numerous occasions where Jews were burned alive in their homes, sometimes while the authorities looked on.⁴⁷ Infants and children were reportedly dashed to death, and women cruelly mutilated. Fingers were allegedly bitten off in Elisavetgrad, so that the rioters could secure the victims' rings (443:5/VIII/1881). The author's most influential accounts, given their effect on world opinion, were his descriptions of the rape and torture of girls as young as ten or twelve. In Kiev, for example, he reported the rape of twenty-five women, of whom five died as a consequence (440:15/VII/1881). His tally for Odessa was eleven rapes, one of which resulted in death (446:26/VIII/1881). Thirty rapes were claimed for Elisavetgrad (443:5/VIII/1881). The two most dramatic accounts came from two medium-sized towns, Berezovka and Borispol.

Berezovka, a town in Kherson province, had a population of approximately 3,000, over half of them Jews. In a pogrom on 26 April 1881, it suffered significant property damage – all but 2 of 161 buildings owned by Jews were vandalized. The Special Correspondent's account was particularly gruesome and emphasized human rather than property damage.

⁴⁷ See 453:14/X/1881 for Pretrovski and Berislav and 448:9/IX/1881 for Kitzkis.

The mob reportedly attacked the synagogue and assaulted the women, more than a hundred of whom were raped, three of whom died from this treatment. The mob then forced forty mothers and their children into the river, where they had to stand for hours. Nine died from exposure. Children were tortured, and on the following day a small child was stoned to death (450:23/IX/1881 NS).

Borispol was a small town located in Poltava province. The Jewish population accounted for roughly 10 percent of the total population of about 9,000. During a pogrom which the *Jewish World* dated to 21 July NS (but which actually occurred on 12 June OS, i.e. 24 June NS), the town witnessed "scenes . . . worthy of the worst days of the [Paris] Commune." The mob, "in the wildest stage of intoxication," was armed with hatchets, axes, knives and bill-hooks, meat cleavers, and choppers. The male rapists were assisted by their womenfolk. "Jewish females, affrighted and trembling, were dragged down by women, by Russian mothers and Russian wives, and held down for the men to insult and outrage before their eyes. And many a poor Jew who would otherwise have escaped was brutally beaten by mobs of women, or secured by them until the men came up to do the work for them." This was a family festival, for children as young as two were brought to watch the beatings. The army, it was reported, was forced to fire five volleys into the crowd, killing "at least twenty rioters" (454:21/X/1881).⁴⁸ This report was widely disseminated by Rabbi Rülff both in Russia and abroad. As he put it, "the history of the world may well be declared to contain no parallels of the Russian anti-Jewish outrages . . . The blood of innocent victims cleaves to the thresholds and doorposts of Jewish houses in Russia."⁴⁹

The Special Correspondent provided an interpretation of the pogroms, that found a welcome affirmation in the editorial columns of the *Jewish World*. After the Kiev pogrom the editor declared that

these Russian atrocities are absolutely *sui generis*. They were deliberately got up in a time of peace against quiet traders and order-loving citizens by persons legally and morally responsible for their protection . . . We plainly and publicly impeach the Russian official class as directly responsible for the late enormities at Kiev. Russia is a country so thoroughly policed and regulated, that it would not have been probable in any case that such events should take place without previous official cognizance; but in this case *direct evidence plainly proves official connection therewith*. (441:22/VII/1881)

⁴⁸ Given the sensitivity of the authorities in the case of the military killing civilians, such a case would have been reported. The archival record does record the killing of *pogromshchiki* at Borispol, but nothing on the scale claimed by the Special Correspondent.

⁴⁹ *JC*, 680:7/IV/1882. The Rülff appeal appeared in Russia in both the non-Jewish (*SPb Herald*) and Jewish press. See *NKhV*, 14:2/IV/1882.

As he filed his reports from across the Pale, the Special Correspondent sketched out a coherent tale of conspiracy and execution. He emphasized that the perpetrators of the pogroms, the peasantry, were least worthy of blame. The *muzhik* was simple and ignorant, fit only for "hugging his rags, sipping his tea, and breeding fleas." He never acted without instigation and leadership. This is why pogroms always began in urban areas. Indeed, so lethargic was the *muzhik* that special ukases had to be forged, *ordering* them to beat the Jews. The real culprits were the Panslavs in Moscow, led by Ivan Aksakov, "the personal friend of the Tsar and his confidential advisor."⁵⁰ His motto was "Russia for the Rus'," and he hated and feared any outsider. In particular the Jew, marked by energy and industry, would defeat the lethargic and drunken Russian in the struggle for control of the national economy. The Panslavs undertook to prevent this by organizing a *Judenhetze* through the local press. The causes of the disorders were envy, resentment, and spite. "The trading classes, the middle class of businessmen," were "the very individuals who originated, planned and through their agents, created the recent disorders." The Moscow leadership paid for the railroad tickets and drink of their agents, who traveled from town to town, instigating pogroms with the collusion of the local authorities, like Drenteln, who were sympathizers. Only with the arrival of these outside agitators did disorders break out. The Panslavs now surrounded the emperor, and prevented him from seeing the true situation in the country. Instead, they foisted onto him the deceptive idea of "exploitation" in order to explain the violence. The pogroms were best viewed as a struggle between "Free Trade" and the "Protectionism" of the Panslavs. The tsar was a misguided dupe. Ironically, Ignatiev, albeit "the greatest hypocrite on the face of the earth," was not assigned a leading role.

The Special Correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* was not so reticent, especially in the aftermath of the Balta pogrom. Who was to blame? "None other than Ignatiev, whose agents go from town to town to spread the report that the Tsar has ordered the Jews to be robbed, outraged and murdered." Nor, he claimed, would Ignatiev have dared to act in such a manner without the approbation of the tsar (686:19/V/1882).

The atrocity debate

As noted in Chapter 7, the Russo-Jewish Committee in London was under sustained attack for its apparent ineffectiveness. With the waning

⁵⁰ While Aksakov's Judeophobia was undeniable, he was hardly the tsar's "personal advisor." See John D. Klier, "Evreiskii vopros v slavianofil'skoi presse 1862-1886 gg.," *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v Moskve*, 1, 17 (1998), 41-60.

of the pogroms in the depths of winter, the plight of Russian Jewry disappeared from the pages of the non-Jewish press, even as the threatening work of the Gotovtsev Committee continued apace. In order to keep Russian Jewry before the eyes of the public, the RJC prepared a series of articles on the pogroms and succeeded in placing it in the most respected publication in Britain, *The Times* of London. This feat had the added advantage of drawing a critical editorial faulting the Russian government for having unleashed the pogroms. Russia was urged to "put an end to these enormities." "If they are unwilling, the Russian government must be held responsible for all the crimes – some of them as atrocious as any recorded in history – which have been accomplished by letting loose the hatred of Orthodox mobs" (30,401:11/I/1882).

Although there were many claimants to the feat of having provided this information to the RJC, a perusal of the articles, which appeared on 10 and 11 January 1882 NS, reveals that they are substantially a compendium of atrocity stories taken from the columns of the Special Correspondent of the *Jewish World*. Garnished with the prestige of *The Times* and devoid of any further attribution, subsequently published as a separate pamphlet, and translated into a variety of European languages, the account became the definitive Western version of the pogroms.⁵¹ This did not occur without some resistance from two strange bedfellows, the Russian and the British governments. I have noted above how the Russian government sought to draw the sting from *The Times'* series by assembling what it claimed were accurate statistics and by unleashing its private defenders in British society.⁵²

More curious was the role played by the British Foreign Ministry. The British government was embroiled in a diplomatic crisis in the Middle East and was not eager to complicate relations with Russia further. At the same time, the pressure of Jewish parliamentarians, and the resort to public opinion represented by the Mansion House protest meeting, was making it increasingly difficult to dismiss the pogrom crisis as an internal affair of Russia, of no concern to the outside world. Sir Charles Dilke had resisted the importunities of Baron de Worms by assuring him that the government would act when it received sufficient information from its consuls on the scene. As discussed in Chapter 7, the consuls in the South of the empire were ordered to proceed to the affected areas and prepare

⁵¹ The pamphlet became the basis for a speech in the US House of Representatives by Samuel S. Cox of New York in 1882. Parts of it were included in the *Congressional Record and Appendix*, 47th Congress, 1st Session, XIII, pt. 7 (Washington, DC, 1882), 651–8.

⁵² See the article by "OK" in *Frasier's Magazine* (before 9 December 1881); articles in the *London Times*, 30,406:18/I/1882 and 30,431:15/II/1882; and the article by Madame Z. Ragozin, "Russian Jews and Gentiles: From a Russian Point of View," *Century Magazine*, 23, 6 (IV/1882), 905–21.

reports that were subsequently published as a Blue Book under the title, "Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of the Jews in Russia." Its contents appeared to give the government an escape from public pressure to do something about the position of Russian Jews.

The Blue Book materials presented an account of events at great variance from that offered by *The Times*. In particular, they denied the high incidence of rape. In a report dated 18 January 1882 NS, Consul-General Stanley raised objections to the general and particular details of *The Times*' version, "more especially to the accounts of the violations of women." While Jews were aware of one rape that had occurred in Elisavetgrad, "none to whom I have spoken have heard of others, and they say it is incredible they should have occurred without being known to Jews throughout the land." Stanley added a "PS" in which he provided a denial by an eyewitness and local resident that any woman had been raped during the Berezovka pogrom (21-2). Vice-Consul Law initially visited Kiev and Odessa, where he conversed "with some of the leading members of the Jewish community" (7). Reporting from Warsaw, he declared that "I should be disinclined to believe in any stories of women having been outraged during the riots in that town" (24). Colonel Francis Maude, also reporting from Warsaw, threw cold water on the conspiracy theory of the pogroms: "One must not ignore the fact that it is very widely believed that the Government allowed the riots to continue unchecked for a certain time for purposes of their own. I do not attach any importance to this report. Such a manner of playing with edged tools does not, in my opinion, form part of the programme of the Russian government at this moment" (20). Such expert testimony was a serious setback for the protest and aid activities of the RJC. Similar corrective reports sent to *The Times* had already forced that paper to backtrack, with the weak retort that "the indignation of this country is justified to the fullest degree, even if, as seems to be the case, there is ground for thinking that the most villainous misdeeds are in part the creations of popular fancy" (30,419:1/II/1882).⁵³

A number of problems faced the leaders of the Russo-Jewish Committee in its response. The task of reaffirming the reality of Russian atrocities had to be accomplished without calling into question the veracity and competence of Her Majesty's consuls.⁵⁴ They had to regain

⁵³ This editorial was prompted by a British resident of Odessa, who wrote to challenge the account of the Odessa pogrom that had appeared in the January article.

⁵⁴ The Jewish press was under no such restraint. Commenting on the Blue Book, the *Jewish Chronicle* complained that the consuls "have looked at the sad events of last year through Russian spectacles, and their evidence is, we regret to say, tinged with an anti-Jewish bias, which must cause us to deny them that impartiality which all had anticipated" (674:24/II/1882).

the initiative in the face of official and non-official denials of the most sensationalist parts of the pogrom accounts. This was even more urgent, because one of the members of the RJC, Baron de Worms, was preparing to move his motion in the House of Commons to urge the government to act in some way on behalf of persecuted Russian Jewry. The RJC succeeded in placing two more articles, entitled "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," in successive issues of *The Times* in early March (30,444-5:2-3/III/1882), immediately republishing them in pamphlet form.⁵⁵

Like the original series in January, the new articles did a masterful job of pursuing their objectives. They undermined the credibility of the consuls by lamenting the difficulties of their task: "Probably a British Consul would have greater difficulty in ascertaining the facts as to the outrages on the Jews, even after the most diligent investigations, than any other person in Russia." The author questioned their tactics, faulting Vice-Consul William Wagstaff for interviewing victims in Kiev in the presence of a state rabbi and a communal leader. "What matron or maiden would publicly declare that she has been forced, and thus publish her shame to all the world?" Nor could such investigations ever arrive at the truth. Cleverly anticipating further efforts to provide conflicting evidence, the author quoted a correspondent's claim that "the plan is entertained in Russia of calling upon the Jews to give a flat denial to the reports of *The Times* . . . They are persecuted, outraged, murdered; they are hemmed in by legal penalties and restrictions, and deprived of all privileges. And yet, persecuted, outraged, and murdered as they are, they are compelled to deny these barbarities before the world . . . The wise and noble people of England will know what weight should be attached to such denials and refutations."

Having impugned the consuls' reports, the editor offered "corroborative evidence of the most undeniable kind," from letters "from persons occupying high official positions in the Jewish community and other well-known persons," as well as the eyewitness accounts of refugees who were making their way to Britain. Unfortunately the names of these correspondents had to be suppressed, since publication would imperil their liberty and possibly their lives. The report contained twenty-nine testimonials, including the depositions of fourteen refugees. They painted the familiar picture of murder and rape, with special emphasis on the outrages that had been reported from Berezovka (see pp. 401-2). A number of mother/daughter

⁵⁵ *Russian Atrocities 1881. Supplementary Statement Issued by the Russo-Jewish Committee in Confirmation of "The Times" Narrative* (London, 1882). These were accounts that apparently emanated from the Kovno circle and the Kiev Committee ("the local relief committee at Kiev"). They were letters, written in Hebrew, "from a rabbi of eminence" sent to Chief Rabbi Adler. The account also contains information "sent by a Jewish notable at St Petersburg."

rapes, which had already done so much to outrage British society, were again reported. The correspondence also offered an explanation for the failure of the government to act. "Who is ignorant of the commissions and new hostile decrees that are springing up every day? It would appear that the government indicates by all this, that it fully approves of the Jews being murdered. It averts from itself by this procedure the dissatisfaction of the populace with the prevailing disorder and poverty. The Jews are given up as a spoil to divert the current of disaffection."

Judging by a friendly *Times* editorial in the same number, the RJC had clearly won the day. "What was believed before is now proved – unless, that is to say, we are to assume that a whole community has banded together to lie in the face of the world in a matter affecting the honor of its women." Looking ahead to Baron de Worms' motion, it predicted that he "will have no difficulty in establishing the facts of the outrages in all their enormity." As noted in Chapter 7, de Worms' motion did not enjoy smooth sailing in the Commons. Yet even in the wake of the withdrawal of the motion, a *Times* editorial gave cheer, by declaring that "thanks to the ability and energy displayed by the Russo-Jewish Committee, the hideous facts of the case are proved beyond cavil." A positive gloss was even placed on Gladstone's non-committal remarks, which "fortunately place in the clearest light the view taken of these disgraceful crimes by Englishmen of every creed and party." The RJC could hardly ask for more than *The Times*' concluding observations that explained popular resentment against the Jews:

They are hated by the populace for their success; and when exceptional distress breeds uncontrollable discontent, it may be that the Russian authorities are not sorry to see it vented upon the Jews instead of upon themselves. Murder and outrage they probably regard as regrettable incidents, but they are at no pains to put down the habit of plunder out of which these incidents arise. The profound misery of a poor, ignorant, superstitious, and perennially misgoverned populace is at the root of the internal disorders of Russia; while the intolerable *ennui* of a governing class ignorant of the rudiments of the art of governing explains the perpetual restlessness which makes Russia a standing menace to the peace of the world.

The matter did not end there, however. The Foreign Office was not about to allow the methods or competence of its personnel to be maligned. The issues raised by the supplementary articles in *The Times* were forwarded to the consular staff in Russia, who responded in detail. This correspondence was subsequently published in a second Blue Book, issued at the end of June 1882.⁵⁶ In their reports, the consuls admitted that their task was

⁵⁶ *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia. Russia No. 2 (1882). State Papers*, vol. LXXXI (London, 1882). The correspondence dealt with both *The Times* series and with additional atrocity reports carried in the *Daily News* on 19 January. A *Daily News*

difficult: Vice-Consul William Wagstaff sustained a serious leg injury and collected testimony while bedridden. Consul-General Stanley, who warned his consuls to hide, as best they could, their information-gathering activities, complained about those who “sneer at consular reports and consuls’ means of obtaining information” (16). Wagstaff noted that “it was my intention to have visited some of the Russian authorities, but from the violent feeling expressed in the Russian press against the movement on foot in England in favor of the Jews, I deemed it prudent not to call attention to my procedure” (14). They were aware of how contradictory much of the evidence was. Said Wagstaff from Kiev: “At this city I experienced greater difficulties than elsewhere in obtaining information. The evidence was so conflicting that it was most difficult to ascertain the truth of the many statements made to me” (6).

In general, the consuls were not able to confirm the worst atrocity reports, especially from Borispol and Berezovka. Stanley summarized Wagstaff’s conclusion that “*The Times*’ account of what took place at each of those places contains the greatest exaggerations, and that the account of what took place at some of those places is absolutely untrue” (2). Wagstaff, unable to travel, dispatched a member of the Kiev Relief Committee to Borispol and the surrounding areas. His account described wholesale property damage, but little personal injury (11). His report led Wagstaff to conclude that “there have been a few cases of outrage committed on women by some of the mad drunken mob. These, however, are isolated cases, and although connected with the movement, do not form a salient feature of it; the main object appears to have been plunder” (10).

Stanley went right to the top and, on 8 March 1882 NS, interviewed the state rabbi of Odessa, S. L. Shvabakher, and asked him to confirm or deny the supplemental reports as they applied to Odessa. He confirmed one death, but no looting of synagogues or victims set alight. He denied knowledge of any rapes in Odessa. The consul specifically queried Shvabakher about the situation in Berezovka. The rabbi “had not heard of outrages on women there.” On 4 April 1882, Stanley interviewed the newly appointed governor-general of Odessa, General Gurko, and pressed him on events in Berezovka. “He assured me I could with a clear conscience positively deny that any deaths or any violations of women took place there during the disturbances of last year. This is in accordance with all the information I had received and forwarded to your Lordship, and which I think more credible than anonymous letters in *The Times*” (19).

special correspondent in Russia reported that rape claims were greatly exaggerated: Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881* (Philadelphia, 2005), 154–5. Pagination in the body of the text is from this Blue Book.

Of course, the preemptive warnings of *The Times* that the Jews would, of necessity, deny all, could be used to discredit Shvabakher's testimony. In addition, why should any credence be given to agents of the government, itself accused of dereliction of duty and pogrom-mongering? Still, the conflict might have gone on, punctuated by new atrocity reports in *The Times* and yet another Blue Book in reply, save for two significant events: the Balta pogrom and the fall of Ignatiev.

The Balta pogrom, described in Chapter 1, displayed all the worst features that came to define the pogrom of legend. The local authorities were particularly inept at every stage of a worsening situation, failing to take proper precautions, disarming Jewish self-defense, and calling in peasant auxiliaries who promptly joined the riot. Besides beatings and enormous property losses, there were unquestionably rapes. The British vice-consul Henry W. Hunt was able to report from Balta, without denial or qualification, a scene of utter devastation. Damage was estimated at one million rubles. "I was informed that 1,096 houses and shops were wrecked, and from the appearance of the town, I can quite believe it" (31).

Worse, the Russian government was soon caught *in flagrante* doing what it had been so often accused of in the past—perpetrating a cover-up around the pogroms. A summary of press articles provided by the consulate to the Foreign Office drew attention to the fact that the official *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, in reprinting pogrom reports from *Golos*, omitted those sections "which relate to the inefficiency of the authorities" (32). This was not an isolated case. Edward Thornton, the British consul in St. Petersburg, reported that the official publications, *Journal de St. Petersbourg* and *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, sought "to persuade the public that the disturbances have been very insignificant, and that the injury to persons and property has been extremely small. I am afraid that this is very far from being the truth" (34). Rape and rapine were real. Official reports could not be trusted. With such reports now flowing from British consuls, the Russo-Jewish Committee had no further need to place atrocity stories in *The Times*, and the Foreign Office was no longer obliged to publish Blue Books.⁵⁷ In the public mind, the Balta pogrom served to confirm all previous claims.

Ignatiev fell from power at the very moment that he had achieved his goal of imposing new restrictions upon Russian Jewry. It had been a long-fought and very public battle, and Ignatiev had been thoroughly demonized in the eyes of Western Jewry. They seized the moment of his fall not only to rejoice, but to lay myriad sins at his door. As *The Times* editorialized: "Never has the fall of a minister excited a warmer and more general outburst of satisfaction." Already dark deeds were imputed to him by the

⁵⁷ See the *Jewish Chronicle's* comments in welcoming the second Blue Book, 693:7/VII/1882.

paper: "The Jews have certainly every ground for delight. Ignatiev, from malice, weakness, perhaps race hatred, if he did not foment persecution, allowed it to spread with terrible cynicism" (30,534:15/VI/1882). The Anglo-Jewish press had no reason to offer Ignatiev a better valedictory. Assessing his Jewish policy, the *Jewish World* declared that "nothing short of the blindest personal hate or the most irresponsible madness can account for a policy, the obvious consequences of which were violent troubles and heartburnings in the immediate present and untold miseries in the future" (16/VI/1882). The *Jewish Chronicle* rejoiced in the fall of Ignatiev and his "mendacious and cruel system of Judaeophobia." Like the Russian masses, Ignatiev lacked notions of right and wrong, good and evil. "The late Minister possessed this 'Ignatiev' character in an eminent degree; wily as a serpent, hypocritical like 'Tartuffe,' cynical as a worthless woman – to whom nothing is sacred, who recoils from no meanness, like incarnate Nihilism itself." His demise meant that "now we can breathe freely again" (693:7/VII/1882).

It mattered not that pogroms persisted into the late summer. Jewish publicists convinced themselves and their readers that every administrative change was punishment for officials who had been derelict in presenting disorders.⁵⁸ Where Ignatiev had presided over expulsions from Orel, Kiev, and St. Petersburg, Tolstoi restated the Makov Circular. Where Ignatiev's pronouncements about the "western borders" had triggered the emigration crisis, Tolstoi brought it to an end by outlawing emigration agitation. Yet those who cursed Ignatiev and praised Tolstoi overlooked the fact that the May Laws remained in force. The verdict on the Ignatiev system, therefore, was that it was militantly antisemitic in every aspect. Although the pogrom outbreak had predated his ministry, critics easily made Ignatiev the center of a Panslav conspiracy to destroy the Jews, as argued most eloquently in the Levin Memorandum. Critics from the Left and the Center agreed in conceptualizing the pogroms as an official policy to deflect opposition provoked by the deficiencies of the regime onto Jewish scapegoats. This judgement of these contemporaries meshed easily with the interpretation of historians. The pogrom was established as an essential part of Russian imperial statecraft.

The myths of 1881–1882 in the scholarly tradition

While the press played a decisive role in the creation and dissemination of the pogrom myth, those willing to read the pogrom-era press with a critical

⁵⁸ See *JC*, 695:21/VII/1882, for the claim that Governor Miloradovich was removed because of the outbreak of a pogrom in Okny.

eye could arrive at a rather different picture of events, as did the most important study of the pogroms compiled outside Russia, *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, 2 vols. (Cologne and Leipzig, 1910), published under the sponsorship of the Zionist Organization. The pseudonymous editor and principal contributor (“A. Linden”) was Leo Motzkin, a Russian Jew who had witnessed the Kiev pogrom as a teenager and who became a veteran Zionist activist.⁵⁹ The compilation was inspired by the wave of pogroms that accompanied the First Russian Revolution of 1905, and these events shaped Motzkin’s detailed treatment of 1881–2. Motzkin resisted the tendency of many of his contemporaries, especially on the Left, to read back their assumptions about the events of 1903–6 to the mechanics of the first pogrom wave. This latter view verified accusations of official instigation or collusion in the pogroms of the modern period by linking them to the earlier events and finding a common pattern: anti-semitic press agitation, advance planning, instigation, and official participation or inactivity. These elements, which were seen as an integral part of the pogroms of 1881–2, anticipated in detail the outrages in 1903 in Kishinev, in 1905 in Odessa and Kiev, and in 1906 in Belostok.

Motzkin, who used the contemporary Jewish press and the official documentation of the Palen Commission, reached different conclusions. Indeed, his overview of the pogroms of 1881–2 conceded that atrocity reports, such as those in the London *Times*, were exaggerated (17). From the content of official announcements reprinted in the Jewish press, Motzkin concluded that the central government and its provincial agents did not engage in pogrom-mongering. “We believe that all the facts speak against this assumption” (24). Ignatiev, for one, was no enemy of the pogroms and, through his passivity and indulgence toward their suppression, could even be called their accomplice. However, he was in no doubt that the tsar absolutely opposed the violence (27). Public manifestoes were widely disseminated that warned against violence and threatened punishment to the *pogromshchiki*. Jewish communities published letters of thanks to local police officials who had intervened energetically in their defense. Motzkin assumed that their energy was motivated by Jewish “gifts,” a measure that was not successful in 1905 (31).

The one exception to the general picture was Kiev. Reflecting his own experiences as a native of that province, Motzkin was extremely critical of Governor-General A. R. Drenteln. For Drenteln, hatred of the Jews was “a basic instinct,” and the persecution and harassment of the Jews were “an end in itself” (32). Under these circumstances, the Kiev provincial

⁵⁹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972), XII, 476–7. Citations in the body of the text are taken from volume I of *Die Judenpogrome*.

administration – taking its lead from Drenteln – was extremely slow and apathetic in its suppression of the pogroms (36).⁶⁰ Kiev aside, Motzkin's final conclusion was that there was no official organization, instigation, or toleration of the pogroms in 1881–2. At worst, local authorities were slow or unenthusiastic in taking decisive measures.⁶¹ They were also derelict in their responsibilities to prevent anti-Jewish agitation, giving a free hand to the Judeophobe press on the local and national level (39).

The true importance of the pogroms emerged only some years after the initial outbreaks. The inherently Judeophobe bureaucracy (a term that Motzkin used for every level of the Russian government) instinctively recognized the role that discrimination and persecution could play in the task of defending the autocracy. Jewish persecution developed into an unchanging principle of the state and became a major weapon in the bureaucracy's efforts to undermine the revolutionary quest for freedom (42). In Motzkin's summary, "in comparison with the present, the activities of that part of the bureaucracy, that in the 1880s indulged or patronized the pogroms was little more than child's play." Only in the twentieth century did this child's play grow into "a struggle of life and death, a struggle without any consideration, full of furious rage and bestial vindictiveness" (43).

Despite Motzkin's nuanced treatment of the events of 1881–2, based on primary sources, the events of 1903–6 and the widespread belief in the "pogrom politics" of the tsarist regime eclipsed the distinctions that he sought to make. His book came to serve primarily as a convenient reference work, a compilation of all the despicable episodes of tsarist anti-Jewish politics in action.

Between 1916 and 1920, the Jewish Publication Society of America published a three-volume history of Russian Jewry authored by S. M. Dubnow. The work was based on the research that Dubnow had first published in *Evreiskaia starina*, which fully accepted the claims of the Levin Memorandum. Dubnow's *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* circulated widely and dominated the historiography of Russian Jewry for well over a half-century. His English-language work met an enthusiastic reception in part because it exactly confirmed the pogrom myths that had

⁶⁰ See my discussion of the Kiev administration in Chapter I. While Motzkin emphasizes Drenteln's willfulness and connections at court, I suggest, on the basis of archival evidence, that he was under great pressure from the center to deal vigorously with the pogroms. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972, XIII, 696), it might be noted, while balanced in its treatment of 1881–2, follows Motzkin completely: "The most severe attack was perpetrated in Kiev over three days before the eyes of the governor-general and his staff of officials and police force while no attempt was made to restrain the rioters."

⁶¹ Motzkin is much more concerned about the role of the revolutionary movement. While acquitting the Narodovoltsy from instigating pogroms, he presents an extended discussion of the reaction of the revolutionaries whose "high ideals" led to the "greatest misunderstanding" of the true nature of the pogroms (53). He decried as a "monstrosity" the idea of using pogroms in the pursuit of freedom (47).

developed independently in the West. Moreover, it was the work of one of the most highly respected Jewish scholars of the day.

Scholars who followed Dubnow were unable to escape his desire to lay the responsibility for the pogroms at the door of the Russian state, even when the evidence was ambiguous. This is reflected in the contradictory statements that coexist in their works. Louis Greenberg admitted that attacks on the Jews “were not directly engineered by the central government,” although they were “at times tolerated by it.” But he goes on to say that “no serious excesses could have occurred without the active participation or the tacit consent of the authorities . . . That these outbursts were not spontaneous but planned and organized by higher-ups is obvious from the common pattern they pursued . . . In a number of instances the provincial authorities themselves participated in the organization and execution of pogroms or made it known to the local authorities that their connivance was expected.”⁶²

Salo W. Baron, Dubnow’s chief rival in the twentieth century as the preeminent historian of world Jewry, opted for the conspiratorial theory of the pogroms. In a popular work first published in 1976, he claimed that officially inspired rumors were spread that Jews had played a leading part in the revolutionary upheaval. The newly organized league of nobles (Sviashchennaia Druzhina) for the defense of the existing order engaged in large-scale anti-Jewish propaganda. It stirred up sufficient resentment among the peasants to lead to bloody outbreaks in many communities, particularly in southern Russia.

Equivocal hints dropped by such officials as the anti-Semitic governor-general of Kiev, Alexander Romanovich Drenteln (seemingly a member of the Druzhina), persuaded would-be attackers that the Tsar wished to see the Jews suffer retribution . . . As a result, a series of pogroms swept over the Ukraine and its neighboring provinces . . . The local police and military forces reacted with painful slowness, whether because they were unprepared for this sudden epidemic of attacks or because of the reluctance of their military and civil commanders to use force against their coreligionists in the defense of the hated Jews. In most cases the authorities tolerated assaults and looting of Jewish quarters for two days before effectively intervening on the third day. Quite a few policemen and Cossacks mingled with the looters.⁶³

Conspiracy theories have had the power to charm Jewish audiences as surely as they have gripped groups of antisemites. Just as the latter find a strange comfort in the myths propagated by the *Protocols of the Elders of*

⁶² Louis Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia: The Struggle for Emancipation*, 2 vols. in 1 (New York, 1976), 19–20. This material was originally published in 1951. Greenberg cites Dubnow’s 1909 article as “one of the main sources for the history of the pogroms of 1881 and 1882”: *ibid.*, 22.

⁶³ Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 1987), 44. I cite the revised edition of Baron, which retained the description of the pogroms from the first edition, to demonstrate how recently (1987) this portrait of the pogroms was in general circulation. Baron’s chief sources are Linden, Krasnyi-Admoni, N. M. Gelber, and Mina Goldberg.



Figure 19. The popular imagery lives on. We are grateful to Seymour Chwast for his permission to reproduce the illustration.

Zion, so too do many descendents of the East European Jewish diaspora retain an unshakable belief in the malevolent pogrom-mongering of the Russian state. It is a belief that overwhelms balanced and readily available accounts.⁶⁴ Like much else that constitutes the conventional perception of Russian Jewry, it pervades popular culture from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* to the most mundane objects of commerce (see Figure 19).

⁶⁴ See the entry for “pogroms” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972), XIII, 696: “The pogroms occurred in a restricted geographical region – southern and eastern Ukraine. Here there was a combination of aggravating circumstances: the traditional rebelliousness among the masses, a tradition of anti-Jewish hatred and persecutions from the 17th and 18th centuries (the massacres perpetrated by Chmielnicki and the Haidamacks), together with the presence there of homeless seasonal workers in the factories, railways, and ports, the rise of a rural bourgeoisie and local intelligentsia, who regarded the Jews as most dangerous rivals, and an extremist revolutionary movement which was unscrupulous in the methods it adopted.”

Appendix

EARLY 1881

Publicist emphasizes role of dark forces and links by rail (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 40-1).

1 MARCH 1881

Military forces available for Kiev military district (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 24-41ob).

15 MARCH 1881

Governor Gesse of Kiev reports gendarmerie evidence that criminal elements plan simultaneous attacks on shops in St. Petersburg and Kiev on 19 March; a "small revolution"; measures will be taken; disorders to coincide with the sentencing of the regicides (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 11).

23 MARCH 1881

Odessa governor-general on preventative measures; praised by Loris-Melikov on 3 April 1881 (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 1-1ob).

MARCH-JULY 1881

Proclamations found and sent through mail, mostly by Socialist Revolutionaries; one disseminated by a Jew in Tauride province (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 256-60ob).

7 APRIL 1881

Jews of Berdiansk have asked for protection of their warehouses over Easter in light of threatened disorders (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 12).

8 APRIL 1881

Rostov police chief advised to keep police sober and avoid provocative behavior (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 150-20b).

9 APRIL 1881

Kherson governor to police colonels of Anan'ev on need to take precautions against rumored pogrom during Easter; news from Elisavetgrad by railroad; origins of pogrom on 1 May in Anan'ev (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 398-9).

11 APRIL 1881

Kherson governor reports on pogrom on 4 April in Novaia Praga; gathering broken up by whips leads to mockery by Jews and to short pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7, ll. 23-7).

15 APRIL 1881

Odessa governor-general reports success of preventative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 1).

16 APRIL 1881

Telegram report from Odessa to Ministry of Justice about outbreak of a pogrom in Elisavetgrad and measures taken; investigations underway (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 1).

Odessa governor-general reports on measures, including transfer of authority to military, during Elisavetgrad pogrom; Loris-Melikov reports to tsar, who notes "very shameful" (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 2).

7 p.m. telegram to Ministry of Justice from Odessa prosecutor, reviewing situation in Elisavetgrad (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 4).

17 APRIL 1881

Odessa governor-general reports on Ekaterinoslav pogrom; peasant looting; one killed, several wounded; investigation of failure by the troops to respond quickly (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 3).

MVD to Odessa governor-general: take all measures to keep pogroms from spreading; request for more information; liaise with Drentel'n in Kiev; investigate possible dereliction of duty by Ekaterinoslav authorities (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 3).

MVD ordered Drentel'n in Kiev to keep a careful eye on situation and to liaise with Dondukov-Korsakov (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 3).

Loris-Melikov reports to emperor on measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 3-4).

Ministry of Justice to MVD regarding Elisavetgrad (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 4).

District police colonel in Kherson province sends telegrams to rural sergeants warning against pogroms; daily reports back (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 356-7ob).

18 APRIL 1881

MVD telegram to governors-general of Kharkov and Northwest with information about pogroms; stresses need to take appropriate measures and to keep information coming (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 4).

Official announcement of Ekaterinoslav pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 5).

Telegram report from Dondukov-Korsakov to MVD regarding disorders; Loris-Melikov reports to tsar (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 5).

Dondukov-Korsakov to MVD: will change Georgievskii Fair; how disturbances might be prevented in future; rumors and measures taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 5-6).

MVD reports to Alexander III (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 6).

Odessa governor-general reports all quiet in Elisavetgrad (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 6).

19 APRIL 1881

MVD asks Dondukov-Korsakov to investigate instigation (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 6).

Kharkov governor-general reports on measures taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 6).

Kiev governor-general sends troops to Smela and Korsun in response to pogrom rumors (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 6-7).

20 APRIL 1881

Bessarabia governor-general personally investigates a fight in Kishinev bazaar (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 7).

Poltava governor Bilbasov reports receipt of telegram from Kremenchug police chief about clashes in Elisavetgrad and asking to use troops; reports episodes of incitement reported by police (incl. Dracula rumor); all

instigators arrested; discretion is being used, but night patrols have been strengthened (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 8–9).

Jews and Christians accused of disturbing the peace in Kishinev bazaar; tried and convicted in June; distrust of Jewish testimony; rude comments by Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 160–2).

21 APRIL 1881

Pleve demands information from Kiev gendarmerie as to what is happening in Smela and Korsun; reply that troops have been sent as a precaution and warning announcements made (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 13).

Poltava governor announces arrest of an instigator with proclamations claiming to be correspondent for *Orlovskii vestnik* (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 7).

24 APRIL 1881

Reports indicate that gendarmerie were in constant contact with St. Petersburg about rumors surrounding the pogroms (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 14–16).

Head of Kiev gendarmerie Novitskii reports on responses to his 21 April queries to district police colonel on state of the population; unrest and expectation of disorders; resentment against Jews, Poles, and land owners; agitation and fights began in Kiev on 23 April; drinking houses closed, Jews off the streets (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 10–11).

Supplement to the above; rumors of pogroms; at request of citizens, Drentel'n has sent troops to Zlatopol', clashes and fights between Russians and Jews in Kiev (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 11).

Kiev reports dispatch of troops to Zlatopol' (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 14).

Drentel'n reports signs of attack in Kiev's Ploskaia district; action taken; troops sent to Smela (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 12).

25 APRIL 1881

List of measures to keep peace in Poltava province (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 77–85).

26 APRIL 1881

Kiev – initial reports suggest all is quiet but then telegrams that a pogrom has started; revolutionaries are not instigators, but plan to use disorders (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 7).

Telegram dispatched at midnight reporting outbreak of pogrom in Kiev; revolutionary circles do not seem to be involved; report at 4 a.m. from Podol, where crowds looted almost in front of the governor-general; arson; warning announcements from governor-general; Jews accused of exploitation and killing tsar; reply to request from Plevé for information reports use of firearms and one fatality (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 160ob).

27 APRIL 1881

Kherson governor Erdeli reports in outline form to MVD on Elisavetgrad pogrom and measures he took, including going there (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 31).

Coded telegram reports Kiev disorders; measures taken and arrests; Novitskii reports on pogroms; personal role of Drentel'n in stopping pillage; Jews accused of regicide and exploitation (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 7-8).

Police report at 2 a.m. about the danger of repeat of disorders; report regarding movement of troops; report that workers are discussing an attack on the prison on 1 May (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 10ob-11).

Kiev complains to Plevé that reporting of pogroms in the press is stirring up resentment and disorders; recommends that only official announcements be carried (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 12-13).

Losses in pogrom of Zhmerinka (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 264-7).

27-8 APRIL 1881

Report on Konotop pogrom; role of rail workers; one Jewish fatality (subsequent trials) (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 1-6).

27-9 APRIL 1881

Losses from some Kiev district pogroms (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, l. 48).

28 APRIL 1881

From Novitskii in Kiev: pogroms giving way to vandalism; use of firearms, 77 cartridges fired in response to stones and bludgeons; soldier arrested for interference; 1,000 arrested (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 9-10).

Sviatopolk-Mirskii reports to Plevé on mood in Kharkov, Poltava, and Kherson provinces; intellectuals read press but many oral reports - the

more absurd, the more accepted; before 17 April awaited a manifesto, and now a reform; landowners are now apathetic, but mutual relations are bad; students are uncoordinated and beginning exams; peasantry of very different minds; spread of rumors, especially by those returning from war in Bulgaria; poor moral ground of peasants; need a decree confirming status and reducing taxes; need more and better police in villages; the *sotskie* are all debtors (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 17-18).

Poltava governor Bilbasov issues announcement warning against pogroms and stating that Jews are under protection of law; knows that some believe that pogroms are government policy; 3,000 copies have been printed (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 28-9).

Firearms used in Kiev pogrom, one killed; arson; troops at posts (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 8).

Report to state police on causes of Kiev pogrom; claims full and complete planning; faults of police for their temerity and inactivity; eyewitness account of inactivity of police (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 41-2).

Kharkov governor-general Sviatopolk-Mirskii sends troops to Konotop to deal with disorders there with orders to take vigorous measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 11).

Coded telegram from Novitskii in Kiev; quiet restored (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 10).

Railway police from Moscow reports unrest along stations of Kiev lines (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 10).

Report from Kiev police that disorders will continue on 1 or 2 May (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 10).

Drentel'n reports disorders in Fastov, Zhmerinka, Vasil'kov (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 12).

29 APRIL 1881

Drentel'n reports quiet in Kiev; troops sent to where there might be trouble; moved from Volynia province (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 10).

Gendarmerie report on rumors surrounding Demievka pogrom; apparently educated persons dressed as workers and from Moscow; rumors that Jews ruin the people and killed tsar; assumption that these rumors are spread to stir up a movement based on hostility to Jews and turn people against troops who are forced to protect Jews (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 17-17ob).

Novitskii reports calm but rumors throughout the province; troops sent everywhere (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 12).

Sviatopolk-Mirskii from Kharkov announces that he is making a sweep through the province, visiting endangered centers; announces wide range of measures; better to anticipate than to suppress (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 13-14).

Dondukov-Korsakov to MVD with full report on Elisavetgrad and following pogroms; full details of beginning of pogrom; movement of troops; use of firearms; criticism of military action; bystanders; size of crowds; Jewish fatality Zolotarev; several beaten; 400 arrested; recommends transfer of police chief; post-pogrom activities; spread of disorders; legal proceedings moving smoothly; disturbance in Kishinev on 20 April, but dealt with in timely fashion by police chief; seeks causes not in religious prejudice, but in hatred of economic activities; danger of creating impression that Jews are under some special protection; emphasizes crude and insulting behavior of Jews; rejection of assistance from Jewish sources; how Jews use the change of time for the fair; warning of further outbreaks and peasant petitions; Jews filling up schools; educated society does not condemn these actions (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 19-27).

30 APRIL 1881

Poltava governor reports on spread of rumors; delegations of Jews seeking protection whom he has tried to assure they are safe; local officials have been advised to take all measures; invokes the law of 19 January 1878 (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 29-30).

Rumors of pogrom planned for Berdichev (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 35ob).

Dondukov-Korsakov from Odessa reports on end of pogroms in Anan'ev and Berezovka; officers have been sent to convoke *skhody* and deter peasants from riot; governors ordered to stay where there is trouble (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 14).

Police report from Kiev at 2 a.m. about pogroms in Vasil'chikova district; examples of lack of diligence; some residents are of a stormy character, and disorders may take a very sharp character; most energetic measures must be taken (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 12).

Pleve asks Drentel'n for information; Drentel'n reports troops having been dispatched; artillery sent where cavalry unavailable; most authorities more resolute, ordering corporal punishment; two announcements depending on whether or not a pogrom has taken place; suggests some military changes and collective responsibility recommended; garrison commander message with threats to use armed force (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 12ob-13).

Zhitomir Jews petition MVD to leave troops in place; complaints that troops were used effectively in Kiev only on the fourth day, especially Cossacks; perhaps posters to warn that troops will be used? (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 14–15).

Drentel'n reports calm in Kiev but a cavalry column will be sent tomorrow to Vasil'kov and Kiev districts (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 15).

Novitskii reports that a gang has arrived in Vasil'kov from Kiev and begun a pogrom; already fatalities; fuller report from Novitskii on pogroms in districts; peasant officials involved; rumors of an ukase; great danger from districts where population is descended from freebooters; district police are powerless (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 15).

Kiev governor reports petition of Zhitomir Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 15).

Sviatopolk-Mirskii to MVD from Kharkov; Chernigov governor in Konotop; need to send troops to Nezhin; rumors of an ukase; railway workers spread disorders; 100 arrested; Sviatopolk-Mirskii suggests that measures more severe than arrests will be necessary (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 18–19).

ca. 30 APRIL 1881

Senator Polovtsev reports on confused conditions in Chernigov province (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 16).

APRIL/MAY 1881

Anonymous letter from "all students at St. Vladimir University" demands an apology from Drentel'n for failing to protect Jews (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 19).

Berdichev gendarmerie reports panic in Berdichev; Jews armed with clubs patrol streets at night; rumors of instigators coming from Kiev through the woods; people fleeing abroad (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 20).

APRIL–JULY 1881

Proclamations found in Pavlograd district; Elisavetgrad; proclamations (2 May) against pogroms; peasants prevent pogrom (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 26–8).

MAY 1881

Anti-pogrom proclamation by governor-general of Northwest, Totleben (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 38–9).

1 MAY 1881

Mogilev governor reports on logistics to safeguard the Jews of Gomel (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 39–40).

Offer by eyewitness of Elisavetgrad pogrom to collect information for police (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 41).

Novitskii reports from Kiev; columns of Cossacks have been seen throughout district, administering corporal punishment; carried out too by peasant officials; shortage of horses; two different types of announcements are ordered; warning of use of firearms; Land Arbiters and clergy to carry out real actions, not on paper; no holidays for officials (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 16).

Account by Ekaterinoslav governor on 7 May of pogrom in Aleksandrovsk by rail workers (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 51–3ob).

Moscow Jew complains to Kutaisov that Jews are being beaten before the eyes of the authorities who show by word and deed their apathy (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 126, ll. 1–6ob).

AFTER 1 MAY 1881

Reports on Anan'ev town and district pogroms; action taken in Aleksandrovsk; Odessa district *stanovoi pristav* reports anti-pogrom measures; Jewish exploitation; no trace of outsiders; Jews ask for troops at their own expense; negative impact on trade (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 400–51, 459–65).

2 MAY 1881

Vilna Military District gives instruction for suppression of pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 130–130ob).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Loris-Melikov: request from Austrian government that its Jewish students be protected (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 36).

Senator Polovtsev reports from Chernigov about new disorders in Osterskii and Kozelets districts; business must be placed in strong hands; given incompetence of governor, a stronger power is needed; replace with Shakhovskoi? (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 19).

All quiet in Kiev, fears among Jews notwithstanding (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 19).

Governor-General Totleben sends detailed instructions to military of Vilna Military District about procedures to follow in use of deadly force (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 1–3).

Dondukov-Korsakov reports pogroms in Bol'shaia Aleksandrovka, Ekaterinoslav province; governor sent with troops (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 16).

Report of destruction in Aleksandrovka; troops sent and further attempts at disorders broken up (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 17).

3 MAY 1881

Jews of Tal'noe ask governor-general for protection in light of rumored pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 19).

Kharkov governor-general to Poltava governor: How soon can troops be returned for training? What measures are being taken? What are the sources of discontent? Stick to facts! (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 49).

Drentel'n complains that army is not big enough to send troops everywhere they are requested; Tal'noe is far from a railway line, but measures will be taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 19).

Drentel'n to MVD: details judicial measures to deal with *pogromshchiki*; attributes pogroms to hatred of "Yid" based on economic complaints; Jews are seen as to blame for all the problems of the state, including regicide; thus, juries cannot be counted upon to convict; need for swift and severe sentences – explores how best to secure; use of administrative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 42–5).

Reports of attack on railway station at Lozova in Ekaterinoslav province (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 19).

Drentel'n reports calm in Kiev but panic among Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 35).

Report from Zhitomir about the Volochisk pogrom; lists eight Jews wounded and nineteen rioters arrested (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Representative of Jews in Bogoslav asks for protection from an impending pogrom after refusal by Kiev governor-general; copied by Loris-Melikov to Drentel'n on 4 May (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 27–8).

Arrest of Kharkov resident for saying "Let's beat the Jews" (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 55–6).

Placement of troops in Kharkov (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 59–61ob).

Iancherak *pogromshchiki* demand tsarist ukase from *starosta*; subsequently tried on 19 May under Art. 250 of Criminal Code (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 192–4).

AFTER 3 MAY 1881

Count Bobrinskii considers the danger of suppressing pogroms by deadly force (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 170–7).

4 MAY 1881

Pogrom in Berdiansk (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 181–91).

Report on outbreak of pogrom in Smela; provoked by Jews; troops badly needed. Subsequent report that troops have reached the town, but that it has been destroyed (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 28).

Kiev gendarmerie reports to St. Petersburg on Smela pogrom; caused by Jews attacking Russians; troops have been sent (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 14).

Among alleged agitators in Smela pogrom is a Jewish convert, Dr. Bernshtein (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, l. 27ob).

Follow-up reports on Smela pogrom; resistance and fatalities; punishments; local authorities not vigorous in arrests; list of casualties (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 91–100).

Pogrom suppressed in Romny (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 31).

4–5 MAY 1881

Particulars of the Orekhov pogrom; one peasant death; synagogue not touched; not enough police; peasants joined rioters; details difficulties in trying *pogromshchiki* (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 199–206ob).

5 MAY 1881

Report of Kiev police chief on pogroms; early gathering of workers; wrecking of synagogue; Jews exaggerate losses (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 7–8).

Report of a pogrom in Volochisk; one Jew and two peasants wounded; nothing can be done without troops; twenty-five peasants attacked Jewish property (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 31).

Governor-general reports from Nikolaev on efforts to carry out pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Telegram from Dondukov-Korsakov to MVD on attempted pogroms on 4 May; he has toured Nikolaev and found little destruction; arrested 250 persons as preventative measure, including eighty Jews armed, in part, with axes and revolvers and intent on causing disorders; one Jew and one Christian were badly wounded; many people were beaten up (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Telegram from Jewish community of Rovno, Volynia province, has asked for protection from governor-general without success; ask for a small force for protection (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Drentel'n reports on Smela pogrom; on 3 May two Christians and three Jews were killed; on 4 May, one man killed attacking an officer and one woman wounded; wounds from beatings: seven Jews, eleven peasants, nineteen people in hospital (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Ignat'ev urges Kharkov governor-general to guard against a planned pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 35).

5-8 MAY 1881

Correspondence with Foreign Office about security for the Romanian consul who lives in a Jewish neighborhood in Odessa (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 45).

AFTER 5 MAY 1881

Report on aftermath of Orekhov pogrom; behavior of townspeople and Jews (who exaggerate losses); threats to attack those who protected Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 224-9).

BEFORE 6 MAY 1881

Poltava governor Bilbasov lists measures he has taken to preserve order at fair time (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

6 MAY 1881

Kharkov governor-general announcement regarding pogroms: Jews under same protection (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, l. 74).

Attempted pogrom in Nikolaev; trial of would-be *pogromshchiki* on 18-19 May (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 22-5).

Military report from Volochisk that *pogromshchiki* claimed to have been sent by the *volost* to wreck Jewish homes; arrests have been made (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 32).

Kharkov report that Poltava and Chernigov await pogroms but that all precautions have been taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 34).

Proclamation to public against pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 139-40).

Amid pogrom rumors, Dondukov-Korsakov reports that officials have been sent out to admonish population (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 34).

Tauride governor Kavelin reports from Simferopol on pogrom in Orekhov; no injuries; most pogroms have been avoided through arrival of troops (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, ll. 34-5).

7 MAY 1881

Bilbasov has sent dragoons in light of a pogrom in Bobrik (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 35).

Ignat'ev reports to Drentel'n that he has taken over MVD and asks for information (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 36).

Ignat'ev assures Girs that he is taking all measures and will protect Austrians (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 37-8).

Head of Minsk Railway Police fon Rotkirkh to Department of Police: reports handwritten notices of pogroms; disorder in Romny; rumors of golden charter (i.e., tsarist authorization of pogroms); warning has been sent to all workers and instigators equated with regicides; positive effect on workers who crossed themselves and promised to behave; Jewish trickery at rail office (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 56-7).

Ekaterinoslav governor Durnovo reports pogrom in Aleksandrovsk district; issued announcement to avoid violence and threat of military force; Russian trade-commercial class worried at losses (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 57-9).

Zhitomir gendarme reports to Plevé on Volochisk pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 35).

Drentel'n complains of receipt of telegrams from Jewish communities seeking protection (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 35).

Volynia governor Podgorichani-Petrovich reports on Volochisk pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 36).

Poltava governor reports that story in *Golos* no. 121 is completely fictitious (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 47).

Poltava governor Bilbasov reports that railway workers approached authorities of Kriukov with an alleged official decree in St. Petersburg *Herold*; in fact, the antisemitic declarations surrounding Argenau disorders in Poznan (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 48-9).

Report of Bilbasov to governor-general (see 3 May); emphasizes shortcomings of police and consequent need to rely on troops; antipathy arises from political propaganda, exclusive conditions of Jewish life, difficult economic conditions; denies "liberal" claims that rioters did not steal - quite the contrary; emphasizes the "political" role; withdrawal of troops means riots; problems connected with fair (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 50-3).

Kharkov governor Gresser to MVD reports threats of pogroms from railway workers in Kharkov; owners asked to explain impermissibility of pogroms to workers; restrictions on opening hours of taverns for holidays (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 53-4).

Pavlograd sees hand of anarchists in pogroms; asks for more troops (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 41-4ob).

Ekaterinoslav governor writes to governor-general to describe measures he has taken to prevent outbreak of pogroms (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 148-9).

Poltava reports measures to preserve order (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 77-85).

7-9 MAY 1881

Rostov Duma seeks measures against pogroms; suggests committee of citizens; thirty-six elected (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 46-7ob).

8 MAY 1881

Tauride governor reports to MVD that troops were sent to Berdiansk at request of Jews; they behave very cautiously and this gives rise to jokes; troops sent at Jews' request to various small towns (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 244-6).

Smolensk governor Tomara reports precautions in advance of Feast of Ascension on 21 May; issued proclamation and strengthened patrols (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 60-1).

Tauride governor Kavelin reports measures at Easter to protect Berdiansk Jews; terror of Jews and joking of townspeople; wave of rumors; troops sent in preparation for Kakhovskii Fair; other dispositions of troops to forestall pogroms; off to Orekhov due to pogrom there; sent instruction on 6 May to explain to peasants the inadmissibility of disorders and liability for same; clergy asked to help (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 61-2).

Minsk governor to MVD: rumors panic Jews, whose leadership was called in to assure them that all would be well; patrols increased; supervision of traveling groups of workers; asked for extra troops to be left in town (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 54).

Ekaterinoslav governor reports pogroms against Jewish agricultural colonies; vice-governor sent; danger in Elisavetgrad; relief measures undertaken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 36).

8-9 MAY 1881

Correspondence between Mogilev and Kiev gendarmerie; former asks about reports of agitators wearing blue or yellow sashes; Kiev denies the sashed leaders and attributes leadership to artisans, workers, and peasants (TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, d. 238, ll. 25ob-6).

9 MAY 1881 (FEAST DAY OF ST. NICHOLAS)

Dondukov-Korsakov reports from Odessa that night shelters were raided; 850 without papers; 250 non-residents to be expelled; to be repeated; concern at role of revolutionaries in Nikolaev (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 36).

Dondukov-Korsakov reviews anti-pogrom measures he took prior to Easter; divided town into sections and assigned troops accordingly; fights between Jews and Christians failed to grow into pogroms because of immediate intervention of troops; numerous important details (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 63-7).

Lengthy report on pogrom in Smela; rumors; measures; two fatalities among rioters; four Jews killed and one mortally wounded; widespread flogging (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 36-45).

Ekaterinoslav governor telegraphs reports on attacks on colonies and destitute position of victims; minister of state properties approves relief measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 45).

Bessarabia governor responds to threats against Jews by shortening tavern hours (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 68).

Odessa governor-general on "clashes between the Russian and Jewish population"; order given on 4 April to maintain calm; fight between Christians and Jews on 29/30 April; continuing fights; crowd of Jews armed with axes; involvement of politically active students; 850 people arrested, of whom 150 Jews; closed taverns on St. Nicholas Day; verified papers of those in night shelters; economic causes and efforts of revolutionaries to use disorders (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 615-23ob).

Kursk vice-governor reports unrest after Konotop; example of fear of pogroms against others besides Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 33-4ob).

10 MAY 1881

Tauride governor to Marshals of Nobility on need to combat false rumors; instructions repeated on 16 July; asks for reliable peasants to help (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 232-4ob).

Khotovsk *volost* court; punishments meted out to peasants involved in Kiev pogrom; thirty-six convicted, sentenced to twenty blows each (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 61-4).

Officer reports on techniques for preventing disorders among peasantry; announced violence in Tauride; danger of peasant uprising against Russian merchants (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 96-70b).

Ekaterinoslav governor Durnovo reports attacks on Jewish agricultural colonies; resistance; vice-governor dispatched; troops to be marched through the region as a deterrent; relief measures taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 68).

Head of Kiev provincial gendarmerie reports on Kiev; governor in Smela (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 39).

Attacks on Jewish agricultural colonies in South (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 45).

Rovno Jews beg MVD for protection (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 40).

11 MAY 1881

Vitebsk governor fon-Val to police authorities and clergy advising them of ways of preventing pogroms (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 8-80b).

Denunciation by Jews of anti-Jewish articles in *Libausche Zeitung* (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 63).

Kursk governor has dispatched troops to Putilovsk district at request of the Marshal of the Nobility; fear that pogroms will continue and spread to attacks on landowning classes; report of Marshal follows (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 69-70).

Bessarabian governor reports the circulation of rumors among Jews in Orgeev by Hebrew letter; need to prepare for pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 85).

12 MAY 1881

Ignat'ev recommends Kutaisov to investigate pogroms; considers pogroms as a test by ill-intentioned persons (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 46).

Arrangements for Kutaisov's trip; said to be an investigation of disorders' connection to Socialist Revolutionary party; Kutaisov order to investigate disorders and response of local authorities; role of antipathy to the Jews and use made of it by malefactors (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 47).

14 MAY 1881

Ignat'ev conveys Drentel'n's report to emperor; denies political involvement; blend of benevolence and savagery; honest belief in service to tsar; vengeance for regicide?; notes measures for trial; Ignat'ev is more convinced of a political element (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 58-9).

Nabokov assigns law court officials to assist Kutaisov (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 67).

Moscow Stock Exchange Committee emphasizes to MVD importance of Ukrainian fairs (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 69).

Kharkov governor has banned sale of alcohol on a number of holidays: 8, 9, 10, 17, 21, 24, 31 May, and 1 June (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 72).

Sviatopolk-Mirskii reports his query to governors about ending dispersal of troops in countryside; why hostility to Jews? (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 81).

Dondukov-Korsakov complains to Ignat'ev that economic side of Jewish Question has consistently been ignored; need for radical measures; economic disorders will provide opportunity for socialists to stir up further outbreaks; given popular loyalty, only means of creating sedition; glad of professed loyalty to tsar; emphasizes need to move Jews out of tavern trade; a full ban would move Jews out of countryside (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 82-5).

Kiev governor reports on Smela pogrom (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 103-5ob).

Jewish victims of pogroms in Cherkass district in May 1881 (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 108-10).

15 MAY 1881

Kiev governor reports those who have acted well during pogroms (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 111-14ob).

Gakhmuten asks for troops (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 45-45ob).

Pogrom in Volochisk, Volynia province, reported on 27 May; complaints against rail gendarmerie and local prosecutors (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 241-4).

Tauride governor on pogrom aftermath; threats to Russian merchants; need for speedy justice; misconduct of Jews; *skhod* demands expulsion of Berdiansk Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 217-21).

Drentel'n proposes to appoint a general to assume unified command over threatened districts but without martial law which will create a bad impression abroad (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 59).

Tauride governor Kavelin reports on Orekhov pogrom of 5 May and measures taken; besides movement of troops, addressed the peasantry at *skhody*; lists personnel who conducted themselves well; declared period wherein goods could be returned without punishment; troops billeted on villages which participated in pogroms; people always wait to see if they will be punished; indiscreet conduct of Jews regarding protection; they incessantly demand protection (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 72-5).

Attempt to send telegram from Podvolochisk to Austria seeking removal of gendarmerie officer prior to investigation of disorder (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 69).

16 MAY 1881

Drentel'n puts proposals into effect (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 62).

Ignat'ev urges Drentel'n to hurriedly complete trials of *pogromshchiki*; punish intellectuals more (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 62).

Drentel'n's comprehensive report on Kiev pogrom; role of rumors; Jews as regicides; special preventative measures well before Easter; division of city; provision of forces to prevent or repress pogroms; decided not to put up warning announcements (and defensively notes pogrom in Odessa despite such warnings); 26 April was a holiday; suggests Jews helped provoke pogrom; details of destruction; crowds of onlookers; announcements put up on 27 April; troops fired in response to rock throwing; one woman killed, three men wounded; spread of pogroms to district; three killed in Smela; list of rumors as to causes; statistics suggest non-involvement of socialists; suggests a "loyal" aspect to pogroms; role of Great Russians; discovery of secret printing press; harvest work will perhaps distract people from disorders; warns that continued actions of Jews could lead to new pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 75-81).

Bessarabian governor reports fight between an Old Believer and a Jew; the former wounded, and died; compensation paid by Jewish community; Jewish assailant arrested (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 86-7).

17 MAY 1881

Kiev governor reports on rumors suggesting expansion of pogroms and has taken measures; judicial measures which need to be taken (*volost* courts not to be used); seeks to control punitive expeditions to make severe actions uniform; uselessness of local officials, police and peasants (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 9-12ob).

18 MAY 1881

Odessa governor-general reports Anan'ev (26 April) disorders to St. Petersburg and many smaller disturbances; reports from Ekaterinoslav, Tauride; role of revolutionaries; blame on Jews; measures taken; problems of military (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 15–29ob).

19 MAY 1881

A Polish nobleman and landowner writes to complain of lenient punishments that have been meted out to *pogromshchiki*; they will attack landowners next (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, ll. 85–6).

Odessa governor-general to governors: initiative on foreign Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 587–8).

20 MAY 1881

Vitebsk governor fon-Val defends himself from charge of Rezhits Jews that no measures were taken to defend them; troops have been provided for security; anonymous denunciation on a regular basis; Jews seek to frighten authorities to use extreme measures to cement their power over region (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 87).

24 MAY 1881

Precautions against a threatened pogrom in Pavlovsk, Voronezh province (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 88).

25 MAY 1881

Pogrom in Demievka (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 19–24).

26 MAY 1881

Kurland governor reports fight and ritual murder charge (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 2–3).

Kursk vice-governor on preventative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 12–14).

27 MAY 1881

Complaint that Kiev authorities are expelling Jews in violation of Makov Circular (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 88).

Sviatopolk-Mirskii reports from Kharkov: trials of Konotop *pogromshchiki*; lack of evidence; troops ordered to strategic points; forces have

acted with zeal, but this diverts from military training; Kharkov and Poltava governors have acted to keep peace; disastrous effect on trade in Chernigov province; taverns closed (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 1, l. 17).

28 MAY 1881

Kiev district police colonel reports to Kutaisov: rural pogroms only because of urban pogroms; no antipathy observed before pogroms; doubts Socialist Revolutionary role; spread of Jewish Question from Germany; need to end Jewish exploitation and improve local conditions (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 76–85).

29 MAY 1881

Particulars about Smela pogrom and investigation of telegraph office (RGIA, f. 1282, op. 2, d. 2143, ll. 9–12).

Pleve asks Kurland governor to confirm *Golos* pogrom report (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 4).

Tauride governor reports minor disorders and action (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 8).

Poltava governor reports measures; need for rapid punishment; preventative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 62–62ob).

31 MAY 1881

Bessarabia governor reports precautionary closure of taverns in Kishinev (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 1ob).

Gendarmerie officer describes exploitation of Bessarabian peasantry (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 154–9).

Trials for Odessa disorders of 3–4 May, with dispositions; Justice of the Peace (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, l. 268).

MAY 1881 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Report on corporal punishment in Kiev district *volost* courts (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, l. 60).

List of peasant officials dismissed during pogroms in Aleksandrovsik district, Ekaterinoslav province (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 54–60).

Outbreak of violence in Jewish colonies (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 100–1).

Aleksandrovsik Jews ask Duma to help gain permission for a collection to help pogrom victims (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 138–42).

Reasons for failure of Jewish colonies; resentment of state peasants (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 143–7ob).

2 JUNE 1881

Ekaterinoslav governor asks for information on foreign Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 630–1).

3 JUNE 1881

Ignat'ev to governors: troops on standby; measures to keep peasants calm (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 5–7).

5 JUNE 1881

Kutaisov receives from Kiev court information on Jewish involvement in civil suits, prepared for senatorial revision; also material on criminality, spirit trade, military recruitment, etc. (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 268–72).

5–17 JUNE 1881

Measures to prevent disorders connected with fairs (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 73ob–4).

8 JUNE 1881

Complete and detailed inventory of losses during Smela pogrom (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 156–240).

9 JUNE 1881

Ekaterinoslav governor reports on pogroms in province: rumors before Easter of attacks on Jews and students; published rules on keeping the peace; spread of pogroms “along river”; sacked official; rumors carried by pilgrims; newspapers spread pogroms (*Russkii evrei*); no personal violence; explains pogroms; lists of proclamations: 6 May (against pogroms), stay in during pogroms; 28 May to Marshal of Nobility against pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 81–105).

12 JUNE 1881

Ekaterinoslav governor thanks troops for quelling pogrom (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 94–5ob).

Ekaterinoslav governor, at behest of Odessa governor-general, asks for comparative information on Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 625–7ob).

16 JUNE 1881

Trial of peasant for spreading false rumors (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 19–21ob).

Odessa governor-general to Nikolaev asking for full particulars of “clashes with Jews” (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, l. 586).

17 JUNE 1881

Odessa governor-general forbids private settlements with Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 589–90).

Penza and Kursk governors ask for troops to stay on station (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 78–9).

18 JUNE 1881

Marshal of Nobility for Verkhnedneprovsk district meets peasant administration to preserve order (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, l. 89ob).

19 JUNE 1881

Stanovoi pristav reports to Kutaisov on damage from Golta pogrom (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, l. 397).

Aleksandrovska report on officials who were commended or removed for their behavior during pogroms (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 459–65).

A. Kosich reports on Elisavetgrad pogrom; antipathy of Jews to local needs; revolutionaries played no role (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 495–500ob).

20 JUNE 1881

Dondukov-Korsakov of Odessa complains of “tactlessness” of Jews; accused of starting rumors; deceitful settlements; reply on 28 June (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3, ll. 1340–3ob).

21 JUNE 1881

Drentel'n orders Jews away from railway stations where their thieving arouses discontent (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 110–110ob).

24 JUNE 1881

Kherson governor details precautions; peasants more reliable than city types (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 109–109ob).

Ekaterinoslav vice-governor notes arrogance of Jews, and rumor-mongering of arson; report on behavior of Jews (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 629–629ob).

26 JUNE 1881

Anti-pogrom resolution of Aleksandrovskaia zemskaia uprava (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 197–8).

27 JUNE 1881

Ignat'ev reports Dondukov-Korsakov's actions to emperor (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3, ll. 1344–50).

28 JUNE 1881

Kherson provincial gendarmerie reports to Kutaisov on administration of corporal punishment (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 274–5).

30 JUNE–14 JULY 1881

List of pogroms in Pereiaslav and district (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 136–136ob).

JULY 1881 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Ministry of Justice on pogrom in Pereiaslav; need to hold trials as quickly as possible (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 107).

2 JULY 1881

Petition to MVD from Kiev Jew, complains that Kiev authorities are cracking down on Jews; complains about *Kievlianin* (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 139–40).

Odessa Jewish merchant asks Kutaisov for objectivity; beware of chameleon-like local authorities (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, l. 651).

Proceedings of Kiev Military Court; verdicts include Siberian exile (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 127, ll. 13–18).

AFTER 2 JULY 1881

Telegram to Baron Gintsburg reports pogrom and complains of official inactivity in Pereiaslav (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 130).

8 JULY 1881

Poltava governor reports on Pereiaslav pogrom of June 30–2 July; petition campaign against Jews; Jewish resistance; violent response of crowd; ineptitude of local authorities; talk with rioters; Jewish boasting; example of rumors of “Jews beating Christians”; only two people wounded in the pogrom, despite rumors; faults economic role of Jews; events make Jews believe they are under special protection; impact of Jews expelled from Kiev; investigatory committee formed (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 170–87ob).

9 JULY 1881

Delay peasant *skhody* to announce dismissal of peasant officials lest they create unrest (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 90–1).

Tauride explains pogroms through Jewish exploitation; example of disorders elsewhere; rumors sincerely believed by whole peasant community; damage reports (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 238–43).

14 JULY 1881

Kharkov governor asked for information regarding anti-pogrom measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 137).

18 JULY 1881

Kharkov governor-general reports anti-pogrom measures; governors instructed to take energetic measures; lists drawn up of expelled Jews and Christians (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 153–4ob).

20 JULY 1881

Governor of Ekaterinoslav explains reference to popular discontent against Jews and students due to role of Gelfman and Rysakov (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 155–6ob).

23 JULY 1881

Report on pogroms in Ekaterinoslav agricultural colonies, with signatures of victims; district police colonel report (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 15–18ob).

Tauride governor asks district police colonels to report on Jews living near railway stations (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 223–223ob).

Pogrom trials in Simferopol court (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 253–253ob).

28 JULY 1881

Poltava governor reports on disorders in Pereiaslav district; Cossacks quartered in Jewish houses; complaints regarding Jewish land rental (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 189-95ob).

30 JULY 1881

Ignar'ev orders governors of Poltava and Kharkov to take the most energetic measures against pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 168-9).

1 AUGUST 1881

Jews of Andreevskii, Berdiansk district, ask for assistance in light of pogrom; seven sign, of whom five are illiterate (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 290d, 1-1ob).

GUDDP to governors on need to control reporting of pogroms in provincial newspapers (RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8).

4 AUGUST 1881

Jews are reminded to conduct themselves cautiously; police are to immediately deal with any violation of the law by Jews (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, l. 18ob).

5 AUGUST 1881

Kharkov governor-general complains of Jewish exploitation; proposes creation of provincial commissions (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 128, ll. 42-8ob).

Chernigov governor reports precautions taken for upcoming fairs in Konotop and Berevno (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 220).

Kharkov governor-general reports on anti-pogrom efforts; emphasizes role of exploitation; Jews in liquor trade; Jewish usury; Jews in landowning; Jews in rustling and service evasion; riots seen as only way to fight Jews; must show people that government hears their complaints; proposes convocation of provincial committees; would discuss exploitation; results to be reworked by commission in St. Petersburg; would show that government was seriously doing something (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 250-9).

Detailed report from Kherson from Vice-Governor Pashchenko; extensive preparations in Elisavetgrad; rumors; military procedures; aid to poor Jews; post-pogrom actions; extensive statistics; spread to districts by

peasants; beating of peasant officials; instigator; shortcomings of police (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 3, ll. 1348-1422).

6 AUGUST 1881

Chernigov governor reports on meeting of peasants' representative assembly in Nosovka which called for expulsion and threatened violence but was pacified (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 221).

9 AUGUST 1881

Poltava governor reports on causes of pogrom in Pereiaslav province; blames Kiev example, economic conditions, and exploitation; agitation; local unrest; investigation of people accused of agitation; one arrest (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 222-4).

11 AUGUST 1881

Pereiaslav committee, listing economic complaints against Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 290a).

12 AUGUST 1881

Chernigov governor asks nobility, *zemstvo*, and peasant officials to play a role in preventing pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 227-8ob).

Poltava governor reports anti-pogrom measures, especially in light of handwritten proclamations (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 230-1).

21 AUGUST 1881

Kharkov governor has transferred to military court a case of pogrom-related manslaughter during Konotop pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 234).

Poltava governor reports on pogroms in Lubny; complaints against non-local Jews; role of drunkenness; not exploitation; agitation and confusion of locals; accusations that authorities protect Jews; notes vigorous measures taken; need speedy trials; responds to Ignat'ev's demand for action (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 237-44).

22 AUGUST 1881

Ministry of Justice reports on legal measures directed against pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 261-5ob).

23 AUGUST 1881

Chernigov governor on pogroms in Borzno district; grew out of squabble in bazaar; some interested in destruction of Jewish trade; need for better justice: released *pogromshchiki* rioted again; only 20 of 500 brought to justice; suggests to people that government will not punish rioters (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 245-7ob).

25 AUGUST 1881

Pereiaslav committee to regularize relations between Christians and Jews reports to Kutaisov (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 289).

29 AUGUST 1881

Chernigov governor reports pogrom in Ichna; stone throwing and window breaking; forty arrested (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 272-5).

7 SEPTEMBER 1881

Speech of Ignat'ev to Jewish delegation including Poliakov and Gintsburg (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1627, ll. 1-4).

12 SEPTEMBER 1881

Continuation of thorough report from Kherson; extensive statistical information; analysis of exploitation; summarizes press recommendations (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 679, ch. 2, ll. 1391-1422).

18 SEPTEMBER 1881

Chernigov governor Shakhovskoi emphasizes need to anticipate pogroms; governor will be held personally responsible if they break out (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 2-3ob).

20 SEPTEMBER 1881

GUDP to governors on need to stop any reporting of official measures regarding Jewish Question during work of provincial commissions (RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 8).

25 SEPTEMBER 1881

Tauride governor reports on measures taken even before communication of 23 May; warnings issued on 6 May (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 4-5ob).

6 OCTOBER 1881

Intercepted telegrams to Gintsburg and Poliakov from Orel Jews who report that, despite promises, they have been given until 24 October to vacate town (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 6-8).

7 OCTOBER 1881

Governor of Mogilev sends troops to protect Jews of Poddobrianka from hostile Old Believers; many young men from village were involved in pogroms in the South, and peasants await their return; faults reports of light punishment for pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 13-14ob).

11 NOVEMBER 1881

Girs to Ignat'ev on measures to be taken regarding Jewish settlement abroad; formulation of guidelines (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 132, ll. 9-10).

14/26 DECEMBER 1881

Particulars of Warsaw pogrom; letter complains of inactivity of authorities (RGIA, f. 1282, op. 2, d. 2144, ll. 4-12).

17 DECEMBER 1881

Vigilance warning in light of Warsaw pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, l. 128ob).

28 DECEMBER 1881 ONWARD

Problems with English petitions (RGIA, f. 821, op. 9, d. 132, ll. 15ob-19ob).

1881 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Debate in Verkhnedneprovsk Duma about asking for troops; who should pay? (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 48-50).

Anan'ev arrests for spreading false rumors (RGIA, f. 821, op. 19, d. 125, ll. 395-6).

Secret police investigate an Honored Citizen, Makhotin, for instigation during pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 588, ll. 1-2).

Paperwork for expulsion of a Jew from St. Petersburg (GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 759, ll. 1-2).

Case of a provincial secretary exiled for inciting pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 764).

Secret police investigations of Jewish meetings on borders of Russian state (GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1483, ll. 1-2).

1881-2

Mail intercepted by the police dealing with the organization of emigration groups; reveals mood of Jewish youth (GARF, f. 102, op. 1881, d. 1227, ll. 1-17).

MID-JANUARY 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor has failed to advise Orshanskii not to come to St. Petersburg to see Ignat'ev (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 1478).

22 JANUARY 1882

Ignat'ev conveys appreciation to Warsaw governor (Al'berdinskii) that Warsaw pogrom was halted without bloodshed, which would only stir up Poles (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 1468ob).

28 JANUARY 1882

Draft, possibly from Damishevskii, about rumored British diplomatic intervention; emphasizes importance of non-intervention; lists government's actions against pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 1469-73).

30 JANUARY 1882

Girs writes about how petition campaign in Britain might be handled (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, l. 1479).

31 JANUARY 1882

Report of provocative behavior by Jews of Orekhov, Tauride province, who have already suffered a pogrom; claim capital punishment will be used (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 21-3).

1 FEBRUARY 1882

Verses written "to the young generation" from Jewish students on occasion of 1 February fast (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, l. 27).

5 FEBRUARY 1882

Kiev provincial gendarmerie reports on Jewish activities in light of pogroms; fast day declared on 1 February; speech in Hebrew with students at Podol synagogue; proclamation by Deich, student at Kiev University, printed before censorship permission (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 24–24ob).

8 FEBRUARY 1882

Chernigov governor, when apprised of fast day and proposed closing of shops, orders them to be kept open (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 25–6).

12 FEBRUARY 1882

Report from Vitebsk on fasts conducted by Jews to influence deliberations on them (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, l. 20ob).

15 FEBRUARY 1882

Shakhovskoi of Chernigov complains of impudence of Jews, convinced that governmental commission will act in their favor; such arrogance threatens a new pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 1488–9).

21 FEBRUARY 1882

Vitebsk governor reports that the Jews are attempting to influence deliberations on their fate by a fast and collection of money under influence of spiritual rabbi Shneerson (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 19–19ob).

1 MARCH 1882

Manifesto of Brotherhood of Zion, as translated by Nikolaev rabbi Levst (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7, ll. 8–10).

11 MARCH 1882

Grodno head of gendarmerie complains of a sermon given by Brest-Litovsk rabbi complaining of society's treatment of Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 4, ll. 28–32).

12 MARCH 1882

Warsaw gendarmerie reports anti-Jewish poster in Polish threatening riots at Easter (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 2–2ob).

16 MARCH 1882

Anti-Jewish poster in Polish in Groetsk and Blonsk (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 1-1ob).

17 MARCH 1882

Anti-pogrom measures taken in Tauride province; troops sent to threatened areas (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 5).

18 MARCH 1882

Warsaw gendarme reports on posters threatening Easter pogroms; working-class or peasant in origin; faults local press for instigation, naming *Varshavskii kur'er*, *Vek*, and *Utrennyi kur'er* (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 6a-6dob).

Unrest in Anan'ev district, with rumors of an attempt to blow up local church (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 14-15).

21 MARCH 1882

Pogrom in Valegotsulovo, Anan'ev district, during bazaar; attempt at arson; very serious violence against *uriadnik* and priest (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 6, 11-12ob).

22 MARCH 1882

Petition of Gintsburg to Alexander III regarding measures to stop pogroms and comments by Ignat'ev (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1622, ll. 1-3ob).

Warsaw: pogroms threatened for Easter (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 3-3ob).

23 MARCH 1882

Ignat'ev circular to governors advising them that government is devising measures to safeguard native population; until these measures are worked out, seek to avoid clashes (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 25-6).

25 MARCH 1882

Warsaw governor-general reports to MVD; Passover and Easter are close together; Jews in panic; public hostility; posters; belief in no punishment; notes preventative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 15-16).

26 MARCH 1882

Pogrom in Nlova after church (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, l. 5ob).

Ignat'ev circular to governors asking them to take special precautions against pogroms with approach of Easter; reviews strategies which have worked in past (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 27-31ob; f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 4-8; op. 39, d. 512, ll. 1-9ob).

Ilov, Poland, pogrom after church (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1247, ll. 3-6).

Ignat'ev instructs Gurko and Drentel'n to be consistent and uniform; differentiate between rioters and leaders; use administrative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 11-14ob).

27 MARCH 1882

Pogrom arising from fight in the bazaar in Valegotsulovo (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7, l. 11).

28 MARCH 1882

First day of Easter.

30 MARCH 1882

Disorders surrounding a tavern in Bereznegovatoe, Kherson province (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 50-3).

Drunken peasants conduct pogrom in Bereznegovatoe and Visunsk (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, l. 22).

Letichev pogrom, Podolia province (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, ll. 14-15).

30-1 MARCH 1882

Pogrom in Dubossarai, Kherson province (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 24-6).

31 MARCH 1882

Reserve soldier arrested for spreading rumors of a tsarist ukase (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 7, l. 17).

1 APRIL 1882

Action being taken to investigate Balta pogrom by judicial authorities (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, l. 10).

1-2 APRIL 1882

Destruction of property of rich Jewish landowner in Karpovich; "execution" by governor; peasants ask forgiveness on their knees (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1243, ll. 8-8ob).

Pogrom in Moshorino, Kherson province; trial of *pogromshchiki* on 28 June 1882 (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 115-16).

2 APRIL 1882

Disorders in Balta district (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, l. 20ob).

2-5 APRIL 1882

Series of pogroms in Aleksandriev district, Elisavetgrad (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 29-33ob).

3 APRIL 1882

Podolia governor Miloradovich reports on Balta pogrom of 29-30 March 1882; rumors of Jewish attack on cathedral; eighty arrested; root cause is hatred of Jewish misconduct; one Jew killed, two Christians, and one Jew in hospital (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 19-25ob).

Chernigov governor reports invitation to local Jews (Balaban and Bruk) from St. Petersburg community to attend a congress; Ignat'ev forbids participation (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, l. 2).

Warsaw governor-general has followed MVD advice (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 21-2).

Shakhovskoi in Chernigov reports on preventative measures; complains of past dereliction of duty; plans to expel more "noisome" Jews; police should not overuse troops; rabbis advised to improve life of their people; what to do in event of outbreaks (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 35-44).

3-5 APRIL 1882

Kiev governor-general to Ignat'ev regarding measures to prevent pogroms (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1620, ll. 1-5).

3-8 APRIL 1882

Pogroms in Podolia province (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, ll. 30-1ob).

4 APRIL 1882

Kiev Jewish merchants complain to Ministry of Justice of their summary expulsion from Podol; likely to lead to more pogroms (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1246).

Shakhovskoi of Chernigov reports anti-pogrom measures, including warnings to *volost* elders (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, l. 8).

5 APRIL 1882

Investigation of a secret hectograph printing pro-emigration literature for Am Olam (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 8, ll. 5-8).

6 APRIL 1882

Report of pogrom in colony of Abazovka on 30-1 March 1882; two Jews were beaten and subsequently died (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 29-30).

7 APRIL 1882

Warsaw gendarmerie has dealt strongly with any instigation and with actions of Jews trying to attack a woman who planned to convert to Christianity (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 11-14).

Warsaw governor-general reports peace has been kept through timely measures; danger on Good Friday from Roman Catholics (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 27-27ob).

8 APRIL 1882

Mogilev governor offers extensive report on preventative measures; public mood; Jews deface icon (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 23-6).

Shakhovskoi of Chernigov suppresses a pogrom in Karpovichakh; monk accused of claiming ukase; stylized meeting with peasants and their ritual plea for forgiveness; instigators were flogged; Jewish losses said to be exaggerated (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 13-16).

Chernigov governor reports minor attack in Dobrianka, growing out of a fight (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 8, l. 17).

Nabokov to governors-general that emperor has approved that all pogrom cases be moved up the docket (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241, l. 2).

11 APRIL 1882

Shmilevizna, Poland, peasants try to stop Jews from road work on Sunday (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1247, l. 10ob).

16 APRIL 1882

Vigilance warning in light of new pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 129–129ob).

17 APRIL 1882

Illiterate anti-Jewish posters in Poland; proposal to ban Jewish rentals; fight occasioned by Jews working on Sunday (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 15, 21, 23–23ob).

18 APRIL 1882

Pogrom in Gombin, Poland (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 24–36; RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1247, ll. 16–18).

Disorders in Wyszogrod involving peasant argy-bargy (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1247, ll. 20–20ob).

Breaking of glass in Visunsk (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 55–55ob).

19 APRIL 1882

Ekaterinoslav pogrom involving railway workers (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1245).

21 APRIL 1882

GUDP prohibitions involving discussion of Committee of Ministers' treatment of Jewish matters (RGIA, f. 777, op. 3, d. 26, ll. 26–26ob).

Report that Jews of Ekaterinoslav petition for troops; wonders about the danger, especially as Jews spread rumors themselves; preventative measures which are taken; instructions to peasants in *skhody*; strategic relocation of gendarmerie office (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 49–53).

22 APRIL 1882

Threatened disturbance in Berezna, Chernigov province, where instigators complain that they have not yet had a pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 18–19).

23 APRIL 1882

Aleksandriia pogrom; demand for local peasants' petition; active crowd resistance, attacks on troops; already resentment against troops used to repress disorders in previous year (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241, ll. 9-12ob).

Pogrom in Aleksandriia, Kherson province; triggered by unsuccessful attempt at peasants' petition (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 63-70).

24 APRIL 1882

Measures being taken by Polish authorities in aftermath of Gombin pogrom (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241, ll. 13-14).

Governor of Petrovskii province reports threats of a pogrom in Lodz in order to encourage Jews to emigrate; all measures taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2, ll. 2-3).

29 APRIL 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor reports that Bakhmutsk district rabbi has received a letter inviting him to participate in work of "Brotherhood of Zion"; a quiet watch will be kept (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 12a, 12d-15ob).

30 APRIL 1882

Warsaw governor complains of influence of rumors and example of southern Russia; actions taken to counter pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 44-5ob).

Pogrom in Leovo, Bessarabia province, growing out of a tavern fight (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 10, l. 3).

Disturbance in Leovo, Bessarabia province, when Jews attack Christians in a tavern (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244, l. 3).

APRIL 1882 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Comments of Ignat'ev to Alexander III on petition of Baron Gintzburg (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1622, ll. 5-11).

Senate ukase ordering pogrom cases to be moved to front of docket (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, l. 28).

1 MAY 1882

Handwritten decree from Klintsakh, Chernigov province, in the name of Alexander III, blaming Jews for crimes and regicide and calling to "beat the Yids" (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 26-7).

AFTER 1 MAY 1882

Unprinted letter to *Golos* regarding pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 92–5ob).

Denunciation of Balta military authorities (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 10–12).

Critical account of the Balta pogrom; rapes (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 13–16ob).

Jewish community complains of Balta authorities (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 17–28).

Balta merchants ask for assistance (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 35–8ob).

Ministry of Finance to MVD, query on Jewish petition (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, l. 53).

4 MAY 1882

Crowd throws stones at Jewish houses shouting “Go to Palestine!”; Jews insult a religious procession (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2, ll. 4–5).

5 MAY 1882

Odessa Jewish hospital denies sensationalist reports about victims of Balta pogrom (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, ll. 52–4).

6 MAY 1882

Ianov, Poland (Siedlce province), pogrom, with trial of accused on 1 June 1882; bazaar fight after tavern (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1247, ll. 23, 26–26ob).

Drentel'n report on Balta (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 42–9ob).

7 MAY 1882

Anonymous letter to Novgorod Jew warns of pogrom on Trinity day; precautions are taken (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 45–7).

8 MAY 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor reports on bad relations between Jews and peasants in Verkhnedneprovsk (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 12d–15ob).

Vilna governor reports instigatory letter (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18, ll. 1–2).

11 MAY 1882

Drentel'n asked to investigate Balta by MVD (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 29–34ob).

14 MAY 1882

Disorders around a tavern in Chernigov province reported (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 30–1).

Disorders in Sevastopol, involving sacking of a brothel (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1242).

15 MAY 1882

Ignat'ev asks for information on Balta (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 39–39ob).

21 MAY 1882

Indictment of *pogromshchiki*; use of emergency legislation of 1881 (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1243, ll. 12–12ob).

22 MAY 1882

Jews threatened with arson in Velikie Lukie; *meshchanstvo* assembly to hear reading of laws of 3 May and regulations forbidding violence against Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 54–54ob).

24 MAY 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor complains of lack of guidance from governor-general (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 69–70ob).

Procedures for publishing Senate decree on pogroms (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 32–3ob).

27 MAY 1882

Following report from Drentel'n, MVD seeks guidance for trials of *pogromshchiki* (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 61–2).

29 MAY 1882

Report of prosecutor of the Odessa Sudebnaya palata to Ministry of Justice, reporting how he ensured that trial of Aleksandriia *pogromshchiki* was heard in civil court, while new governor-general Gurko wanted a court martial (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 80–3ob).

Vilna gendarme reports peasant attacks on taverns (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18, ll. 3-4ob).

30 MAY 1882

Vilna provincial gendarmerie reports on student groups trying to organize emigration to Palestine; apprehension of a student courier; center in Minsk; proclamation (Kharkov, 8 March 1882) sold for 40 kopeks to raise funds; explores motivation of students and calls for emigration to Palestine (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18, ll. 9-13ob).

31 MAY 1882

Drentel'n reports on the assignment of pogrom cases to military courts; murder charge for Abazovka pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, l. 34ob).

MAY 1882 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Ignat'ev explains to Alexander III why *Golos* should receive a second warning; includes complaints about reports concerning Balta pogrom (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1509, ll. 1-2).

3 JUNE 1882

Trials for pogroms in Novaia Praga and disposition of cases (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 88-88ob).

Trials for disorders in Bereznegovatoe and Bol'shaia Nagartov (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 90-91).

4 JUNE 1882

Pskov governor reports that landlords of Jews are to take special precautions (night watch) (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 55-55ob).

Tauride governor reports special precautions for hiring fair (Nicholas Fair) (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 56-7).

5 JUNE 1882

Official report on Balta pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 77-88).

6 JUNE 1882

Justice of the Peace hears case of tavern brawl in Edentsa, Bessarabia; Jews convicted of starting fight (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244, l. 11).

7 JUNE 1882

A peasant and two former soldiers assigned to military court for a rape during Balta pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, l. 32ob).

8–11 JUNE 1882

Assignment of pogrom cases to military courts (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 44–6).

11 JUNE 1882

Drentel'n reports from Balta on removal of officials (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 101–25).

Shakhovskoi of Chernigov reports on correspondence to local officials regarding precautions; long letter from Chernigov rabbi asking his brothers to avoid dishonesty and adopt productive work (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 512, ll. 66–7ob).

12 JUNE 1882

Ministry of War reports on deployment of troops (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, l. 75ob).

Trial of Balta *pogromshchiki* charged with rape (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1248, ll. 59–60).

13 JUNE 1882

Tavern brawl between Christians and Jews (Kishinev district court) (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244, l. 7).

Villagers in Kingdom of Poland are arrested for pogrom agitation (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2, ll. 7–7ob).

15 JUNE 1882

David Gintsburg writes to inform Tolstoi of a pogrom in Okny, Balta district (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, l. 37).

16 JUNE 1882

Report on pogrom in Okny; a case of competition with holder of liquor patent? (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 47–50ob).

Totleben responds to request from Tolstoi to list anti-pogrom measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 126–127ob).

Drentel'n complains of report on Okny pogrom in *Golos*; typical of such reporting (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 157-8).

19 JUNE 1882

Podolia governor reports on Okny pogrom; explains why report was delayed (there should have been a telegraph report); measures taken to prevent pogroms are listed; eight of nine *pogromshchiki* have been tried and convicted (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 51-60).

21 JUNE 1882

Drentel'n to Tolstoi on Balta pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 141-141ob).

Drunken Christians start disturbance in Jewish colony of Domobrovka, Bessarabia; stopped by *volost starshina*; court case on same page (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244, l. 9).

23 JUNE 1882 ONWARD

Drentel'n assigns pogrom cases to military courts (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 3, ll. 57-9, 62ob).

BEFORE 26 JUNE 1882

Podolia governor Miloradovich reports preventative measures (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 98-98ob).

27 JUNE 1882

Fight near Tomashov, Petrovskii province, is reported as pogrom; a crowd of 700 Jews gathered with sticks and cudgels with plans to attack peasants (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 2, ll. 8-10).

Disorders in colony of Malaia Seitseminukh (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 149-50).

28 JUNE 1882

Disposition of cases for the Aleksandriia pogrom (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 112-13).

1 JULY 1882

Vitebsk governor asks police to publicize Tolstoi circular on emigration activities (GARF, f. 542, op. 1, d. 175, l. 37ob).

7 JULY 1882

Balta Jews appeal to MVD by telegraph (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 152–5).

9 JULY 1882

Drentel'n reports official's retirement due to "poor health"; peasants not to be used to put down disorders (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 160–160ob).

16 JULY 1882

Mercy sought for Balta murderers (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, l. 161).

19 JULY 1882

Pogrom in Iaryshev, where Jews themselves detained those in a tavern dispute (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1241, ll. 14–15ob).

3 AUGUST 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor closes taverns in conjunction with fair (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 16–16ob).

6 AUGUST 1882

Gendarmerie reports detention of Jews illegally trying to cross border (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 56–7).

7 AUGUST 1882

Correspondence with Gurko about amnesty for Aleksandriia *pogromshchiki*; Gurko rejects amnesty at this time – need to set strong example (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 120–1ob).

10 AUGUST 1882

Detailed report on Ekaterinoslav pogrom of 20–1 July; final count of eleven killed outright; twenty-eight wounded of whom nine died; three dead of alcohol poisoning; broad details of composition and disposition of arrestees; special efforts to help Jews; troops were in summer quarters; all resistance made crowd angrier; not enough police; threatening letters have been received (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 42–59).

12 AUGUST 1882

Ekaterinoslav governor asks that Jews be allowed to solicit help from other Jewish communities; on 28 August, receives negative response from Department of Police: letter greatly exaggerates the losses in pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, l. 68).

11 SEPTEMBER 1882

Fight in village of Gertok-Mikh, Bessarabia, between Jews and *sotskii* (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1244, l. 17).

15 SEPTEMBER 1882

Head of Podolia gendarmerie reports on negative Jewish activities (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 163-7).

24 DECEMBER 1882

Podolia governor reports attempts to calm fears of Jews of Balta (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 168-169ob).

1882 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

List of delegates of the conference meeting in St. Petersburg which sought to discuss position of Jewish population (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1628).

Report on closure of Committee on the Jewish Question (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1632, ll. 1-2).

"Report of the Representatives of the Jews in Petersburg"; asks for permission to summon a conference (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1633, ll. 1-2).

St. Petersburg police chief denies that widespread persecution of Jews is imminent - merely checking documents of capital Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 1882, d. 338, ll. 1-3).

Pogrom in Vyshyi Vereshch, Kiev province (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1246, l. 6).

Statistics on trials of *pogromshchiki* in Elisavetgrad court district and basis for charges (RGIA, f. 1405, op. 534, d. 1249, ll. 146ob-147).

Drentel'n reports measures to deal with pogroms; deployment of troops (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 3, ll. 31-45).

Governor of Mogilev reports preventative measures as well as attacks (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 197, ll. 71-73ob).

Telegram to Dondukov-Korsakov and Sviatopolk-Mirskii advising of Drenteln's court procedures; members of intelligentsia should be treated with greater harshness than lower orders (GARF, f. 102, op. 38, d. 681, ch. 2, l. 60).

APRIL 1883

Report by Pavel Demidov, Prince of San Donato, implying that he is a member of the "Commission" (GARF, f. 730, op. 1, d. 1626).

21 JULY 1883

Ekaterinoslav governor reports on recent pogrom; police were overwhelmed and saved only by chance presence of Cossacks who had to use bayonets; complains of lack of police forces; warning to keep off streets, avoid looting, refrain from pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 7-8ob, 60-2).

21/22 JULY 1883

Ekaterinoslav governor reports on serious pogrom in Ekaterinoslav carried out by railroad workers on 20-1 July; troops were forced to fire: ten killed, thirteen wounded (of whom three died); summary telegram reports twelve killed and seven dead from wounds (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, l. 29).

25 JULY 1883

Gendarmerie report on Ekaterinoslav pogrom: grew out of bazaar fight; troops fired, killing two, but crowd regrouped and attacked governor himself; more rifle fire killed three more and one innocent bystander; troops fired again on 21 July; growing antipathy because of death of Christians (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 35-40).

3 DECEMBER 1883

Ekaterinoslav governor Dolgorukii sets forth detailed plans for preventing pogroms (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 4, ll. 77-86).

12 DECEMBER 1883

Drentel'n assigns pogroms to military courts (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 38-38ob).

10 JUNE 1884

News of Nizhnii Novgorod pogrom has dangerous impact on Kiev (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 8, ll. 25–6).

17 JULY 1884

Shakhovskoi reports on hostility to Jews and anti-pogrom measures he has taken to forestall pogroms of the kind that occurred in 1881 (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 43–59).

23 JULY 1884

Gombin proclamation demands tax on rich Jews (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 1, ll. 61–61ob).

31 JULY 1884

Pogrom in Dombrovitske, Volynia province; some Jews resisted with pikes and axes (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 9, ll. 16–23).

27 OCTOBER 1884

Governor-general of Northwest reports violent Jewish opposition in Vilna to recruitment; blames Jews for much of the ill feeling between Jews and Christians (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 18, ll. 16–18ob).

1884 (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN)

Various minor incidents reported, typically growing out of squabbles in bazaar (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 6, ll. 39–42).

Comprehensive report on Nizhnii Novgorod pogrom (GARF, f. 102, op. 39, d. 280, ch. 31, ll. 1–46).

Glossary

- Am Olam (Hebr. for "eternal people"): Movement of radical Russian Jewish colonists – mostly students – settling in North America in 1881–2. Members were called Am Olamtsy in Russian.
- Bilu (Hebr. acronym for *Bet Yaakov, lekhu ve-nelkha* or *House of Jacob, come, let us go*, Isaiah 2:5): Mostly socialist Russian Jewish colonists in Palestine in the period after 1881, founders of Jewish settlements starting with Gederah in 1884. Members were called Biluim.
- Conjoint Committee: The Conjoint Foreign Committee of British Jews was established in 1878 by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association.
- desiatskii* (Russ., pl. *desiatskie*) or *desiakhin* (Russ.): Member of a rural community elected by ten households (Russ., *desiat'*) to function as constable.
- ekzekutsiia* (Russ.): Form of physical punishment involving public flogging or beating of delinquents by police forces or military units. Outlawed by the court reforms of 1865 but applied in several cases to suppress anti-Jewish violence.
- etap*: Group of banished delinquents or, by extension, of Jews who, having been illegally resident elsewhere, were returned by the military to their places of registration. Derived from the term for military stations on the way to Siberia.
- galut* (Hebr.): Exile of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.
- Ignatiev commissions: Provincial commissions set up by the tsar in August 1881 to examine existing legislation concerning the Jews and devise projects to protect the lower classes from alleged Jewish exploitation. Named after the minister for internal affairs, Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev.
- inorodets* (Russ., pl. *inorodtsy*): Literally "alien" or "foreign-born person"; member of one of the non-Russian and non-Orthodox communities in imperial Russia.
- ispravnik* (Russ.): Police officer of higher rank, district police colonel.

- Judeophilia: Sentiments and attitudes that were favorable toward the Jews; juxtaposed to the term "Judeophobia."
- Judeophobia: Term in use in Russia throughout the second half of the nineteenth century designating negative attitudes toward Jews; juxtaposed to the term "Judeophilia." It was only gradually replaced by the term "antisemitism."
- kahal (Hebr.): Governing board in the premodern Jewish community.
- kulak: Land-owning farmer, engaging also in petty trade, money-lending and grain speculation, especially after the Great Reforms of the 1860s.
- maskil, (Hebr., pl. maskilim): Adherent of the Jewish enlightenment (from the eighteenth century onwards); also, supporter of secular education for Jews.
- May Laws: Set of temporary regulations enacted in May 1882, restricting Jewish mobility in the Pale of Settlement, and especially prohibiting Jewish leases of rural inns and taverns. The May Laws did not apply in the Kingdom of Poland.
- MID (Ministerstvo inostrannykh del): Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- muzhik* (Russ, pl. *muzhiki*): Peasant.
- MVD (Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del): Ministry of Internal Affairs
- nagaika* (Russ.): Whip with short lashes, used by police forces in imperial Russia.
- otkhod* (Russ.): Situation of peasants forced to leave their farms, mostly due to economic conditions.
- pan* (Polish): Noble man, landowner.
- pogrom* (Russ.): Outbreak of mass violence directed against a minority religious, ethnic, or social group. The term came into widespread usage after the riots of 1881 and 1882 in the Russian Empire. Those who initiated and took part in the pogroms were known as *pogromshchiki*.
- prigovor* (Russ., pl. *prigovory*): Resolution passed by peasant and town communities.
- samosud* (Russ.): Vigilante or self-administered justice.
- shtadlan (Hebr., pl. shtadlanim): In traditional Jewish society, a representative of a community with a defined mandate to intercede with the authorities; this form of intercession is referred to as shtadlanut.
- skhod* (Russ., pl. *skhody*): Assembly of an individual peasant community, often held in the open air, with limited prerogatives to elect the village elders and decide issues of local concern.
- sotskii* (Russ., pl. *sotskie*): Member of a rural community elected by one hundred (Russ. *sto*) households to function as constable.
- stan* (Russ.): Police district below the provincial district (Russ. *uezd*) level.
- starosta* (Russ.): Member of a rural community elected village elder by his peers.

starshina (Russ.): Head of the elected regional peasant assembly (*volost*).
ukase (Russ.): Imperial order with legislative character in pre-revolutionary Russia.

volost: Regional assembly of delegates, elected by the peasants and headed by the *starshina*.

zemstvo (Russ., pl. *zemstva*): Form of local government organized by district. Introduced in 1864, the *zemstva* predominantly consisted of noblemen; townspeople, clergy, and peasants were represented to a lesser degree.

zhid (Russ.): Originally one of two Russian terms for a Jew, together with *evrei*. By the second half of the nineteenth century it had acquired pejorative connotations, and can be translated into English as "Yid."

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