

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

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PEACE AND MIND

Seriatim Symposium on Dispute, Conflict, and Enmity
Part 5

Alexander Solzhenitsyn | Richard Rorty |

Linda Hutcheon | Georges Didi-Huberman |

Péter Nádas | Joseph Frank | Mikhail Epstein |

Robert B. Pippin | Marjorie Perloff | Dale Kent |

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TWO HUNDRED YEARS TOGETHER

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Translated by Jamey Gambrell

Throughout a half century's work on the history of the Russian Revolution, I have touched on the question of Russian-Jewish relations many times. Doing so has often served as a way into events and into human psychology, but the question has elicited heated passion.¹

I have long hoped that some writer, before I myself had the opportunity, would shed light for us all on this difficult topic, and in a manner that is thorough, two-sided, and equitable. But mostly what we find are one-sided reproaches. On the one hand are accusations of Russian guilt, even of ancient Russian depravity, with respect to the Jews—these claims can be found in abundance. On the other hand, Russians who have written about this mutual problem have done so for the most part vehemently, with bias, and with no desire to see what might be tallied to the credit of the other party.

This material was originally published as "Vkhod v temu" and "Evreiskoie i russkoe osoznanie pered mirovoi voinoi" in the author's book *Dvesti let vmeste (1795–1995)* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2001).

1. I wrote the volume [from which this article is taken] in conformity with no dictate but that of the historical materials and [of my] search for benevolent decisions [that

might be taken in] the future. It should be kept in mind that the condition of Russia [since I finished the Russian text in 1995] has changed so drastically in the last few years that the problem studied here has been forcefully thrust aside and has faded in comparison with other contemporary Russian problems. [Note added by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 2000.]

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The problem is not a dearth of journalists. There are many, especially among Russian Jews—many more than among ethnic Russians. However, for all the brilliant array of minds and pens, there has not appeared, to date, a representation or elucidation of our mutual history that could be met with mutual understanding.

Still, we must learn not to stretch the taut threads of this interwoven history to the tearing point.

I would be happy not to try my energies again on so sensitive a problem. But I believe that this history—the attempt to comprehend it—should not remain “forbidden.” The history of the so-called Jewish question in Russia (and is it only in Russia?) is first and foremost *rich*. To write about it means to hear new voices and convey them to the reader. (In this work, Jewish voices will be heard more abundantly than Russian ones.)

To approach the problem, depending on the press of social currents, can feel like walking along a razor’s edge. On both sides you experience every possible, impossible, and still developing reproach and accusation.

The feeling that carries me through this work on two hundred years of the Russian and Jewish peoples’ lives together is the search for every point of common understanding and every possible route—cleansed of the bitterness of the past—into the future.

Like every other people, like all of us, the Jewish people is both an active subject of history and its suffering object; and it has often fulfilled, sometimes quite unconsciously, major tasks imposed on it by history. “The Jewish question” has been interpreted from many perspectives, always passionately, but often self-deceptively as well. After all, what happens to any people in the course of history is defined, not simply by that people itself, but also by the peoples who surround it.

The excessive vehemence of the two sides in this matter is humiliating for both. Though no earthly question can be unsuitable for thoughtful discussion, popular memory has, alas, accumulated many reciprocal offenses. Still, if we remain silent about events, then how will we heal the memory? Until popular opinion has found lucid expression, it will remain an indistinct (or worse, a threatening) hum.

We cannot turn our backs on the last two centuries. And the planet has grown so small that in any sector we are again neighbors.

I postponed writing this book for a long while and would be pleased not to assume the burden; but my time in life is growing limited, and I have had to take it on.

I have never conceded anyone’s right to conceal events that have occurred. I cannot call for an accord based on unjust witness to the past. I call on both parties, Russian and Jewish, to engage each other with tolerant mutual understand-

ing and in recognition that each has its share of sin. Though it would be so much easier to turn aside and say: Well, it was not *our* fault . . .

I am sincerely trying to understand both sides. To do so, I study events rather than [engage in] polemics.² My attempt is to *report*. I enter into arguments only in those unavoidable cases where justice is covered by layers of untruth. I dare to expect that I will not meet with the fury of the most extreme and irreconcilable; my hope is, on the contrary, that this work will serve mutual accord, that it will find well-disposed interlocutors among Jews and among Russians.

This writer understands his ultimate task as follows: to do all in his power to consider, on behalf of the future, mutually accessible and benevolent paths along which Russian-Jewish relations may proceed.

Jewish and Russian Identity before World War I

In Russia, during the single decade [of the twentieth century that] it was saved from destruction, the best minds among both Russians and Jews had time to look back, judge the essence of our common life from various perspectives, and give serious thought to the question of each people's culture and destiny.

The Jewish people had moved through the unsettled contemporary world with the comet's tail of its three thousand year diaspora. Jews never lost their constant awareness of themselves as a "nation without language and territory but with its own laws" [Solomon Lurie], and they preserved, through the strength of their religious and national intensity, their separate and distinctive nature in the name of a higher, suprahistorical idea. Did Jewry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries strive to identify with and merge with the surrounding peoples? Russian Jewry actually preserved its self-isolation longer and later than its brethren elsewhere, concentrating on its religious life and consciousness. Yet, from the end of the nineteenth century onward, it was Russian Jewry in particular that grew stronger, multiplied, and blossomed—and thus "the entire history of Jewry in the new era developed under the sign of Russian Jewry," which possessed "an intense *sensitivity to the course of history*."³

Russian thinkers were confounded by Jewish segregation and, in the nine-

2. Bracketed material in this article has been added, with the assistance of Naphtali Pratt (editor of the Russian-language *Jewish Encyclopedia*), where a non-Russian reader unused to the author's allusions and allusive style may require clarification or information. [Editor] In the text, Russian names are given according to commonly accepted spellings (Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Soloviev, Gorky) or in order to make pronunciation easier for the reader of English. Citations of original publications in the notes, however, are given in the Library of Congress transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet in order to convey historical sources accurately. In the text, for example, the reader will

find the spelling Jabotinsky, while in the notes the same name is spelled Zhabotinskii. [Translator]

3. B. Ts. Dinur, "Religiozno-natsional'nyi oblik russkogo evreistva" [The religious-national face of Russian Jewry], in *Kniga o russkom evreistve: Ot 1860-kh godov do Revoliutsii 1917* [Book of Russian Jewry: From the 1860s to the 1917 Revolution], ed. Jacob G. Frumkin, Gregor Aronson, and Alexis Goldenweiser (New York: Soiuz Russkikh Evreev [Union of Russian Jews], 1960–68), 319, 322, hereafter referred to by English titles.

teenth century, the question for them was how to *overcome* it. Vladimir Soloviev, who was deeply sympathetic to the Jews, proposed doing so through Russian love for them.

Earlier in the century, Dostoevsky had observed that a disproportionate animosity greeted his hurtful, though negligible, remarks on the Jewish people: "This animosity testifies vividly to how the Jews themselves view Russians . . . and [testifies] that among the causes of our separation from the Jews, perhaps the Russian people is not alone guilty . . . causes have of course accumulated on both sides, and it is still not clear on which side there are more."⁴

Ya. L. Teitel, from the same end of the nineteenth century, gives us the benefit of his observation:

Jews are materialists for the most part. Their striving to acquire material goods is robust. But what disdain we see for these goods when their internal "self" or national dignity is at issue. One would think, why doesn't the mass of Jewish youth, which doesn't observe any rituals and often doesn't even know its national language—why don't they convert to Russian Orthodoxy, at least for appearances' sake: a move that would open wide the doors of all institutions of higher learning and would ensure all earthly blessings? *At least for the sake of education?—after all, scholarship and higher knowledge are valued more highly among them than financial riches.*⁵

But they have held, [Teitel continues,] to the idea of not abandoning their fellow tribesmen, who have lived in straitened circumstances. Teitel moreover says that Europe was not a happy alternative for Russian Jews: "Young Jewish students have felt uncomfortable in the West . . . German Jews have looked on them as an undesirable element, unreliable, noisy, untidy"—and the "French and Swiss Jews . . . have followed [German Jews] closely" in this opinion.⁶

Daniel Pasmanik, on the other hand, reminds us of a category of Jews who were forced to convert and thus held an even more bitter grudge against the authorities and feelings of hostility to them. (From 1905 on, the transition to Christianity was eased: conversion to Russian Orthodoxy was no longer the only option, and Protestantism seemed more acceptable in spirit to many Jews. Moreover, in 1905 the prohibition on reverting to Judaism was lifted.)⁷

4. Fedr M. Dostoevskii, *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* [Diary of a writer] (1876–1881; reprint, Moscow; Leningrad: GIZ, 1929), 78, chap. 2.

5. Ya. L. Teitel', *Iz moei zhizni za 40 let* [Forty years of my life] (Paris: Y. Povolotskii, 1925), 227–28, hereafter referred to by its English title. The italicized passage, interpolated by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in the quotation from Teitel, appears to be the former's paraphrase of the latter's argument. [Translator]

6. Teitel', *Forty Years*, 227–28.

7. *Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia* [Jewish encyclopedia], 16 vols. (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvo dlia Nauchnykh Evreiskikh Izdanii i Izd-vo Brokgauz-Efron [Society for Scholarly Jewish Publications and Brokgauz-Efron Publishers], 1906–13), 11:894, hereafter referred to by its English title.

Another writer concluded with bitterness in 1924 that, during the pre-Revolutionary decades, not only did the “Russian government . . . definitively count the Jewish people among the enemies of the fatherland,” but “what is worse is that many Jewish politicians counted themselves among such enemies as well, hardening their hearts and ceasing to distinguish between ‘the government’ and the fatherland—Russia. . . . The indifference of the Jewish masses and the Jewish leaders to the destiny of Great Russia was a fateful political mistake.”⁸

Needless to say, like any social process, this one—especially in an environment as diverse and dynamic as that of the Jewish people—did not follow a single course, but split; in the hearts of many educated Jews, it splintered. On the one hand, “belonging to the Jewish tribe gives the individual a certain specific position in the Russian environment.”⁹ But on the other hand, there is “a marvelous duality: the customary emotional attachment of quite a number [of Jews] to the surrounding [Russian world], their rootedness in it, and, at the same time, their rational rejection, their abhorrence of it across the board—infatuation with a hated environment.”¹⁰

So tormented and ambivalent an approach could not help but bring tormented, ambivalent results. At the Second State Duma in March 1907, I. V. Gessen, denying that the bloody momentum of the [1905] revolution would continue and thus undercutting the right-wing pose of defending culture from anarchy, asserted [about Russian Jews that] “we [are] teachers, doctors, lawyers, statisticians, writers . . . you call us enemies of culture? Who will believe you, gentlemen?” And the answer shouted from the right was: “Of Russian culture, not of Jewish!”¹¹ Not enemies, the Jews, no, why use such extreme terms?—the Russian Right asked—but are you truly our wholehearted friends? The difficulty for [Russian-Jewish] intimacy was this question: how could these outstanding lawyers, professors, and doctors not have profoundly, preferentially Jewish sympathies? Could they feel themselves thoroughly Russian in spirit? And from this question arose a more complex one: could they take the interests of the Russian state to heart in full measure and depth?

In these same decades, the Jewish middle class moved its children from a religious to a secular education, specifically in the Russian language. Simultaneously, a strong print culture, which had not previously existed, developed in

8. V. S. Mandel', “Konservativnye i razrushitel'nye elementy v evreistve” [Conservative and destructive elements in Jewry], in *Rossiiia i evrei* [Russia and the Jews] (Berlin: Osnova, 1924; reprint, Paris: YMCA Press, 1978), 201, 203, hereafter referred to by English titles.

9. D. O. Linskii, “O natsional'nom samosoznanii russkogo evreia” [On the national self-awareness of the Russian Jew], in *Russia and the Jews*, 142.

10. G. A. Landau, “Revoliutsionnye idei v evreiskoi obshchestvennosti” [Revolutionary ideas in Jewish society], in *Russia and the Jews*, 115.

11. Gosudarstvennaia Duma—Vtoroi sozyv [State Duma—second session], *Minutes*, Session 2, Meeting 9, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: March 13, 1907), 522.

Yiddish, and the term *Jewishness* emerged, implying: let the Jews be Jewish and not assimilate.

An unusual path to assimilation, far from widespread but not insignificant either, was mixed marriage. Another, more superficial stream of assimilation was the adoption of artificial pseudonyms in the Russian style. (But *by whom!*—the Kiev sugar manufacturers “Dobryi” [Kind] and “Babushkin” [Grandmother’s], who during the war were brought to trial for doing business with the enemy; the publisher “Yasnyi” [Clear], whom even the Cadet [Constitutional Democratic Party] paper *Rech’* [Speech] described as an “avaricious speculator,” a “shameless, profiteering shark”;¹² or the future Bolshevik David Goldendakh, who considered “all of Russia lacking in unique [qualities]” but himself assimilated as “Ryazanov” [from the town of Ryazan], and under that name, as a fixatedly Marxist theoretician, clouded readers’ brains until his imprisonment in 1937.)

It was during these decades that Zionism developed, most powerfully of all in Russia. The Zionists harshly ridiculed assimilated Jews, whose heads were swelled with the idea that the destiny of Russian Jewry was inextricably tied to the destiny of Russia.

And here, we must turn above all to the brilliant and rather dramatic journalist Vladimir Jabotinsky, whose lot it was in the pre-Revolutionary years to express, not just aversion to Russia, but also words of despair. Jabotinsky thought of Russia as no more than a wayside inn for Jews on their historical circuit; he felt they had to move down the road to Palestine.

Jabotinsky wrote passionately: we [educated Jews] do not have dealings with the Russian people—we know Russia through its culture, “primarily through its writers . . . the highest, purest manifestation of the Russian spirit,” and then we apply our judgment [of Russian high culture] to the entire Russian world. “Many of us, the children of the Jewish intelligentsia, are madly and humiliatingly in love with Russian culture . . . with the demeaning love of the swineherd for the tsarevna,” whereas we know Jewry only in its commonness and narrow-mindedness.¹³

Jabotinsky is merciless to assimilated Jews: “A multitude of slavish habits developed in our psychology during the russification of our intelligentsia,” [he writes. We] “have lost the hope or desire to preserve Jewry untouched and are causing its disappearance from the stage.” The average Jewish intellectual forgets about himself, thinks it better not to pronounce the word *Jew*: “It’s not the right time.” He is afraid, [Jabotinsky says,] to write “we Jews,” and so writes, “we Russians” or even “our brother *rusak*”: “A Jew can be a Russian citizen of the first

12. “P. G.,” “Marodery knigi” [Marauders of the book], *Rech’* [Speech], May 6, 1917, 3.

13. Vladimir Zhabotinskii, *Fel’etony* [Feuilletons] (St. Petersburg: Gerold Tipografiia, 1913), 9–11, hereafter referred to by its English title.

order, but only a second rate *Russian*.¹⁴ "From the moment when the Jew declares himself Russian, he becomes a second-class citizen," but all the same he "preserves a distinctive 'accent' of the soul." There was, [according to Jabotinsky,] an epidemic of conversion for profit, often for things far more trivial than a diploma: "thirty silver pieces of equality." On abandoning their faith, [he concludes, Jews] should not remain in their nationality either.¹⁵

The position of Jews in Russia (not at all times, but specifically after 1905–6) Jabotinsky viewed as hopelessly gloomy: "The objective advantage of all we associate with [living in] a foreign land has now turned against our people, and we are powerless and helpless." "We knew before that we were surrounded by enemies," [he wrote, but now Russia] "is a prison," "a barking kennel," "the prostrate and wounded body of defenseless Russian Jewry, persecuted and surrounded everywhere by enemies." "Six million [Russian Jews, he continued,] swarm in a deep pit . . . it is an era of slow torture, of a drawn-out pogrom." It even seemed to Jabotinsky that "newspapers supported by Jewish money" did not defend the Jews "in this era of unprecedented persecution." Then, at the end of 1911: "For the last few years, Jews in Russia have been sitting firmly in the dock"—we are not revolutionaries, [he said,] we "did not sell Russia out to the Japanese," and we are not like Evno Azef and Dmitri Bogrov.¹⁶ Indeed, concerning Bogrov, Jabotinsky wrote: "Whatever he may have been personally, at the hour of his amazing end, this unhappy young man was abused by those ten boors from the cesspool of Kiev's Black Hundreds" who wanted to assure themselves that the murderer [of Pyotr Stolypin] had been executed.¹⁷ ("Bogrov's amazing end"?!)

Over and over, turning his gaze on Jewry, [Jabotinsky wrote]: "We are culturally impoverished now, our hut is joyless, our way is stifling." "Our main illness is self-contempt, our basic need is to develop self-respect. . . . Scholarship

14. The words used here are, respectively, *rossiianin* (Russian citizen) and *ruskii* (ethnic Russian). The adjective *rossiiskii* refers to the territory of Russia and/or the Russian state and citizenship; in addition to Russian ethnicity, *ruskii* refers to the language, literature, and culture. Both are often translated into English as *Russian*, but the distinction is important, particularly in this context. Generally, where *rossiiskii* is used as distinguished from *ruskii*, I have tried to translate the word or phrase as *Russian state* or *Russian citizen*. [Translator]

15. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 16, 62–63, 176–80, 253–54.

16. Evno Azef, a Jew, was an exiled member of the Social Democratic Party, who was recruited as a spy for the Okhrana, the Russian internal security police. Asked to join the Socialist Revolutionary Party so that he could

inform on its members as well, he was eventually exposed as an informer and fled to Germany, where he died during World War I. Dmitri Bogrov, a Jew and member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, was also recruited as an Okhrana spy. But in 1911, possibly as an act of penance, he assassinated Pyotr Stolypin, minister of the interior, and was hanged the same year. [Editor]

17. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 26, 30, 75, 172–73, 195, 199–200, 205. The Black Hundreds was a reactionary party that chose the Jews as scapegoats for the 1905 edict by which Nicholas II established the rudiments of a constitutional government. The Black Hundreds perpetrated major pogroms against the Jews in Kiev, Odessa, Yekaterinoslav, and Bialystok (and assassinated several important Russian liberals). [Editor]

on Jewry should become the heart of scholarship for us. . . . Jewish culture has become the only safe harbor of salvation for us.”¹⁸

And this view can well be understood and shared (especially by us Russians today. . . .)

Jabotinsky did not judge those who assimilated in the past: in history, [he said,] “there are moments when assimilation has undoubtedly been desirable, when it has been a necessary stage of progress.” A moment of that kind arose after the 1860s, when the Jewish intelligentsia was nascent and was absorbing its surroundings, a mature culture. At that time, [according to Jabotinsky,] assimilation was “not a rejection of the Jewish people, but on the contrary, the first stage of Jewish national initiative, the first step toward the renewal and renaissance of the nation.” It was necessary to “assimilate what was foreign in order to develop one’s own [self] with renewed strength.” But half a century had passed, much had changed drastically, both without and within Jewry. The thirst for general education had become powerful, in any case; now the zeal for it was unparalleled. Now was the time for *Jewish* principles to be inculcated in the younger generations, [for] now there was a threat of tracelessly dissolving into a foreign culture. “Our sons are leaving with every passing day,” [Jabotinsky wrote,] and “are becoming alien to us”: our “educated children are serving every people on earth, except us; no one labors for any Jewish causes. . . .” “The surrounding world is too magnificent, spacious, and rich,” [he continued,] we will not allow it to lure Jewish youth from the “unsightliness of Jewish existence. . . . Immersion in the national values of Jewry must become the main . . . element of Jewish education.” “Collective responsibility . . . is the only thing a nation can hold on to” and renegade behavior slows down the struggle for Jewish rights. “Recently”—ah, so there was an exit [from responsibility]—young Russian Jews “have been leaving . . . in droves . . . with such cynical ease.”¹⁹ (“Collective responsibility . . . is the only thing a nation can hold on to”—would that we Russians had such an awareness!)

And most strikingly, [Jabotinsky concludes]: “The majestic spirit [of Israel] in all its might, its tragic history in all its colossal magnificence . . .”—“Who are we that we should justify ourselves to them? Who are they to interrogate us?”²⁰

This last formulation also commands full respect. But its application should be two-sided. No one nation or faith is given to *judge* another.

These appeals to return to Jewish *roots* did not fall on deaf ears in pre-Revolutionary Petersburg: “One could observe a sharp rise in interest in Jewish history among circles of the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia.”²¹ In Petersburg in

18. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 15, 17, 69.

19. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 18–24, 175–77.

20. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 14, 200.

21. “Pamiati M. L. Vishnitsera” [In memory of M. L. Vishnitser], in *Book of Russian Jewry*, 8.

1908, the Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Commission expanded and transformed itself into the Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society, headed by Maxim Vinaver.²² The society began actively and successfully collecting an archive on the history and ethnography of Jews in Russia and Poland—nothing like it had been created by Jewish historical scholarship in the West. Under the editorship of Simon Dubnov, the journal *Jewish Antiquity* began to appear.²³ At the same time, the sixteen-volume *Jewish Encyclopedia* (which I use abundantly in this work) and the fifteen-volume *History of the Jewish People* were prepared for publication. True, in its final volume, the encyclopedia complains [that] “the leading circles of the Jewish intelligentsia . . . displayed indifference to the cultural tasks of the encyclopedia” (they were engaged in the struggle for more open manifestations of Jewish equality).²⁴

Still, in other Jewish heads and hearts, a contrary conviction grew: that the future of Russian Jewry was inextricably bound with the future of Russia. [In I. M. Bikerman’s words:] Although “dispersed across vast expanses, living sprinkled here and there in a foreign element . . . Russian Jewry was in fact, and conceived of itself as, a single entity. For the environment surrounding us was one and the same . . . a single culture. . . . We absorbed that culture throughout the entire country.”²⁵

[Or as Stephan Ivanovich made the point:] “Russian Jewry has always known how to connect its interests to those of the Russian people as a whole. And this is a result, not of noble character or feelings of gratitude, but a good sense of historical realities.” Continuing the argument peremptorily, as if in direct contradiction of Jabotinsky, [Ivanovich added]: “For the millions of Jews that inhabit her, Russia is not a chance way station in the historical peregrinations of the Wandering Jew. . . . The Russian paths of world Jewry have been and will remain the most significant historically. We cannot escape from Russia, just as Russia herself cannot escape from us.”²⁶

O. Ia. Pergament, a deputy in the Second and Third State Dumas, described this inability to “escape” even more categorically: “No improvement of Russian internal life is [itself] possible without the simultaneous emancipation of the Jews from the lack of civil rights that weighs them down.”²⁷

Another significant voice that cannot be ignored is that of Genrikh Sliozberg, a Jewish lawyer who had close dealings with the Russian state for decades, as assistant overseer of the Senate and as legal adviser to the min-

22. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 8:466.

23. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 7:449–50.

24. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 16:276.

25. I. M. Bikerman, *Rossia i russkoe evreistvo* [Russia and Russian Jewry], in *Russia and the Jews*, 86.

26. Stephan Ivanovich, “Evrei i sovietskaia diktatura” [Jews and Soviet dictatorship], in *Evreiskii mir: Ezhegodnik na 1939* [The Jewish world: Almanac for 1939] (Paris: Ob’edinenie russko-evreiskoi intelligentsii, 1939–40), 55–56.

27. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12:372–73.

istry of internal affairs, a man whom many Jews reproached for *requesting* rights from those in power, when the time had come to *demand* Jewish rights. In his memoirs, Sliozberg says: "From childhood I was accustomed to thinking of myself as a Jew first and foremost. But from the very beginning of my adult life, I felt myself to be a son of Russia as well. . . . To be a good Jew doesn't mean not being a good Russian citizen."²⁸ [He continues:] "In our work, we did not have to overcome obstacles of the kind that the Poles put up for Polish Jewry every step of the way. . . . In Russian government life, we, Jews by nationality [ethnic origin], did not constitute an alien element, since many nationalities inhabited Russia, unified in Russian statehood without attempts on the part of the dominant nationality to swallow all others. . . . The cultural interests of Russia did not conflict in the least with the cultural interests of the Jews. One culture in effect complemented the other."²⁹ Indeed, Sliozberg goes so far as to joke that, given the incoherence and contradiction of Russian laws about Jews, he was in the 1890s "supposed to begin development of a distinctively Jewish jurisprudence, employing purely talmudic methods."³⁰

And moreover [from another source, D. O. Linsky, we find]: "The softening of the national yoke in recent years, not long before Russia entered a tragic streak in her history, created in the souls of all Russian Jews the hope that gradually the consciousness of Russian Jewry would follow the path of filling that consciousness with the creative content of reconciling Jewish and Russian aspects in a synthesis of higher unity."³¹

And can we forget that, of the seven authors of the incomparable *Vekhi* [*Landmarks*: a collection of anti-intelligentsial, antiradical essays], three were Jews—M. O. Gershenzon, A. S. Izgoev-Lande, and S. L. Frank?³²

Despite which, on the other side [of the political divide], Russian Jews of the pre-Revolutionary decades enjoyed as well the powerful, unified support of social progressives. It may well be that this support developed against a background of constraint and pogroms; nevertheless, in no other country (perhaps even in all of world history up to that time?) had support [for Jews] been so exten-

28. Genrikh Borisovich Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei: Zapiski russkogo evreia* [Affairs of days gone by: Notes of a Russian Jew], 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Pascal, 1933–34), 1:3–4, hereafter referred to by its English title.

29. Sliozberg, *Affairs of Days*, 2:302.

30. Sliozberg, *Affairs of Days*, 1:302.

31. Linskii, "On the National Self-Awareness," in *Russia and the Jews*, 144.

32. *Landmarks: A Collection of Articles on the Russian Intelligentsia* (in Russian) (Moscow, 1909; published in English translation as *Signposts*, ed. and trans. Marshall S. Shatz and Judith E. Zimmerman [Irvine, CA: Schlacks, 1986]).

In Gary Saul Morson's description: "Here is one case where it is entirely justified to call a publication a scandal: *Landmarks* dissected, indeed tried to bury, the intelligentsia's self-image, psychology, mores, etiquette, and unquestioned values and assumptions, most of which *Landmarks* described as destructive. Generally liberal in their views, the contributors criticized the intelligentsia's automatic habit of radicalism. Still more iconoclastic, *Landmarks* refused to consider politics the solution to all problems, not even to political problems": Morson, "Prosaic Bakhtin: *Landmarks*, Anti-Intelligentsialism, and the Russian Counter-Tradition," *Common Knowledge* 2.1 (spring 1993): 38.

sive. The high-minded, freedom-loving intelligentsia of Russia placed anti-Semitism entirely beyond the bounds of society and humanity. Anyone, moreover, who failed to offer clear and voluble support for the Jews, especially in their struggle for equal rights, was immediately branded a "dishonorable anti-Semite." The excruciatingly conscientious, acutely sensitive Russian intelligentsia tried to heed and assimilate fully the specifically Jewish understanding of political priorities: whoever protests the oppression of the Jews is progressive, all others are reactionary. Russian society not only staunchly defended the Jews in relationship to the government, but forbade both itself and everyone else to express even the faintest shadow of criticism regarding the behavior of individual Jews: what if suddenly, in my annoyance [at a particular Jew's behavior], anti-Semitism should reveal itself in me? (The generation that grew up at that time retained this attitude for decades.)

In his memoirs, V. A. Maklakov recounts a characteristic episode that took place at the Zemstvo congress of 1905, after the recent pogroms against the Jews and intelligentsia, and when pogroms against the landowners were gathering force: "E. V. de Roberti proposed that the amnesty [demanded by the congress] not be extended to crimes involving violence against children and women." His amendment was immediately suspected of "class bias"; that is, that he was concerned about the landowning families that had suffered. [As Makhlakov tells the story, Evgeny] "de Roberti hastened . . . to calm everyone: 'I wasn't thinking of the gentry's estates at all. . . . If 5–20 estates burned down, that is insignificant. I meant the many Jewish estates and homes that were burned and pillaged by the Black Hundreds.'"³³

In the terror of 1905–7, Mikhail Gertsenshtein (who had been so ironic about the burning of the landowners' estates) and Boris Iollos—but none of the thousands of murdered innocents—were recognized as martyrs [because they were Jews].³⁴ In the satirical journal *Poslednii samoderzhbet* [The last autocrat], which Russian liberals published abroad, it is even said that, under the portrait of the general whom the terrorist Girsh Lekkert failed to assassinate, was the caption: "Because of him, the tsar executed . . . the Jew Lek[k]ert."³⁵

Not only the opposition parties, but also the large midlevel bureaucracy, trembled at the thought of appearing "unprogressive." One had to be entirely

33. Vasilii Alekseevich Maklakov, *Vlast' i obshchestvennost' na zakate staroi Rossii (Vospominaniia sovremennika)* [Power and society at the sunset of old Russia (Memoirs of a contemporary)], *Prilozhenie k "illustrirovannoi Rossii"* [Supplement to "The illustrated Russia"], no. 3 (Paris, 1936), 466.

34. Mikhail Gertsenshtein, a Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadet) delegate in the First Duma, was assassinated by members of the Black Hundreds in Finland in 1906.

Boris Iollos, likewise a member of the First Duma and an enemy of the Black Hundreds, was assassinated in 1907 by the "Union of the Russian People." [Editor]

35. Italics added by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Viktor Petrovich Obninski, *Poslednii samoderzhbet: Ocherk zhizni i tsarstvovaniia imperatora Rossii Nikolaia II-go* [The last autocrat: Sketches of the life and reign of the Russian emperor Nikolai II] (Berlin: Eberhard Frowein Verlag, 1912), 58.

independent financially or possess outstanding spiritual freedom to have the courage to withstand the pressure of the general current. In the legal, artistic, and scholarly worlds, any deviation was immediately ostracized.

Only Lev Tolstoy, by virtue of his unique social position, could allow himself to say that *for him* the Jewish question occupied eighty-first place.

The *Jewish Encyclopedia* declares that the October 1905 pogroms “provoked among the progressive intelligentsia no special protest [no opposition specifically to the persecution of Jews], but only protest of a general nature, directed against all manifestations of ‘counterrevolution’ in general.”³⁶

Russian society would have ceased to be itself if every question was not exacerbated by tsarism, tsarism, tsarism.

On that account, “concrete aid to Jewish victims after the October events [the 1905 pogroms] was given exclusively by the Jews of Russia and other countries.”³⁷ To which [spectacle] Nikolai Berdiaev responded: “Do you feel the soul of the Jewish people? . . . No, your struggle . . . is for an abstract person.”³⁸

Slizberg confirms [Berdiaev’s observation]: “In the eyes of certain politically developed circles,” the Jewish question “at that time did not have the significance of a political issue in the broad sense of the term. Society was preoccupied with thoughts about manifestations of [tsarist] reaction [against the 1905 revolution] in general.”³⁹

To correct this miscalculation on the part of Russian society, an unusual collection of essays was assembled. An intervention on the Jews’ behalf, *Shchit* [Shield]—while comprehensively and exclusively devoted to Jews—included no contributions from Jewish writers. Every contributor was Russian or Ukrainian, and to be sure all the names most resonant at the time were represented, some forty altogether.⁴⁰ The entire anthology is dedicated to the single theme of “the Jews in Russia”; it is unequivocal in its resolution of the problem and sometimes selfless in its articulation.

Among the views expressed [in the anthology] is that of Leonid Andreev: the solution to the Jewish question is already within reach [and its result is] a feeling “of joy, close to awe”—of deliverance “from the pain that has accompanied me all my life,” from something resembling “a hump on my back.” I have, [Andreev adds,] been “breathing poisonous air.” Maxim Gorky’s [opinion] is that the Jew, as a psychological type, is considered, by “the major thinkers of Europe,

36. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12:621.

37. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12:621.

38. Nikolai Berdiaev, *Filosofia neravenstva* [The philosophy of inequality], 2d ed. rev. (Paris: YMCA Press, 1970), 72.

39. Slizberg, *Affairs of Days*, 1:260.

40. Leonid Andreev, Maksim Gorkii, and Fedr Sologub, eds., *Shchit: Literaturnyi sbornik* [Shield: A literary anthology], 3d ed. (Moscow: Russkoe Obshchestvo dlia izucheniia evreiskoi zhizni [Russian Association for the Study of Jewish Life], 1916), hereafter referred to by English titles.

to be culturally higher, more comely than the Russian.” (And Gorky expresses satisfaction with both the growth of the Sabbatarian sect in Russia and with the “New Israel.”) Pavel N. Maliantovich, [a minister of justice, offers this assessment]:

The horror of the Jew’s lack of legal rights in Russia is a shameful blemish on the name of the Russian people. . . . The best Russians experience it as a disgrace from which there is no escape throughout their lives. . . . We are barbarians among the cultured people of humanity . . . deprived of the precious right to be proud of our people. . . . The struggle for Jewish civil rights is, for the Russian . . . genuinely a national affair of the first importance. . . . The Jew’s lack of rights dooms the Russian people to powerlessness in the work of attaining their own happiness.”

[And Maliantovich concludes:] if we [Russians] do not concern ourselves with the emancipation of the Jews, “then we will never determine our own affairs.” [As for K. K. Arsenev, [his contribution to *Shield* argues that,] if all barriers are removed for the Jews, there will be “an increase in the mental riches of Russia.” A. N. Kalmykova [adds that, while,] on the one hand, we [Russians] have “close spiritual ties with Jewry in the area of higher spiritual values,” on the other hand, [Russians] “consider contempt and hatred for Jews permissible.” Andreev [returns]: we Russians “are ourselves *the Jews of Europe*, our border is that very same Jewish Pale.” D. S. Merezhkovsky [also has his say]: “What do the Jews want from us? Moral indignation?” “That indignation,” [he replies to his own question,] “is so strong and simple that . . . one can only shout out loud with the Jews. And we are shouting.” By some misunderstanding, Berdiaev was not included [among the contributors] to *Shield*. But he said [elsewhere that, for his part,] he had broken with his circle of early youth and preferred to keep company with Jews.

All the authors in *Shield* characterize anti-Semitism as a vile sentiment, “an illness of consciousness, distinguished by obstinacy and contagion” ([I am quoting] Dmitry Ovsianiko-Kulikovsky, an academic). But several contributors note that “the means and techniques . . . of [Russian] anti-Semites are of foreign origin” (P. N. Miliukov). “The new anti-Semitic ideology is the product of the German Spirit industry . . . the ‘Aryan’ theory . . . was taken up by our nationalistic press . . . M. O. Menshikov [echoes] the ideas of Gobineau” (Fyodor Kokoshkin). The doctrine of the supremacy of the Aryan over the Semite “is German handiwork” (Vyacheslav Ivanov).

Yet what does this [point—that anti-Semitism is not Russian in provenance—] matter to those of us [like Andreev] with “a hump on [our] back”? In the “Progressive Club” at the end of 1916, Gorky “devoted his two-hour speech to every possible form of slur against the entire Russian people and to an immod-

erate praise of Jewry”—so recounts the progressive Duma member S. P. Mansyrev, a founder of the “Club.”⁴¹

Alexander Voronel, a Jewish author in our time, writes about this phenomenon objectively and with insight: “there occurred a reeducation of educated Russian society, which took the Jewish problem much closer to heart, alas, than might have been expected. . . . Sympathy for the Jews became almost the same kind of imperative as ‘God, Tsar, and Fatherland’”—and individual Jews “used these social tendencies in accordance with their level of cynicism.”⁴² [The phenomenon to which Voronel refers,] V. V. Rozanov referred to at the time as the Jews’ “hunger to have it all.”⁴³

In the 1920s, Vasily Shulgin held the following view of the situation: “Over this period [the quarter century before the 1917 Revolution], Jewry took the political life of the country into its hands . . . it seized political Russia. . . . The brain of the nation (if one doesn’t count the government and government circles) turned out to be in Jewish hands and was accustomed to thinking according to Jewish orders.” “Despite all the ‘limitations,’” [Shulgin wrote,] “Jews had captured the soul of the Russian people.”⁴⁴

But—had the Jews *captured* it? Or did the Russians not know what to do with it [themselves]?

In the same issue of *Shield*, Merezhkovsky tried to explain that Judeophilia is created by Judeophobia and ends in the affirmation of a nationality that is just as blind [as the rejection that preceded it]. In the place of an absolute “no,” [Merezhkovsky wrote, there is now] an absolute “yes!”⁴⁵ Professor Jan Baudouin de Courtenay expressed [similar] reservations: “Many people, even in the camp of the Jews’ ‘political friends,’ actually feel a certain aversion to them and will acknowledge this face to face. In that case, of course, there’s not much you can do. Feelings of sympathy and antipathy . . . do not depend on us.” One should be guided, in any case, “not by affect, [but] by reason.”⁴⁶

In 1909, Pyotr Struve articulated, with great depth and social significance, the ambivalence of [Russian] social psychology. All his life, Struve fearlessly overcame barriers and other taboos along the spectrum from Marxism to right-wing

41. Prince S. P. Mansyrev, “Moi vospominaniia” [My memoirs] in *Fevral’skaia revoliutsiia* [The February revolution], comp. S. A. Alekseev (Moscow; Leningrad: GIZ, 1925), 259.

42. Aleksandr Voronel, “22,” *Obshchestvenno-politicheskii i literaturnyi zhurnal evreiskoi intelligentsii iz SSSR v Izraile* [Sociopolitical and literary journal of the Jewish intelligentsia from the USSR in Israel] 50 (1986): 156–57.

43. “Perepiska V. V. Rozanova i M. O. Gershenzona” [Correspondence of V. V. Rozanov and M. O. Gershenzon], *Novyi mir* [New world], no. 3 (1991): 239.

44. Vasily V. Shul’gin, “*Chto nam v nikh ne nraivitsia . . .*”: *Ob Antisemitizme v Rossii* [“What we don’t like about them . . .”: About anti-Semitism in Russia] (Paris: Izd-vo Russia Minor, 1929), 58, 75.

45. Andreev, Gorkii, and Sologub, *Shield*, 164.

46. Andreev, Gorkii, and Sologub, *Shield*, 145.

statism. A historically important polemic appearing in the liberal newspaper *Slovo* [Word] in March 1909—it is now utterly forgotten—reported with an immediate bang throughout the entire Russian press.

[The controversy] began with the overblown, widely discussed “Chirikov episode”: a furious explosion in a narrow literary circle, involving abrupt accusations of anti-Semitism against Evgeny Chirikov, the author of an extremely sympathetic play titled *The Jews*. [The furor followed on Chirikov’s] remark, dropped at a literary dinner, that most Petersburg reviewers were Jews, and were they really capable of appreciating fully the themes of everyday Russian [life]? The incident hit a sudden nerve in Russian society. (S. Liubosh, the journalist, referred to it at the time as “the one-kopeck candle that burned down Moscow.”)

Jabotinsky felt that he had not, in his first article, sufficiently expressed himself on the [subject of] the Chirikov episode; and so on March 9, 1909, he published a second article in the *Word*, titled “Asemitism.” In it he expressed alarm and indignation that most of the progressive press had sought to suppress [information about] the incident with Chirikov and Konstantin Arabazhin, [and] that even a certain leading liberal newspaper (he was alluding to *Russkie Vedomosti* [Russian gazette]) had supposedly for twenty-five years written nothing “about the terrible persecution of the Jewish people. . . . Since that time, hushing up is considered the highest chic of progressive Judeophilism.” [Jabotinsky argued, moreover,] that the most harm is done by purposely suppressing the Jewish question. (And one can indeed agree with [Jabotinsky on this last point].) When Chirikov and Arabazhin “assert that there was nothing anti-Semitic in their remarks, they are both absolutely right,” [Jabotinsky concluded]. Because of our [the progressives’] traditional silence, “one can end up being marked an anti-Semite for simply using the word ‘Jew’ or for the most innocent remark about Jewish particularities. . . . Only the Jews have been transformed into this sort of forbidden taboo [group], about which even the most mild criticism may not be made, and it is the Jews who lose the most from this custom.” (And again, one can only agree with [Jabotinsky].) “The impression,” [he continued,] “is created that the very name ‘Jew’ is an unprintable word”: here [we have the] “echo of a certain common mood that has made headway among the progressive Russian intelligentsia. . . . There’s no documentary evidence—the presence of such a mood can thus far be established only by feel.” But [the vagueness of] this [mood] is precisely what causes alarm: [proceeding] by feel and without documents, Jews will not hear the approaching thunder; they will be caught unaware. At the moment, [Jabotinsky foretells,] “a sort of cloud is forming, and from far away one hears an indistinct, still faint, but already inhospitable murmur.” This [approaching cloud] is not anti-Semitism, it is still only “asemitism”—but it is no more allowable, and neutrality cannot be justified. After the Kishinev pogrom, when reactionary newspapers are spreading the “burnt hemp of hatred,” the silence of the Rus-

sian progressive press “about one of the most tragic questions of Russian life” is impermissible.⁴⁷

In the same issue, in its editorial preface, the *Word* expressed reservations [about Jabotinsky’s article]:

The accusations that the author directs toward the progressive press do not, in our view, correspond to the reality of the situation. We understand the feelings that dictated his bitter lines, but to attribute to the Russian intelligentsia the almost premeditated tactic of suppressing the Jewish question is unjust. In Russian life, there are so many unresolved problems that relatively little space can be devoted to each of them. . . . And after all, the positive resolution of many of these problems has enormous real significance also for Jews—as citizens of our common homeland.⁴⁸

Would that the *Word* had asked Jabotinsky why he did not defend the three simpletons who had made the “most innocent remarks about Jewish particularities.” Did Jewish society pay any attention to or defend such people? Or did it only watch as the Russian intelligentsia cleansed itself of these “anti-Semites”? As far as “forbidden taboos” are concerned, it must be said that Jews were no less guilty than Russians.

And the newspaper accompanied [Jabotinsky’s] commencement of its discussion [of the Chirikov incident] with one other article, [titled] “Accord, but Not Coalescence,” by Vasily Golubev. [His argument is that,] yes, the Chirikov incident “comprises a far from private occurrence” [since] “the national question . . . at the present time . . . concerns our [Russian] intelligentsia as well.” In recent years, [Golubev continues,] especially in the year of the revolution [1905], our intelligentsia “sinned woefully” in its cosmopolitanism, but “not without trace has the struggle proceeded within society . . . and among the nationalities inhabiting the Russian state.” Like other nationalities as well, during these years “the Russian people also had to think about their national tasks . . . when the stateless nationalities began to define themselves, it became necessary for the Russian to define himself as well.”⁴⁹ Even with respect to our history, “we, members of the Russian intelligentsia, are in practice less informed” [about Russian] than about European history. “Common human ideals . . . have [always] been . . . far more important to us than our own creations.” But in the opinion of even

47. Zhabotinskii, “Asemitism,” *Slovo* [Word], March 9 (22), 1909, 2 (hereafter referred to using English titles); see also *Feuilletons*, 77–83.

48. *Word*, March 9 (22), 1909, 1.

49. See note 14 above. It should be observed as well that the word for *nationality* in Russian [*natsional’nost’*] is dis-

tinct from the word for *citizenship* [*grazhdanstvo*], and is often closer to and interchangeable with contemporary English use of the word *ethnicity*. Thus, “nonterritorial” or “stateless” nationalities refers in this context to the many non-Russian ethnic groups that inhabited the Russian empire. [Translator]

Vladimir Soloviev, who was far removed from any sort of nationalism, “we must, before becoming the bearers of common human ideals, raise ourselves to a certain national height. And that feeling of self-elevation, it seems, is beginning to reach even the circles of the intelligentsia.” Until now, [Soloviev wrote,] “we have suppressed the particularities . . . of the Russian people.” And there is no anti-Semitism in recalling [Russian particularities]. [Recalling them] means in no sense oppressing other nationalities, but [only that,] among nationalities, there should be, [in Golubev’s phrase,] “accord but not coalescence.”⁵⁰

Perhaps the *Word* expressed its reservations so strongly because another article had passed its typesetters, colliding by chance with Jabotinsky’s but arriving independently of it—an article also dealing with the disturbance surrounding the Chirikov incident. Pyotr Struve’s article, “The Intelligentsia and the National Countenance,” appeared in the *Word* the day [after Jabotinsky’s appeared], on March 10.

Struve wrote: “This incident,” which would “soon be forgotten,” “showed that something has arisen in peoples’ minds, has awakened, and will not be calmed. What has awakened demands to be taken into account.” “The [ethnically] Russian intelligentsia,” [Struve continued,] “grows colorless in the intelligentsia of the Russian state . . . needlessly and fruitlessly covering its national countenance,” which “should not be hidden.” “Nationality is something far more undeniable [than race or skin color,] and at the same time it is subtle. It consists of spiritual affinities and aversions, and in order to become aware of them, one need not have recourse to either anthropometric techniques or genealogical research. [These spiritual qualities] live and tremble in the soul.” One can and should struggle, [Struve argued,] to prevent these affinity-aversions affecting the legal system, “but ‘state’ justice does not require of us an indifference to ‘nationality.’ Affinities and aversions belong to us, they are our own property”; [ours] “is an organic feeling of nationality. . . . And I do not see the least grounds . . . for rejecting this property on behalf of anyone or anything.”

Yes, Struve repeats, it is necessary to define [national] borders—the lawful territory of the government—and the territory where [national] feelings are alive in us. [Then he adds that,] “especially regarding the Jewish question, this [demarcation of territory] is both very simple and very difficult”: “the Jewish question,” [Struve argues,] “is formally a legal one,” and for that reason it is simple, natural, to resolve. Give the Jews equal rights—why, of course! But to resolve [the question is also] “very difficult, because the strength of aversion to Jewry in the most varied layers of the Russian population is actually quite great, and significant moral and logical clarity are required in order irrevocably to resolve the legal question despite the aversion.” However, [Struve continues]:

50. Vasily Golubev, “Soglashenie, a ne sliianie,” [Accord, but not coalescence], *Word*, March 9 (22), 1909, 1.

for all the strength of the aversion to Jewry among a broad section of the Russian population, the Jews are closest to us of all “foreigners”; they are most closely tied to us. This is a cultural-historical paradox, but it is true. The Russian intelligentsia has always counted Jews [among] its own, [considered Jews to be] Russians—and not accidentally, not without reason, not by any sort of “misunderstanding.” The conscious initiative of rejecting Russian culture, affirming Jewish “national” particularities, belongs not to the Russian intelligentsia, but to the Jewish movement known by the name of Zionism. . . . I have not the least sympathy for Zionism, but I understand that the problem of “Jewish national identity” exists and is even growing.

(It is significant that [Struve] puts the words “Jewish national identity” in quotation marks, so hard is it for him to believe: do the Jews, [he wonders,] really think of themselves as apart?) “In Russia,” [Struve says,] “there are no ‘foreigners’ other [than the Jews] who have played such a role in Russian culture. . . . And there is yet another difficulty: they play this role while remaining Jews.” You cannot, [Struve adds,] deny the role of Germans in Russian culture and science; but Germans, upon entering Russian culture, dissolve into Russian culture completely. “Not so the Jews.”

And [Struve] concludes: “It is unbecoming for us to dissemble [about Russian national feeling] and hide our face. . . . I, and every other Russian, have the right to these feelings. . . . The more clearly this is understood . . . the fewer misunderstandings there will be in the future.”⁵¹

Which is true: if only we had all come to our senses several decades earlier. (The Jews did so much earlier than the Russians.)

Meanwhile, it was as if all the newspapers had been waiting [for this debate to at last occur]! The next day a whirlwind ensued, both in the liberal *Nasha Gazeta* [Our newspaper] (“*is this the proper time to say so?*”—the classic question) and in the right-wing *Novoe Vremia* [New time]. In the quintessentially Cadet [liberal] Petersburg paper *Speech*, P. N. Miliukov could not help but gasp: Jabotinsky, [he wrote,] “has managed to make the silence end, and all the terrible and threatening things that the progressive press and intelligentsia tried to hide from the Jews have finally been drawn in their true proportions.” But further along, Miliukov, with his invariably reasonable coldness, moved on to [issue] his verdict. The most important element [of it] was the warning [question]: *Where are we being led, [and] to whose advantage is it?* “A national countenance,” one that “should not be hidden”—is that not reminiscent of far right-wing bigotry? (The “national face,” apparently, *should* remain hidden.) Thus, [P. N. Miliukov concludes,] the

51. Petr Struve, “Intelligentsiia i natsional’noe litso,” [The intelligentsia and the national countenance], *Word*, March 10 (23), 1909, 2.

intelligentsia, “descending the slippery slope of aesthetic nationalism,” will quickly die out and descend into the “genuinely tribal chauvinism” generated “in the rotten atmosphere of contemporary social reaction.”⁵²

But the forty-year-old Struve, with almost youthful agility, bounced back to counter Miliukov’s “instructive words” in the March 12 issue of the *Word*. “Where are we being led, to whose advantage is it?” was the turn of phrase that, above all, he challenged. (*Whose grist for whose mill?* . . . they will still be shutting mouths with that one—on any theme—a hundred years from now: a twisted choice of words, betraying no awareness that words can in themselves be honest and profound.) “Our views have not been fundamentally refuted,” [Struve wrote,] “but [merely] juxtaposed polemically with a ‘forecast’ of ‘where they lead’.”⁵³ The *Word* [itself] commented several days later: “The tried and true way of discrediting both an idea that you don’t share and the person who professes it is with a nasty hint that this fellow would meet with complete sympathy in the *New Time* and *Russian Banner*. This procedure, in our view, is entirely unworthy of the progressive press.”⁵⁴ But the heart of the matter [for Struve was that] “at the present time, strong, stormy feelings often adhere to the nationality question. These feelings, since they express awareness of one’s own national individuality, are completely valid, and . . . extinguishing [them] is . . . a great perversion.” If [national feelings] are driven inside, [Struve says,] they will break out in a perverted form. And [he continues]:

The most terrible “asemitism” is far more favorable soil for the legal solution of the Jewish question than the hopeless battle . . . of “anti-Semitism” versus “philosemitism.” No single non-Russian nationality requires . . . Russians to love it without fail. Still less [does any nationality require] that [Russians] pretend to love it. And indeed, “asemitism,” combined with a clear and sober understanding of well-known moral and political principles and . . . governmental requirements, is far more necessary and useful for our Jewish citizens than feeble, sentimental “philosemitism,” particularly when it is simulated.

Moreover, [Struve argues,] “it is beneficial for Jews to see the open ‘national face’” of Russian constitutionalism and democratic society: “For [the Jews], it is entirely useless to give in to the illusion that that sort of face belongs only to anti-Semitic bigots.” This [face] “is not a Medusa’s head, but the honest and kindly face of the *Russian* nationality [*russkoi natsional’nosti*], without which the ‘*Russian*’ [*rossiiskoe*] state will not stand.”⁵⁵ And also, as the editors added: “Accord . . .

52. Pavel Nikolaevich Miliukov, “Nationalizm protiv nacionalizma” [Nationalism against nationalism], *Rech*, March 11 (24), 1909, 2.

53. Struve, “Polemicheskie zigzagi i nesvoevremennaia pravda [Polemical zigzags and untimely truth], *Word*,

March 12 (25), 1909, 1, hereafter referred to by its English title.

54. *Word*, March 17 (30), 1909, 1.

55. Struve, “Polemical Zigzags,” 1.

means recognition of all the distinctive qualities of each [nationality] and respect for those qualities.”⁵⁶

The newspaper polemics continued heatedly. “Over the last few days, an entire literature has been compiled,” [Maxim Slavinsky wrote in the *Word*]. Something, [he continued,] is happening “in the progressive Russian press . . . something that would have been completely impossible not long ago: the question of Great Russian nationalism is being debated!”⁵⁷ But while the *Word* raised the argument to its full stature, other papers focused on “affinities and aversions.”⁵⁸ With irritation, the intelligentsia attacked its recent hero, Struve, [and his] liberal journal *Osvobozhdenie* [Liberation].

Nor did Jabotinsky remain silent; he spoke out twice again. He hurled [an article,] “The Bear Leaves the Den,” at Pyotr Struve. [Struve] had seemed so calm and evenhanded, but Jabotinsky was offended [just the same,] and referred to [Struve’s] article and Miliukov’s as “a brilliant appearance of the bigwigs”: “Their affectionate declamation,” [Jabotinsky wrote,] “is drenched in hypocrisy, insincerity, timidity, obsequiousness, and for this reason is utterly mediocre.” [Jabotinsky] gathered from Miliukov that, [or so] it seems, in “the old Russian intelligentsia, holy and pure, there were anti-Jewish ‘aversions’? . . . Curious.” [Miliukov, Jabotinsky said, tongue in cheek,] had cursed “‘the holy and pure’ climate of this marvelous country” and the “zoological species *ursus judaeophagus intellectualis*” [intellectual Jew-eating bear]. (Maxim Vinaver, the peacemaker, came in for his share [of ire] as well: [Jabotinsky referred to Vinaver as] “the Jewish servant of the Russian mansion.”) Jabotinsky furiously rejected the notion that Jews should wait “for the moment when larger state tasks had been resolved” (that is, the overthrow of the tsar): “[We extend] our thanks for such a flattering opinion of our willingness to assume canine selflessness” [and for such a flattering opinion] of “the efficiency of the loyal subject, Israel.” [Jabotinsky] even concluded [, on the subject of the Jews of Russia,] that “the exploitation of a people by another people has never before avowed itself with such innocent cynicism.”⁵⁹

It must be acknowledged that the extreme vehemence of [Jabotinsky’s] tone did not serve his point of view well. Furthermore, the very near future made clear that it was indeed the tsar’s overthrow that would open previously inconceivable positions for Jews—would [make possible for Jews] even more than they had already achieved—and in so doing would pull the rug out from under Zionism in Russia. Thus Jabotinsky turned out, in addition, to be essentially wrong.

56. Golubev, “K polemike o natsionalizme” [Toward a polemics on nationalism], *Word*, March 12 (25), 1909, 2, hereafter referred to by its English title.

57. Maxim Slavinskii, “Russkie, velikorossy, i rossiane” [Ethnic Russians, great Russians, and Russian citizens],

Word, March 14 (27), 1909, 2, hereafter referred to by its English title.

58. *Word*, March 17 (30), 1909, 1.

59. Zhabotinskii, “Medved’ iz berlogi” [The bear leaves the den], in *Feuilletons*, 87–90.

Much later, another witness to that era, a member of the Bund, recalled coolly: "In Russia, during the years 1907–1914 a certain epidemic of 'asemitism,' if not exactly open anti-Semitism, would occasionally take hold of some liberals in the Russian intelligentsia, and disappointment with the maximalist tendencies of the first Russian revolution gave others an excuse to place responsibility for those tendencies on the conspicuous participation of Jews in the revolution." And during the prewar years, [this witness continued,] "the growth of Russian nationalism could be observed . . . in particular circles where, it seemed, the Jewish question had quite recently been viewed as a Russian question."⁶⁰

In 1912, Jabotinsky himself, quite calmly now, recounted an interesting observation of a well-known Jewish journalist: as soon as Jews are interested in some cultural phenomenon, it becomes alien, as it were, for the Russian public, which is [then] no longer drawn to it. [This response is] a variety of invisible *aversion*. Yes, [Jabotinsky wrote,] a line of national demarcation will be inevitable, [and] Russian life organized "without admixtures from outside, which in such quantity are obviously unacceptable for [Russians]."⁶¹

All considered, it would be most correct to conclude that two processes were simultaneously at work among the Russian intelligentsia (as is often the case with historical phenomena), and that, with regard to the Jewish question, [intellectuals] were distinguishable largely on the basis of temperament rather than degree of goodwill. But the [view] that Struve expressed was not very loud, was unsure of itself, and was muffled, [while the view] that was stridently declared by the philosemitic publication *Shield* turned out to be dominant in terms of publicity and social custom. One may still regret that Jabotinsky did not appreciate Struve's point of view, did not see its virtues.

The 1909 debate in the *Word* was not limited to the Jewish theme, but grew into a discussion of Russian national consciousness, which, after our country's eighty-year deafness, is today fresh and edifying for us as well. [The contribution of Pyotr Struve, in this context, was to say]: "Just as one shouldn't be involved in 'Russifying' those who do not wish to 'Russify,' so should we not 'Russianize' *ourselves*"⁶²—should not drown and lose our individuality in the Russian state's multinational expanse.⁶³ Golubev protested against the "monopoly on patriotism and nationalism held by reactionary groups": "We have," [he wrote,] "disregarded the fact that the Japanese victories had an oppressive effect on popular and national feeling. Our defeat humiliated not only the bureaucracy," as

60. G. Ia. Aronson, "V bor'be za grazhdanskii i natsional'nye prava: Obshchestvennye techeniia v russkom evreistve" [In the struggle for civil and national rights: Social movements in Russian Jewry], in *Book of Russian Jewry*, 229, 572.

61. Zhabotinskii, *Feuilletons*, 245–47.

62. Again, the distinction here is between "obruset'," to Russify, and "obrossivat," a neologism meaning "to become *rossiiskii*." [Translator] See also note 49.

63. Struve, *Word*, March 10 (23), 1909, 2.

[Russian] society had desired, “but indirectly the nation as well.” (Oh, [I would say] far from “indirectly!”—[the national humiliation was] quite direct.) “The Russian nationality,” [Golubev continued,] “effaced itself”; “neither is the defamation of the very word ‘Russian,’ transformed as it has been into ‘authentic-Russian,’ any laughing matter.”⁶⁴ Progressive society let both concepts slide, handing them over to the [political] Right: “after all, we understood patriotism only in quotations marks,” though “one must compete against reactionary patriotism with popular patriotism. We just stopped and went no further than a negative attitude to Black Hundreds patriotism, and if we countered it with anything, it was not patriotism, but common human ideals.”⁶⁵ However, [Golubev concluded,] we see that all our cosmopolitanism has still not allowed [Russian society] to make friends with Polish society.⁶⁶

A. L. Pogodin recalled [that it was] after Vladimir Soloviev’s threatening rebuke to N. Ya. Danilevsky’s [pan-Slavist work] “Russia and Europe,” [and] after G. K. Gradovsky’s article [appeared, that Russia experienced] “the first emergence of the consciousness that awakens in peoples, like the instinct of self-preservation, in moments when danger threatens.” (As it happened, moreover, it was precisely during the time of this debate, March 1909, that the Russian state experienced a national humiliation: it was forced to recognize, with pitiful resignation, its “diplomatic Tsushima”—the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.) “In a fateful way,” [Pogodin wrote,] we are moving toward this question [of Russian nationality], which not long ago was utterly alien to the Russian intelligentsia, and now is set forth so abruptly by life [itself] that there’s no getting around it.”⁶⁷

The *Word* concluded [its own remarks on the Chirikov debate as follows]: “A chance incident has served as the catalyst for an entire newspaper storm.” [In the aftermath,] “the need for national self-knowledge is felt in Russian society.” Russian society in earlier years “was ashamed not only of that false antinational politics . . . but of genuine nationalism as well, without which state-building is unthinkable.” A creative people, [the editorial continued,] “invariably has its own face”: “[Kuzma] Minin was obviously a nationalist.”⁶⁸ Constructive state nationalism is characteristic of *living* nations, and that is precisely [so Pogodin argued,] the kind needed [in his time].⁶⁹ “Just as it did three hundred years ago, history

64. Golubev, “Toward a Polemics,” 2.

65. Golubev, “O monopolii na patriotism” [About the monopoly on patriotism], *Word*, March 14 (27), 1909, 2.

66. Golubev, “Ot samouvazheniia k uvazheniiu” [From self-respect to respect], *Word*, March 25 (April 7), 1909, 1.

67. A. L. Pogodin, “K voprosu o natsionalizme” [On the question of nationalism], *Word*, March 15 (28), 1909, 1, hereafter referred to by its English title.

68. *Word*, March 17 (30), 1909, 1. Directly in front of St. Basil’s Cathedral, Moscow, is a statue that honors Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky, who defeated the invading Polish army in 1612 and drove the Poles out of the Kremlin. [Editor]

69. Pogodin, “On the Question,” 1.

demands an answer from us" [the editors wrote in 1909. History] "demands that, during the terrible days of our trials, we answer whether we have, as a unique people, a right to autonomous existence."⁷⁰

Clearly, something Imminent could be felt in the air!—though the year 1909 seemed relatively peaceful.

But the [participants in this growing debate] did not overlook the truth [that, as Slavinsky wrote,] "the attempt to Russify, or more accurately, to Great Russian-ize all of Russia . . . has turned out to be deadly for those national features, not only of all the nonterritorial peoples of the empire, but first and foremost, of the Great Russian people [itself] . . . the cultural strength of the Great Russian people turned out to be too weak [to sustain this effort]."⁷¹ For the Great Russian nationality, [in summary:] only intensive internal development, normal circulation of the blood, is useful—a lesson (it is a shame to say) that has not been assimilated by Russians even now. "There must," [Pogodin argued,] "be a struggle against physiological nationalism, [when] a stronger people strives to impose a form of government alien to them on weaker peoples."⁷² After all, [the editors added,] such an empire should not be created with physical strength alone but with "moral strength" as well. And if we [Russians] have that [moral strength, the editors said,] then the equality of peoples, whether Jews or Poles, will not threaten us in the least.⁷³

In the later decades of the nineteenth century—and at the commencement of the twentieth, even more so—the Russian intelligentsia felt itself already on a plateau of one-worldly, all-humanitarian cosmopolitanism or internationalism (these terms were interchangeable at the time). In many senses, [the Russian intelligentsia] had almost, even then, completely rejected everything that was Russian. (From the tribune of the State Duma a joke was heard about the "Patriot, Iscariot.")

But the Jewish intelligentsia did not reject the question of nationality. And even the most extreme Jewish socialists tried to somehow combine their ideology with their national feeling. Still, at the same time not a word was heard from the Jews—from Dubnov to Jabotinsky and Vinaver—to indicate that the Russian intelligentsia, which had supported its oppressed [Jewish] brethren with all its soul, might not have to reject its *own* national feelings. In all justice, this opinion should have been heard. No one understood at the time: by *equal rights*, the Jews meant something *greater*.

And the Russian intelligentsia—it stepped into the future alone.

The Jews did not receive equal rights under the tsar, but—partly because that was so—they received the hand and loyalty of the Russian intelligentsia.

70. *Word*, March 17 (30), 1909, 1.

71. Slavinsky, "Ethnic Russians," 1.

72. Pogodin, "On the Question," 1.

73. *Word*, March 17 (30), 1909, 1.

The strength of [the Jews'] development, perseverance, and talent *took up residence* in the Russian social consciousness. Our notions of our goals, our interests, the impulses behind our decisions—we merged all these with their principles. We accepted their view of our history and of the possible ways to shape it.

And it is more important to understand this [aspect of our mutual history] than to count how many Jews stirred things up in Russia—we all did—or made the revolution or participated in the Bolshevik regime.

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