

The Donald W. Treadgold Papers

Number 102
February 1995

*In Russian, East European
and Central Asian Studies*

Religion in Imperial Russia

Two papers from the conference

“Religion in the Life of the State in Russian History”

held at the University of Washington, May 8, 1993.

The Henry M. Jackson
School of International Studies
The University of Washington

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The Church in Imperial Russia

The passing of Dr. Donald W. Treadgold in December 1994 is a reminder of the rich legacy left to us by this remarkable scholar in Slavic studies. Those of us who were privileged to have Dr. Treadgold as a mentor were deeply influenced by his integrity as a person and his steadfast commitment to the highest standards of academic and professional excellence.

In May 1993 at the University of Washington, his former students gathered for a conference in his honor on the occasion of his retirement. The theme of the conference centered on a topic at the heart of Professor Treadgold's area of academic expertise and interest: "Religion in the Life of the State in Russian History".

There can be no question but that an understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church is critical to any perceptive assessment of Russia's past, the dark night of Soviet communist rule, or the prospects for Russia's future.

In this issue of the *Treadgold Papers*, Dr. Robert L. Nichols skillfully examines the Russian Orthodox Church's interactions with the state in Imperial Russia, while Dr. Henry R. Huttenbach provides invaluable insights into the checkered relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Jewish community.

In addition to these fine presentations from the 1993 conference, there were also notable papers given by: Kent R. Hill, "The Russian Orthodox Church and Other Christian Confessions in Russia Today"; Edward J. Lazzerini, "The Islamic Peoples of the Russian Empire and the State"; and John McErlean, "Prince Kozlowski and Catholicism in Early 19th-century Russia". These papers have been published elsewhere.

The contributions of Dr. Donald Treadgold to Slavic studies are significant. But his influence is not just reflected in his own extensive bibliography, but in those numerous and important works by his students. The following papers are but two fine examples of this legacy.

Kent R. Hill
President, Eastern Nazarene College
January 1995

Church and State In Imperial Russia

Robert L. Nichols

In the eighteenth century the Russian Orthodox church became an imperial institution, whose leadership sought to develop the church within the framework of an expanding empire, relying upon the emperor's traditional protection and promotion of Orthodoxy. The new formulation of church and state inverted the traditional Muscovite symbiosis of religion and the sovereign authority of the tsar which had existed within an ecclesiastical framework. In Muscovy, the patriarch's role had gone beyond taking part in public ceremonies involving the tsar and his family and included direct participation in legislation without regard for any distinction between the temporal and spiritual realms. By contrast, in the imperial period, the traditional symbiosis developed within a secular framework, redefining the role of the church and carefully compartmentalizing its "spiritual" activity. The change produced a tension between churchmen ready to play their imperial part and their royal protectors, whose political concerns increasingly made them unreliable defenders and promoters of the Orthodox faith. The tension provides the dynamic for Orthodoxy's development in imperial Russia.

A growing fear that the tsar and his government might sacrifice the spiritual well-being of Orthodoxy to the secular interests of the state produced among churchmen a strong desire to restate with greater care and clarity the central tenets of the Orthodox faith, revitalize the charismatic transcendence of Orthodoxy, and strengthen the church's ties with society outside the limits set for it by Peter I and his successors.

By the time of the Russian revolution, Russian Orthodoxy had not found a satisfactory resolution of the dynamic tension, although some who have studied the religious renaissance of the early twentieth century, believe it may have been on the way to doing so. Its imperial role had been called into question by many, including the

episcopate. The church's reaffirmed claim to a transhistorical charismatic truth limited its ability to make a close bond with any nationalist or socialist redefinition of Russia. Its social outreach did not stretch far enough to ensure continued public support for its experiments in "this world" theology and social action. As a result, the revolutionary events made clear what had been achieved and what remained undone or imperfectly done during the imperial era. Orthodoxy's rethinking of the imperial relationship made it possible for the church to survive when the empire collapsed. Its reclaimed charisma, for complex reasons, impeded any efforts aimed at bringing the church closer to the emerging liberal, nationalist, and socialist movements. Consequently, the church's experiments in social Christianity had no opportunity to continue after the victory of Bolshevik socialism. The new communist government proceeded to restrict Orthodoxy's "spiritual domain" exclusively to "cultic" activity, a limitation far beyond anything ever imagined by Peter the Great and his supporters. Today, after the collapse of communism, the history of the church in the imperial era offers important experience to those who seek to rebuild Russia on the basis of an historic Orthodoxy.

Russian Orthodoxy as an Imperial Church

"Therefore one must be subject [to the governing authorities], not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience." (Romans 13:5)

Although fierce polemics have been waged over Peter I's reform of the Russian church under the terms of the Spiritual Regulation and through the new Synodal administrative structure after 1721, for the most part Orthodoxy's leading hierarchs and the expanding numbers of churchmen educated in the growing network of church schools, seminaries, and academies generally accepted the notion that Russian Orthodoxy had an important imperial role to play. This is not to say that Orthodoxy became a state institution, as historians, polemicists, and many others have contended since the nineteenth century, when this view first gained currency.¹ It is enough to note that the clergy and the hierarchy were not state officials regulated by the Table of Ranks that governed civil and military service. Moreover, it is not necessary either to disregard or overemphasize

the obvious Lutheran elements that went into the thinking of Peter I and his reform associates, especially Feofan Prokopovich, to see that the reform aimed at making the Church a "modern" institution compatible with a "modern" empire.

The imperial framework required a new organizational position for the church and a new terminology to describe it. Following the abolition of the patriarchate in 1721, the "Most Holy Governing Synod" became the supreme administrative body in the ecclesiastical realm. Placed on an equal level with the Governing Senate, the supreme administrative organ in the secular realm, the church's activity was sharply divided from the imperial regime's secular domain. The intention was not to make the church into a cog in the governmental machinery run by state officials. The overprocurator, a layman and the tsar's "eye" in the Synod, was not a member of the Synod. Within its Synodal domain, the hierarchy generally exercised great autonomy and formulated the legislation that enacted the church's spiritual purpose. Even the emperor could not issue any laws concerning the faith or establish any principles of Christian doctrine. But attempts to venture beyond the prescribed spiritual realm usually proved unsuccessful. For example, when Moscow University was founded in 1755, theology could not be included in the curriculum because "theology, properly speaking, belongs to the Holy Synod."² The strict division between secular and spiritual was meant to make clear a distinction which had already typified European states since the Reformation.³

The Spiritual Regulation — as much a programmatic statement about Russian Orthodoxy's future development as it was a set of new administrative rules for the church — sought to free Orthodoxy from its "superstitious" and medieval past and prepare the church for its specifically spiritual tasks and its role in knitting the disparate parts of the growing empire into a coherent whole. Among other things, this meant raising the clergy's intellectual level to meet the challenges of the empire on its western frontiers, to formulate a strategy for surmounting internal divisions (especially the Old Belief), and to combat religious heterodoxy on the empire's eastern and southern flanks. Clerical education, through the system of schools, seminaries and higher theological academies initiated by Peter the Great, eventually produced a new episcopal elite that functioned in a manner analogous to governors in the provinces and senators in the capital.

A measure of how quickly the new elite grew can be seen by contrasting the virtual isolation of Feofan Prokopovich, the author of the Spiritual Regulation, among the hierarchs at the beginning of the eighteenth century, with the large number of bishops during the reign of Catherine II who supported her imperial and cultural projects. A few might be mentioned here as illustrations: Bishop of Nizhnii Novgorod Damaskin (Semenov-Rudnev, 1737-1795), the translator of Nestor's chronicle into German; Metropolitan of Moscow Platon (Levshin, 1737-1811): "Plus philosophe que pretre," according to Joseph II;⁴ the Greek Archbishop Eugenios (Voulgaris, 1716-1806), invited by Catherine to Russia on the recommendation of Frederick the Great and who served as librarian to the imperial court;⁵ and Metropolitan of Novgorod Dmitrii (Sechenov, 1709-1767). He is "*ni persecuteur ni fanatique*," wrote Catherine to Voltaire. "*Il abhorre la proposition des deux puissances*," that is, the equality of church and state.⁶ Moreover, like the governors, the new bishops frequently transferred from one diocese to another, thereby attenuating their local loyalties and giving them an imperial outlook in assessing the needs and goals of the church. And they presided over an expanding church: in the Baltic region, Ukraine, and Poland in the eighteenth century, the Caucasus, Eastern Siberia, Central Asia, and North America in the nineteenth century. Orthodox missions reached even further toward China, Japan, and the Near East.⁷

In exchange for its support for the imperial order, the church expected the tsar to continue playing his traditional sacred role as the supreme protector and custodian of Orthodox dogmas; the keeper of the true faith and all good order in the Holy Church.⁸ This was a role the church understood from its earlier history and from canon law, and it was one to which Russian tsars wholly subscribed until the eighteenth century, when they began to evince a more ambivalent attitude toward traditional Orthodoxy. Peter's mockery of Orthodoxy (and Catholicism) in the Most Licentious Council of Buffoons and Drunkards is a crude indicator of the change,⁹ while Catherine II's sponsorship of the Enlightenment represented a more sophisticated departure from the older idea of Orthodoxy as the exclusive repository of the one true faith and the ruler as its Saint George. Moreover, her "secularization," that is, confiscation of monastic property, while unexpectedly providing some benefits to the clergy and the monasteries (not least its freedom from the ownership of human souls), awakened churchmen to the implications of the state

transfer of church resources to the secular domain.¹⁰

Catherine's husband, Peter III, in one of his first ukases, invited the Old Believers to return from beyond the empire's frontiers, and her son, Paul I, nearly went further than any Russian monarch by allowing the Jesuit Gabriel Gruber and the papal legate Lorenzo Litta to draft a proclamation uniting Orthodoxy and Catholicism by imperial decree. The emperor was prevented from signing it only by his murder on 11 March 1801.¹¹ His son, Alexander I, briefly experimented (1817-25) in a supra-confessional governmental agency combining religion and education, while subordinating all of the empire's religious groups to the authority of a single government minister, Prince A.N. Golitsyn. Orthodoxy thus found itself on the same footing with other Christian and non-Christian organizations within the empire. Although Alexander I's successor, Nicholas I, backed away from his brother's religious experimentation, he appointed a vigorous over-procurator, Count N.A. Protasov, to supervise more closely the Synod and the church generally. Protasov, a man of strong personality, proceeded to organize his own chancellery and staff, and succeeded for a time in overshadowing and dominating the pliant Metropolitan of St. Petersburg Serafim (Glagolevskii, 1763-1843), the Synod's ranking hierarch since 1821.

By the end of Nicholas I's reign in 1855, the church and its congregation had begun to chafe at a state imposed regimentation, whose authority they were supposed to obey not only from fear, but for the sake of conscience, as the overprocurator's chancellery apparently interpreted St. Paul's letter to the Romans. Metropolitan of Moscow Filaret (Drozдов, 1782-1867) defined the apogee of enlightened absolutism as "a confining age — an age which compels one to look vigilantly at every step."¹²

Spiritual Renewal and Social Orthodoxy

The growing divergence between the outlook and actions of the various emperors and empresses and the goals of the church began to raise serious doubts in the minds of churchmen about the wisdom of the imperial role they had played in the preceding century and a half. Doubts, of course, had existed earlier, and it is easy to cite examples of protest over specific aspects of the imperial enterprise: Stefan Iavorsky's condemnation of the illegal and unjust interference by secular authorities in ecclesiastical affairs as violations of

ecclesiastical statutes by the tsar himself; Metropolitan of Rostov Arsenii's protest of Catherine's secularization policy carried out without complaint by the Synod, "who sat like dumb dogs without barking";¹³ Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-1794), a "drop out" from the hierarchy, seeking extra-institutional ways to live a spiritual life and practice Christian charity; the emigre monastic effort at recovery of Orthodoxy's contemplative tradition on Mount Athos and in Moldavia led by Saint Paisii Velichkovskii (1722-1794).¹⁴

Yet, as in other areas of Russian life, it is probably in the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I (ca. 1815-1842) when a "parting of the ways" began based on the pessimistic conclusion that the church no longer enjoyed imperial trust and that it could not passively rely on the emperor's good will. Greater thought had to be given to defining the question of church and state in ways limiting the government's intrusion into the church's inner life. Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow at one point declared that Peter the Great had intended to give the Russian church a bureaucratic "Spiritual College," but it was "transformed by the Providence of God and the Spirit of the church into the Most Holy Governing Synod," implying that the Synodal structure allowed for needed internal autonomy.¹⁵ The emperor, the metropolitan insisted, was the head of the church, but the anointment of coronation did not confer equal rights on the imperial bureaucracy. Others went beyond the Moscow metropolitan to condemn Peter's action in abolishing the patriarchate. This led to an avalanche of new studies of canon law that eventually contributed to reestablishing the patriarchal office in 1917-1918.¹⁶

Churchmen admitted that the one-sided "rational" imperial Orthodoxy had proven successful in mobilizing church resources behind the emperor's goals, but it was much less successful in evoking a creative, positive spiritual life. Feofan Prokopovich's definition of the church as "a civil society, or republic which is called the church...so that they might better know themselves, give mutual assistance, rejoice, and with God's aid defend themselves against their enemies," wholly omitted the mystical reality of the church.¹⁷ Revitalizing Orthodoxy meant rethinking the church's inner life. Fresh debates about dogmatic theology, church history, patristics, Bible translation, church archeology, iconography, architecture, liturgy, contemplative monasticism, women's monastic communities, the cult of saints,¹⁸ all had in common a desire to recover an older and broader understanding of Orthodoxy and its

Russian pilgrimage.

In all of this renewal, the revival of Orthodoxy's charismatic life should be singled out because it proved so dynamic in reasserting the church's salvific purpose. The charismatic interiorization of baptismal and eucharistic grace embodied in the mystical theology and experience of the Orthodox East took place most creatively in Russia's remote cloisters, hermitages, and convents devoted to the contemplative life.¹⁹ Responsible carriers of truth (the Synod, bishops, clergy), respected though they were, never were able to achieve the status of ultimate authority, but had to acknowledge a sometimes almost indiscernible leadership of those who bore witness to the charismatic life of the Spirit. To put the matter as Saint Irenaeus of Lyons did in the second century: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church..., but the Spirit is Truth."²⁰ In other words, the imperial framework proved too confining for a renewed sense of Orthodoxy's invisible and transhistorical character. It is enough here to cite the remarkable figure Saint Serafim of Sarov (1752-1833; canonized in 1903), a spiritual reformer who, through example and counsel, renewed the Orthodox tradition of contemplative asceticism and made it relevant to the tasks faced by the Russian church in the imperial era. As a voice of tradition modulated for the challenges of the modern world, Serafim indicated the means whereby Orthodox believers could prepare the site for building God's House, whose Door (Christ) is made from the Cross. But this, he insisted, must be done in freedom, not imposed by authority, and in this crucial respect, he pointed the way for Orthodox renewal.²¹

Charismatic Orthodoxy found expression in the remarkable return of the institution of *starsy*, or monastic elders experienced in the contemplative life, most notably at Optino cloister, whose famous elders made a contribution to Russia's high culture through their influence on Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Vladimir Solov'ev. In time, *starchestvo* crossed the line from purely spiritual direction focused on individual salvation to an asceticism linked to social action. Mother Ekaterina of Lesna (1850-1925), for example, adapted the contemplative monastery in order to "serve the world." The nuns of her ascetical community, she argued, could serve as a model for Orthodoxy's effective social mission "to the people." "Broad experience," she insisted, "shows that the woman missionary is better able to evoke the confidence of the people, and it is easier for

her to draw closer to them...."²² Father Ioann (Sergiev, 1829-1908) of Kronstadt was the first man of contemplative prayer to take the ascetical way of life into the urban slums, where he worked with the poor, the outcast, the criminal, and the unemployed, combining social work with huge outdoor celebrations of the liturgy and eucharist.

At the turn of the century, charismatic Orthodoxy became embroiled in high politics, when Nicholas II and Alexandra insisted on the canonization of Serafim of Sarov in 1903. Their interest lay in giving a sharper spiritual definition to the reign, thereby recapturing an older legitimacy for the dynasty that had been eroded by the actions of Russia's tsars in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. "Holy Russia" and its newly discovered saints would demonstrate the close solidarity of tsar and people protected by the continuing concern of Divine Providence. In this way, charismatic Orthodoxy became associated with the conservative and romantic nationalism of late imperial Russia centered at court.²³

By mid-nineteenth century, the church had also begun to sense the need for a closer contacts with society going beyond its earlier narrowly understood task of enlightenment. In a curious way, the confiscation of monastic property by Catherine had the important result of allowing the church an independent perspective on the questions of serfdom and land reform, since the Church, unlike its medieval forerunner, had no direct financial stake in the existing agrarian order. And over the course of the next century the church did publicly criticize landlords who forced their serfs to work on Sundays, and thereby interfered with the church's liturgical and educational contacts with the them. It also protested efforts of noble landowners to arrange illegal underage marriages or marriages violating church rules on degrees of kinship. Sometimes clergy were emboldened to denounce nobles for sexual or physical abuse.²⁴ Because of the church's relative independence — or isolation — within the existing social order the government, in contemplating the economic, social, and legal "Great Reforms," did not welcome participation by the church in either public discussions or public activities. For all of its earlier efforts to enroll the parish clergy in the job of policing and improving the lower classes, the government found them too close to the peasantry to be politically reliable. For the most part, after all, the clergy were dependent for financial

support on the local community and its goodwill rather than on the government.

One recent investigator argues that the impetus for church social activism is found in a new "this world" theology, a Christian modernism, aimed at fusing the church and the world, in order that Russia's changing society would be Christian, not secular and materialistic. The new viewpoint clearly marked a break with the Church of prereform Russia and its focus on the "otherworldly" role of Orthodoxy.²⁵ While we should not exaggerate the division between "other worldly" prereform Orthodoxy and "worldly" Orthodoxy after mid-century — after all, the new theology itself was a product of religious ferment in the schools in the 1830s and 1840s and charismatic "otherworldly" Orthodoxy began to develop a social dimension of its own as the nineteenth century waned — Christian modernism accelerated the willingness of Russian clergy to engage social issues outside the walls of the church. Hence the appearance in large numbers of former seminarians in the ranks of the radical intelligentsia in the 1860s and 1870s. "The new ethos had to overcome significant obstacles but steadily gained momentum in the decades after 1855, finally culminating in powerful movements of clerical liberalism and seminary radicalism in the early twentieth century."²⁶ In the later 1850s the church developed a network of parish schools and many clergy eagerly took up the task of educating their flocks.

A second feature of social Christianity appeared somewhat later in the 1880s and 1890s, arising from the church's perception that the city was becoming an unfriendly place for the church, despite its greater institutional presence there than in the scattered and widespread villages of rural Russia. Perhaps the central problem lay in the growing gulf between educated society and the church. Emerging materialist philosophies and atheism among educated Russians, the unexpected attack by the *zemstva* on the church's prerogatives in education, stinging new criticisms of the clerical exemption from taxation, and in general the panoply of new conclusions that emanated from a liberal understanding of natural rights that ran counter to traditional Orthodox views on marriage, divorce, public penance, adultery, homicide, blasphemy, censorship, and the relativization of faith, all contributed to the church's reduced role in Russia's urban life.²⁷

The new situation demanded new approaches and new strategies.

Here the church unexpectedly received help from lay intellectuals, notably Vladimir Solov'ev and others of similar outlook who wished to see the church give greater emphasis to its role as a force in *this* world. Repeated encounters with Russia's educated laity developed through contacts in the famous St. Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society in 1902-1903, the pre-Sobor Council of 1906-1907, a similar council held in 1911, and culminating in a "local" (*pomestnyi*) Russian council of the ecumenical church in 1917-1918. These gatherings focused on the need for greater participation by the laity in the life of the church and the renovation of the parish.

Beyond rapprochement with educated society, the church sought new venues for social justice, and many clergy prominently participated in the liberation movement in order to achieve a radical reconstruction of state and society. Father Gapon, the St. Petersburg priest who led the workers' procession to the Winter Palace in January, 1905 that touched off the revolution of that year, is the best known example. But he was by no means a solitary figure among clergy prepared to protest the existing social order.²⁸

By the beginning of the First World War, the interrelated processes of redefining Orthodoxy and its relationship to the imperial regime, the charismatic awakening, and the Christian modernist searching for social justice had moved the church a long way from the "Egyptian bondage" Metropolitan of St. Petersburg Serafim (Glagolevskii) had earlier condemned in the policies of Tsar Alexander I.

Conclusions

Russian Orthodoxy in the early twentieth century had good reason to feel still more urgently the need for redefining its traditional imperial role. Efforts at "counter reform" in the previous two decades by Overprocurator Konstantin Pobedonostsev to strengthen the church while dismantling the Great Reforms, were publicly viewed as further evidence of the church's captivity by the state and its willingness to help Russify restive portions of the empire. Following the creation of the Duma in 1906, the church's position became still more complex, since now the church's inner life was affected by Duma attempts to extend its authority into ecclesiastical matters and devise legislation aimed at reforming the church. The Rasputin affair from 1911-1916 and the renewed revolutionary

activity of those same years added to the church's sense of crisis. The new challenges reenforced the long standing desire of churchmen to achieve greater autonomy and establish an authority in the church at least equal to that of the emperor (e.g., a national synod or a patriarchate). Their desire was satisfied only after the collapse of the monarchy in February, 1917.

Although spiritual renewal, awakening social conscience, and unease over its older relationship to the state disclosed a church straining at the limitations of imperial Orthodoxy, the church did not successfully resolve the problems presented by its older imperial role. When the revolution came in 1917, most churchmen showed that they were ready to embrace a new order, but there was no agreement about what it should be or how it should be achieved. The church's internal cleavages — charismatic, liberal, social renovationist — impeded building adequate bridges to society and left the clergy divided in various ways among themselves. The Bolshevik victory in October, 1917 meant the end, not the beginning, of an unrestricted Orthodox renaissance nurtured by the earlier currents of church renewal.

As a result, Russian Orthodoxy, the sole imperial institution to survive the revolution, was condemned to suffer because of its past association with the tsarist regime. Yet, its revitalization in the period preceding the revolution also left an inspiring legacy for those who suffered along with the church during its time on the Cross.

Thus, as one writer has concluded: "...the Orthodox church during the imperial era was caught up in problems its past had ill fated it to cope with; that even considering those undoubted inherited handicaps, it did not do all it could — when does any of us ever do all that one can? And yet its record is not as unrelievedly bleak and unsuccessful as it has been made out; moreover, much of the story has yet to be told and understood."²⁹

Notes

¹ See P. V. Verkhovskoi's authoritative Uchrezhdenie dukhovnoi kollegii i dukhovnyi reglament, 2 vols., Rostov-on-Don, 1916, which represents the culmination of pre-revolutionary writing emphasizing Orthodoxy's servile dependence on the state resulting

from Peter I's church reform. Verkhovskoi's work, which amplified earlier intelligentsia thinking, carried great weight, since he was the first to study systematically the relevant archives. His views have been repeated in older western accounts such as John S. Curtiss, Church and State in Russia: the last years of the empire, 1900-1917, New York, 1940 and polemically restated in Richard Pipes's Russia under the Old Regime, London, 1974. Since the appearance of Pipes's book, however, western students of Orthodoxy have moved away from this interpretation, beginning with Robert L. Nichols and Theofanis G. Stavrou, Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime, Minneapolis, 1978 and then in a series of books and articles by Gregory L. Freeze.

On the specific subject of church and state, Freeze contends that "the Petrine reform did not transform the Church into a government bureau, that the Synod's autonomy varied considerably from reign to reign, but that the Church never became — in law, in practice, and in spirit — a mere ministry of religious affairs. Not that the secular state, especially at various points in the nineteenth century, did not strive to achieve such integration and incorporation. But it was precisely these assaults that impelled the clergy — both bishops and parish clergy — to dissociate themselves from the existing order, to reaffirm ecclesiastical interests and needs *vis-a-vis* the state, and to press more firmly their own political and social ambitions. This explanation for the state's failure to incorporate and assimilate the Church...rests partly in the specific ecclesiastical structure established by Peter the Great, partly in the development of the episcopal elite and parish clergy into distinct social groups. The result, apparent by the early twentieth century, was a congeries of dynamic reform movements in the Church — episcopal conciliarism, renovationism, radical Christian socialism, none of which was an accidental or opportunistic response to the revolutionary crisis in contemporary society, but which rather mark the culmination of processes long at work in the Church."

"Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 36, no. 1. January, 1985, p. 84.

To this summary, one need only add the charismatic awakening in the church which also affected the church's relationship with both the state and society.

- ² As quoted in Georges Florovsky, Ways of Russian Theology, I, Belmont, Mass., 1979, p. 142.
- ³ Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State?" p. 86. There is an English translation of The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great by Alexander V. Muller, Seattle, 1972. Catherine II later organized the Catholic communities of the empire in a manner very similar to that characterizing the Orthodox faith, without, of course, granting them the same governmental status accorded Orthodoxy. See Isabel de Madariaga, Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great, New Haven, 1981, p. 515.
- ⁴ As quoted in Florovsky, I, p. 143. For an extended study of Platon, see K.A. Papmehl, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow (Petr Levshin, 1737-1812). The Enlightened Prelate, Scholar and Educator, Newtonville, Mass., 1983.
- ⁵ See Stephen K. Batalden, Catherine II's Greek Prelate: Eugenios Voulgaris in Russia, 1771-1806, New York, 1982.
- ⁶ Madariaga, p. 114.
- ⁷ Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State?" pp. 95-97.
- ⁸ Fundamental Laws, Article 64, 1906.
- ⁹ Donald W. Treadgold, The West in Russia and China. Religious and Secular Thought in Modern Times, Vol. 1, Russia 1472-1917, Cambridge, 1973, p. 93.
- ¹⁰ M. Gorchakov, Monastyrskii prikaz, St. Petersburg, 1868; Bulygin, Monastyrskie krest'iane, Chap. 1.
- ¹¹ Treadgold, I, p. 136. Litta did persuade Paul to restore the Basilian order and Catholic property confiscated by Catherine II.
- ¹² See Robert L. Nichols, "Filaret of Moscow as an Ascetic," in John Breck, John Meyendorff, and Elizabeth Silk, eds., The Legacy of St. Vladimir. Byzantium, Russia, America., Crestwood, N.Y., 1990, pp. 81-91.

¹³ Madariaga, p. 116.

¹⁴ On Paisii and the revival of contemplative monasticism in Russia, see Robert L. Nichols, "The Orthodox Elders (Startsy) of Imperial Russia," Modern Greek Studies Yearbook, Vol. 1 (1985), pp. 1-30.

¹⁵ As quoted in Florovsky, I, p. 121.

¹⁶ When, in 1839, the Book of Laws (Kniga pravil) was published as a replacement for the older The Rudder (Kormchaia kniga), it characteristically omitted all civil legislation, in keeping with the effort to limit and restrict the "spiritual domain." However, almost simultaneously Professor Aleksandr Kunitsyn (1743-1841) compiled a corrective, The Complete Collection of Ecclesiastical Legislation in Russia since the Establishment of the Holy Synod (Polnoe sobranie dukhovnykh ukazonenii v Rossii so vremeni uchrezhdeniia Sviateishago Sinoda), which the government found "unseemly" to publish, as it also found the extensive canonical code, The Complete Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws (Polnoe sobranie dukhovnykh zakonov, 15 vols.), assembled by Bishop of Orenburg Avgustin (Sakharov, 1768-1841).

¹⁷ As quoted in Florovsky, I, p. 125. One historian of Catherine's reign writes that "the hierarchy was not untouched [!] by the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and attempted to purge the village of its colorful superstitions, myths, and false miracles. Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, probably the most distinguished ecclesiastical figure in late eighteenth-century Russia, did a great deal to regulate church life and impose a more dignified pattern upon it. Yet it is likely that genuine religious fervor was to be found in the continuing current of medieval hesychastic mysticism...." Madariaga, p. 121.

¹⁸ Scholarly study of Russian saints only began in the nineteenth century. Vasilii Kliuchevskii's Old Russian Lives of the Saints as an Historical Source (Drevnerusskie zhitiia sviatykh kak istoricheskii istochnik, 1871) is a well known but hardly isolated example.

¹⁹ See Philip Sherrard, "The Revival of Hesychast Spirituality," in Louis Dupre and Don E. Saliers in collaboration with John

Meyendorff, Christian Spirituality, Post-Reformation and Modern, New York, 1989, pp. 417-431.

²⁰ As quoted in John Meyendorff, "Theosis in the Eastern Christian Tradition," Ibid., p. 475.

²¹ I have tried to explain the ways that Serafim endeavored to relate ancient Orthodox tradition to the challenges of modern life in a paper entitled "Serafim of Sarov, Indiscernible Religious Leader in the Reign of Alexander I," presented at the national convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Phoenix, Arizona, November, 1992, and in the essay. "Orthodox Elders" cited above.

²² Vladimir Maevskii, Lesna, khopovo-furke, San Paolo, 1962, pp. 31-2.

²³ See Robert L. Nichols, "The Friends of God: Nicholas II and Alexandra at the Canonization of Serafim of Sarov, July 1903," in Charles E. Timberlake, ed. Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia. Essays in Honor of Donald W. Treadgold. Seattle, 1992, pp. 128-144.

²⁴ Freeze, "Handmaiden of the State?" p. 94.

²⁵ Gregory L. Freeze, "A Social Mission for Russian Orthodoxy. The Kazan' Requiem of 1861 for the Peasants in Bezdna," in Ezra Mendelsohn and Marshall S. Shatz, eds., Imperial Russia 1700-1917. State, Society, Opposition. Essays in Honor of Marc Raeff, DeKalb, Illinois, 1988, p.117.

²⁶ Ibid., p.129.

²⁷ These points are made in detail in Gregory L. Freeze, "Going to the Intelligentsia': The Church and Its Urban Mission in Post-Reform Russia," in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West, Between Tsar and People. Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia, Princeton, 1991, pp. 215-232. Freeze cites Igor Smolitsch, Geschichte der russischen Kirche, ed. G.L. Freeze, Vol. 2. in Forschungen sur

Osteuropaischen Geschichte, Bd. 45. for his survey of these topics.

²⁸ For a detailed account of the church and the 1905 revolution, see James W. Cunningham, A Vanquished Hope. The Movement for Church Renewal in Russia, 1905-1906, Crestwood, N.Y., 1981.

²⁹ Donald W. Treadgold, "Russian Orthodoxy and Society," Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime, pp. 40-41.

The Cross and the Star: Uneasy Neighbors - Jews and Christians in Imperial Russia

Henry R. Huttenbach

A perennial theme in European history is the ambivalent relationship between Jew and Christian. In the course of its evolution it has led, for example, to elegant, harmonious cultural achievements in Muslim Medieval Spain, to brilliant but controversial synthesis in Wilhelmine Germany and in Habsburg Vienna and Budapest, and to radical modernism in Weimar Berlin. At the same time the relationship led to extreme intolerance and depraved criminality in the same three *loci*: from mass expulsions, (beginning in England in 1290 and culminating with the introduction of the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula in the 1490's), to political, racist antisemitism in turn-of-the-century Vienna and Paris, and climaxing tragically with the German National Socialist conceived continent-wide genocide in the 1930's and 40's. So, where does the Judeo-Christian chapter in pre-1917 Imperial Russia fit into this polarized record, in which moments of limited tolerance have led to unparalleled human creativity, and moments of unrestrained intolerance have given vent to ferocious Christian and post-Christian-inspired forces of mass destruction?

Formally and informally, structurally and culturally, Russians — as early as their ancestors in Kievan Rus — have defined themselves as Christians. Prince-Heroes and Prince-Martyrs were enshrined as national saints, fighting and dying for the Cross.¹ Their subject — the peasant — whether free or in the bondage of serfdom, was referred to as *khrest'ianin*, a variant of *khristianin*: a Christian. From the outset, the bond between secular ruler and religious prelate was a symbiotic one. Thus, Grand Prince of Muscovy Ivan III's goal of "ingathering" adjacent principalities (a dynastic goal to unify territories considered a patrimonial heritage) was just as much the dream of the Metropolitan of Moscow to reunify Slavic Orthodox Christians² in order to lay the foundations of a separate patriarchy. This self-definition along religious lines was fortified externally over

the centuries by invasions and occupations in the west by Catholic Lithuanians and Poles, and in the east and south by Muslim Tatars.

The determination to preserve the Christian character of Muscovy was fortified by the uninterrupted acquisition of territory beyond the Orthodox core assembled by Ivan III (1462-1505). During the reign of Ivan IV (1533-1584), Muscovy conquered lands inhabited by large non-Orthodox Christian populations, beginning with permanent conquest in the east and southeast of the middle and lower Volga valley, that is, of the Muslim Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan in 1552 and 1556, respectively, and the annexation of the Khanate of Siber in 1555, followed by temporary victories in the northwest in 1558, resulting in the capture of the Baltic coast and its Lutheran populations. As Muscovy and its successor state became in essence a multinational empire with a multi-religious population, it developed on the one hand a strict commitment to an Orthodox Christian identity, at times tantamount to a tyrannical official ideology, and, on the other hand, it maintained a surprisingly pragmatic policy of accommodation vis-à-vis its non-Orthodox peoples and their social orders.

How did this dual stance impact on Muscovy's and its heirs' attitudes and policies towards Jews? On the whole, Muscovites harbored the same basic animus towards Jews as did the rest of Christendom. Fundamentally, their faith was nourished by the vehemently anti-Judaic Patristic writings imported to the Dnieper valley from the Byzantine Empire. Their Judeophobic animosities were specifically amplified in the eleventh century by Metropolitan Hillarion of Kiev and, in the next century by St. Cyril of Turov. Their unbending anti-Old Testamentarianism explicitly equated Jews with the outright denial of New Testamentarian revelation as well as with the sin of sins *bogoubiistvo* (deicide). By the fifteenth century, both Muscovite religious and secular culture was riddled with anti-Jewish references and imagery, imbedded in the panegyric Lives of Saints, in iconography, and in the *byliny* (popular epics). And yet, there was none of the murderous crusading hysteria in the early Russian sphere as there was in the Catholic zone, no doubt because of the absence of Jews in Muscovy. The only contact was with Jewish merchants in Poland and in the Crimean Khanate.³

This changed markedly in the last quarter of the fifteenth century with the Heresy of the Judaizers, known as *zhidovstvuiushchie*.⁴ Fear of Jewish influence led to a radical policy of closing Muscovy to all

Jews, including Jewish merchants who were part of foreign trade missions. With the ascent of Grand Prince Vasily III in 1505, subsequent reigns always began with an edict reasserting the policy of forbidding Jews from entering the realm, let alone allowing them to take up residence. Thus, with each new conquest, Jewish residents were forced to convert, face expulsion or execution as was the case, for example, after the fall of Polotsk in 1563 and the complete annexation of Novgorod in 1570.⁵

By then, Poland was besieged by Socianism, an anti-Trinitarian doctrine, and hence, by Muscovite standards, a Judaizing heresy, especially in the eyes of the ever-watchful Ivan IV, who was profoundly influenced by the teachings of Iosif Volokolamsk.⁶ Indeed, as stressed correctly by Klier,⁷ Jews were increasingly associated by Muscovy's elite with Poland as that kingdom evolved into Muscovy's political and religious arch-enemy and rival in Eastern Europe. By the time of the Smuta at the turn of the century (triggered by the succession crisis ushered in by the reign of Tsar Boris Godunov), one of the pretenders to the throne was tagged as being surrounded by a retinue of *bogoubitsy* (Christ-Killers) and the False Dmitry himself was characterized as a *rodom zhidovim* (of Jewish origin).⁸

A century later, when the Petrine Empire conquered more territories in Polish Ukraine, it absorbed a few Jews, some of whom had been *arendary* (monarchic agents of the Polish court), functioning as tax farmers and licensed innkeepers. Initially they were tolerated, but finally expelled in 1727 by order of Empress Catherine I,⁹ a decree reaffirmed by her successor, Empress Elizabeth in 1744,¹⁰ who again, as per tradition, ordered no Jews be allowed into her realm. But none of these draconian measures and policies could be realistically implemented in the long reign of Catherine II the Great (1762-1796), during which eastern Poland (Central Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania) became a part of the empire along with hundreds of thousands of Jews, too numerous to expel, convert, or kill.¹¹ The addition of Congress Poland after 1815 with its dense Jewish population at long last forced the Imperial Russian government to come to terms pragmatically with its Jewish subjects. A policy was needed. The most important initial decision was the crystallization of the so-called Pale of Settlement, the *cherta osedlosti*, which initially restricted Jewish residency to the western segment and southern tier of the empire, though permission for the

latter (the Gubernia of Astrakhan and Gubernia of Kavkaz) was denied in 1825 at the start of the reactionary reign of Nicholas I (and its cruel, suppressive policies against Jews, including the dissolution in 1844 of the *Kahal*—the Jewish local government). By excluding Jews from Astrakhan and Kavkaz, Emperor Nicholas (1825-1855) undid Catherine the Great's clandestine scheme to import foreign Jews to colonize the lower Volga and Caucasus regions.¹² The anti-enlightenment, post-Napoleonic reaction throughout Europe had its counterpart in the post-1815 Romanov Empire, setting the stage for the drama of Jewish history in the Russian Empire till the 1917 revolution.

Until Nicholas I, there had been no consistent state policy towards the Jewish population. For the most part, Catherine the Great had been more concerned about a smooth absorption of Polish territory; hence her initial proclamation of an overall status quo with respect to social rank and economic activity, which included the half-million Jews who, like Poles, were assured of their property rights and community organizations. But beginning with M.V. Kakhovskii, governor of Mogilev gubernia, a rising tide of official Russian animosity towards the Jews surfaced. His reports condemned Jews for practically every social and economic vice *because* they were Jews, quintessentially unfit for residence in the empire.¹³ According to most administrators concerned with rationalizing the new territories and bringing their peoples in line with imperial criteria, the Jews fit into none of the *sosloviia* (estates or social classes) into which imperial society was divided. Initially, Jews were artificially classified as *meshchanstvo* (urban dwellers) to accommodate the many pedlars and craftsmen, where for tax purposes they were registered as *kupechestvo* (merchants).¹⁴ In fact, however, most Jews were not urban, but rural, eking out a subsistence livelihood in small towns. The result of this unimaginative bureaucratic manipulation was overall confusion, provoking predictable vocal opposition from *bona fide* Christian merchants and Russian city administrators.

By 1791, this cumbersome and unpopular arrangement was revoked, leaving Jews in a legal limbo.¹⁵ Yet, till 1825, for every administrative restriction there were dozens of exceptions voiding the effectiveness of any ruling. Here we observe seemingly inflexible ideology periodically tempered by unavoidable and/or prudent pragmatism. Throughout the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I, Jews had normal access to the judicial courts to appeal unfavorable

decisions or to the tsarist court to which they sent many petitions. In numerous instances appeals were favorable to Jewish plaintiffs, despite the deep-seated prevailing prejudices against them. The worst of these was expressed by G. R. Derzhavin in his *Zapiski* ¹⁶ (memoirs) in which he portrayed Jews as inherently dishonest and incapable of being loyal subjects. He called for strong measures to excise them from civic life, but, despite his influential friends, his call for a formal solution (that is, mass expulsion) was generally ignored by the imperial court. Nevertheless, people such as Derzhavin and Kakhovskii laid the intellectual groundwork for the Nicholaeian era, which so hindered, indeed, obstructed, the emancipation of the Jews.

On the one hand, Imperial — and officially Christian — Russia's ability or failure to integrate its Jewish population was a litmus test of the empire's willingness to come to terms with its non-Russian peoples; on the other, the nineteenth-century cycle of Jewish experiences — from suppression, to reform, to reaction and pogroms, to partial emancipation, and again to conservative and reactionary prejudice, to momentary full liberation during the revolution in 1917 — for European Jewry this was the central historic experience, since Russian Jewry represented over 80% of Ashkenazic Jewry at the start of the nineteenth century (by far the greater majority in numerical terms of all Jewish minorities in other European nations). The inability of the empire to reform sufficiently to absorb its Jews led in no small measure to the politics of reaction which alienated a large segment of the Jewish masses to emigrate *en masse*, a major symptom of disaffection true for all peoples of the multinational empire. This alienation also gave birth to Jewish nationalism, Zionism, which further contributed to a fundamental critique of the empire and its climates of rejection on all levels of society. Most important, of the tens of thousands of Jews who opted to remain in the Russian empire, thousands chose to join the ranks of reformers and revolutionaries, contributing immensely to the many socialist visions of Russia's future, from Bundism to Bolshevism. It is in these capacities that many Jews found themselves in the close company of Russians. It was always a tense alliance, a marriage of political convenience and ideology, undermined by chronic, dormant Christian prejudices and deeply ingrained Jewish suspicions.

In the educated and acculturated minds of Russian reformers and revolutionaries languished generations of stereotypes of Jews

furnished by high Russian culture, especially by its secular literature. N. I. Novikov, the popular eighteenth century Voltairesque satirist typically depicted the Jew as a cowardly miser¹⁷ in the general tradition of Shakespeare (and later, Dickens). Even Pushkin misused his poetic talent to paint the Jews stereotypically as greedy and desirous of immoral or immodest ownership. N.M. Karamzin, the eminent court historian, while not denying the humanity of Jews, nevertheless emphasized caricature — like Jews with their lack of personal hygiene, prisoners of depravation, who must be brought out of the cultural darkness of the Pale into the light of Russian Christian civilization and saved from their ghetto backwardness. Karamzin promoted a form of secularized conversion for Jews, a Russian variant of the White Man's Burden.

In general, Jews seeking to work alongside Russians as part of the enlightened modernizing process had to deal with persons who, though highly educated, were nevertheless exposed to the standard Russian menu of Jewish stereotypes, even though these persons themselves, on a conscious rational level, did not, perhaps, subscribe to the caricatures of the Jew. This accounts, for example, for the rejection of a Jew's application to the Masonic Lodge in St. Petersburg in 1811.¹⁸ For the most part all the future Decembrists held negative notions about Jews whom they regarded collectively as a high priority problem to be resolved once they, the Decembrists, held the reins of power. Thus was born the Russian variant of the Central European "Jewish Problem." Not only was it a "problem" for official Russia, for the imperial state, but also for those who sought radically to revamp the political and social structure of the empire. Both antagonists had trouble accommodating Jews into their schemes, whether monarchic — in line with *ancien régime* socio-religious principles and traditions — or republican, in line with more modern secular notions of an eighteenth-century enlightened civic order.

The former — the post Napoleonic conservatives - functioned in a state system that lacked precision. It was largely disorganized, improvisational, and inefficient. Thus, on paper, it had explicit policies to homogenize the multicolored tapestry of peoples. Uvarov's simplistic formula of unification was never systematically carried out from top to bottom. Hence, large segments of the non-Russian population, never heard the call for "One Ruler, One Faith, One Language"; this included the Jews who, for the most part, lived

culturally and geographically, isolated, locked in the Pale - increasingly poor, increasingly unassimilated. On the whole, in the eyes of official Russia throughout the nineteenth century, the Jews were a marginal concern, as were Volga Germans, for example, as the regime dealt more with larger issues, such as the serf question, or the imperial wars in the Caucasus, or with politically destabilizing rebellion in Poland. There was, in the first half of the nineteenth century, no coherent government policy with distinct goals with respect to Jews. The court and its advisers could not find even a precise legal definition for its Jewish subjects. Its major concern was to guide or force them into the mainstream without knowing exactly how. On the one hand, archreactionary Nicholaeian officials relied on mass recruitment into the army as an assimilation device; on the other, more farsighted tsarist civil servants encouraged the schools of the *Maskilim*, of the *Haskala* reform movement, as a way of educating *shtetel* Jews and weaning them away from their backward traditions. Towards that end they dissolved the *Kahal*, on the grounds it was a regressive organization, in order to provide a way of "freeing" Jews from the fetters of communal pressures, in the hopes of getting at least the younger generation to join the modern Russian mainstream, but with little success.

The Reforms of the 60's had the same initial effect on Jews as on others: high hopes and expectations, especially on university campuses. There, in the 70's, a handful of Jewish students encountered moderate and radical Russians, reformers and revolutionaries. But the majority of Jews who linked up with the Russian mainstream were those who chose the path of economic betterment by attaching themselves to the post-1856 drive for industrial modernization after the debacle of the Crimean War. Thousands of Jews joined the ranks of the new generation of entrepreneurs and managers: in railroad construction and administration and in the grain export business, in the hopes of attaining the ranks and status of a Russian bourgeoisie, with the prized permission to reside in one of the major cities, to own urban real-estate, and to profit generally from the advantages of a respectable burgher's life, including higher education for the children.

The abrupt termination of moderate liberal reform came with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Modernization continued, of course, but with a Russo-*volkisch* character. Severe quotas were

placed on Jews, especially in education. The *numerus clausus* minimized opportunities for Jews to the point of total exclusion, as in the legal profession, from which they were barred in 1889. The 1882 May laws led to mass expulsions of Jews from cities outside the Pale, reducing most to second-class citizenship, and, not surprisingly, driving many Jewish students into the arms of socialist radicals. Yet, there were those who still hoped for acceptance and full integration into Russian life, refusing to believe Russian Judeophobia was an inextricably integral part of Russian culture.

One of these was Mikhail Osipovich Gershenzon, a literary critic and essayist, and unreconstructed lover of Russian secular culture. Born in 1869, Gershenzon grew up in Kishinew on the southwest fringe of the empire. In his formative years he experienced the last flickers of the reforming era and the climax of the golden age of Russian literature — that of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy (neither of whom were Judeophiles). Despite the reactionary years 1881 to 1903, Gershenzon carefully sought to distinguish between the autocratic and antisemitic regime and the artistic creativity that flourished in the repressive political atmosphere, soon becoming one of the prominent interpreters of Russian literary culture. Meanwhile, Gershenzon consciously avoided traditional Jewish life, spurned the Zionist option, and rejected a revolutionary path. Instead he placed his faith in the triumph of the spirit of reason over political narrowness. He was, as such, an optimist in pursuing the path of full assimilation and full acceptance by the Russian literary world, though stopping short of religious conversion (unlike his ambitious German Jewish counterparts). Despite suffering severe discrimination, Gershenzon completed his academic training, hoping the day would come when he would at last be able to be gainfully employed in his capacity as historian, author and critic of the Russian world.

That did not come until the upheavals of 1904-1906. Prior to the 1904 Russo-Japanese War and Revolution of 1905, Gershenzon was effectively shut out. His dream of receiving a residence permit in the capital remained a dream. The numerous clauses and other obstacles delayed his entrance to a university and, once accepted, was denied access to the law faculty on the explicit grounds he was a Jew. His first job in 1907 as a book review editor was abruptly cut short on account of his being Jewish — his highly original insights into Russian literature became unacceptable to the average Russian

readers aware of his Jewish identity.¹⁹ The opinions of a Jewish intellectual about Russian culture were intolerable in a climate of intensifying ethnocentric reasoning. In reply, Gershenzon tried to justify his legitimacy by admitting his status as an "alien" looking from the outside in. This, he maintained, gave him the advantage of additional perspective and particular objectivity. Above all, he insisted, to be Russian is not by birth but by exposure; hence, he concluded, his broad familiarity with Russian culture qualified him as a bona fide literary critic and historian.²⁰ To prove his case, Gershenzon pointed to Heine.

Not surprisingly, his contentions divided his readers into those who supported him and accepted his brilliance and those who rejected him as a *parvenu*, as an intruder, an outsider, a Jew. The former confirmed his optimism, and he did not let the latter deter him, hoping for even better days when the cosmopolitan would overcome the xenophobic. On the whole, judging from his correspondence, Gershenzon believed that judeophobia was not an integral part of modern Russian culture, that judeophobes would ultimately be sidelined as Russian society became more international, more pan-European.

Gershenzon's brand of assimilation was essentially symbiotic.²¹ He argued, and believed, that a Jewish thread could enrich the fabric of Russian culture just as Russian culture had much to offer the tapestry of Jewish life. This vision was strongly rejected by such chauvinists and antisemites as Vasillii Rozanov, with whom Gershenzon had a troubled correspondence, in which he maintained his utopian belief that Russia and the rest of Europe were moving, though imperfectly, towards a universalist level of tolerance. Even prior to 1917, Gershenzon never abandoned hope for the day when antisemitism would be a thing of the past and leave his beloved Russian literature unsullied and freed from irrational bondage. As a historian, he nourished a view of a Russian past moving steadily towards a state of greater enlightenment but not heading towards a destructive revolution. (The second 1917 revolution certainly was not in his scheme.) Yet, few of his Russian colleagues — fellow *intelligenty* — fully embraced him as an equal. In their eyes he was a stranger, a Jew, and *not* a Russian, hence an outsider, not in Gershenzon's understanding of the term, but one who did not have and could not acquire the psychological makeup to be a *true* Russian. In the end, if not Jewish, he was too European for them, too un-Russian

for all their denial of harboring parochial ethno-cultural criteria. In their eyes, for example, what Gershenzon had to say about Pushkin as a world literary figure, was an act of de-Russification, an act of cultural robbery.

In a sense Gershenzon was a true product of the lessons taught by the *Maskilim* — that Jews need not be strangers among non-Jews. This allowed Gershenzon, however illogically and unrealistically (and as did many others elsewhere in Europe), to look upon pogroms and the Dreyfus case as aberrations from the main line of European evolution. His was a kind of myopia that permitted him to nourish the hopes of a truly cultured man. In his eyes, Russia at the turn of the century, still home to over 70% of European Jews, had evolved for the better a long way from the days of Nicholas I. The suffocating restrictions of the Pale of settlement were gone (not formally dissolved until 1915); the cities were opening to Jews. A Jewish bourgeoisie was making great strides; Jews enjoyed thriving cultures in Yiddish and Hebrew, and, of course, in Russian and Polish. He, like the writers in *Razsvet* ("Dawn") ardently believed in the value of Jews to Russian life.

But they were a tiny minority and they attracted a miniscule readership of Russians and Jews. The broad Russian and Jewish masses were on diverging cultural paths *and* on a political collision course. Many Jews in the empire opted for religious tradition (the Hasidim) or secular separatism (the Bundists). Others eagerly pursued the road to emigration — most to the west, to the United States, and a few to the Biblical Land — as Zionist pioneers. Very few experimented with Marxist revolution as a device for a common Russo-Jewish future. But they paid a double price: voluntarily, they totally abandoned their Jewish identity for a new ideology, and later, soon after the revolution, were involuntarily purged from the Party's ranks, primarily because they were Jewish in origin.

Mainstream Russia never lost its animus for the Jews before or after the revolution. Men like Gershenzon lived in a fool's paradise. 1905 unleashed numerous national independence movements, including Polish and Ukrainian. Both harbored ugly strains of antisemitism, as did the overarching imperial regime throughout its death agonies. The last decade was no exception. Even Stolypin promoted political parties known for their antipathy for Jews.²² In the Duma years, Polish nationalists openly persecuted Jews.²³ Anti-democratic forces encouraged antisemitism and undermined any

hope for a tsarist society in which Jews could participate according to Gershenzon's hopes. Only the Kadet Party came out for full civil rights for Jews but insisted on a Russian dominated empire,²⁴ thereby unwittingly seeming to align itself with the volkish Russocentric nationalism of the Union of Russian People who openly called for the primacy of the Russian nation — *gospodstvo russkoi natsional'nosti*.²⁵

Stolypin, perhaps, is the example *par excellence* of the dilemma inherent in Russo-Jewish relations. Despite his enlightened conservatism, or because of it, Stolypin was hopelessly torn between two initially exclusive tendencies - acceptance and rejection of Jews. In 1906, as Minister of the Interior, Stolypin was opposed to the expulsion of Jews from the central Russian provinces to which so many had migrated from the Pale. And, as Prime Minister, he advocated the slow, but eventual complete emancipation of all Jews in the empire. Nevertheless, despite his influence and stature, Stolypin did nothing to curb radical nationalists in the Third Duma from mouthing an antisemitism reminiscent of the murderous slogans of the Black Hundreds.²⁶ He did nothing to silence the likes of Purishkevich and Markov²⁷ and other unreconstructed Judeophobes. As the reaction rained down upon the Jews, Stolypin remained passive. Only a few socialist delegates spoke up in defense of the Jews.²⁸ Finally — and perhaps not surprisingly — Stolypin caved in when Tsar Nicholas II openly sided with the sentiments of the antisemites. Was Stolypin merely weak, or an opportunist who bent with the prevailing wind? Or did he simply lack the moral courage, being, in Witte's words, "politically immoral"?²⁹ Or was he a "typical" Russia official, a reflection of his cultural tradition? It does not help to know that Stolypin had once, in 1906, provided funds for the Black Hundred.³⁰

The moderate position Stolypin held in 1906 — that of granting freedom slowly to the Jews — had its origins in the Reformist Conservatives who, in turn, had their spiritual roots in the era of the 1860's. However, what they advocated after 1881 was too little and too late. Among them were A.I. Giorgievsky from the Ministry of Education, an outstanding member of the Pahlen Commission (1883-1888), whose mandate was to change the law, and hence the empire, from within.³¹ But they operated in a climate of systemic antisemitism brought on by the regime they were charged with modifying, a contradiction that lived on in Stolypin.

Increasingly, Russian voices who favored *immediate* and full emancipation of the Jews came from the ranks of the revolutionaries, such as Maxim Gorky. But even his call was flawed since he wanted russified, de-judaized Jews, that is, fully assimilated and secularized, not to mention the Marxist orientation.

Proponents of a multiethnic society — that is, full of emancipation without assimilation — were few indeed. The one who came closest to advocating a society free for Russians and non-Russians (specifically, Jews) was Paul Miliukov. But even he did so out of respect for Russian society, for the sake of its viable continuity, and not out of any sympathy for the Jews and Judaism *per se*. Most illustrative, perhaps, of the "prison" in which Russian officials were trapped is Viacheslav Plehve. It is all too well known that this highly educated man (who rose to become Minister of the Interior at the turn of the century) made antisemitism a major tool for his professional political advantage. As such he was in the vanguard of anti-Jewish legislation. And yet, according to Witte, Plehve, privately and personally, knew this was the wrong policy and felt no animus for Jews.³² It was the autocratic system that most fettered Russians and prevented them from forging a society open to Jews.

As the Russian Empire moved towards war, ethno-pluralism was not in the cards, tolerance of the Jews seemed remote. If Russians, even liberals, could not agree on the legitimacy of an autonomous Ukrainian culture, they certainly would not agree on an enlightened policy towards Jews at a time when ethno-patriotism increasingly dictated attitudes towards non-Russians, especially if these harbored political secessionist intentions, a principle which even the most liberal Kadet rejected. Increasingly, even moderate Russian conservatives rejected the notion of mass Jewish assimilation into Russian society and culture.³³ As for their reactionary cousins on the far right, Jews were the *inorodtsy par excellence*, totally unassimilable, and, in the end, should have been expelled from Russia a long time ago. This xenophobia was best expressed after 1906 by A. Liprande, who numbered Jews among the worst enemies of the Russian Empire.³⁴

The individual examples of Russo-Jewish rapprochement in the last decades of the empire was, therefore, an ambivalent one. It was, basically, doomed to fail. A regime incapable of absorbing or integrating its Catholics or Muslims was unlikely to absorb its Jewish population. Yet, the imperial government rarely fully

enforced its draconian restrictions on non-Russians nor, on the other hand, could it implement fully its more liberal reforms to transform all its peoples into equal citizens regardless of ethnicity. Ambivalence and ambiguity reigned to the bitter end, byproducts of the century-old contradiction between ideology and practicality.

That some leaders and rank and file, both Russians and Jews, believed in assimilation was symptomatic of the ambivalent relationship they shared. The Russian-Jewish meeting was a product of conquest, unwanted by both. In the end — that is, by 1914 — they were essentially moving away from one another despite some moments of rapprochement. Just as much as their original separateness was once defined by an exclusive Russian Christian identity, so now it was upheld by a more secular cultural and still Christian-Russian need to remain "Russian," a stance that left little room for Jews, no matter how Russified. In retrospect, Russians and Jews made uneasy neighbors, a disquiet that remained throughout the Soviet period and continues in today's post-Soviet era.

Nevertheless, if placed in the larger context of European history, the nineteenth-century Jewish chapter in the Russian sphere was, comparatively, no better and certainly no worse. Emancipation came in fits and starts in Habsburg and Hohenzollern Europe, giving the illusion of eventual consummation, a false hope that transferred itself to such hopefuls and observers from afar, such as Gershenzon; in contrast, emancipation came not at all to Jews in the Romanov Empire, encouraging counter-trends, such as mass emigration, ethnic separatism, and, lastly, revolution, the latter especially infecting impatient Jews in Central and Western Europe. When all is said, the unease between Christian and Jew was a pan-European phenomenon of which Imperial Russia spawned but a variant and not a condition that *per se* was *sui generis*.

NOTES

¹ Michael Cherniavsky, Tsar and People, Yale University Press, 1969.

² The pioneer of this project to minister to all Russian Orthodox Christians from Moscow was Metropolitan Cyprian, who held the

post at the turn of the fifteenth century.

³ Salo W. Baron, The Russian Jew Under Tsar and Soviets (New York, 1976), p.6.

⁴ For the views of this complex heresy, see IA. S. Lur'e, Ideologicheskaiia bor'ba v russkoi publiistsike kontsa XV - nachala XVI veka (Moscow-Leningrad, 1960).

⁵ Technically, Novgorod had subsumed itself to Muscovy in 1456; but this was internally disputed for over a century, leading to Ivan III's repeated intervention in the 1470's, and numerous shows of force over the next hundred years by his successors.

⁶ For example, see Ivan's debate with the Polish Protestant, Jan Rokyta. Charles J. Halperin "Judaizers and the image of the Jew in Medieval Russia: A Polemic Revisited and a Question Posed," *Canadian American Slavic Studies*, 9 (Summer 1975), p.154.

⁷ J. D. Klier, Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Question" in Russia, 1772 - 1825 (Illinois, 1986), p.27.

⁸ Iulii I. Gessen, "Evrei v moskovskom gosudarstve XV-XVII veka," *Evreiskaia starina*, No. 7 (April-June 1915), p.153.

⁹ Simon M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, I (Philadelphia 1916), pp.246-8.

¹⁰ Polnoe sobranie zakonov, 12, No. 8867 (25 January, 1944).

¹¹ Klier, p.30.

¹² Initially Catherine sought to exclude Jews from immigrating (Klier, p.36). Later, despite her anxieties over Jews (Nikolai N. Golitsyn, Istoriia russkago zakonodatel'stva o evreiakh (St. Petersburg 1886, p.61), Catherine did let them in as colonizers (Roger Bartlett, Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762 - 1804 (Cambridge, 1979), p.119.

¹³ For his report, see G. R. Derzhavin, Sochineniia Derzhavina, Ia.

Grot (ed.), 7 (1872), pp.308-14.

¹⁴ Klier, *op. cit.*, p.67.

¹⁵ Polnoe sobranie zakonov, 23, No. 17006 (23 December, 1791).

¹⁶ G. R. Derzhavin, Zapiski (Moscow, 1860).

¹⁷ Klier, p.184.

¹⁸ V. I. Semevskii, Politicheskie i obshchestvennye idei Dekabristov (St. Petersburg, 1909), p.343.

¹⁹ See Arthur Levin, "The Life and Writings of M.O. Gershenzon," unpublished dissertation, U.C. Berkeley, 1968, pp.114-6. This segment is based on Brian Horowitz, "Jewish Identity and Russian Culture: The Case of M.O. Gershenzon," article to be published in *Nationalities Papers*.

²⁰ Gershenzon pursued this argument in 1912 in his exchange of letters with V. Rozanov. See "Perepiska V. V. Rozanova i M. O. Gershenzona," *Novyi Mir*, 3 (1991).

²¹ He developed this line of thought in his correspondence with V. Rozanov. See *Novyi Mir*, 3 (1991).

²² He was especially criticized for this by I. P. Pokrovskii, an SD Duma member. Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, IV, s.1, ch. II, zasedanie 51 (May 20, 1913), col. 1786-1787.

²³ *Ibid.*, col. 1785.

²⁴ V. Ivanovich, Rossiiskie partii, soiuzy i ligi (St. Petersburg, 1906), pp.14-16.

²⁵ M. Slavinskii, "Natsional'naia struktura Rossii i Velikorossy," in A. I. Kastelianskii, ed., Formy natsional'nago dvizheniia v sovremennykh gosudarstvakh (St. Petersburg, 1910), p.296.

²⁶ Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Stenograficheskie otchety tret'ei dumy, vtoraia sessiia, chast 1. (St. Petersburg, 1908), pp. 1850-1857.

²⁷ In 1911, Markov depicted Jews as a "criminal race and enemies of mankind." Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia: The Struggle for Emancipation. (New York, 1976), II, p.87.

²⁸ "Duma gosudarstvennaia," Evreiskaia entsiklopediia, VII, cols. 374-375.

²⁹ The Memoirs of Count Witte, trans. Abraham Yarmolinsky, (New York, 1921), p. 384.

³⁰ As late as 1909, Stolypin felt the Union of Russian People should not be disbanded. Soiuz russkogo naroda, ed. A. Chernovsky, (Leningrad, 1929), pp. 241-242.

³¹ On the Pahlen Commission, see Evreiskaia entsiklopediia, V, cols. 862-863.

³² Witte, Memoirs, pp. 156 & 380.

³³ Most argued for exclusion. See M. M. Artsybashev, Griadushchaia gibel Rossii (St. Petersburg, 1908), pp.59-117.

³⁴ A. P. Liprandi, Ravnopravie i evreiskii vopros (Kharkov, 1911), pp.1-5. See also his Evreistvo i antisemitizm (Kharkov, 1914), as well as the writings of G. Butani, A. S. Shamakov and Ia. Demchenka.

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