

Studies in Antisemitism

Russian Antisemitism,
Pamyat, and the
Demonology
of Zionism

William Korey

THE VIDAL SASSOON
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR THE
STUDY OF ANTISEMITISM (SICSA)
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY
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COVER DESIGN BY

Louise Burston

EDITING AND COMPOSITION

Alifa Saadya

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Dedicated to
Rachel and Benjamin

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Preface

The emergence in Russia of the chauvinist antisemitic movement, Pamyat in 1987 has startled Western society even as it has stirred deep fears and anxiety among Jews and democratic forces within Russia. How could a supposedly Communist society whose founder, V. I. Lenin, had railed against racism and bigotry, give birth to a proto-fascist ideology and organization?

This study seeks to respond to the understandable, if provocative, query. The roots of Pamyat's ideology are traced to the tsarist Black Hundreds in the early part of the twentieth century, to certain aspects of later Stalinism and, most especially, to a virulent official Judeophobic propaganda campaign, masquerading as anti-Zionism, from 1967 to 1986.

What emerged in this centrally-directed campaign which saturated the public media was the demonization of Zionism, ascribing to the historic and modern Jewish drive for self-identity an evil and corrupting essence. Zionism was equated on an official level with every form of moral outrage and, at the same time, was applied in a rather unsubtle manner to Jews and Jewishness.

Analysis would demonstrate that the notorious tsarist forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, shielded only by a Leninist linguistic gloss, stood at the core of the propaganda drive. That drive was extended in every direction—internationally, to intimidate the West—and, internally, to Jews themselves in order to silence any aspiration for self-identity.

Although the antisemitic campaign was finally halted at the state level by Mikhail Gorbachev, the social ground had already been fertilized for a populist and chauvinist Pamyat movement, emerging in 1987, which could exploit the much freer atmosphere of glasnost to pursue a program of hate. The earlier ideological roots could now flourish openly. Zionism,

perceived as the embodiment of satanism, was to become Pamyat's principal target.

How the new and publicly blatant antisemitism functioned and, more importantly, how it was bolstered by the entrenched nationalist and communist apparatus in political and literary life throughout the glasnost era and beyond constitute the heart of this inquiry. To the extent that these nationalist and chauvinist forces remain throbbing, vital elements in contemporary Russian society, they inevitably invite a profound sense of concern among Jews and in the civilized community generally. Documentation provided here, hopefully, can serve to reinforce that concern.

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has contributed significantly to making this work possible. Important additional assistance has been provided by the Sonya Staff Foundation. Valuable support was extended by the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation. In making travel possible to complete research findings, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture was especially helpful.

The author is deeply appreciative for the constant encouragement of his wife, Esther. He is also deeply indebted to Seymour Reich, former president of B'nai B'rith, and to James Rapp for various types of support. Gerald Baumgarten of the Anti-Defamation League was a continuous source of needed documentation. Excellent secretarial and typing services were rendered by Eva Owen. Finally, I am very much indebted to Alifa Saadya for her extensive technical assistance in the production of this book.

Chapter 1

Historical Background

Contemporary Pamyat proudly traces its lineage and heritage to the Union of Russian People, founded in November 1905. Thus, at a meeting in Moscow on June 6, 1990 of a Pamyat group called the “People’s Russian Orthodox Movement,” the speaker, Aleksandr Kulakov, told seven hundred participants that “we consider ourselves the spiritual successors of the Union of Russian People.”¹ Analysis of the Union and its aims, scarcely discussed in western circles, aside from specialists on tsarist history, can serve as a useful point of departure for an inquiry into Pamyat.

Like the latter, the Union emerged into public view during a grave political and economic crisis in the Russian Empire which had weakened the power and authority of tsarism in the wake of defeat during the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War. Its primary purpose, as perceived by its leaders, was to resist the unleashed wave of reform and revolution and preserve intact the institutions of the monarchy, Russian Orthodoxy, and the empire.

The Union’s internal character and tactics were quite distinctive, indeed unique. Until then, tsarism had largely preserved itself along with its handmaidens—the Church and an empire of subjugated nations—by the force of imperial arms and armies. But a defeated Russian army, virtually

¹ Notes were made available by an activist in the Moscow Jewish community who prefers to remain anonymous. Aleksandr Shmukler, later a leader of VAAD, vouched for the report’s accuracy. For a revealing interview with Kulakov conducted by Leonid Kelbert, see “The Protocols of Pamyat,” *Hadassah Magazine*, 72, no. 6 (February 1991): 17–21.

in self-dissolution, made this technique uncertain. In the absence of other available means, populism—marked by a profound, xenophobic chauvinism, constituted the essence of the means by which the Union of Russian People attempted to support law and order, Throne and Altar.

What had been brought onto the historical scene, for both Russia and Europe generally, was a new style of right wing politics involving mass activity.² It was perhaps quite appropriate to dub the Union's role, as a prominent European history work would note, as "Europe's first fascist organization."³ One of the Union's reactionary leaders, V. M. Purishkevich, was referred to by his Soviet biographer as a "fascist" who had set an authentic style for a movement that would blossom forth in Europe a decade later.⁴ Some historians have suggested that the Union exerted a "tangible and substantial impact" upon German National Socialism through Baltic and Russian emigrés who found themselves in Germany after World War I.⁵

Attributes of the fascism of the twenties and thirties were not uncommon for the Union, including street violence, paramilitary formations wearing special dress (for example, the "Yellow Shirts" in Odessa), personal assaults upon enemies (even murders), distribution of literature designed to stir envy and hate, marches and demonstrations. At its ideological core stood a vicious antisemitism. Jews were seen as dominating the press, banking and, through the Masonic societies, all key spheres of Russian life and influencing prominent liberal government ministers. Count Sergei Witte was especially singled out as a dupe of Jews and Masons. The Union denounced him as a traitor for "extorting" the democratic October Manifesto from Tsar Nicholas II, and for imposing upon the country a "Judeo-Masonic Constitution."⁶

Equality of ethnic rights, as elaborated by the Constitution of 1905,

² Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986), 188–242.

³ G. Bruun and V. S. Mamatey, *The World in the 20th Century* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1962), 891.

⁴ S. B. Liubosh, *Russkii Fashist Vladimir Purishkevich* (Leningrad: Byloe Publishing House, 1925), 29.

⁵ Walter Z. Laqueur, *Russia and Germany* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), 50–53.

⁶ Rogger, *Jewish Policies*, 219, 214.

was regarded as anathema. Instead, what was sought was the severest restriction upon Jews and their total elimination from the capitalist economy. Governmental legislation, economic boycott and, if necessary, expulsion to Palestine was proposed in order to achieve this. Not surprisingly, the Union was a major backer of the notorious blood libel trial of Mendel Beiliss.⁷

Targets of the Union extended to Masons, liberals, capitalists, foreigners, and westerners. They were seen as alien to Russian nationality and its tradition. But all these “cosmopolitan” elements were understood as only instruments of Jews. Antisemitism was the cornerstone of the systemic beliefs of the Union of Russian People. Its followers, along with the members of other small groups of rightist antisemites were dubbed the “Black Hundreds.” Not accidentally, when *Pravda* finally acknowledged the existence of antisemitism in the Soviet Union—which didn’t occur until July 1990—it referred to Pamyat and other antisemites by the then almost forgotten phrase, “Black Hundreds.”⁸

While the Union’s chairman was a physician, Dr. A. I. Dubrovin, and his two deputies were a nobleman-landowner (Purishkevich), and an engineer, the majority of the membership ranged from petty-bourgeois elements to unemployed workers, peasants, skilled proletarians, and professionals. Never before had the reactionary right in Russia taken on such an all-class character. Estimates place its size in Moscow alone as 40,000, while overall membership figures—given by the Union—range from 600,000 to 3 million, although a hostile source estimated the membership as only 10–20,000.⁹ Even that low figure was significant for the times.

The Union had received financial assistance from officials within the Ministry of Interior. It also had access to the printing presses of the police department, which enabled it to conduct large-scale propaganda campaigns against liberals, democrats and, especially Jews. At the Union’s disposal was an underground fighting organization composed of minor police agents, governmental employees, and criminal elements. They often stirred up armed attacks on Jews, while the Union’s links to

⁷ Ibid., 220; and Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beiliss Case* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 19–20.

⁸ *Pravda*, 22 July 1990.

⁹ Rogger, *Jewish Policies*, 216, 266, fn. 46.

high officials, particularly in the Ministry of Interior, enabled them to acquire a secure immunity.

Interwoven into the Union's belief system was a set of ideas that found expression in the historic forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which was first published in 1903 by the reactionary tsarist publicist, Pavel Krushevan. Fabricated by a tsarist police agent in Paris who drew upon an obscure work written in the France of Louis Napoleon and totally unrelated to Jews, the *Protocols* took on a life of its own.¹⁰ They were alleged to be the secret decisions taken by the "Elders of Zion," at the first Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897.

Five major themes predominate in the notorious forgery: 1) international Jewry, or Zionism, through the "Chosen People" concept, aspires to world domination; 2) that aspiration is to be achieved through guile, cunning and conspiratorial devices which will deceive the "goyim cattle" (the language of the *Protocols*) who are easily manipulated; 3) an especially powerful mechanism for achieving world domination is Jewish control over the world banking system whereby "all the goyim" will begin "to pay us the tribute of subjects"; 4) equally crucial as a mechanism of control is the ownership of the press, the seizure of which by Jews or Zionists will enable them to acquire "the power to influence while remaining...in the shade"; and 5) the deception is maximized by infiltration and manipulation of Masonic lodges which will "throw dust in the eyes of their fellows."¹¹

Only fifteen years later did the *Protocols* exert a powerful popular impact. It was used extensively during the Civil War in 1918–20 in the Ukraine, when 30,000 Jews were massacred and twenty-eight percent of Jewish homes were destroyed.¹² This was the largest pogrom in Russian

¹⁰ For an authoritative analysis, see Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); John S. Curtiss, *An Appraisal of the Protocols of Zion* (New York: AMS Press, 1942). It is summarized in Senate, Senator Harley M. Kilgore, "A Cruel and Vicious Forgery," Congressional Record, 1 June 1948, 6788–6971.

¹¹ An early English translation, published in the United States was called *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion* (New York: Beckwith Co., 1920). For a summary of the major elements of the *Protocols*, see William Korey, "The Kremlin's Anti-Semitism," *Midstream*, 24, no. 8 (October 1978): 8.

¹² Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 220–21.

history since the massacre of Jews in the Polish Ukraine during the Bogdan Khmelnytsky uprising in the middle of the seventeenth century. Later, the *Protocols* became the solid basis for Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and his "Final Solution."¹³

The "Black Hundreds," of course, did not spring full-blown from the revolutionary developments and political uncertainties in Russia in the first decade of the twentieth century. The powerful and omnipresent Russian Orthodox Church which had been intimately linked to the tsarist state, had long identified the Jews as "enemies of Christ." When Tsarina Elizaveta in the mid-eighteenth century was asked to invite Jews into the Empire in order to develop greater commerce, she refused saying, "from the enemies of Christ, I wish neither gain nor profit."¹⁴ Only in consequence of the three partitions of Poland in which Tsarina Catherine the Great joined Prussia and Austria, did vast numbers of Jews become part of the Empire. The bulk were forced to live in the Pale of Settlement, prevented from owning land, subjected to a *numerus clausus* in higher education and a host of discriminatory barriers.

Periodic pogroms (the noun is derived from the Russian verb *pogromit*, which means "to destroy" or "to ruin") constituted a signal tsarist contribution to international discourse. Elizavetgrad, a Ukrainian town of 32,000 was the starting point on April 15, 1881.¹⁵ Prompted by emissaries from the St. Petersburg aristocracy calling for the "people's wrath" to "be vented on the Jews," the peasants unleashed violence against the Jews in the small city. A wave of killings, rape, and pillage spread quickly to hundreds of other towns and then to the large cities of Berdichev and Kiev. By the end of the year it reached Warsaw, an outpost of

¹² Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 220–21.

¹³ Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 16, 20.

¹⁴ Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence, the Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union* (New York: Schocken, 1988), xiv.

¹⁵ For background, see Stephen M. Berk, *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the Pogroms of 1881–82* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985); and Irwin M. Aronson, *Troubled Waters, the Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1990).

100,000 were ruined economically and Jewish property valued at \$80 million was destroyed. A contemporary Russian writer described the trauma as “unending torture.”¹⁶ It triggered the mass emigration of Jews to the West.

Like many other oppressors before and after them, the tsarist authorities blamed the victims for the violence. The Minister of Interior, Count Nikolai P. Ignatyev, in a memorandum to Tsar Alexander III on August 22, 1881, blamed the pogroms upon “the Jews’ injurious activities” directed against the peasantry.¹⁷ Hostility toward Jews was not restricted to the tsarist aristocracy and the peasantry. The radical populist intellectuals comprising the Narodnaia Volia urged on the pogromists on grounds that the “kikes...rob and cheat” the peasant and “drink his blood.”¹⁸

The depth of popular anti-Jewish sentiment, while broadly surmised, cannot be known with precision. Negative perceptions about Jews were integral to Russian society. A tsarist Commission, comprised of moderates, after five years of lengthy interviews and in-depth study of the Jewish problem, concluded in 1888 that Jews have a tendency to “shirk state obligations” and to avoid “physical manual labor.”¹⁹

According to the fairly liberal Commission: “The passion for acquisition and money-grubbing is inherent in the Jew from the day of his birth; it is characteristic of the Semitic race, manifest from almost the first pages of the Bible.”²⁰

Such popular views provided the fertile soil for nourishing the ideas in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Popular antisemitism in tsarist Russia made possible the extraordinary blood libel trial, the Beiliss Case, in Kiev in 1911–12.²¹ Clearly, pogromist ideology was part of the baggage the Russians carried with them into the twentieth century.

¹⁶ William Korey, “From Russia with Hate, A Bitter Centennial,” *Moment*, September 1982, 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Lucy S. Dawidowicz, ed., *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 406.

¹⁹ Jesse D. Clarkson, *A History of Russia* (New York: Random House, 1961), 333–35.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 333.

²¹ Samuel, *Blood Accusation*, 15–246.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, vigorously fought pogromist attitudes. While seeking to make antisemitism and pogroms a capital offense, he publicly denounced Judeophobia. "Shame on those who foment hatred toward the Jews," he cried.²² The vicious stereotyping of Jews persisted even as the Bolshevik leadership in the 1920s tried to eradicate it. The populist Kronstadt uprising against Soviet power in 1921 was based in part upon peasant attitudes toward the "cursed domination" of Jews.²³ In November 1926, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Soviet regime acknowledged that Soviet white collar workers were "more anti-Semitic today than...under Tsarism."²⁴ An official survey of antisemitism among trade union members conducted in February 1929 in Moscow found that "anti-Semitic feeling among workers is spreading chiefly in the backward sections of the working class that have close ties with the peasantry...."²⁵ At the heart of the prejudice, as it had been in the 1880s and afterwards, was "talk of Jewish domination."²⁶

The 1950–51 Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System was based on interviews with Soviet refugees in the United States, people who had defected or had been captured during World War II or who had fled during 1946–50.²⁷ The interviews reflected tremendous hostility towards Jews across the board, though the antisemitism of the Ukrainian refugee population was especially severe.²⁸ Most of those surveyed agreed that Jews occupied a "privileged and favored position" in Soviet society; that they were "business-and-money-minded;" that they were "clannish," "aggressive" and "pushy;" that they don't like to work hard and refuse to serve in the front lines of the armed forces.²⁹ Despite two to three decades of Bolshevik rule, attitudes of the 1880s had remained

²² Vladimir I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th ed. (Moscow: State Publishers, 1965) (English), vol. 29, 253.

²³ Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1970), 178–80.

²⁴ William Korey, *The Soviet Cage: Anti-Semitism in Russia* (New York: Viking, 1973), 13.

²⁵ *Pravda*, 19 February 1929.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1956).

²⁸ Korey, *Soviet Cage*, 4–11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

unchanged.

Prejudice reached especially intense levels during the “anti-cosmopolitan” campaign of 1949–53, climaxed by the notorious “Doctors’ Plot.” Ilya Ehrenburg, otherwise an apologist for Stalin’s rule, was so shocked by the “ugly survival” of antisemitism that he was convinced “that to cleanse minds of age-old prejudices is going to take a very long time.”³⁰ Had Stalin not died on March 5, 1953, there was certain to be “only one sequel: a nation-wide pogrom,” according to Isaac Deutscher, his distinguished British biographer.³¹

Poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko raised the issue in a major way with his “Babi Yar” in 1961.³² He bemoaned how “the Russian people were blemished” by antisemitism and how the Communist song, *Internationale*, can “thunder forth” only when Jew-hatred is “buried for good.” When Nikita Khrushchev objected to Yevtushenko raising the shameful issue, the poet would not be silenced. The popular hate must be faced, he said, for “we cannot go forward to communism with such a heavy load as Judeophobia.”³³

“Judeophobia” had already become part of official policy by the end of the 1930s. According to Hitler, Stalin told Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in the fall of 1939 that he would oust Soviet Jews from leading positions the moment he had a sufficient number of qualified non-Jews with whom to replace them.³⁴ Stalin’s promise was more than a mere diplomatic gesture to placate his new racist ally. In 1942, one year after the Nazi invasion of Russia, the Soviet authorities handed down a secret order establishing quotas for Jews in particularly prominent posts.³⁵

According to Milovan Djilas, Stalin in 1946 boasted to him that “in our

³⁰ Ilya Ehrenburg, *Post-War Years, 1945–54* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1967), 131, 298.

³¹ Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin*, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 627.

³² William Korey, “A Soviet Poet as Rebel,” *The New Republic*, 8 January 1962.

³³ “Russian Art and Anti-Semitism: Two Documents,” *Commentary*, December 1963, 434.

³⁴ Henry Picker, *Hitlers Gespräche in Führerhaupt-quartier, 1941–42*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1976), 472.

³⁵ John Armstrong, *The Politics of Totalitarianism* (New York: Random House, 1961), 154.

Central Committee there are no Jews!”³⁶ Stalin’s daughter revealed that after the war, “in the enrollment at the university and in all types of employment, preference was given to Russians. For the Jews, a percentage quota, (as had been the case during the tsarist era) was, in essence, reinstated.”³⁷

The government’s policy of discrimination against Jews as individuals was largely a function of two internal developments in the Soviet Union at the time: deepening Russian nationalism (bordering on xenophobia) and the formation of a totalitarian structure.³⁸ The new Russian nationalism was a dominant characteristic of the struggle against the Old Guard’s “internationalism.” Suspicion fell equally upon those suspected of harboring sympathies with various non-Russian nationalities of the USSR and those linked, in one way or another, with the West.

“Cosmopolitanism” became the Aesopian term used extensively beginning in 1948, to mark postwar antisemitism.³⁹ The media drive was directed against “cosmopolitans”—those without genuine roots in Russian soil, those without spiritual “passports,” those not really “indigenous.” Marxism was turned on its head. If initially “internationalism”—not national narrowness—was perceived as valuable for a socialist future, now it or its twin, cosmopolitanism, was denigrated and repudiated.

Antisemitism went hand in hand with official Russian national chauvinism, as it had during the tsarist era, at least since the reign of Nicholas I. Certainly, it was not accidental that official antisemitism made its first, if then only momentary, appearance at the time, in 1926, when Stalinist forces were attempting to inculcate a national pride in the doctrine of “socialism in one country.”⁴⁰ Chauvinism catered to and fed upon popular prejudices. The World War II years were replete with examples of an unleashed bigotry linked to nationalist fervor. Many of the partisan

³⁶ Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 154.

³⁷ Svetlana Alliluyeva, *Only One Year* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 153.

³⁸ Korey, *Soviet Cage*, 68–70.

³⁹ Yehoshua Gilboa, *The Black Years of Soviet Jewry, 1939–1953* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 146–225.

⁴⁰ Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921–29* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 257–58.

units for example, were riddled with antisemitism.⁴¹

That the Jews were particularly suspect in a totalitarian structure impregnated with a distinct chauvinist character is not surprising, for they indeed were a minority with an international tradition and a worldwide religion. Jews everywhere had cultural, emotional and even family ties that transcended national boundaries.

Furthermore, Hannah Arendt has noted that totalitarianism requires an "objective enemy" who, like the "carrier of a disease," is the "carrier" of subversive "tendencies."⁴²

This aspect of totalitarianism had a distinctive impact on the state's relationship to the Jews. The very nature of a system which claims both a monopoly on truth and the control of the "commanding heights" by which the preordained may be reached precludes human error or inadequacy. Only plots and conspiracies by hidden forces could interrupt, hinder or defeat "scientifically" planned programs. Stalin even considered his daughter's marriage to a Jew a "Zionist plot."⁴³ Other Soviet leaders may not necessarily have perceived the Jew as a "plotter," but, cynically, accepted the functional usefulness of such a perception. The cynicism enabled the Jew to be cast in the role of a scapegoat, to be blamed for failures or difficulties in the regime's internal and foreign policies.

If both chauvinism and totalitarianism lent themselves to the absorption of popular antisemitism at high levels, the background of the Party leadership since the late 1930s helps explain the transmission and persistence of folk imagery about the Jew.⁴⁴ With the influx of this group into the leadership, the wide cultural and intellectual horizons which characterized the pre-Purge Party leaders gave way to horizons that were provincial and cramped.

On both national and regional levels, almost half of the top Party executives in the early 1960s had peasant fathers. Only six percent had white collar origins, while a little more than a quarter came from the

⁴¹ Korey, *Soviet Cage*, 69.

⁴² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 423–24.

⁴³ Alliluyeva, *Only One Year*, 152.

⁴⁴ On the new Party leaders' features, see, George Fischer, *The Soviet System and Modern Society* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 65–117.

proletariat. Most likely, many of them learned negative Jewish stereotypes in their own homes, their own neighborhoods, their own towns.

The “thaw” following the death of Stalin was not marked by any effort to reduce the pervasive negative stereotyping of Jews. The broad discriminatory pattern against Jews sometimes totally, sometimes through tokenism, continued.⁴⁵ Jews were excluded from leadership positions in the Party, the Soviets, the state apparatus, the security organs, the diplomatic corps, the foreign trade organs, and the defense establishment. Quota systems in higher education abetted the patterns. Such patterns ineluctably reinforced hostile perceptions of Jews. An interview by a visiting French parliamentary delegation with Nikita Khrushchev in May 1956 highlighted the attitude. Khrushchev was asked about anti-Jewish discrimination. He answered:

This is a complicated problem because of the position of the Jews and their relations with other peoples. At the outset of the Revolution, we had many Jews in the leadership of the Party and State. They were more educated, maybe more revolutionary than the average Russian. In due course we have created new cadres.

Should the Jews want to occupy the foremost position in our republics now, it would naturally be taken amiss by the indigenous inhabitants. The latter would ill-receive these pretensions, especially as they do not consider themselves less intelligent nor less capable than the Jews. Or, for instance, when a Jew in the Ukraine is appointed to an important post and he surrounds himself with Jewish collaborators, it is understandable that this should create jealousy and hostility toward Jews.⁴⁶

Hostility to Jewry was strengthened when Khrushchev launched in 1959 his campaign against religion generally. The propaganda drive against Judaism ineluctably, unlike the propaganda drive against other religions, took on an antisemitic dimension. Hardly unusual in the campaign was Trofim Kichko's *Judaism without Embellishment*, a book published in 1963 by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev which carried the typical set of canards about Jews: “What is the secular God [of the Jews]? Money. Money. Money, that is the jealous God of Israel.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Gilboa, *Black Years*, 244–56.

⁴⁶ *Réalités*, 136 (May 1957): 104.

⁴⁷ Trofim Kichko, *Judaizm bez prikras* (Kiev: Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, 1963).

Judaism was linked with Zionism, Jewish bankers, and Western capitalists in a great conspiracy. A distinguishing feature of the work was the incorporation into it of a series of illustrative cartoons showing Jews with hooked noses, and similar vulgar stereotypes. It reminded one of Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer* in the halcyon days of Hitler. After a worldwide outcry, the Soviet Party's Ideological Commission finally acknowledged in April 1964 that the book "might be interpreted in the spirit of antisemitism."⁴⁸

What complicated the problem was the fact that no efforts were made to reverse the traditional attitudes about Jews that reached back deep into Russian history. References to Jewish history in Soviet textbooks were virtually non-existent. Little mention was made in textbooks or in newspapers of the heroic role played by Jews in the Red Army. Almost nothing was said about the enormous tragedy of the Holocaust or of the Jewish resistance to Nazism.⁴⁹ Counteraction to antisemitism was rare. Earlier perceptions about Jews that could be traced back to tsarist epochs, in consequence, were hardly unusual.

Yet, this residue of bigotry from the past was not of a character that would explain the ferocity and virulence of Judeophobia that emerged with glasnost. One of the Soviet Union's most prominent scientists, Professor Yuri Osipyan, who also served in President Mikhail Gorbachev's inner cabinet, the so-called Presidential Council, stated in the spring of 1990 that "ordinary, everyday antisemitism exists in the Soviet Union, probably to a greater extent than elsewhere in Europe."⁵⁰ The past is of course prologue to the present. Can the early twentieth century developments—the Union of Russian People and the *Protocols*—by themselves explain the distinctive Judeophobia of the present?

⁴⁸ *Pravda*, 4 April 1964.

⁴⁹ William Korey, "In History's 'Memory Hole': The Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust" in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *Contemporary Views of the Holocaust* (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1983), 145–56.

⁵⁰ "The Long Shadow: New Fears of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union," *Newsweek*, 7 May 1990, 36.

Chapter 2

Emergence of the Demonology of Zionism

Of far greater significance in determining attitudes toward Jews during the glasnost era was the massive, extraordinary and intensely-orchestrated propaganda campaign against Zionism during the two decades that immediately predated Gorbachev. If the seeds of hate were sown earlier, it was during the period 1967–86 that the emergent and flourishing plants of bigotry were provided extensive nourishment. Pamyat's favorite writers and lecturers got their start during that period. They appeared then in the leading state journals, or on principal party platforms and were read and heard by millions. An entire generation was nurtured on their outlook.

What was created during 1967–86 was a new official demonology, and it is this demonology which, with dangerous ramifications, persisted into the nineties. The enemy was not the Jew per se; the enemy was Zionism. Launched in the first week of August 1967, the campaign began with the simultaneous appearance in the leading Soviet provincial organs of an article entitled "What is Zionism?" Its opening paragraph struck the dominant note of the campaign: "A wide network of Zionist organizations with a common center, a common program, and funds exceeding by far the funds of the Mafia 'Costra Nostra' is active behind the scenes of the international theater."

Stereotypic images of the Jew abounded in the paranoid portrait sketched by the author. The global "Zionist Corporation" was composed of "smart dealers in politics and finance, religion and trade" whose "well camouflaged aim" is the enrichment by any means of the "international Zionist network." Exercising control over more than a thousand newspapers and magazines in very many countries around the world with an

“unlimited budget,” the world Zionist “machine” services the vast monopolies of the West in their attempt “to establish control over the world.”¹

If the campaign had its psychological roots in the dark phantasmagoric past, which had been nourished in the climate of Stalin’s last years, it also served a pragmatic political purpose. The Soviet Union’s client Arab states had suffered a major debacle in the Six-Day War, and the Communist regime itself was badly thwarted in its diplomatic endeavor at the United Nations to compel an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory; thus a convenient scapegoat was needed to rationalize these severe setbacks.² Tiny Israel and public opinion were surely not the causes of these failures. The enemy must rather be presented as a hidden, all-powerful, and perfidious international force, linked somehow with Israel. “World Zionism” was the ideological cloth that could be cut to fit the designated adversary. During the months following the Six-Day War, the citizenry of Communist states as well as those of the Arab and Afro-Asian world were literally saturated with this theme. Foreign radio broadcasts from Moscow chattered away endlessly about Zionism as if this mysterious ghost would take on flesh with repeated incantation.³

In the subsequent months and years, especially after 1971 and most notably after 1974, the entire Soviet media was harnessed to the propaganda drive—newspapers, journals, publishing houses, radio, television and lecture halls. The vast and endless outpouring of vitriol directed at Zionism was extraordinary. It was equated with every conceivable evil—racism, imperialism, capitalist exploitation, colonialism, militarism, crime, murder, espionage, terrorism, prostitution, even Hitlerism. No ideology, no “enemy” had received as much attention or been subjected to so much abuse.

What was striking about the Kremlin’s perception of Zionism, as re-

¹ Yuri Ivanov, “What is Zionism?” *Sovetskaia Latvii*, 5 August 1967. Ivanov was identified by an independent source as a KGB operative on the Party Central Committee serving as its “only specialist on Israel.” See *Khronika* (New York), 31 August 1969, samizdat. It is questionable how much of a specialist on Israel Ivanov was; prior to his assignment he had worked in the Central Committee on African problems but was transferred after a reprimand for drunkenness. Copies of the articles from various provincial organs are in the author’s possession.

² William Korey, *The Soviet Cage*, (New York: Viking, 1973), 125–31.

³ Summaries of the Russian-language broadcasts are in “Soviet Anti-Zionism or Anti-Semitism,” *Jews in Eastern Europe* (London), 3, no. 6 (March 1968), 17–23.

flected in the propaganda, was the enormity of the power and evil with which it was endowed. Diabolical, and displaying transcendent conspiratorial and perfidious talents, Zionism was presented as striving for domination. Poised to resist that aspiration was the great Soviet power. The world was perceived in Manichean terms: the forces of darkness, representing Zionism, were locked in final struggle with the forces of light, as represented by the Soviet state.

Close content analysis of the media outpouring reveal that the inspiration for it came from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The five major themes outlined in the previous chapter found a precise echo in the post-1967 propaganda campaign. A major analyst of the *Protocols* called them “rank and pernicious forgeries.”⁴ In a historic Swiss trial in the thirties which focused upon the authenticity of the *Protocols*, the presiding judge wrote: “I hope that one day there will come a time when no one will any longer comprehend how in the year 1935 almost a dozen fully sensible and reasonable men could for fourteen days torment their brains before a court of Berne over the authenticity...of these so-called *Protocols* [which] are nothing but ridiculous nonsense.”⁵ The jurist’s hope appeared to be near fulfillment thirty years later, in 1965, when Norman Cohn completed *Warrant for Genocide*, the authoritative work on the *Protocols*. He observed that at that time it was “quite rare” to find anyone under the age of forty who had ever heard of the “strange ideas” incorporated in the *Protocols*.⁶

Ridiculous nonsense these strange ideas may have been but they enjoyed a stunning renaissance not in some primitive Third World nation, but in the USSR, a superpower and leading industrial country. Moreover, the founder of the Soviet state, Lenin, had expressed total contempt for the Tsarist antisemitic ideology that spawned the *Protocols*. Neither he nor any other Bolshevik leader in the early twentieth century ever published a single article against Zionism. What few references were made on the subject by Lenin were incidental and part of a bitter polemical struggle against the Bund, the Jewish Social-Democratic movement in Tsarist Russia. In Lenin’s complete works, numbering forty large volumes in the fourth edition, the word “Zionism” is mentioned but

⁴ Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (New York: Harper, 1969), 16–17, 268.

⁵ Cited in Korey, “The Kremlin’s Anti-Semitism,” 8.

⁶ Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, 17.