

DOUBLE ISSUE

THE RUSSIAN-JEWISH LEADERSHIP AND THE POGROMS OF 1881-1882:  
THE RESPONSE FROM ST. PETERSBURG

by

ALEXANDER ORBACH  
1984

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THE TIMES OF LONDON, THE RUSSIAN PRESS, AND THE POGROMS  
OF 1881-1882

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**THE CARL BECK PAPERS IN  
RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
William Chase and Ronald Linden  
Co-Editors  
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THE TIMES OF LONDON, THE RUSSIAN PRESS, AND THE POGROMS OF 1881-1882\*

With the rise of the mass media in the nineteenth century, educated Russians began to manifest a special fascination with the attitudes of foreigners towards all things Russian. (Where but in Russia would a major newspaper offer readers a regular section devoted to "What the foreign press says about Russia?") Consequently, the extremely hostile reaction of foreign journalism to the pogroms, the anti-Jewish riots which broke out in Southern Russia in April 1881, was especially painful for Russian intellectuals. Russian discomfiture was re-enforced by the fear that these journalistic assaults presaged foreign diplomatic initiatives directed against the Russian state.

Russian concern found a focus in the editorial attitudes of The Times of London towards the pogroms of 1881 and those which followed in 1882. Indeed, a study of The Times' editorial postures during this period provides an excellent narrative record of the British response to anti-Jewish violence in Russia, as manifested in meetings, petitions, and parliamentary interpellations, and serves as well as a chronicle of the efforts of pro- and anti-Russian publicists. Of equal interest are the responses of the Russian press to the activities of The Times. A study of these responses adds another dimension to the history of the tactics of Russian journalism when dealing with the pogrom crisis of 1881-1882.<sup>1</sup>

The editorial activities of five newspapers form the basis for this study. In addition to The Times, four Russian periodicals were utilized: Golos, Novoe vremia, Rus', and Novorossiiskii telegraf. Golos, published by A. A. Kraevskii in St. Petersburg, was the pre-eminent Russian liberal newspaper.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it was awarded the ultimate accolade by The Times itself,

which characterized Golos as the Russian newspaper "which approaches the great organs of West Europe most nearly."<sup>3</sup> A. S. Suvorin's Novoe vremia, also published in St. Petersburg but of a decidedly more conservative bent, was fast becoming the most successful daily newspaper in Russia, and the keystone of a great publishing empire.<sup>4</sup> Rus' of Moscow, was the small and controversial weekly of I. S. Aksakov, the celebrated Slavophile journalist.<sup>5</sup> Odessa's Novorossiiskii telegraf, published by M. P. Ozmidov, was a scandalous but successful provincial organ, which had a long career as a Jew-baiting paper.<sup>6</sup>

The Times, no stranger to and no friend of Russia,<sup>7</sup> had taken a specific interest in the Jewish Question in Russia a year before the pogroms. The occasion was a characteristic attack on the Jews by Novoe vremia, which argued that the Jews were over-represented in the revolutionary movement, and attributed this to some inner characteristic of Judaism itself.<sup>8</sup> The Times addressed this charge in four separate editorials. Initially it denied that the Jews, a notoriously conservative element, had any affinity with revolutionary ideas. How to explain, then, the appearance of this improbable charge? "We must answer boldly, the Government is responsible. The Russian Government, in maintaining in the law and administration the sort of diminutio capitus to which it condemns the Jews, solely on account of their origin, maintains also among the people the superannuated prejudice against the Jews so frequently manifested in this country, and which has almost disappeared in more enlightened countries."<sup>9</sup>

Such discrimination, warned The Times elsewhere, threatened to have the same detrimental effect upon Russia as did the expulsion of the Huguenots on France. Indeed, "Russia owes all the growth it shows to the presence of alien germs. An elimination, were it practicable, of the German and Jewish

populations from the Empire would be equivalent to plunging it back into mediaeval torpor."<sup>10</sup> Even if there were Jewish Nihilists, this was understandable. "Had the leaven of Pan-slavism not set all the elements of internal agitation in ferment, no one can suppose that the Jews of Russia would have joined in a race war against established order. When the conflict of all the elements of discontent had begun, it was equally unlikely that Judaism, despised and trampled upon, should not contribute auxiliaries."<sup>11</sup> Such sentiments guaranteed that The Times would have much to say upon the outbreak of the pogroms.

The Times gave extensive coverage to the pogroms, although it was necessarily dependent upon reports culled from the Russian press. Not surprisingly, these reports created a sensation among the Jews of Great Britain, and on May 24, 1881, a delegation from the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Jewish Board of Deputies met with the Foreign Secretary of Gladstone's cabinet, Lord Granville.

On May 23, 1881, The Times offered advice to those about to meet Lord Granville. Although Englishmen must feel the need to aid the victims, "their government cannot equally give rein to its sensibilities when the wrong comes within the jurisdiction of an independent State to correct or license."<sup>12</sup> Yet the British government need not remain mute and powerless, continued The Times. The police in St. Petersburg had recently expelled a British subject of Jewish descent, a Mr. Lewisohn, from the capital in apparent violation of a Russo-British commercial treaty of 1859. Upon this slender thread, The Times proposed to hang a British expostulation to the Russian government. Although only implied by the editorial, a number of objectives would thus be served. Britain would continue her tradition of supporting the rights of her subjects,

wherever they might be violated. At the same time, some avenue of diplomacy would be open to express Britain's discontent over the pogroms.

This particular article pursued the question of the status of the Jews in Russia, with interesting results. The Times was an early sponsor of the theory, since brought into question but still found widely in the secondary literature, that as early as 1881 the Russian government consciously used the Jews as a scape-goat for the existence of the revolutionary movement.<sup>13</sup> "Feeling blindly for means to rally the nation against a spirit it cannot quell by its legions of soldiers and police, it falls upon the Jewish religion, as sufferers by pestilence in the Dark Ages fell upon imagined witches and wizards."

Finally, the editorialist examined the situation of the Jews in Russia, and found it far from admirable. The oft-repeated Russian charges of "Jewish exploitation" and separateness were examined. ". . . It must be acknowledged that in Slavonic countries the Jew does not exhibit the characteristics of his race in an admirable form. He obtrudes his nationality as Jewish rather than Russian in dress and manners. He uses his larger acquaintance with human propensities and infirmities to impose a heavy pecuniary yoke upon his neighbors." The saving grace was that such activities were not the fault of the Jews, but of the restrictive legal system which offered them no other livelihood than that of village usurer. "Every one would rejoice could Jewish energies in Eastern Europe be diverted from the channel of money-lending to other vocations less provocative of dislike." Such arguments, either by coincidence or design, mirrored those made by the liberal Russian press, exemplified by Golos.<sup>14</sup>

Lord Granville, at least, followed The Times' cautionary advice. He lamented, while admitting, the government's impotence, explaining that

"however intolerant, however unjust, and however impolitic such laws [restricting Jewish rights] might be, they are clearly within the competence of independent states to maintain." Moreover, he explained, all evidence spoke against any complicity of the Russian government in the pogroms. Finally, he promised that the government would diligently pursue the Lewisohn matter. In short, it was a masterful political performance, exemplified by Granville's summation of what he took to be the consensus of the meeting, in which he agreed with the statements made by members of the delegation by misstating them.<sup>15</sup>

Granville's meeting with the Jewish delegation served to defuse the situation somewhat. The Times offered a few indignant letters on the need to respond to the "outrages," but presented no new concrete proposals. This was understandable. The pogrom epidemic, after sweeping across the South, had waned with the coming of winter. Although the physical destruction was great, violence against persons, at least as reported by the Russian press, was depicted as extremely rare, almost non-existent. (It was Christians, not Jews who were killed when the troops opened fire, as Rus' continually reminded its readers.)<sup>16</sup> In short, the situation was returning to normal, with no further intervention required.

This state of journalistic quiescence perfectly suited the Russian press, which had long been on the defensive at the prospect of British diplomatic intervention. Novoe vremia, for example, reported Granville's reply to the Jewish delegation, and contended that it was the Russian government, which sent troops to quell the disorders, which was the real friend of the Jews.<sup>17</sup> On June 15, 1881, Novoe vremia devoted the entire leading article to Europe's defense of the Jews. It noted that international intervention, exemplified by those provisions of the Treaty of Berlin of 1879 obligating Rumania and Serbia

to grant equal rights to the Jews, had already proven a failure. The solution to the Jewish Question lay not in forcing unwilling countries to make them citizens, but in removing obstacles to their rapprochement (sblizhenie) with the rest of the population. The chief obstacle to this process was the low degree of intellectual and moral development of the Jewish masses. Foreign intervention threatened to perpetuate this obstacle, rather than eliminate it. If Europe wished to help the Jews, advised Novoe vremia, returning to a proposal it had already volunteered, she might profitably do so through a European congress which would explore ways of resettling Russia's Jews in America, Africa, and Australia.<sup>18</sup>

Golos restricted itself to a short condemnation of Europe for using the pogroms to malign Russian society, and to reinforce these slanders by inventing non-existent pogroms in Dunaberg/Dvinsk.<sup>19</sup> Novorossiiskii telegraf, on the other hand, enthusiastically echoed the sentiments of Novoe vremia's editorial.<sup>20</sup>

This sniping from afar ended dramatically with a new salvo from The Times in January 1881. It presented a lengthy, two-issue description of the pogroms, "compiled from the best available sources of information," (which, though unnamed, included the Jewish World of London). The material was printed under a new title, "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," rather than the customary "The Jews in Russia," employed in earlier reports. The author's stated objective was to rouse public opinion in England, so that it would "give vigorous expression to its feelings of abhorrence." The articles painted a lurid, exaggerated picture of the pogroms. "Men ruthlessly murdered, tender infants dashed to death, or roasted alive in their own homes, married women the prey of a brutal lust that has often caused their death, and young girls violated in the sight of the relatives by soldiers who should have



been the guardians of their honour—these have been the deeds with which the population of Southern Russia has been stained since last April."<sup>21</sup> Detailed descriptions were given from a list of pogroms in over 160 towns and villages, involving 23 murders of men, women and children, 17 deaths resulting from rapes, and 225 rapes. In addition, as a consequence of a wave of arson following the pogroms, over 100,000 Jewish families were reported to be destitute.<sup>22</sup>

A central feature of the pogroms, according to this account, was the culpability of the local authorities. "And during these scenes of carnage and pillage the local authorities have stood by with folded arms, doing little or nothing to prevent their occurrence and recurrence, and allowing the ignorant peasantry to remain up to this day under the impression that a ukase existed ordering the property of the Jews to be handed over to their fellow-Russians." The account emphasized that, prior to the outbreak of the pogroms, local authorities had been warned of their imminence and had taken no precautions. (This charge, incidentally, was questionable in the case of Elizavetgrad and Kiev, and quite incorrect in regard to Odessa.)<sup>23</sup>

The Times' account also hinted at a semi-official identity for the instigators of the pogroms, without specifically spelling out the charge. The pogroms were said to have been aided by "Panslavist emissaries from Moscow," "professional ringleaders from Great Russia," or in Warsaw, "by men who spoke Polish with a Russian accent."<sup>24</sup> Reliance upon outside agitators was necessary because the article claimed that Christians were not inherently hostile to Jews. "Apart from the influence of ringleaders, the rioters had no cause to excite them to rapine except the force of contagion and the impression that the Czar had really transferred all Jewish property to his orthodox subjects. If once this impression had been officially removed, the

epidemic would have been checked. In many cases it was distinctly shown that the peasants liked the Jews, and only pillaged because they thought it had been ordered."<sup>25</sup> There was not a word in all of this about the explanation almost universally advanced by the Russian press to explain the eruption of pogroms: Jewish "economic exploitation."<sup>26</sup> Where the question was raised in an official context, as in a circular issued by Count Ignat'ev, the Minister of Interior, it was simply dismissed: "the Jewish question at the present moment is not how the Jews should be prevented from competing with the Russians in certain trades, but whether the lives of three millions and a half of Jews shall be left at the mercy of the passion of the mob."<sup>27</sup>

Despite the provocative tone of these accounts, The Times' accompanying response was measured and cautious, with no calls for crusades other than of a moral nature. "It is no business of ours to arraign the Russian government for its apparent indifference to abominations as hideous as those which were used to excite the public opinion of Europe against the Ottoman dominion in 1876." Yet, the editorial continued, the Russian government was playing with fire, for the popular passions thus aroused would not stop with the Jews. Moreover, "if they are unwilling, the Russian government must be held morally responsible for all the crimes -- some of them as atrocious as any recorded in history -- which have been accomplished by letting loose the hatred of orthodox mobs."<sup>28</sup>

The month of January witnessed an accelerated outpouring of moral indignation against Russia, culminating in a meeting at Manor House on February 1. Numerous letters were printed on the subject, including one from the Earl of Shaftesbury, asking for "moral and religious protests," which even if ineffective would show to the world that "the Christianity of this kingdom is a very different thing from the so-called Christianity of Russia, and (I

regret to add) from that in some parts of Germany also."<sup>29</sup> On January 25, The Times reported that the Jews of England had presented a memorandum calling for the abolition of special laws for Russian Jewry to the Russian ambassador, who had accepted it while refusing to transmit it to his government.<sup>30</sup> An article summarized the Parliamentary paper devoted to the case of the expelled Mr. Lewisohn.<sup>31</sup> Finally, an editorial praised the Manor House meeting to protest persecution of Russian Jewry, which had been addressed by Lord Shaftesbury and Cardinal Manning, the senior ecclesiastic of the Roman Catholic Church in England. (The Times only lamented that on one level the meeting suggested partisan feeling, for and against Gladstone.)<sup>32</sup>

Neither the Russian government nor Russian journalism could remain silent in the face of such an onslaught. The government replied, largely through the official Journal de St. Petersburg. The Times reported one such riposte on January 23, 1882, which took the form of a denial of the pogrom accounts published earlier. "The English journals, with The Times at their head, have published alleged details of the Russian 'atrocities' in which the greatest fantasy and plainest malevolence are strikingly apparent. It is easy enough to pile up figures and statistics of people killed and goods lost, and say, 'Refute that if you can'."<sup>33</sup> Another tack was employed apropos of the Manor House meeting: "The same people would consider it strange if similarly sweeping language were indulged in at meetings on the Continent in discussing English legislation in Ireland. We understand perfectly well, however, that the end in view is to revive the inveterate Russophobia which has been mitigated since the accession of the present British cabinet to office."<sup>34</sup> Finally, the Russian government warned that reports of threatened British intercession could serve to increase the existing tension between Christians and Jews, and pointed out that it had convoked local committees to address the

question which, in any case, "is one of those internal matters in which no state would ever permit foreign interference or counsel in any form whatever."<sup>35</sup>

One of the first replies to the Judeophilic campaign in the British press by the friends of Russia came in a letter to The Times' account by O.K., the nom de plume of Olga Novikoff (Novikova).<sup>36</sup> Her strategy was to attack the accuracy of The Times' account, and to question the right of the British to sit in judgment on Russia. Noting that the accounts used by The Times originated with the London-based Jewish World, she asked "why is it so calmly taken for granted, on the ipse dixit of a Jewish compiler of Jewish correspondence, that the Russian government is guilty of encouraging the excesses of the social war which is raging between the Jews and their neighbors in our southern provinces?"<sup>37</sup> Even these accounts demonstrated that it was conspirators who spread the violence, using the existing hostility to the "Talmudic Jew." The government was at first slow to respond, due to the "liberal" policy of Count Loris-Melikov, but eventually went so far as to shoot rioters. The fact that 1,000 were arrested in Odessa, 1,500 in Kiev, and 2,700 in Warsaw proved that the authorities had not been inactive. The hatred of the "Talmudic Jew" arose, not from religious fanaticism, but as a response to their insatiable greed, cupidity, desire to become rich, forwardness, and their economic role as middlemen. Their behavior could be contrasted with that of the small Judaic sect of Karaites, which, though Jewish, did not display these negative characteristics and thus had been left untouched by the mobs. In short, "the Karaites are Russian citizens of the Hebrew faith. The Talmudists are aliens settled on Russian soil."<sup>38</sup>

Critics of Russia, O.K. continued, forgetting the failures of their own government to prevent similar outrages in Ireland, "have either lost all sense

of the ridiculous or else find it necessary to air their indignation at cruelty abroad as a relief after the heroic fortitude with which they have contemplated in silence, similar excesses nearer home."<sup>39</sup>

The Russian press, for its part, displayed a rare unanimity in rejecting the intervention of Great Britain, even while disagreeing over what lay behind it. Golos, for example, frankly admitted and lamented Russian guilt for finding the "originality" to settle the Jewish Question by violence. Yet once the pogroms occurred, the government had moved to quiet minds and to end the disorders, ultimately creating a commission to investigate all aspects of the Jewish Question. Consequently, the intervention of London was superfluous, and possibly self-defeating. It would be tragic if such agitation impeded the quiet resolution of the Jewish Question.<sup>40</sup> This was all the more the case because the agitation was motivated not by humanitarianism, but by political motives. The campaign against Russia was in preparation for an attack by the Conservatives upon the "Russophile" government of Gladstone. A demand for intervention would be based upon the "precedent" of a note delivered to Russia on the occasion of the Polish uprising of 1863. Such adventurism, opined Golos, was more likely to harm than to help the position of Russian Jewry.<sup>41</sup>

While other newspapers also emphasized the partisan aspects of the campaign, they often placed most of the blame for the agitation on the Jews themselves, inside and outside Russia. Novoe vremia saw such activities as the Manor House meeting as part of a continuing campaign engineered by the Jews. Their first tactic had been a demand for equal rights in the aftermath of the first pogroms. When the Russian government was not forthcoming, foreign Jews attacked Russian credit on the international stock exchange, a ploy which failed because Russia was not in need of a foreign loan. The latest demonstration was an attempt to sabotage the very mechanism which the

Russian government had devised in order to resolve the Jewish Question, the new imperial commission charged with reviewing the activities and legal status of the Jews in Russia.<sup>42</sup>

Novoe vremia returned to the theme in mid-February, applauding the "useful lesson" given to "English Judeophiles and Jewish barons" by the official announcement in Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik that the Russian state would permit no interference or advice in its internal affairs. Such agitation, editorialized the paper, arose from the assumption abroad that Russia was weak and divided -- an impression conveyed by the articles of the liberal Russian press -- and constrained to heed the "voice of Europe." Now, such assumptions had been disproved. The Jews, in their own newspapers, might better desist from reporting such foreign agitation, and recognize that it served only to displease the Russian masses and unfavorably to influence their own position.<sup>43</sup>

Novorossiiskii telegraf, in an article provocatively entitled "The Jews do everything to strengthen the enmity of Russians toward them," denounced the Jewish attempt to "enslave" British public opinion in their favor. To demonstrate the lies and exaggerations said to be abroad in British society, Novorossiiskii telegraf, as did Novoe vremia, quoted extensively from the January articles of The Times. Indeed, whatever attempts may have been made by the Russian press censorship to restrict accounts of the pogroms in the Russian press -- an unsubstantiated charge made by The Times -- the details now became public knowledge through these accounts. Novorossiiskii telegraf issued one final warning to the Jews: in trying to make the domestic Jewish question an international problem, they demonstrated what good citizens they were. What other national group in Russia ran abroad to ask foreign powers to put pressure on the Russian government?<sup>44</sup>

Ivan Aksakov's Rus' was particularly constrained to reply to The Times, because Aksakov was the very epitome of the "Moscow Slavophiles" whom The Times' accounts had accused of fomenting the pogroms. Such attacks in the English press, asserted Rus', were efforts to pressure Russian public opinion at a time when the Jewish Question was the subject of a national commission. It was small wonder that foreign accounts of the pogroms were based upon reports in newspapers "of a certain type, unfavorable to Russian nationalism (narodnost')." "In a word, from the point of view of the Jews, and of our 'liberal press,' (and, of Austria, of course), in Russia all the harm is 'nationality,' and the nationalist direction, which presumably arouses the popular spirit against the 'interests of civilization' (read: Jews and Germans). . ."<sup>45</sup>

Rus' also noted in passing the role played in anti-Russian agitation by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and recommended that the Russian government make a special effort to block its further interference in Russian internal affairs.<sup>46</sup> (Aksakov's concern with the Alliance would reach its peak in 1883 when Rus' reprinted from the French newspaper L'Antisemitique a spurious "manifesto" of Adolphe Cremieux, the president of the Alliance, detailing a Jewish plan for world domination. It was important element in what would later become "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.")<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, in London, the anti-Russian campaign had taken a surprising turn, with The Times forced to retreat from its more extreme statements. The occasion was the publication of a Parliamentary Paper, "Russia, No. 1, 1882," containing correspondence which the Foreign Office had received from the British diplomatic corps in St. Petersburg, Warsaw, Taganrog, and Nikolaev, all but the first being in or near regions of pogrom violence. The impressions which they conveyed of the pogroms were at variance with the

earlier reports of The Times. The number of victims and the amount of physical damage were both considerably reduced. The report of Consul-General G. E. Stanley at Taganrog was typical: "That the Russian authorities during these outbreaks were generally most apathetic and neglectful of their duties, allowing the brutal mobs to plunder and ill treat the Jews and that these suffered terribly in loss of property and loss of home, that no compensation has yet been given them, and that they are still in reasonable fear of similar scenes occurring. There is no doubt; but throughout these riots there has been little loss of life, and violations of women have, I believe, been most rare."<sup>48</sup> These were mild qualifications to be sure, but nonetheless significant in the light of the ghastly accounts offered by The Times in January.

In addition, several of the reports suggested that the violence might be understandable, if not justifiable. Consul W. G. Wagstaff in Nikolaev, in particular, presented an account which accurately reflected the worst charges of Russian Judeophobes against the economic activities of the Jews. Arguing that the Jews must somehow be integrated into society, Wagstaff explained that "the word 'Jid' as applied in Russia to the Jew, is synonymous with everything vile and despicable; he is looked upon as the bane of society, no matter what position he enjoys."<sup>49</sup>

The Times was obviously taken aback by these reports -- significantly, it headlined them "The Treatment [rather than "The Persecution"] of the Jews in Russia." An editorial conceded that the issue of the misconduct of Russian officials was reduced to a question as to degree. "These reports, to a certain extent, tend to extenuate the seriousness of the anti-Jewish riots. The loss of life and the outrages upon women which were circumstantially detailed in the accounts published in this paper are generally denied, so far



as they can be said to be denied by those who have merely not seen or heard of them themselves." Yet this did not excuse what actually did occur. "The stories of bloodshed and lust lend more horrible features to the anti-Jewish outrages; but the responsibility of Russian Governors, and through them of the Russian Government, cannot be got rid of by showing that a smaller number of Jews that was reported lost their lives at this place or that."<sup>50</sup> Nor did the old tales about the disreputable occupation of the Jews justify brutality or plunder, in the editorialist's eyes.

The Russian press seized on these concessions by The Times with alacrity and delight. Golos argued that the consular reports demonstrated that the Russian government was quite capable of protecting its own, without the intervention of the Court of St. James. Moreover, Golos predicted, this spelled the end of agitation in England, and would probably produce a backlash in Russia's favor.<sup>51</sup>

Novorossiiskii telegraf, writing after the outbreak of new disorders, offered special praise for Wagstaff's report. It noted editorially that Wagstaff advocated reform in the dual sense of reducing the Jewish muddle (neustroistvo) and of granting equal rights to the Jews. Novorossiiskii telegraf professed itself to be in agreement, but this was only a prelude to a stereotypical attack on the Jews and their illegal community structure, the kahal, the alleged existence of which was a special obsession of Russian Judeophobes.

But what state is itself able to take up such an objective as the abolition of the kahal, on which the Jewish muddle really depends? This matter is found entirely in the hands of the Jews themselves -- let them overthrow the yoke of the kahal themselves and then equality will arrive by itself: for useful activities, for workers engaged in productive labor, there will be neither restriction, interference, nor threats . . . . And the Jews recognize all this

very well themselves, but the kahal holds them in a hopeless slavery.<sup>52</sup>

Rus' was able to present a summary of the consular reports authored by Olga Novikova herself, recently arrived back in Russia. These reports presaged, the title of her article predicted, "the end of Jewish exploitation in England."<sup>53</sup>

Such celebrations were premature. On March 2 and 3 The Times returned to the fray, its confidence in the right restored. The occasion was provided by a lengthy report of the Russo-Jewish Committee, submitted by Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, seeking not only to confirm the veracity of the pogrom accounts published by The Times, but to show that they had been incomplete. The report comprised letters and affidavits from Jews emigrating from Russia and from the representatives of individual communities. Taken together, they represented a frightful picture of violence, murder, and brigandage, about which the local authorities did nothing. Worse still, Jews writing anonymously from Russia complained that the government was encouraging them to repudiate public reports, and threatening them with mob violence if they received help from England.<sup>54</sup>

These new reports were made more controversial by the announced intention of Baron Henry de Worms, a Jewish community leader and member of Parliament, to move during the parliamentary session of March 3 that the House deplore the outrages in Russia and, either singly or in concert with the other Great Powers, use its good offices with the tsarist government to prevent a recurrence.

A Times editorial warmly applauded the first proposal, but doubted the efficacy of the second. Indeed, it claimed, diplomatic intervention would do more harm than good by enabling the Russian government to appear before its own people as the patriotic defender of the independence of the country. "A

strong and emphatic protest in the name of humanity and civilization, such as has already been made from our towns and villages, our Universities and our Press, is more likely to be effectual than any quantity of diplomatic remonstrance."<sup>55</sup>

The ensuing parliamentary debate proceeded much as The Times would have liked. The motion of Baron Worms was withdrawn after a vigorous debate. According to The Times, much was gained in consequence. The moral protest of the British people had not been weakened by a political manoeuvre, and the "hideous facts of the case" had been proven beyond cavil. "Mr. Gladstone's own expressions, carefully guarded as they were, fortunately place in the clearest light the view taken of these disgraceful crimes by Englishmen of every creed and party."<sup>56</sup>

With these words, The Times essentially parted company with the Jewish Question inside Russia for the duration of 1882. To be sure, there was continuing coverage of pogroms,<sup>57</sup> approving glances at American diplomatic intervention,<sup>58</sup> and attentive examination of the phenomenon of widespread Jewish emigration from the Russian empire.<sup>59</sup> But the polemical war with the Russian government and the Russian press was at an end, punctuated only by a parting shot designed to place the Jewish Question in Russia in a wider context: "The profound misery of a poor, ignorant, superstitious, and perennially misgoverned populace is at the root of the internal disorders of Russia; while the intolerable ennui of a governing class ignorant of the rudiments of the art of governing explains the perpetual restlessness which makes Russia a standing menace to the peace of the world."<sup>60</sup>

The waning of foreign press concern with the Russian pogroms did not mean an end to their examination by the Russian press. Quite the contrary. Ironically, at the very moment that The Times was directing its attention

elsewhere, a pogrom erupted in the town of Balta in early April which closely resembled those pogrom accounts which the Russian press had heretofore indignantly rejected. At Balta, Jews were murdered, pogromshchiki were shot down by troops, almost a thousand Jewish homes were destroyed, two hundred persons were wounded, and numerous rapes were reported. Golos described the pogrom as worse than the infamous taking of Magdeburg by the hordes of the bloodthirsty Tilly in the Thirty Years' war. Indeed, freed of the need to defend Russia from the possibility of intervention by the Great Powers, a newspaper like Golos could become much more aggressive towards "home-grown Judeophobes," if not towards the local administration.<sup>61</sup>

What, in the final analysis, was the impact of The Times' pogrom campaign, beyond the generation of a heated literary polemic? Certainly no concrete results were attained: the British government, unlike the American, never presented a note or an admonition to any representative of the Russian imperial government. Russian treatment of the Jews was apparently neither mitigated nor strengthened as a result of foreign pressure. Rather, the threat of social revolution implied by the pogroms was by itself sufficient to impel the Russian government to initiate a massive investigation of the circumstances of Jewish life in Russia, and to implement a new code of restrictive legislation ("The May Laws") designed to reduce the friction between Christian and Jew.

On the other hand, the foreign press campaign led by The Times did make the Russian government painfully aware of the power of the press, and all the more determined to cripple it. Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, the official publication of the Ministry of the Interior, delivered a lecture to the Russian press on its responsibilities. The paper warned that the task of the press was to quiet minds, rather than to inflame them by the circulation of

unfounded or unreliable rumors.<sup>62</sup> To ensure a proper flow of information, Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik pledged itself to publish full, complete, and accurate accounts of any subsequent pogroms.<sup>63</sup> The task of controlling information was taken seriously: The Times' correspondent soon reported that Russian telegraph officials were refusing to transmit any pogrom news whatsoever.<sup>64</sup> Finally, matters were taken to their logical extreme, with a regulation banning any pogrom account which had not appeared first in Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik.<sup>65</sup>

In England, The Times' campaign had the effect of creating a picture of an able but persecuted Russian Jewry burdened by an oppressive legal system, a picture which would long endure, and which expedited renewed agitation in the 1890s and afterward. But in the future, the familiar pattern on 1881 would be repeated: moral indignation freed from any real diplomatic intervention.

## FOOTNOTES

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1. The present study supplements my examination of Russian press attitudes towards the pogroms from a more domestic perspective. See John D. Klier, "The Russian Press and the Anti-Jewish Pogroms of 1881," forthcoming in Canadian-American Slavic Studies, Vol. 17 (1983).

2. See Paul Anthony Russo, "Golos, 1878-1883: Profile of a Russian Newspaper," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1974).

3. "The Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 29,863 (April 28, 1880). All dates for Times' articles are New Style. Articles in Russian newspapers are Old Style/New Style. Distinctive spellings are The Times' own.

4. See Effie Ambler, Russian Journalism and Politics, 1861-1881: The Career of Alexei Suvorin (Detroit, 1972).

5. For Aksakov's career, see Stephen Lukashevich, Ivan Aksakov, 1823-1886: A Study in Russian Thought and Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1965); and N. I. Tsimbaev, I. S. Aksakov v obshchestvennoi zhizni poreformennoi Rossii (Moscow, 1978).

6. A survey of the journalistic practices of the paper may be found in S. M. Kraeva, "Novorossiiskii telegraf" i ego spodvizhniki (Odessa, 1881).

7. The general attitude of The Times towards Russia was neatly summarized in an editorial in No. 29,794 (February 3, 1880): "Russia is a

backward country, which has not yet worked its way to the level of European life."

8. Novoe vremia, No. 1444 (March 6/18, 1880) is a typical example.
9. "The Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 29,830 (March 16, 1880).
10. Lead article, The Times, No. 29,870 (May 1, 1880).
11. Ibid. Golos, glad to discomfit an ideological rival, devoted a lengthy editorial to a summary of The Times' attack on Novoe vremia, and expressed its complete agreement. "V zashchitu nevinnykh," Golos, No. 76 (March 16/28, 1880).
12. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,202 (May 24, 1881). These were sentiments fully shared by the Russian government. Within the week, in response to the furor in Britain, the official Agence Russe declared that the Russian government required no exhortations from foreign powers to do its duty. "Russia," The Times, No. 30,206 (May 28, 1881).
13. For a re-evaluation of the "scape-goat" theory, see Hans Rogger, "The Jewish Policy of Late Tsarism: A Reappraisal," The Wiener Library Bulletin, Vol. XXV, Nos. 1 and 2 [New Series Nos. 22 and 23] (1971), 44-5.
14. Klier, "Russian Press and Anti-Jewish Pogroms."
15. See the account in "The Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,203 (May 25, 1881).
16. "Moskva, 8 avgusta," Rus', No. 39 9 August 8/20, 1881).
17. "Ezhednevnoe obozrenie," Novoe vremia, No. 1870 (May 14/26, 1881).
18. "Evropa i evreiskii vopros." Novoe vremia, No. 1901 (June 15/27, 1881).
19. "Khronika," Golos, No. 189 (July 10/22, 1881). These specific complaints were directed against the German press.

20. "Evropa i evreiskii vopros," Novorossiiskii telegraf, No. 1926 (June 20/ July 2, 1881).

21. "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,401 (January 11, 1882).

22. Ibid., No. 30,403 (January 13, 1881).

23. Ibid., No. 30,401 (January 11, 1881). For warnings of pogroms in the press, see Klier, "Russian Press and Anti-Jewish Pogroms."

24. Ibid. A massive literature has grown up around the pogroms of 1881-2, much of it encrusted with myths. For recent re-evaluations of the nature and origin of the pogroms, see Rogger, "Jewish Policy of Late Tsarism," and the same author's "Government, Jews, Peasants, and Land in Post-Emancipation Russia," Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique, XVII, Nos. 2-3 (April-September 1976), 5-25, 171-211, and "Russian Ministers and the Jewish Question, 1881-1917," California Slavic Studies, VIII (1975), 15-76; I. Michael Aronson, "Geographical and Socioeconomic Factors in the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia," The Russian Review, XXXIX, No. 1 (January 1980), 18-31; and Klier, "Russian Press and Anti-Jewish Pogroms."

25. The Times, No. 30,401 (January 11, 1881).

26. Klier, "Russian Press and Anti-Jewish Pogroms."

27. The Times, No. 30,403 (January 13, 1881).

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., No. 30,405 (January 16, 1882).

30. "Persecution of the Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,413 (January 25, 1882).

31. "Mr. Lewisohn," The Times, No. 30,417 (January 30, 1882). The Foreign Office, on the basis of precedents which it had accepted, found itself unable to insist upon an interpretation of treaty rights at variance with the



construction placed on them by the Russian government in the case of Lewisohn. The Times refrained from making an issue of the affair.

32. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,420 (February 2, 1882).

33. "Russia," The Times, No. 30,411 (January 23, 1882)

34. "Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,422 (February 4, 1882).

35. "Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,429 (February 13, 1882).

36. Olga Novikoff (Novikova) was a Russian aristocrat resident in London and a frequent apologist for her country in the letters section of The Times. For a survey of her publicistic career, see William T. Stead, ed., The M. P. for Russia. Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff (New York and London, 1909), 2 vols.

37. "The Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,406 (January 18, 1882). This letter was widely reprinted in Russia, for example in Novorossiiskii telegraf, No. 2,093 (January 16/28, 1882).

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid. In a subsequent letter in No. 30,431 (February 15, 1882), O. K. turned to another part of the Empire for an analogy. "The Jewish question is not religious but social. . . I learn that the most innocent agriculturists in India, in Santalistan and in the Deccan have repeatedly attacked the Hindoo money-lenders exactly as our peasants attacked the Jews, and for the same reason. And how did you deal with this difficulty? Not by increasing the license, but by restricting the opportunities of the Hindoo money-lenders, and as you do it with some success your example can be useful indeed. In short, you do as General Ignatieff proposed to do in his famous rescript, which you abuse so much."

40. "Antirusaskaia agitatsiia v Anglii," Golos, No. 12 (January 17/29, 1882).

41. Ibid. The analysis of Golos appears questionable. The Conservatives had far better sticks with which to beat Gladstone—who could be considered "Russofil" only in comparison with his predecessor Benjamin Disraeli. Foreign policy questions, especially the situation in South Africa, the Balkans and Afghanistan loomed large. Domestic concerns were dominated by the Irish Question. To be sure, the foremost parliamentary spokesman for Russian Jewry was a Conservative, Baron Henry de Worms, and an opponent of Gladstone's Liberal Party. But Worms was also a Jew, and a persistent defender of the cause of persecuted Romanian Jewry. In his case, political concerns were unquestionably secondary.

42. "Evrei i spekuliatziia," Novoe vremia, No. 2121 (January 23/February 4, 1882).

43. "Pravitel'stvennoe zaiavlenie po povodu zagranichnoi evreiskoi agitatsii," Novoe vremia, No. 2129 (January 31/February 12, 1882).

44. "Evrei delaiut vse, chtoby usilit' k nim vrazdu russkikh," Novorossiiskii telegraf, no. 2092 (January 15/27, 1882). In a subsequent article, the paper quoted with approval from articles in the British Spectator and the Tablet, the first imputing native hostility towards the Jews to their "illegal or immoral professions," and the second tying German antisemitism to Jewish corporatism and exploitation. "Angliiskii gazety o evreiskom voprose," No. 2108 (February 5/17, 1882).

45. "Moskva, 23 ianvaria," Rus', No. 4 (January 23/February 4, 1882).

46. Ibid.

47. See "Moskva, 1 noiabria," Rus', No. 21 (November 1/13, 1882). For the genesis of the Protocols, see Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide (New York, 1969).

48. "The Treatment of the Jews in Russia," The Times, No. 30,435 (February 20, 1882).
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid. In a subsequent editorial, The Times reminded its readers of the difficulties which diplomatic personnel encountered in gathering accurate information about the pogroms.
51. "Vopros o russkikh evreiakh v palate obshchin," Golos, No. 48 (February 20/March 2, 1882).
52. "Diplomaticheskaiia perepiska po povodu evreiskogo iga na iuge Rossii," Novorossiiskii telegraf, No. 2179 (May 5/17, 1882).
53. O. K., "Konets evreiskoi agitatsii v Anglii," Rus', No. 8 (February 20/March 21, 1882).
54. "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," The Times, Nos. 30,444 (March 2, 1882) and 30,445 (March 3, 1882).
55. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,445 (March 3, 1882).
56. "Russia," The Times, No. 30,446 (March 4, 1882).
57. "Russia," The Times, No. 30,488, (April 22, 1882).
58. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,494 (April 29, 1882).
59. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,521 (May 31, 1882).
60. Lead article, The Times, No. 30,446 (March 4, 1882).
61. "Dmoroshchennym iudofobam," Golos, No. 113 (April 30/May 12, 1882).
62. Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, No. 82 (April 18/30, 1882). Golos, soon to become the most prominent victim of the new strictures on the press, replied to this argument with a reasoned defense of the freedom and responsibilities of the press. It emphasized that by investigating rumors as carefully as possible, and by publicizing them, the press made it easier for

unfounded rumors to be repudiated. The government was not impressed by such logic. "Interesy dnia," Golos, No. 103 (April 20/May 2, 1882).

63. "Russia," The Times, No. 30,477 (April 10, 1882). Pravetel'stvennyi vestnik did indeed begin to publish reports of pogroms, but they were as a rule neither full nor complete, and reflected the perspective of the local authorities.

64. Ibid., No. 30,482 (April 21, 1882).

65. Ibid., No. 30,488 (April 22, 1882).