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Aims and Scope:

Changing Societies & Personalities is an international, peer-reviewed quarterly journal, published in English by the Ural Federal University. *CS&P* examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values – and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies. The interplay of personality traits and sociocultural factors in defining motivation, deliberation, action and reflection of individuals requires a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge. Since an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary world's changing socio-political institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs, the journal welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of perspectives in the context of value pluralism and social heterogeneity of (post)modern society.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- value implications of interactions between socio-political transformations and personal self-identity;
- changes in value orientations, materialist and post-materialist values;
- moral reasoning and behavior;
- variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
- the moral bases of political preferences and their elimination;
- social exclusion and inclusion;
- post-secular religious individualism;
- tolerance and merely "tolerating": their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
- ideologies of gender and age as variables in political, moral, religious and social change;
- educational strategies as training for specific social competences;
- social and existential security.

The journal publishes original research articles, forum discussions, review articles and book reviews.

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EDITORIAL

"By the rivers of Babylon" and Elsewhere: Weeping and Recovering

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The current issue of *Changing Societies & Personalities* is devoted to a theme having an exceptional importance for the humankind—the fate and deeds of Jewish people in various places and contexts, as well as the roots of anti-Semitism, which still exists in many settings 75 years after the Auschwitz liberation. Research literature on the past and present Jewish history, as well as the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, is enormous. However, there is always room for reflection, and I hope that this issue of CS&P will contribute to the tradition of Jewish studies in various ways.

I would like to introduce the current issue by quoting Hillel Levine's[1] unpublished article, which he has kindly placed at our disposal:

> Before we seek the answers, we must know the questions. The popular characterization of the Jews as the "chosen people", a characterization that assumes that this is paramount in the way in which the Jews themselves view their relationship to God, with no small measure of arrogance and conceit. This characterization is imprecise at best and tainted with anti-Semitism at worst. As an acid test of its alien-ness to the Jewish experience, there is hardly a precise term for the "Chosen People" in classical Hebrew. To be sure, there are strong conceptions of Jews having a special relationship with God. But several dimensions are overlooked, even by those non-Jews who would speak of this chosen-ness with the best intentions and with the most positive feelings towards the Jews. As Jews perceive that special relationship, it involves far more obligations than privileges; it becomes the

[1] Hillel Levine is the President of the International Center for Conciliation (https://www.centerforconciliation.org/) and Emeritus Professor of Religion, The Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies, Boston University.

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> basis for the harsher standards against which Jews see themselves measured, judged, and therefore so often failing and punished. This is so much the case that, particularly in the post-Holocaust period, there have been many Jews who utter the term "chosen people" with the same irony as their worst enemies. Contemporary Jewish literature has many expressions of protest and rebelliousness against God, precisely on this point: "O God of mercy, why don't you take your mercy and chosen-ness and endow it upon a different people!"[2]

When examining the biblical concept of chosen-ness, Levine underlines that the Bible describes a common origin for *all* people, for each and every individual of every religion, nation, and background, because every human being is chosen and created "in God's image". At the same time, each and every individual, from birth, is wholly unique and different from all other human beings. On this ground, Levine focuses on another moment in the history of the Jewish people, i.e. the formation of their notion of chosen-ness and their capacity to foster pluralism, which is described by the psalmist:

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst thereof, we hanged up our harps. For there they that led us captive asked of us words of song, and our tormentors asked of us mirth: "sing us one of the songs of Zion". How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? (Ps 137:1–4, KJV)

Could there be a more powerful description of social inclusion or exclusion as a legacy for people that could augment their sense of choosing or being chosen? The failed God of Israel is to be abandoned by God's otherwise abandoned, lonely, and suffering people. But Jews, Levine argues, do not relegate their God, who failed to protect them, to demonic status:

> The God chosen by vanquished Israel is experienced unambiguously, now, and for all times. That God is not only the God of Zion but as the God of the entire world, altogether supreme. The Jews well learn to sing the song of the Lord on alien soil while sacralizing their unbreakable connection to Zion and Jerusalem. This affirmation of God's unity and unlimited power is linked to the Jewish capacity to have multi-centers of Homeland and Diaspora where Jewish culture can thrive, particularly when Jews are not assaulted[3].

In the current issue of CS&P (ESSAY section), Olga Potap, Marc Cohen and Grigori Nekritch's essay *Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE): Jewish Humanitarian Mission for over 100 Years* explores the history and mission of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE), founded in Russia in 1912. The authors overview several periods

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[2] Levine, H. (2021). "Chosen People" and the "Choosing" People: Jewish Sources of Monotheistic Pluralism [Unpublished manuscript]. International Center for Conciliation, https://www.centerforconciliation.org

[3] Ibid.

of OSE activities starting from pre-World War I period, during World War I and after; during World War II and after. They highlight the role of OSE in the caregiving of the Holocaust survivors and their children, and depict the OSE functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the essay, three different life stories of the Holocaust survivors are presented as they were told. As the authors underline, "These are the fates of people who did not want to submit to tragic circumstances and who found the strength to actively resist them even when the hope of salvation was negligible". They conclude that the results of the OSE activities "in the 20th century, full of dramatic events, showed the correctness of the choice of its conceptual ideological, professional, and humanistic principles".

In the article *Tradition as a Homeland to Return to: Transnational Religious Identity of the Post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry*, Elena A. Ostrovskaya analyses the results of field research on the post-Soviet Russian-speaking Lithuanian, Chabad and Hasidic communities of St. Petersburg and Minsk concerning their religious identity and day-to-day practices. Reviewing the collection of biographical interviews, the author notes that the vast majority of post-Soviet Jews were not familiar with the Jewish/Judaic way of life; thus, the revival of Jewry in the 1990s revealed a complete loss of the connection between the present generations and the historic forms of daily observance of the commandments. Ostrovskaya observes three stages of the revival: the first stage (1980s–the early 1990s), when the religious Jewish underground "consolidated by mastering the practices of observing the commandments"; the second phase (1990–2008) was marked with the arrival of foreign rabbis who created the infrastructure (synagogues, Jewish kindergartens, religious schools, *yeshivas*, kosher production, etc.); the third stage (started in 2008) involved the mediatization of communicative practices and the digitalization of Russian-speaking Orthodox Jewry. The article reveals various factors influencing the process of obtaining religious identity by the Jewish generation of the 1980s.

Ivan Peshkov in the article *B(ordering) Utopia in Birobidzhan: Spatial Aspects of Jewish Colonization in Inner Asia* reflects upon the formation of Jewish settlements in Birobidzhan region, Far East of Russia, from an unexpected angle, "showing the complex relationship of the new formation of immigrants with alternative models of territoriality in the region" in order to de-colonize "the dominant perspective of the Birobidzhan project research, in which the colonial categories of empty land, useless territory, natives, and comical distance from the center are accepted as legitimate descriptions of reality". When analysing the formation of the Jewish Autonomous Region (1934) in the context of the Jewish question between two World Wars, Peshkov mentions the Soviet outlook on the borders as a source of danger and an area of confrontation with the enemies. The author underlines that the Soviet project of Jewish autonomy was originally utopian, intending "to combine Jewish dreams of their own land with the demands of a new society: Jewish culture was to become modern, proletarian, and secular"; and describes several stages of the failure of the project.

In the article *The "End of Times" and the Antichrist's Arrival: The Orthodox Dogmas and Prophecies in the National-Patriotic Media in Post-Soviet Russia,* Victor A. Shnirelman focuses on several national-patriotic newspapers published in

1990–1993 in Russia, which took an active part in discussions around the country's past, present and future, proclaiming that the world was moving to a decline and a catastrophe ("end of time" and the expectation of the Antichrist arrival). In the 1990s, Orthodox-Monarchist newspapers promoted the idea of some 19th century Orthodox thinkers that the genuine Christianity survived only in Russia; therefore, God would save Russia from the Antichrist, and Russia would save the rest of the world. As Shnirelman shows, they "paid great attention to prophecies about the end of time and to signs of its coming, in particular. For them, the most important omens were linked with the Jewish activity because, according to the myth, Jews not only were anxiously waiting for the Antichrist's arrival but did all the best to speed it up and to harm Christians as much as possible". The author concludes that, in 1990s, a new specific type of political theology was born in Russia.

The article *Time, Moment, Eternity: Hieroglyphs and Meditations in Yakov Druskin's Philosophy* by Andrey S. Menshikov is devoted to Druskin's concept of temporality in the context of "complete revision of how philosophy should be done", elaborated by Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Franz Rosenzweig and some other European philosophers. Menshikov analyses Druskin's understanding of temporality and stresses the complexity of adequate translation, because Druskin "uses a number of categories, which despite their apparent simplicity are hard to translate". Another difficulty is caused by the fact that Druskin's "texts are not purported to inform the reader, they intend to transform, to reproduce in a reader the transformation that was exercised and perfected by the writer". Menshikov concludes that Druskin's philosophy cold be placed on par with most prominent European intellectuals of the first part of the 20th century.

Oliver Keune in his article *Preventing Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Barbarism in the Present and in the Future through Art: Using the Example of the Play "The Investigation. Oratorio in 11 Songs" by Peter Weiss,* reflects upon the prevalence of anti-Semitism 75 years after the Auschwitz liberation. The author points out two fundamental problems in this respect: the first one is the rise of populism "that enables politicians to offer simple answers to complex problems by dividing the world into 'us' and 'them'"; the second is an increasing approval of right-wing politicians' position including the willingness to forget—or even deny—the Holocaust. Keune raises the following questions: What can be done about it? How is it possible to reach anti-Semites? In searching answers to these questions, he uses an example of art, which has always been regarded a decisive factor in improving human nature. In this respect, he examines Peter Weiss' play *The Investigation. Oratorio in 11 Songs* "as a possible example of displaying and exercising such a potential" and "a most appropriate and effective piece of art to reach and teach today's generation".

The BOOK REVIEWS section contains three reviews. The first is by Elena Trubina of Justin O'Connor and Xin Gu's book (2020) *Red Creative. Culture and Modernity in China*. The reviewer analyses the specifics of the authors' approach towards creative industries in the socio-cultural context of modern China. The second review is by Oleg Kyselov of the book *Secularization, Desecularization,*

and Toleration. Cross-Disciplinary Challenges to a Modern Myth (2020) edited by Vyacheslav Karpov and Manfred Svensson. The reviewer stresses the main message of the book: the complexity and ambivalence of the interconnection between religion, secularization and desecularization, on one hand, and toleration, on the other. Andrey Nazarov in reviewing German Y. Kapten's book *Problema sakralizatsii voiny v vizantiiskom bogoslovii i istoriografii* [Problem of Sacralization of War in Byzantine Theology and Historiography] (2020) pays special attention to the accuracy of analysing the "sacred war" idea in the Orthodox Eastern Roman Empire presented in the book.

Discussions around the topics raised in the present issue will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal. In planning to introduce new interesting themes, we welcome suggestions from our readers and prospective authors for thematic issues, debate sections or book reviews.

For more information, please visit our journal web-site: https://changing-sp.com/

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ESSAY

Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE): Jewish Humanitarian Mission for over 100 Years

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ABSTRACT
The essay's primary purpose is to bring to the attention of readers interested in the history of the Jewish people that the dramatic 20th century is not only the victims of the Holocaust—and not only the heroism of the military on the battlefields. It is active resistance to barbarism—the rescue of defenseless people through daily civilian activities, nevertheless associated with a constant risk to life. This essay examines non-political and non-religious secular Jewish welfare society within Jewish political and national movements. Five historical periods of the activity of OSE are considered: 1912–1922; 1922–1933; 1933–1945; 1945–1950; 1950–present time. This chronological classification is somewhat imperfect; however, each period reflects the dynamic of functional changes in the initial tasks of the society to review the goals of the organization to satisfy the urgent needs of the European Jewish community in a debatable circumstance of the 20th–21st centuries.

KEYWORDS
Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE), Œuvre de secours aux enfants, World Union OSE, Jewish welfare, Jewish philanthropy, Jewish health care

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Introduction

This essay explores the humanitarian mission of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE), founded in Russia in 1912. The name of this organization was translated from its Russian title "Общество Здравоохранения Евреев" and abbreviated in Russian as "ОЗЕ". The Society changed its legal name several times to fulfill its humanitarian tasks in different countries. Still, the abbreviation OSE remains the same as the symbol of the land of its origin.

Figure 1
OSE Logo

Retrieved from https://www.ose-france.org

The authors analyze the mission of the Society, which encompasses its path of Jewish philanthropy for over one hundred years. The essay will consider the following historical and substantive aspects of the activities of the OSE:

- Firstly, the authors overview the phenomenon of Jewish philanthropy at the beginning of the 20th century in Eastern Europe and discuss the necessity of creating the medico-social service for Jews in pre-World War I period, especially in the Pale of Settlement of Imperial Russia.
- The second part of the essay explores the activities of the OSE during World War I and immediately after the war period.
- The third part describes the operating of the OSE during WWII and after the war period[1].
- The fourth part outlines the role of the OSE in the caregiving of the Holocaust survivors and survivors' children.
- The fifth part of this essay depicts the role of the OSE among the first responders during COVID-19. Naturally, this chapter has an open-end since the problem of COVID-19 is far from being solved.
- In conclusion, the authors sum up the Society's uniqueness, which places it among the first responders solving the Jews' problems in many countries in different periods of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Jewish Benevolence at the End of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th Century

A brief analysis of the early days' history of the OSE outlines the new directions in developing Jewish welfare at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The main characteristics of Jewish benevolence were:

- Domination of the national idea;

[1] The co-author of this paper, Olga Potap, previously published an essay dedicated to the early days of the OSE and its activities during World Wars I and II in the monograph *Conventions*, *Quotas*, *Refugees*: *European Jews in 1938–1945* (Potap, 2020). Therefore, these periods are briefly described in the essay.

- The secularization of the humanitarian movement;
- Changes in the forms of management of the Jewish welfare organizations.

By the end of the 19th century, there were thousands of Jewish cultural and welfare organizations in Russia whose pursuit was "a combination of shtaldanstvo[2] and activities focused on protest and propaganda actions against anti-Semitic measures and acts of the Russian government" (Gassenschmidt, 1995, p. 1).

In the twelfth chapter of his book *Nationalism and History* entitled *On the Tasks of the Folkspartay*, Simon Dubnow, the Russian Jewish historian (1860–1941), proposed uniting Jewish organizations under the Union of Jewish Communities. He wrote: "The unit of self-administration in our time can only be the free people's community (*Volksgemeinde*), with elected councils that administer the local cultural institutions, co-operatives, and philanthropic agencies" (Dubnow, 1958, p. 229).

Dubnow's proposal was by no means an idealistic approach. Ben Halpern and Jehuda Reinharz (both professors of modern Jewish history, USA) write in their article *Nationalism and Jewish Socialism: the Early Years*: "The sudden economic and political shifts of the middle decades of the nineteenth century in Russia severely shook established Jewish settlement and occupational pattern" (Halpern & Reinharz, 1988, p. 220). Political and economic changes in Jewish communal life impacted the community's cultural and social life. Secularization of Jewish communal life in big industrial and cultural centers inside the Pale of Settlement, and especially outside of it, affected the Jewish welfare organizations' activities.

Jacob Lestschinsky, a social scientist (1876–1966) in his research dedicated to studying the Jewish philanthropic organizations in Vilna, confirmed this conclusion. In his work published in 1914, *Evreiskaia blagotvoritel'nost' goroda Vil'ny* [Jewish Benevolence in Vilna] he analyzed a new trend in the development of the Jewish welfare at the beginning of the 20th century. His study of Jewish benevolence is grounded on social and economic characteristics of Jewish communal life.

Studying the traditions of the Jewish aid, Lestschinsky accentuated two major national characteristics:

- A special relationship between donors and recipients. In non-Jewish communities, the communal charity recipients were sick, poor, disabled, and uneducated people. There is evidence of a social and economic gap between donor and recipient; also, the communal help covered only the community's members' immediate needs. By contrast, in Jewish communities, often no difference in social and economic status existed between donors and recipients. Jewish philanthropy and charity covered not only necessities but also some luxuries. Lestschinsky also mentioned that it was not unusual in Jewish communities for the donor's social and economic status to be lower than that of the recipient.
- Participation of the community's members in humanitarian activities. Lestschinsky characterized Jewish welfare as a unique form of self-help. From his perspective, the Jewish self-help was a circle: recipient and donor constantly

[2] *Shtadlan* is an elected or self-appointed Jewish emissary pleading the cause of his people before the authorities as intercessor. https://jel.jewish-languages.org/words/1650

exchanged roles. His conclusion is grounded on the analysis of the statistical data of the charitable organizations' income sources. The primary source of income came from the donations of the community members. The outside contributions provided only 11% of the total contribution.

Lestschinsky viewed Jewish philanthropy and charity in Vilna as a form of communal self-help, where the recipients of the collective help were, at the same time, also donors. He explains these national characteristics of Jewish benevolence by economic and social instability inside the Jewish community during the centuries, making the transition from relative well-being to poverty a ubiquitous phenomenon. The author ascertained the dual and interconnected responsibility between individual and community, defining this phenomenon as a unique national characteristic of Jewish philanthropy.

An overview of Jewish welfare practice would be incomplete without understanding the relationship between the practical tasks of the OSE and spiritual practices of Jewish philanthropy, especially in the medical field. Even a cursory examination of the Code of Jewish Law (Schulchan Aruch)[3] outlines the Jewish health care laws as a paradigm of interconnected laws, including the following:

- Preventive hygiene and medicine (Law Relating to Physical Preservation and the Precept "Not to Destroy");
- Treatment of the sick (Law Concerning One Who is Sick, the Doctors, and Remedies);
- Social responsibility for the care of the sick (Law Concerning Visiting the Sick).

In the Jewish tradition, the observance of hygiene rules and care for the sick were communal and individual responsibility.

Lestschinsky classified three types of philanthropic and charitable organizations in Vilna according to their connection with the religious-ceremonious traditions. They are:

- Strictly religious societies, whose activities were isolated from the secular welfare organizations and did not reflect the economic and social changes in the communal life;
- Religious institutions, which collaborated with secular organizations and, to some degree, adjusted their activities according to the altering situations;
- Secular organizations, whose activities were motivated by national and humanistic ideas rather than by religious traditions.

Characterizing the organizations of the third type, he classified their activities into three categories according to their functional implementation: medical and social societies; educational institutions; financial foundations. Lestschinsky examines the dynamics of various forms of Jewish philanthropy and charity. He stated that Jewish welfare tends to the functional changes but that it keeps its national characteristics.

The essential innovation in the development of Jewish welfare at the beginning of the 20th century that Lestschinsky saw was the transition of Jewish philanthropy

[3] *Shulchan Aruch* ("Set Table") is a compendium of those areas of the *halachah*—Jewish religious law—that are applicable today. It was composed by Rabbi Yosef Karo of Safed (Israel) in the 1560's, and became generally accepted as authoritative after Rabbi Moshe Isserls of Cracow (Poland) supplemented it in the 1570's with notes (known as the *Mappah* – "Tablecloth") giving the rulings followed by Ashkenazic Jews. https://torah.org/series/shulchan-aruch

from "the chaotic Tzedokoh[4] to the organized self-help" (Lestschinsky, 1914, p. 14). The creation of the secular philanthropic and charitable organizations of the third type inside the separate Jewish community became a common phenomenon from the 1860s. Lestschinsky indicated that initially, the idea of creating such organizations was exclusively an initiative of individuals. However, "gradually, the separate interests of individual Jews gave way to the national interests of Jewry" (Ibid.).

By the beginning of the 20th century, Jewish benevolence was not isolated by the borders of the unconnected Jewish communities, and Jewish philanthropy had national and humanistic origins rather than a religious one.

OSE, the First Decade of Activity (1912–1922)

In 1912, the OSE officially began its activities on the territory of the Russian empire. The needs to create the health care society were essential both for the Jewish population and for Jewish medical professionals. The Jewish people, especially those living in the Pale of the Settlement, were practically deprived of *Zemstvo* medical service's benefits. At the same time, *Zemstvo* rejected the cooperation with Jewish medical providers[5]. The first Chair of the OSE was the physician and rear admiral Semyon A. Kaufmann. The founders of the OSE were prominent medical professionals and public figures. They outlined the immediate tasks of the organization in the first OSE's publication (1913) *Zadachi ohraneniya zdorov'ya russkih evreev* [The tasks of protecting Russian Jews' health]. They saw the primary aim of the OSE in improving medical service for Jews in the Russian Empire as self-defense action.

By the beginning of World War I, the OSE created a vast chain of medical institutions over the whole Pale of Settlement. The OSE managed nurseries, sanatoriums for tuberculosis patients, summer camps, and Jewish hospitals.

World War I destroyed the original plans of the OSE. The needs to assist Jewish refugees expelled from the war-zone settlements changed the organization's purpose. The OSE formed the "flying detachments", sanitary squads that rendered medical and social relief to refugees and escorted aliens to new settlement places. Approximately 250–300 thousand Jews were expelled from the war-zone settlements; 170 thousand refugees received support from the OSE.

In his book *Twenty Five Years OSE*, *1912–1937,* Lazar Gourvitch, one of the founders of the OSE, wrote:

> On May 5, 1915, an order of the Front Command was published decreeing the wholesale expulsion of the Jews from the two provinces. The order affected over 150,000 people (…) In the evening of May 5th, 1915, the OSE executives met

[4] *Tzedakah* is the Hebrew word for philanthropy and charity. It is a form of social justice in which donors benefit from giving as much or more than the recipients. So much more than a financial transaction, *tzedakah* builds trusting relationships and includes contributions of time, effort, and insight. https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/jewish-philanthropy-concept-tzedakah

[5] For more information about *Zemstvo* vs Jewish medical service see dissertation of Epstein, L.R. (1995). *Caring for the soul's house: The Jews of Russia and health care, 1860–1914*. (Publication No. 9615222) [Doctoral dissertation, Yale University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

> to discuss the situation. Quick decisions and prompt help were indispensable. The question of funds was not discussed (…) After a few telephone calls, the bacteriological laboratory of Dr. Gran was crowded with excited young people. Contact was established with Jewish chemists and in the same night several field dispensaries were ready. The preparation of supplies of food, linen and clothing was proceeding simultaneously. In the morning of May 7, 1915, four detachments were formed and left at once. (Gourvitch, 1937, p. 24)

A worker of one the OSE detachments depicted his experience:

> Immediately on our arrival, we had to get busy. There was no time even to think of how to organize our work. We were met by a thousand queries (…) Did you ever see a whole Jewish town on the move? We saw it with our own eyes. Six thousand people, including a whole alms-house with senile men and women and an orphanage; scanty belongings, picked up haphazardly, lying about on wagons (…) Our ambulance is functioning; several hundred patients have been treated in these days (…) The food distribution centre works the whole day long. We are distributing thousands of food rations (…) The march to the nearest railway station was an endless agony. Only with the greatest difficulty was it possible to get wagons for the old people and invalids (…) The villagers were afraid to hire their wagons to the Jews even against generous payment. (Gourvitch, 1937, p. 27)

The OSE cooperated with international humanitarian organizations, such as the American Joint Distribution Committee, the Red Cross, and local Jewish humanitarian units.

OSE, Interwar Period, 1922–1933

After the October Revolution (1917), the OSE continued to work in Soviet Russia until 1922. Being attracted by the significant financial support from the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), the Soviet government permitted the OSE to operate in Soviet Russia. When the AJDC stopped to support the Jewish welfare organizations, all the OSE branches were immediately liquidated by the government order. The OSE leaders have made several attempts to restore the OSE legal status in Soviet Russia, but all of these efforts were ineffective. All letters of the appeal came back with the resolution—"to refuse due to the political reason"[6].

The OSE ceased all projects in Soviet Russia in 1922. In the same year, the OSE established a headquarter in Germany and appointed Albert Einstein to serve as honorary president. Naturally, the fact of his presidency affected the reputation of the OSE and made a real help in fundraising campaigns. In his book *In Kamf farn Gezunt fun Idishn Folk: (50 yor OSE)* [In Fight for the Health of the Jewish People (50 Years of

[6] For more information about the activities of OSE in Soviet Russia in 1920s, see the publication of Beizer, M. (1999). *Evrei Leningrada. Natsional'naya zhizn' i sovetizatsiya, 1917–1939* [The Jews of Leningrad. National life and sovetization, 1917–1939]. Jerusalem, Israel: Gesharim

the OSE)], Dr. Leon Wulman, a founder of the American OSE Committee, noted an episode when Einstein performed a violin's solo concert in his house (Wulman, 1968). All revenues from this concert were donated to the OSE.

In Germany, former leaders of the OSE continue their effort to provide a humanitarian help for Russian Jews. The German section of the OSE cooperated with the Red Cross, the American Joint Distribution Committee, and the Nansen Mission.

Ernst Papanek (1900–1973) was an Austrian-born child psychologist and educator known for his work with refugee children during and after World War II. He depicted the Berlin's period 1922–1933 in the OSE activity:

> A group of OSE workers in Berlin, in cooperation with JDC and a special Paris Aid Committee, was sending food supplies and medical aid into Russia and setting up institutions for about ten thousand children. At this stage of its history the OSE reached its most energetic heights—and it's most Revolutionary fervor—as thousands of Jewish intellectuals joined with the doctors to stir the political consciences of the Jewish masses. (Papanek , 1975, p. 35)

After the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the OSE founded new branches in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Romania. In 1929, the OSE established its branch in the United States. In 1933, the German headquarter of the OSE moved to France and legally registered in France under the name OSE-Union on August 13, 1933. Eugene Minkowski, a French psychiatrist born in St. Petersburg and educated in Poland, was appointed as the president of the OSE-Union.

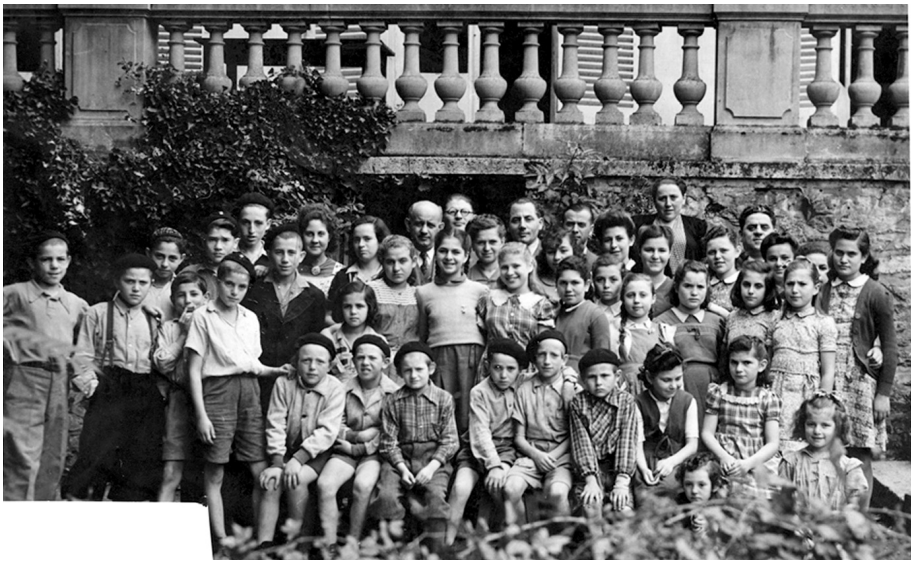
OSE, WWII Period

The OSE made significant efforts to shield Jewish children from deportation to the concentration camps. In order to protect children, especially of foreign origins, who arrived in France without identity papers, the OSE opened children's homes. The first home was opened in Montmorency in 1938. From 1938 to 1944, eighteen secular and religious homes functioned in France. In his memoirs *Out of the Fire*, Ernst Papanek, a director of the children's homes in Montmorency and Montintin from 1938 to 1940, emphasized the OSE's two main tasks. The first task was "quite simply, to save as many children as possible" (Papanek, 1975, p. 13). The other task was to make sure that children "not only survived but survived whole" (Papanek, 1975, p. 14). In a more concrete way, children's survival "in whole" referred to their physical and mental well-being, as well as children's education and vocational training.

Papanek wrote:

> Our first educational goal was to assure the children, explicitly and implicitly, that nothing that had happened to them had been their fault. The second was to convince them that the persecution they had suffered was not their inevitable fate as Jews. The third was to create an educational system that would return them to the world with a sense of pride, accomplishment and social consciousness. (Papanek , 1975, p. 116)

Figure 2
Children's Home in Montmorency, 1939



Retrieved from http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1160588

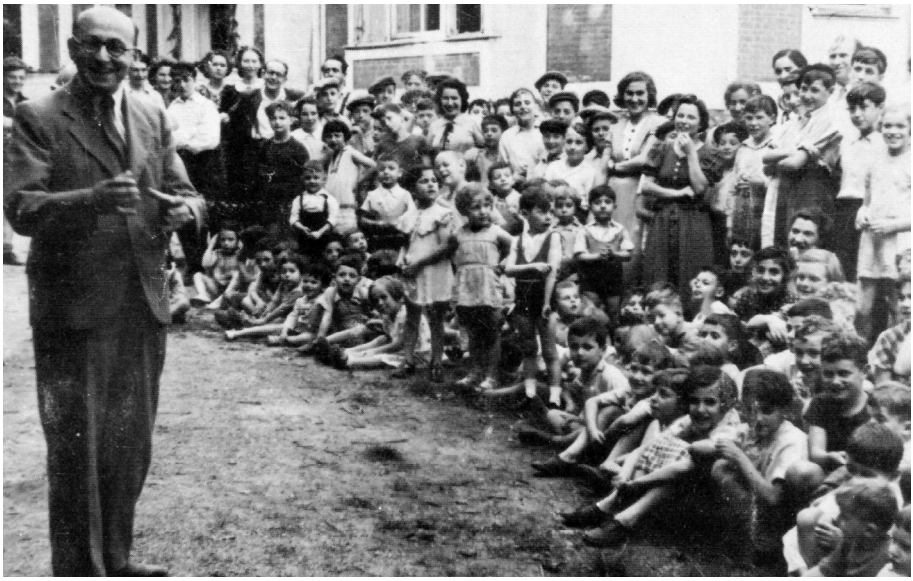
Vivette Samuel, a resident social worker in the camp of Rivesaltes for foreign internees wrote in her memoirs:

> Three types of solutions were contemplated with regard to the dispersal of the children: placement in a secular or Christian institution or family under a false identity; a clandestine crossing of the Swiss border, intended first for those at the greatest risk, notably the boys (…) and emigration to Palestine, via Spain. (Samuel, 1995/2002, p. 96)

Samuel called the period of 1942–1944 a turning point in the chronicle of rescuing children, and she stated that after 1942, the rescuing Jewish children ceased to be only a Jewish problem. People had different motivations driving them to take part in rescuing children. Papanek recollects: "The first people we hired were mostly refugees who had fought in Spain. They were idealists. They were adaptable. They were powerfully motivated" (Samuel, 1995/2002, p. 154).

Papanek also wrote about philanthropists, many of whom were wealthy liberal French Jewry and they were "acting out of humanitarian rather than narrowly Jewish impulses" (Papanek, 1975, p. 52). The Baroness Pierre de Gunzburg donated over one million francs to the OSE. Papanek notes that the Baroness "wanted us to understand that she was a completely assimilated Frenchwoman who wasn't giving us the money because the children were Jewish but only because they were children who happened to be in danger" (Papanek , 1975, p. 45).

Figure 3
Ernst Papanek (1900–1973)



Ernst Papanek and the children of Villa Helvetia
Retrieved from https://www.ose-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Tokayer-016.jpg

It is necessary to note that the doors of OSE children's homes were always open for non-Jewish children, the majority of whom were children of German and Austrian political refugees.

The OSE received significant funds from the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). During the war, the money was transferred via the Red Cross to a branch of the OSE located in Geneva, headed by Dr. Boris Chlenov.

Ernst Papanek wrote about financial help of the AJDC:

> The Joint Distribution Committee had supplied most of their money. And it was an enormous sum (…) immediately after the war the Joint ordered that all Gentiles to whom money was owed be paid off. Whatever they said was due them—and no questions asked. Six million dollars was paid out retroactively, mostly to people who had lent the money or performed the services with no real expectation, or even desire, of ever being reimbursed. (Papanek , 1975, p. 254)

Vivette Samuel wrote in her memoirs about the support that the OSE got from Catholic and Protestant churches, from the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), and from secular charitable organizations that provided food, shelter, false baptismal certificates, and identification papers.

Judith Baumel, Holocaust historian, in her book *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934–1945*,

emphasized the special and unique role of the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), whose "contribution towards the rescue of refugee children was indispensable" (Baumel, 1990, p. 68). The AFSC supplied food and provided medical care to refugee children. But importantly, according to Baumel, was the special role of AFSC in negotiation with German government officials and the Laval government for the transfer of children from France to the United States.

From 1938 to 1944, the OSE existed legally, quasi-legally and illegally, which complicated its activity accordingly. Until 1942, OSE work was legal and "much of the work was supervised by officers of the newly formed Vichy government" (Baumel, 1990, p. 343).

Transitioning from quasi-legal to illegal activity began in November of 1942, when Germans occupied Vichy France. In February 1944, the OSE was forced to close all children's homes, as well as its offices and service centers. However, it continued its clandestine activities and protected thousands of children. According to Hillel Kieval, a historian of Jewish culture, during World War II, the OSE protected approximately 8~9 thousand of children from deportation (Kieval, 1980).

During WWII, the American Committee of OSE maintained contact with the World Union of OSE and with Jewish and general relief organizations in the United States, developed and supported OSE's branches in South America, South Africa, and Australia and continued medical research suspended in Europe because of the war.

Each issue of *American OSE Review* (Jan/Feb 1942–Fall 1951) published research articles dedicated to different aspects of medical and social care of Jews. The scope of topics of these publications concerned problems of neuro-psychiatric rehabilitation of children in post-War Europe, issues of organization of medical care in liberated regions, and disputed pro et contra of the immigration to tropical countries.

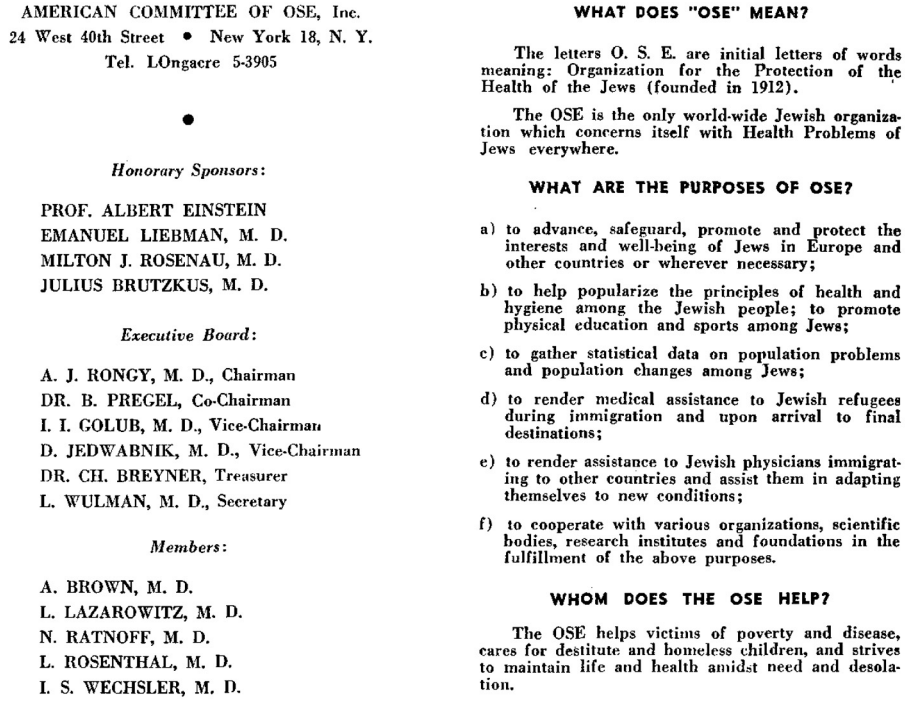
How the scope of OSE general mission and vision changed over this period of time? The American Committee of OSE's membership invitation booklet (circa 1943) described the OSE as "the only world-wide Jewish organization which concerns itself with Health Problems of Jews everywhere". The OSE "helps victims of poverty and disease, cares for destitute and homeless children, and strives to maintain life and health amidst need and desolation" (American Committee of OSE, circa 1943).

The OSE declared six tasks of its mission. They were:

- to advance, safeguard, promote and protect the interest and well-being of Jews in Europe and other countries or wherever necessary;
- to help popularize the principles of health and hygiene among the Jewish people; to promote physical education and sports among Jews;
- to gather statistical data on population problems and population changes among Jews;
- to render medical assistance to Jewish refugees during immigration and upon arrival to final destinations;
- to render assistance to Jewish physicians' immigrations to other countries and assist them in adapting themselves to new conditions;
- to cooperate with various organizations, scientific bodies, research institutes and foundations in the fulfillment of the above-mentioned purpose.

Figure 4

American Committee of OSE, Inc. Membership Pamphlet. Circa 1943



AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF OSE, Inc.
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WHAT DOES "OSE" MEAN?

The letters O. S. E. are initial letters of words meaning: Organization for the Protection of the Health of the Jews (founded in 1912).

The OSE is the only world-wide Jewish organization which concerns itself with Health Problems of Jews everywhere.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF OSE?

a) to advance, safeguard, promote and protect the interests and well-being of Jews in Europe and other countries or wherever necessary;

b) to help popularize the principles of health and hygiene among the Jewish people; to promote physical education and sports among Jews;

c) to gather statistical data on population problems and population changes among Jews;

d) to render medical assistance to Jewish refugees during immigration and upon arrival to final destinations;

e) to render assistance to Jewish physicians immigrating to other countries and assist them in adapting themselves to new conditions;

f) to cooperate with various organizations, scientific bodies, research institutes and foundations in the fulfillment of the above purposes.

WHOM DOES THE OSE HELP?

The OSE helps victims of poverty and disease, cares for destitute and homeless children, and strives to maintain life and health amidst need and desolation.

From private collection of Olga Potap

The fundamental changes of the OSE status and its mission by the end of WWII resulted in creation of a world-wide network of its branches and stated intention to cooperate with secular and religious organizations all over the world.

OSE, after WWII Period, 1945–1950

By 1948 the OSE maintained 32 branches in Europe, Latin America, North Africa, Israel, and Australia. The OSE established, run, and supervised over 500 medical and social institutions to provide health and social services to deportees. However, the children's relief mission again was named as the most critical task of the organization.

The first objective was to take the children out of the families or institutions where they had been hidden and give them back their true identities. The OSE tried to find the children's families and took care of the children who remained alone. The OSE gradually reopened its former homes. Twenty-five homes were opened in 1945 hosted up to 1500 children.

In addition to the "children mission", the OSE actively participated in the fight against the "three Ts" (tuberculosis, trachoma, and tinea, or ringworm) in North Africa.

Figure 5
OSE's Publications

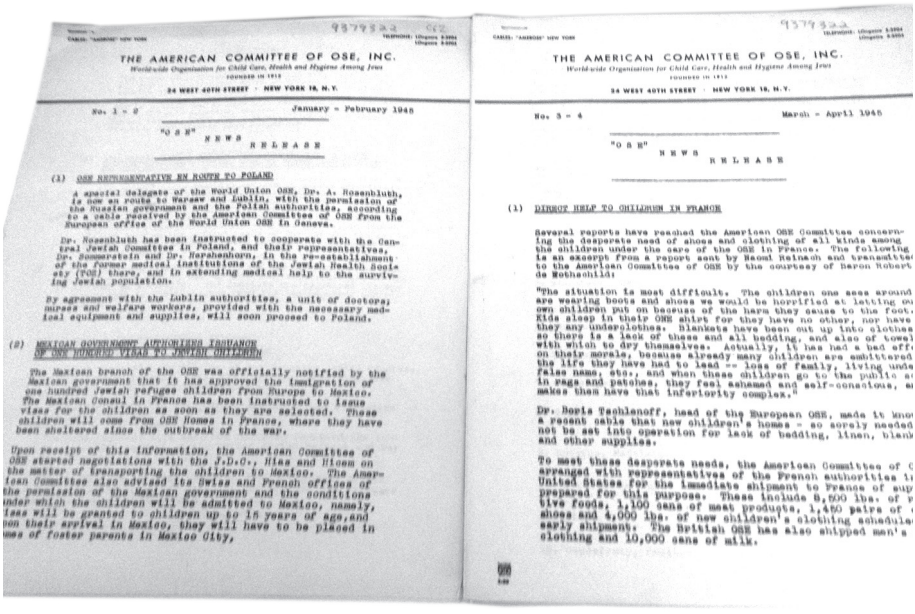
From private collection of Olga Potap

In 1947, JTA (Jewish Telegraphic Agency) reported:

> The OSE, Jewish health society, is planning to extend large-scale medical and social assistance to the Jews of Morocco and other North African countries, the organization announced here today. Mrs. Valentine Cremer and Maurice Brener, members of the OSE Union's executive board, who recently returned from an inspection tour of Jewish communities in North Africa, reported that the physical conditions under which Jews live in the *Mellah* (ghetto) are indescribably miserable. They disclosed that 60 percent of all children are affected by scabies and that rickets and tuberculosis are highly prevalent. The OSE has already shipped quantities of drugs and vitamins to Casablanca. (OSE planning to extend medical, social aid, 1947)

A few words about Dr. Valentine Cremer (1885–1983), an active member of the OSE for over decades. Valentine is the daughter of a famous Russian lawyer and politician, Maxim Vinaver (1863–1926). Valentine Cremer began her medical studies in Petrograd during WWI. In 1915, she was a member of the flying detachments of the OSE, which supervised the convoys of thousands of Jews expelled from the Pale of Settlement. During the Russian Revolution 1917, Valentine participated in the capture of the Winter Palace as a nurse in a Zionist group led by Joseph Trumpeldor.

Figure 6
American OSE's Publications 1945



THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF OSE, INC.
World-wide Organization for Child Care, Health and Hygiene Among Jews
FOUNDED IN 1913
24 WEST 40TH STREET · NEW YORK 18, N.Y.

No. 1 - 2 January - February 1948

"O S E" NEWS RELEASE

(1) OSE REPRESENTATIVE EN ROUTE TO POLAND

A special delegate of the World Union OSE, Dr. A. Rosenbluth, is now en route to Warsaw and Lublin, with the permission of the Russian government and the Polish authorities, according to a cable received by the American Committee of OSE from the European office of the World Union OSE in Geneva.

Dr. Rosenbluth has been instructed to cooperate with the Central Jewish Committee in Poland, and their representatives, Dr. Sommerstein and Dr. Hershenhorn, in the re-establishment of the former medical institutions of the Jewish Health Society (TOZ) there, and in extending medical help to the surviving Jewish population.

By agreement with the Lublin authorities, a unit of doctors, nurses and welfare workers, provided with the necessary medical equipment and supplies, will soon proceed to Poland.

(2) MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZES EVACUATION OF ONE HUNDRED VISAS TO JEWISH CHILDREN

The Mexican branch of the OSE was officially notified by the Mexican government that it has approved the immigration of one hundred Jewish refugee children from Europe to Mexico. The Mexican Consul in France has been instructed to issue visas for the children as soon as they are selected. These children will come from OSE Homes in France, where they have been sheltered since the outbreak of the war.

Upon receipt of this information, the American Committee of OSE started negotiations with the J.D.C., Hias and Hicem on the matter of transporting the children to Mexico. The American Committee also advised its Swiss and French offices of the permission of the Mexican government and the conditions under which the children will be admitted to Mexico, namely, visas will be granted to children up to 15 years of age, and on their arrival in Mexico, they will have to be placed in homes of foster parents in Mexico City.

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No. 3 - 4 March - April 1948

"O S E" NEWS RELEASE

(1) DIRECT HELP TO CHILDREN IN FRANCE

Several reports have reached the American OSE Committee concerning the desperate need of shoes and clothing of all kinds among the children under the care of the OSE in France. The following is an excerpt from a report sent by Raoul Reinach and transmitted to the American Committee of OSE by the courtesy of Baron Robert de Rothschild:

"The situation is most difficult. The children one sees around are wearing boots and shoes we would be horrified at letting our own children put on because of the harm they cause to the feet. Kids sleep in their OSE shirt for they have no other, nor have they any underclothes. Blankets have been cut up into clothes so there is a lack of these and all bedding, and also of towels with which to dry themselves. Actually, it has had a bad effect on their morale, because already many children are embittered the life they have had to lead -- loss of family, living under false name, etc., and when these children go to the public as in rags and patches, they feel ashamed and self-conscious, and makes them have that inferiority complex."

Dr. Boris Tschlenoff, head of the European OSE, made it known a recent cable that new children's homes - so sorely needed not be set into operation for lack of bedding, linen, blank and other supplies.

To meet these desperate needs, the American Committee of O arranged with representatives of the French authorities in United States for the immediate shipment to France of supp prepared for this purpose. These include 8,600 lbs. of p tive foods, 1,100 sets of meat products, 1,450 pairs of shoes and 4,000 lbs. of new children's clothing schedule early shipment. The British OSE has also shipped men's clothing and 10,000 sets of milk.

From private collection of Olga Potap

In a few years, she settled in Paris, where she completed her medical specialization in radiology. Valentine Cremer joined the French branch of the OSE from its creation in 1934; she organized the arrival of children after the *Kristallnacht*. A member of the OSE executive committee in 1939, doctor Cremer was first active in Paris, at the Rothschild hospital. In 1942, she joined the management of the OSE in Montpellier. In 1947, she was one of a few OSE's representatives who visited North Africa and established the OSE branches there.

The OSE projects were coordinated with and supported by many Jewish and non-Jewish religious and secular organizations. In 1948, *OSE Mail* published the appeal for help addressed to the countries through which refugees passed and hoped to find asylum. This appeal states: "It is also the duty of each individual (…) to support the work of the humanitarian organizations in their effort towards the relief of suffering refugees" and thus toward the creation of a "brotherly world" (OSE Mail, 1948).

Working with Holocaust Survivors (First and Second Generation), 1960–present

In 1951, the French Republic awarded the OSE the honorary title of *Utilités Publiques Institution* as a recognition of exceptional services to the population of France. At the same time, the OSE started implementing pilot projects in medico-social, educational, and other socially significant spheres for their subsequent replication in France and

other countries financed by government agencies and private foundations. Such projects began to be implemented by the OSE in the early 1960s.

The objectives of the programs were the following:

1. Medical, social and educational, and hygienic assistance to the most vulnerable groups of the Jewish population, openness to those in need of help, regardless of ethnic and racial origin and political orientation.
2. Cooperation with state, administrative, and associative cultural and fund structures in the framework of implementing necessary projects.
3. The social significance of projects on the scale of the most urgent state and local tasks of the countries of residence.
4. High quality of implemented projects based on the most modern innovative technologies.

To organize practical cooperation with the state, public, and private institutions, an Administrative Council was created. It was comprised of experienced state leaders, owners of investment funds, lawyers, and well-known public figures. The first President of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation, later the First President of the European Parliament, Mme Simone Veil (former prisoner of Auschwitz), was a member of the Administrative Council of the OSE. At the same time, a Scientific Committee was organized with the participation of reputable scientists aimed at elaborating innovative projects and ensure their subsequent supervision.

Two main driving trends of the OSE activities were:

1. Implementation of innovative techniques, insufficiently profiled in other institutions;
2. Assisting to the population groups that cannot find aid in public and private institutions for various reasons (social, financial, religious).

The main activities of this period were intended to protect children and adolescents' physical and psychological health for their harmonious rehabilitation. This field of activity also covers the non-Jewish population—families of migrants from African and Asian countries with complicated socio-cultural adaptation.

Countries with the most successful economic systems, advanced medical technologies, and the most prosperous social security systems face a global demographic problem—the aging of the population. A significant increase in the number of older adults with functional, psycho-social problems is typical for this age group, especially the presence of combined chronic pathology that creates preconditions for the loss of autonomy in daily activities. The OSE's response was to search for an adequate and targeted system of medical and social security, psychological support for this category of the population and their family members—spouses, children, etc. As always, the OSE focuses its efforts on the most disadvantaged group requiring additional attention comparing to the majority of the population. Traditionally, this is the most vulnerable part of the Jewish population.

The OSE paid particular attention to the following groups:

- Elderly Jews who survived Nazi occupation in death camps (Holocaust)—the older generation; or in illegal settlement in France ("hidden children")—the younger generation.

- Jews—immigrants from the decolonized countries of North Africa forced to leave their countries of residence in 1950–1960 because of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In order to understand better medical, psychological, and social status of the groups for patronage in the elderly population category selected by the OSE, a brief historical overview is needed.

Immediately after the end of World War II, the OSE France never lost sight of individual special programs for Holocaust survivors. The main OSE projects were: orphanages for war orphans; archives for tracing of relatives for family reunification, later for the payment of the contrubutions by Germany.

The important task was the provision of medical and social security and psychological support for a large number of displaced persons who looked for the shelter in France. They arrived semi-legally from the countries of Eastern Europe and North Africa where they faced hostility from members of the local population who shared anti-Semitic prejudices. The overwhelming majority of survivors in the death camps were young people who had lost their relatives and friends. They were physically and psychologically exhausted; they did not understand the reasons for the many years of sufferings that fell upon them. Therefore, they rejected faith in God, people, justice, and any definitive future. A significant part of them were immigrants from Poland, where, upon leaving the camps, they set out to start a new life where it was interrupted. They have seen the unfriendliness of their neighbors who, based on the wide-spread anti-Semitic sentiments, revealed a reluctance to give back property. The situation often resulted in violence and mass pogroms. They left Poland with the words: "You can't live in a cemetery"; many of them became displaced and ended up in displaced persons camps in Germany often located in former concentration camps guarded by the occupying forces of the victorious countries. Lacking work and psychological support, they turned into "ghosts". The most persistent and enterprising of them tried to leave the camps in both legal and illegal ways, contacting their surviving relatives in the United States, in England, which had a mandate to temporarily rule Palestine, and in some countries of Western Europe.

The Jewish agency *Sochnut*, a non-governmental institution, did everything possible to help those who survived after many years of suffering (mainly young people) to return to everyday life while preserving Jewish cultural traditions, and settling in countries with a democratic post-war system (with the opportunity to participate in the construction of the nascent state of Israel in the future). For many, such a country turned out to be France, where many Jews escaped from the Nazi-occupied territories. The French government probably was burdened with a fresh memory of the crimes of the pro-fascist occupation regime did not mind their arrival.

The OSE provides medical and psychological support to survivors. The ORT[7] offers professional training that allows the participants to master profession quickly, taking into account individual psychological characteristics, family traditions, and

[7] The ORT is a global education network driven by Jewish traditions. Since its foundation in 1880, the ORT has been transforming lives through training and education. Starting from teaching Russian Jews professions in the 19th century, the ORT has evolved to provide 21st-century skills to empower people and strengthen communities. https://www.ort.org/en/about-ort/about

market demands. The American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) provides financial support to the OSE and the ORT.

Handicraft professions in clothing and footwear making met these requirements optimally due to the ability to create small family businesses quickly, constructive manual activities suitable to getting started at home with a simple universal technique (sewing machine), and high demand for labor products in post-war France. Such work undoubtedly stimulated the creation of traditional family relationships among those who had lost all or most of their loved ones when loneliness aggravated psychological traumas.

In many cases, the couples quickly formed strong marriages. Men and women met at the ORT's classes, in the OSE's clinics, in synagogues, where a significant part of Ashkenazi rabbis (who also escaped extermination) provided single young people the possibility to get acquainted according to traditions but without emphasis on religious rites (taking into account the complicated attitudes towards them amongst many).

A typical household family situation of that time (about 1950) could be described as such: a family rented a three- or four-room apartment in a relatively cheap area (the former area of compact residence of deported Jewish artisans). One room is a master bedroom, the second one is a nursery, the third room is a workroom with equipment, and a living room, if possible. A family members worked 12–14 hours a day. The finished products were sold in the market, where, simultaneously with the sale of goods, socialization processes took place—acquaintances were formed and meetings with fellow citizens happened. This created a cultural community, family friendships, and professional unions.

It should be especially noted that while partially retaining some nostalgic cultural autonomy of the *Yiddishkeit*[8] (concerts, performances, newspapers, and magazines, and sharing the ideological views of pre-WWII families—the Bund, the Jewish workers' party from Russia and Poland), the new community quickly adapted to the French social and cultural life. This adaptation was coupled with a keen interest toward political news, popular music, and literature. Children learned about the French culture in schools and gathered for summer holidays in sports camps of the scout type.

Over time, the family shops, small enterprises for the production of accessories replaced the spontaneous market. Financial well-being increased, and people bought out the apartment they rented. They began to go to the seashore for vacation, purchase real estate there. Travel abroad became fashionable. The grown-up children entered higher educational institutions, received prestigious education, and became full-fledged French citizens.

The following are extracts from three different life stories of survival as they were told. These are the fates of people who did not want to surrender in adverse circumstances and who were strong enough to resist them even when the hope of salvation was faint. The testimonies are expounded by Grigori Nekritch.

[8] The quality of being Jewish; the Jewish way of life or its customs and practices. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/yiddishkeit

Testimony 1

Mr. H. was born in Poland in a very poor, large family in a small village. He was the oldest son. He graduated from the primary religious school, which was compulsory for all Jewish boys of that time—the *Heder* school, which means room. It really was a room where the teacher (*melamed*) taught literacy, gave initial knowledge of Jewish religious and cultural history (through reading the *Torah*) and (which is very important) methods of further education. The main thing in the methodology was to instill an unlimited curiosity and a desire to learn. We know what role this technique played for many scientific and creative discoveries of the 20th century.

However, the circumstances of life often did not allow them to continue their education and our hero ended up with *Heder* education. Afterwards, it was life itself that became his teacher. At the age of ten, despite an ardent desire to continue his studies, he went to work as an auxiliary worker. His father said: "A payment for your studies will make it impossible to buy bread for the other children". He worked and helped to support his family.

In 1939, Poland was occupied by the Nazis. H. was seventeen years old. In the first days of the occupation, he saw terrible scenes of humiliation and violence against the Jews. Father said: "We will all perish, only you have an insignificant opportunity to be saved alone. Try to take the risk of illegally crossing the border with the USSR. Nobody knows what will happen there, but nobody will survive here". An attempt to cross the border with a few daredevils succeeded.

In the Soviet Union, he was immediately asked to accept Soviet citizenship. From contacts with the local Yiddish-speaking population (which allowed informal, confidential communication in an unfamiliar environment), H. realized that he would lose even a minimal hope of returning to the homeland. He refused and was exiled along with other "refuseniks" to a labor camp tin the Northern Russia. Accustomed to work, experiencing physical and psychological difficulties but keeping the ability to adapt and look for any chance in the situation of constant danger of being broken and destroyed, H. survived in unbearable conditions.

After the war, he returned to Poland in the hope of finding relatives. But none of the relatives survived. In search of at least some evidence of the last days of the family's life, H. faced savage manifestations of anti-Semitism, insults and physical violence. H. got out of Poland illegally, trying to leave for the Palestine, which was under British mandate.

He was detained by the British authorities who blocked all routes and sent H. to Germany to a camp for displaced persons, where people who survived all the horrors of war and left without family and shelter were gathered. These camps were guarded by the occupying forces of the victorious countries depending on the zone of their deployment. With the help of the guards—Yiddish-speaking soldiers in the Soviet, American, and British military units, —he made his living by selling and exchanging scarce goods (cigarettes, etc.).

Ultimately, with the support of the Jewish International Agency H. got to Paris semi-legally, alone, without work, without a place to live, without knowing the language, with the burden of what he had experienced (...) He found the surviving

Jewish “returnees” and found his first job—a clothes ironer. At the ORT, he began to study the craft—sewing clothes. In search of acquaintances, with the invitation of the rabbi, he visited the synagogue on Friday evening, where he met a young woman from Poland, who from the age of sixteen went through several ghettos and concentration camps and survived the “death march”. Thanks to the archival social service of the OSE, the relatives of H. found him. Before the war, these relatives settled in France and survived the occupation in a refuge granted by the noble French men.

H. and his fiancé soon got married, two children were born. A family rented an apartment, acquired a sewing machine, worked in turns sixteen hours a day, took the finished products to the market, where they learned everyday French—the home language of communication had always remained Yiddish. In the 70s, they bought their own boutique selling winter clothes and sheepskin coats. There were always many Russian visitors, performers, and tourists from the USSR. H. spoke Russian with pleasure, telling them of his experiences in Russia, recalling the Russian people with great sympathy. Children graduated from universities; one became a doctor and the second a film producer. H. has grandchildren. H. and his wife managed to travel around many countries as tourists, visited Israel, went to concerts, and participated in charity events.

In 2000, the wife became seriously ill, lost her autonomy, became a regular patient of the OSE gerontology service, and received psychological support. He categorically refused to place her in a nursing home, doing all the care work himself for many years. The only organization he trusted was the OSE, which helped him and his wife greatly.

Testimony 2

Mr. N. was born in Galicia into a Jewish family. During the first twenty years he changed his citizenship several times without ever leaving his home. After the fall of Austria-Hungary in 1919, his homeland became Ukraine, then Poland, and in 1939—the USSR.

Before WWII, N. was drafted into the Soviet Army, which ultimately saved his life because the Nazis utterly destroyed all Jewish communities of this region. In the hostilities of WWII, he was a soldier of the Red Army in the mountains of North Caucasus, where the enemies were well-trained detachments of German climbers. His military unit holding the defenses was surrounded by the Nazis and locked in the gorge. The Nazis waited for the morning to take them prisoners.

It was in October, and there was snow in the gorge. Many were wounded but could not get medical assistance; they screamed expecting death sentence for Jews next morning. This was the evening of the Jewish holiday of *Sukkot* (the holiday of Tabernacles in Christian tradition). To distract from the chaos that reigned around and the expectation of the inevitable, Mr. N. along with other Jewish soldiers begin to collect wooden debris and build a traditional hut with appropriate traditional rituals; so the festive night passed.

In the morning, everyone who could hold a weapon was ordered to go for the breakthrough. Very few managed to break through and rejoin the army. Mr. N. was

seriously wounded, evacuated to the rearward area, spent a lot of time in hospitals, and continued the war as part of auxiliary construction units in tough living and weather conditions.

After the war, he returned to his hometown, but did not find anyone from the family. He took advantage of the unsettled system of border control of the initial post-war months when the military conflict of the Red Army and Ukrainian nationalists continued, illegally left the country and, having gone through a lot of obstacles and camps for displaced persons, ended up in a column of the French returning home after being freed from forced labor in Germany. So, he ended up in Paris in the same situation—loneliness, without knowledge of the language and professional skills.

N. followed the same path as the previous witness—the psychological and medical assistance of the OSE, a short professional training at the ORT—and got a wishful profession of a furrier. He spent many hours of daily work for hire, had a profitable independent business, and had a material well-being until the termination of professional activity. Soon after his retirement, his wife died, children left; as a result, loneliness and the loss of the dear ones triggered a sharp deterioration in health and impaired cognitive functions. Behavioral problems rapidly progressed; an anxiety syndrome with a paranoid component developed; moments of confusion, autism, conflict with children arose and progressed.

He was put to the OSE gerontological center with a particular rehabilitation program for those who suffered severe psycho-trauma at a young age. His children completed a specialized course for family assistants of elderly Holocaust survivors[9].

Testimony 3

The parents of the narrator were born in the 1930s. They were socially successful, culturally assimilated doctors who did not observe any Jewish traditions, they rarely and reluctantly mentioned their Jewish roots. Nevertheless, in adolescence, their children learned that not all of their grandparents survived after deportation. As for the parents, they were hidden in peasant families in small villages. Together with foster parents, they attended Christian services and hid in the forest during Nazi raids.

Their children grew up in a prosperous family, received everything necessary for cultural and professional development; but retrospectively they noted the lack of psycho-emotional parental attachments (the most frequent complaint of children whose parents experienced tragic moments of the Holocaust). Also, their parents never had any close friends, and most of their time was occupied by work.

[9] It should be added that the process of restoring families of Jewish immigrants from the Arab countries of Northern Africa followed approximately the same scheme. The psychological trauma of this group was not so devastating but also significant (of course, taking into account individual psychological resistance)—upon leaving the countries of origin, this category of Jewish refugees lost their property, their traditional way of life; the climatic conditions also changed. Most of them were religious people; thus, religious organizations helped them in their socialization. By the time of their arrival, the social assistance from the state was more significant. They got social housing and employment benefits from the French state.

By the time of the testimony, the parents were already about 70 years old. Their professional activity was declining after the age of 60. Desocialization worsened, and anxiety appeared based on the expectation of tragic events related to their past. Unfortunately, the children did not have any clue about their parents' past. However, the children were asked to be ready for a quick evacuation in the event of a threat "from the outside". Suitcases with basic necessities were prepared. Parents repeatedly offered joint "training", namely, to go to the forest at night and to orientate themselves on the terrain. Naturally, the children refused to follow these suggestions, which caused serious tension in the family relations.

In turn, children traumatized by these circumstances felt helpless and experienced an increase of the anxiety-depressive state (third-generation trauma). They turned to medical specialists for help and had learned that their parents were diagnosed with progressive mental disorders associated with psycho-trauma suffered in childhood. The doctors stressed that their parents did not recall traumatic events, thus creating distorted projection onto the present leading to inappropriate behavior and a sub-partial and progressive loss of autonomy in everyday life.

* * *

Nonetheless, in France, even a quarter of a century after the end of World War II, the topic of the Holocaust was not an open subject due to "political correctness". Testimonies of survivors of this tragedy were not known by the public, especially by the post-war generation. By early 80s, new historiography appeared and public opinion about the Holocaust has been changed. The direct participation of the political leadership in mass deportation of Jews to death camps, collaborationism, snitching became evident. Public hearings, publications on Holocaust, separate high-profile trials with the witnessing of the victims took place. The world-famous documentary *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann was released consisting entirely of victims' testimonies. Serge and Beate Klarsfeld published *Le mémorial de la déportation des juifs de France* [The Memorial of the deportation of the Jews of France], which listed the Jews deported from France, died in internment camps or executed in France during the occupation (1940–1944).

In 1995, the newly elected President of the French Republic Jacques Chirac publicly acknowledged the responsibility of France for participating in the Holocaust and called on the country's population to pay tribute to the memory of the victims, to compensate material and moral losses of the survivors as much as possible, and to prevent oblivion of this tragedy in order to not allow new relapses of anti-Semitism. French Prime-Minister Alain Juppé appointed special commission to study in detail the possibilities of compensation to survivors in order to improve their quality of life, provide medical and psychological assistance, and cover social and cultural needs. The government decided to use part of the funds assigned for survivors for continuing research, dissemination of knowledge about the Holocaust among general public, and elaboration of educational programs for the younger generation. A special government decree established the Holocaust Memorial Fund (*Fondation*

pour la Mémoire de la Shoah) for collecting resources of the state and of the donors from different countries.

In addition, practically all French citizens—Holocaust survivors, former prisoners of concentration camps, "hidden children", some of the natives of North Africa who survived the occupation of these territories and were forcibly mobilized into labor camps, were involved in the Trauma Memory Quality Questionnaire (TMQQ), which was used to determine the strength of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

For a significant number of the surveyed people, their memories caused negative psycho-somatic consequences and inadequate behavioral reactions; consequently, family relations, especially intergenerational relations, worsened. The children who accompanied their parents to the surveys often for the first time learned about the details of the tragedy experienced by their parents, because the parents rarely and reluctantly shared their experiences with other people in fear of psychological breakdown.

The TMQQ included questions concerning general information about the need of the involvement of psychologists and doctors specializing in diseases of the people of old age—the life period of "accumulation" of various combined chronic diseases and a decrease of psychological resistance.

The problem of the overwhelming majority of elderly people on pensions is a loss of social activity. The children grew up, left their parental homes, created their own families. The OSE specialists—psychologists, gerontologists, psycho-geriatricians, social workers—are called upon to neutralize, if possible, the negative psycho-somatic effects revealed by the TMQQ, and, on a global scale, to create a system of rehabilitation and prevention of complications. First of all, it was necessary to identify the profiling pathology and its features connected with the trauma experienced at a young age. A significant number of the surveyed had various degrees of depression and psychological instability, low self-esteem associated with desocialization, as well as memory impairment of vascular and neurodegenerative character: psychomotor disorders, inadequate behavioral response to external stimuli—unjustified fears, suspicion with the elements of paranoia and negativism.

In 2010-11, in the partnership with leading specialized institutions, the OSE specialists created a pilot project of medical and psycho-social rehabilitation center for elderly patients who have undergone severe, long-term mental trauma in childhood and adolescence. Most of the funding for the project for the first two years was provided by the Holocaust Memorial Fund. According to the project, the foundation of several interconnected specialized centers with different therapeutic areas for psycho-somatic disorders was planned. The ideology of the centers is based on two main principles: firstly, to help elderly patients in their socialization and keeping feasible creative activity; to provide psychological correction and regular qualified medical supervision. The second principle is the assistance for the family caregivers—spouses and children—in providing partial physical and mental relief, psychological support, training in communication and care. The professional staff was hired and trained in accordance with the profile of the center.

The important factor for the survivors is their belonging to the Jewish traditional cultural heritage within which their childhood, adolescence, and post-war years were spent. This heritage is not lost despite the tragic events of the Holocaust. At the same time, according to the long-term tradition of the OSE, the project presupposed free entry into the general programs of elderly people from other religious and cultural backgrounds.

As a part of the lager project of rehabilitation, under the auspices of the OSE social *Café des Psaumes on Rue des Rosiers* in Paris was opened in the center of the area, which until World War II was a residence of Jewish artisans from Eastern Europe. *Café* offers cultural activities aiming to breathe new life into the neighborhood's "Jewish soul". Although the café's priority is seniors, Holocaust survivors and immigrants from North Africa, it is open to all, fostering intergenerational bonds and raising awareness of Jewish culture[10].

The patients who were traumatized by the Holocaust found relief in informal interviews, sharing the memories in the presence of trained psychologists and psychiatrists. The OSE organized a day hospital of medical and social orientation for patients with chronic psychosomatic pathology and partial loss of autonomy in daily activities as a result of psycho-trauma, which plays a significant role in the clinical manifestations of the disease. The staff includes qualified professionals who are responsible for medical supervision, psychological support, social assistance, and cultural stimulation, as well as necessary hygiene care. All specialists regularly improve their knowledge in the field of psycho-trauma correction. The OSE designed a platform for helping family members of patients and organizes regular conferences with the specialists, as well as provides popularization of knowledge about various aspects of diseases and recommendations for care and psychological support.

In few years, the project of medical and psycho-social rehabilitation center was certified by the government, subsidized by the state and recommended as model for replicating. The OSE becomes a focal point, a place for internships of students and specialists, a referent source for the development of new techniques in gerontology. The OSE in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Fund (leading donor), the Joint and the ORT disseminates the Project's proven results for Jewish community centers in various countries. Together with colleagues from Israel, England, Spain, Germany, Poland, and Lithuania, after numerous seminars in Paris and elsewhere, the Project was replicated and adapted for particular contexts of several former Soviet republics (Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan), Israel, Morocco and India. Typically for the OSE's practice, in the partnership with India logistics are carried out by young people of different specialties—OSE's volunteers. Continuous partnership with these countries is maintained in terms of practical and research activities at a collegial level with interested government structures.

[10] *Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*, https://www.fondationshoah.org/en/help-for-survivors/cafe-des-psaumes-oses-community-based-social-cafe

Covid–19 Pandemic

Amid the Covid–19 pandemic, almost 110-year history of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (OSE) has once again demonstrated the ability to adapt quickly its professional activities and humanistic orientation to the new circumstances in order to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population in large-scale emergencies.

The Covid–19 pandemic and associated quarantine restrictions are known to have caused the greatest harm to the health of the least protected segments of the population. These are patients with chronic diseases, immune system deficiencies, weakened psychological defenses combined with social vulnerability, loneliness of the elderly–the essence of the OSE's long-term professional specialization. Uncustomary clinical aspects of the disease, especially high contagiousness and unusually complicated clinical course, lack of professional experience, lack of emergency situations personnel caused, at first, a certain amount of confusion among the administrative bodies and political leadership of many countries, including France. Urgent recommendations were needed from reputable institutions accustomed to working in extreme conditions.

Due to its historical experience, the OSE enjoys well-deserved trust, as a recognized center for testing pilot projects that are subsequently replicated in other institutions. The current emergency has been no exception. The OSE became the main advisory partner of the medical and social administrative bodies performing selective monitoring and general analysis of observations of the condition of their permanent wards and participating in the development of specific recommendations.

Sudden, strict quarantine measures with forced isolation of large masses of the population often created insurmountable difficulties, primarily for people with disabilities, especially the lonely and unsocialized ones. At the same time, a large number of medical and social workers got exposed to the virus and were unable to perform their professional duties for a long time.

It is not for the first time in the eventful history of the OSE, that a need arose to quickly adapt the functional activity of its numerous structural units to the new conditions within the framework of the official epidemiological regime prescribed by the authorities. Once again, within the OSE's glorious tradition, there was an appeal for volunteers who were needed to search, alert and establish contact with the "lost patients"—primarily those who did not have access to communications. Also, medical workers were needed who were able to allocate some time to serve the patients—at the medical centers, as well as remotely.

It was "the old guard", the OSE pensioners, who were the first to answer the call. In some cases, on voluntary basis, the functions were expanded—doctors of related specializations, under the guidance of professional specialists, started to master the necessary methods and techniques of treatment. Most significantly, poly-specialization was needed during mass vaccination (the OSE took upon itself the specialized vaccination of patients with compromised immunity due to various chronic diseases) when vaccine injections are carried out by doctors of various specializations.

To ensure the uninterrupted functioning of various OSE institutions (round-the-clock in some of them—orphanages, shelters for severely disabled people of all ages), the Coordination Center promptly replaced absent employees of other institutions based on the minimized needs of each. Due to epidemiological regulations, all daytime meeting centers were closed—social institutions, clubs, cafes of psychological and social support for the elderly survivors of the Holocaust ("hidden children") and forced deportees from North African countries. Internet connections were established with the majority of these people, as well as with relatives of patients in day centers for people with disabilities, during the first weeks of total quarantine. Their urgent needs were identified and, as far as possible, resolved.

The OSE monitored and analyzed the general situation among its patients. In a few weeks, a sharp deterioration in the psychosomatic state of many patients, especially those completely isolated, who did not have the opportunity for face-to-face communication with their familiar environment, was determined. The severity of their condition in many cases outweighed the risk of infection minimized by compliance with epidemiological standards. For such patients, at the suggestion of the OSE, the interrupted activities of daily rehabilitation centers were restored, with enhanced system of anti-epidemic measures in place. The life of these patients soon returned to its usual routine.

The OSE experience has been replicated in similar institutions in France.

Figure 7
OSE's Staff Member amid COVID-19. In the Background is a Picture of Moses ben Maimon (1138–1204), a Rabbi, Physician, and Philosopher. Very Symbolical

From private collection of Grigori Nekritch

Conclusion

In the publication dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the OSE, A Legacy for the Future: 90 years of the *L'Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants* [Une memoire pour le futur, 2003], the OSE mission statement was presented as follows:

> After its foundation ninety years ago in St. Petersburg, the OSE caries on, develops, and diversifies its activities and remains faithful to the moral principles that have prevailed since its creation: solidarity, humanity, and remembrance of the past (…) As a Jewish organization, the OSE

> keeps the moral principles and the sense of solidarity of Judaism alive. However, the association is open to all the religious and spiritual communities of France. (Une memoire pour le futur, 2003, p. 124)

For more than a century, the international organization OSE has demonstrated to the world the enduring importance of eternal human values, which are historically shared by Jewish people—the ability to resist the evil, compassion, solidarity, striving for social justice, advanced professional knowledge, and, if necessary, self-sacrifice. The results of the OSE's activities in the 20th century, full of dramatic events, showed the validity of its conceptual, professional, and humanistic principles. Each stage took place in the context of global conflicts of the time and, at the same time, was an adequate response to the vital needs of the weakest.

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ARTICLE

Tradition as a Homeland to Return to: Transnational Religious Identity of the Post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the outcome of a long-term field research into the transnational identity of the post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry. It analyzes biographical interviews taken between 2015 and 2018 in St. Petersburg and Minsk to define the religious identity and day-to-day practices of post-Soviet Orthodox Jews. In this article, I argue that the communities of post-Soviet Orthodox Jews is a new socio-cultural phenomenon with no historical prototypes. As to the research methodology, it was a combination of the transnational approach, random choice case-study targeting post-Soviet Orthodox communities of Orthodox Jewry in large cities, and the biographical method. The backbone of the post-Soviet Orthodox communities of different strains of Judaism was formed in 1990–2008. It is made up of three generations of men and women born in the late 1940s–1960s, mid-1960s–early 1970s, and the 1980s. Each of these generations is characterized by its own unique pattern of observance, the formation of which is directly conditioned by the circumstances of involvement in religious Jewry. The transnational pattern of observance of the Post-Soviet Orthodox Jews involves the model they confronted at the very beginning of their journey, the model they learned in overseas educational institutions or through incoming envoys and rabbis in the country of residence, and the model of balance between the required and possible in the modern post-Christian and post-atheist environment.

KEYWORDS

Post-Soviet Orthodox Jews, transnational religious identity, transnational approach, models of compliance, biographical method

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Introduction

Academic study of the post-Soviet observant Jewry in a diversity of its congregations and modes of compliance is the only recently emerging ethnography of post-Soviet Jewish communities that remained in the former Soviet Union (Cooper, 1998, 2003; Golbert, 2001; Goluboff, 2003, 2008; Sapritsky, 2010). Work on ex-Soviet Jews in post-Soviet countries is still scarce and is highly dominated by the survey method, archival and statistical data (Sapritsky, 2010, p. 17). In this article, I invite the reader to get acquainted with the results of my research of the post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry from the perspective of their transnational patterns of identity, through which they construct trans-local discourses about the daily observance of the commandments. Russian-speaking Orthodox Jews of the post-Soviet space are an integral part of the transnational Jewish diaspora and contribute to the discourses of modern observant Jewry about the model of observance in modern conditions.

My field research of the post-Soviet Russian-speaking Lithuanian, Chabad and Hasidic communities of St. Petersburg and Minsk was launched in 2015. My focus was on the religious identity and day-to-day practices of post-Soviet Orthodox Jews. In the beginning, I invariably asked respondents to advise—who, in their opinion, should be interviewed. From time to time, I was asked the same counter questions:

- "Are you only interested in observing? We have men who come to support the *minyan*[1], but they have Russian wives";
- "Do you need those who are strictly observant? I have a friend who is already observing and preparing to undergo conversion";
- "Why don't you talk to our people, who are here on holidays, do not observe, but respect and sympathize?"

After clarifying that I am only interested in observers, the respondents recommended to me "knock on my Facebook[2] account and see the names of my friends (...)". In biographical interviews, mentioning the name of the first rabbi in the respondent's life was often accompanied by an invitation to send a Facebook link to him. Further, regardless of my reaction, they usually sent this link through WhatsApp[3] messenger. Explaining to me the importance of "interviewing this particular rabbi", the respondents emphasized that they continue to communicate through social networks with those with whom they once began their journey to Jewry. Moreover, they often prefer to ask a question not to the rabbi of their local community, but "through the Internet to their rabbi". My next discovery was the diverse world of transnational diaspora ties between Russian-speaking Orthodox enclaves.

As the collection of biographical interviews progressed, it became increasingly clear that the vast majority of respondents came from Jewish families who did not follow the commandments and were not familiar with the Jewish/Judaic way of life. The revival of Jewry, initiated in the 1990s, revealed a complete loss of the connection between the present generations and the previous forms of communal life and daily

[1] In Orthodox Judaism, that is the quorum of 10 adult Jews required for communal worship.

[2] Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

[3] WhatsApp™ is a trademark of WhatsApp Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

observance of the commandments. This entailed an appeal to the experience of the Russian-speaking Orthodox diaspora in Israel and the United States, the arrival of those foreign rabbis and mentors who were ready to go to *perestroika* Russia to revitalize Judaism.

Most of the Chabad, Hasidic and Lithuanian post-Soviet communities were created with the support of the Israeli, American and European Orthodox enclaves of the Jewish diaspora. In interviews with eyewitnesses of those events, the thesis is clearly expressed that the environment of observant Russian-speaking Jews was formed in several stages. The first stage fell on the period of the 1980s and until the early 1990s, when disparate groups of Zionists, religious Zionists and the religious Jewish underground consolidated by mastering the practices of observing the commandments. The second phase took place in 1990–2008 and included the arrival of foreign rabbis who created the infrastructure for observance (synagogues, Jewish kindergartens, religious schools, *yeshivas*, kosher production) and the formation of rigid boundaries for dividing the Chabad, Hasidic and Lithuanian communities (Ostrovskaya, 2019).

The third stage started in 2008 and was marked by the mediatization of the communicative practices of observant Jewry throughout the post-Soviet socio-cultural space. The digitalization of Russian-speaking Orthodox Jewry has made it possible to synchronize and correlate the communicative practices of communities in different localities of the Jewish diaspora. Local communities and synagogues of various post-Soviet countries create their own Internet sites and pages on social media Facebook, VK[4] (short for its original name VKontakte) and Instagram[5]. Their communications about day-to-day observance are intertwined with the numerous practices of religious Russian-speaking enclaves of the Jewish diaspora. The Internet and new media play a key role in bringing about such interweaving (Ostrovskaya, 2020).

Having studied the life of the Chabad, Hasidic, and Lithuanian communities of St. Petersburg, Minsk, and Kiev for quite a long time (2015–2020), I have come to the conclusion that they are very protective of their communal identities and are inclined to strongly exclusive and highly competitive models of religious observance. Their daily life gravitates towards the ghetto format within a wider non-Jewish urban culture. Each of the communities maintains a constant contact with those *yeshivas* of foreign Orthodox enclaves who participated in its foundation. Most of the Chabad, Hasidic and Lithuanian communities are under the leadership of foreign *rabbis* and *rabbanits*[6], who stay for a long time in Russia and the CIS countries.

The core of the membership in the post-Soviet Orthodox Jewish communities consists of three generations: men and women born in the late 1940s–1960s, mid-1960s–early 1970s, and in the 1980s. Each of these generations has its own unique pattern of observance, which evolved as a result of the particular circumstances of their involvement in religious Jewry, the experience of communication with foreign rabbis of a particular strain of Judaism, receiving a religious education, participating

[4] https://vk.com VK™ is a trademark of VKontakte LLC.

[5] Instagram™ is a trademark of Instagram Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

[6] Rabbanit—the wife of rabbi or the female relative of a rabbi, sometimes also an instructor herself.

in the life of a synagogue, and choosing further life strategies. According to different interviews, step-by-step those rabbis formatted the rigid boundaries which divided the Chabad, Hasidic and Lithuanian communities.

In this article, I argue that the communities of post-Soviet Orthodox Jews is a new socio-cultural phenomenon with no historical prototypes. It started as early as the late 1980s and continues evolving. Its identity is a complex and dynamic pattern resulting from religious and "social remittances" of observing Jews. To define this pattern, I employ the transnational approach and the concept of transnational religious networks involving transnational actors, religious practices, "religious remittance" and transnational religious identity (Lacroix, Levitt, & Vari-Lavoisier, 2016; Levitt, 2001, 2002, 2003; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

As for the research methodology, it was a random choice case study targeting post-Soviet Orthodox communities of observing Jewry in large cities. The biographical method, which has proven its viability in the research on hard-to-reach communities (Ostrovskaya, 2016), was employed in the field study to assess the level of respondents' integrity at different ages and to reveal the key elements in their patterns of observance. The material was gathered through criteria-based sampling. The respondents were chosen according to the three main criteria: their place of residence, length of observance and generation. The respondents that met the chosen categories had the length of observance of at least 10 years, a permanent or temporary residence in St. Petersburg or Minsk, and belonged to one of the following age groups: those born in the 1950s, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, or in the 1980s. This article covers a selected number of 18 Minsk and 29 St. Petersburg interviews with Chabad and Migdal Ohr members[7].

Transnational Network of the Post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry

I would like to start my analysis with a brief overview of the key notions of the concept of transnational religious networks and accompany it with illustrations from my research. The Orthodox communities of St. Petersburg and Minsk are different. The distinctive character of the observant Jewish community in Saint Petersburg I discussed in detail elsewhere (Ostrovskaya, 2016). Here I highlight only the main feature, which distinguishes it from the observant community in Minsk. The former is mainly Chabad with a decent infrastructure and secured "religious remittances". Its members born in the mid-1960s and 1970s are in charge of communicating the traditional patterns. By contrast, Minsk dominated by the Lithuanian community involves in its transnational activities different generations with the most persistent adherents to the transnational pattern born in the 1980s.

Transnational actors or transmigrants come from different countries and stay in contact by sharing a common system of beliefs and religious practices. Among these

[7] Since this research dealt with sensitive issues and its publication ought to comply with accepted ethical research guidelines, we find it is necessary to emphasize that all respondents were informed about the fact that I was conducting a sociological study with the intention of publishing a research article in an academic journal. Permission was obtained from the respondents with regard to transcribing their interviews and the quotes used in the publication were also approved.

actors are ethno-religious communities, religious organizations and religious leaders who interact with each other over the national borders (Faist, 2004; Haynes, 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

Post-Soviet observing Jews involved in transnational religious communication tend to stress their cultural and social differences. They participate in "religious remittances" of the relevant transnational Jewish communities, as well as religious festivals and events. They spend holidays in Israel or the United States; attend overseas religious seminars; address broader transnational communities to solve their pressing ideological, material, financial, and other problems. This interaction involves both migrants to Israel or the United States and those who live in the countries of initial socialization, relatives and friends, foreign rabbis and emissaries settled in Russia and Belarus with their families or making trips there.

An in-depth analysis of the post-Soviet transnational landscape has revealed that Chabad and Lithuanian transnational organizations have been its most active parties. In the 1990s, they re-established the Jewish tradition in the countries of the former Soviet Union, spread the transnational pattern of daily religious practices in communities, as well as communicated the patterns of observance and basic religious education.

Transmitting beliefs and values to two or three other countries is typical of both religious communities and individual actors (Levitt, 2002, p. 2). This involves providing for religious organizations in other countries, fundraising, guest visits of religious mentors and religious teachers, religious consultations for believers in the countries of Exodus, pilgrimage, and shipping religious products (Levitt, 2003; Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008).

My interview questionnaire included a question about the basic set of the doctrines and practices for an observing Orthodox Jew. Most respondents stated that although the degrees of observance may vary community wise, the observance pattern differs from the kosher style. These fundamentals include Kashrut, Shabbat, three daily prayers for men, *Chuppah*[8], the Jewish home, the *mikvah*[9], and the family chastity rules. Regarding this question, Respondent T., 1972, born and living in St. Petersburg, the spouse of a rabbi, the headmaster of a women's school, said the following:

> Jewish religiosity is about observing Saturday, Jewish holidays, Kashrut laws of the family chastity. A woman is expected to dress modestly, which means covering her knees, elbows, and wearing a headgear or wig. A married woman goes to the mikvah. A religious man is prescribed a 3-time daily prayer in a synagogue with or without a minyan of 10 men. The degree of observance is relative: some are stricter than the others.

[8] A Jewish wedding or a canopy under which the bride and groom stand during the Jewish wedding ceremony.

[9] A ritual bath or bathing place for married women (for purification in accordance with Jewish law).

The daily routine of St. Petersburg and Minsk Jewish communities includes men's prayer in *minyan*, classes for women and studies of religious texts for men, family and communal Shabbats with optional overnight stays, and cyclical religious holidays. Some of the examples of transnational religious practices, apart from the Sabbath, are the wig as a mandatory headwear for observing married women, celebrations of Sukkot, Hanukkah, Passover, patterns for women's and men's fashion, etc.

Transnational religious practices include communities' financial transfers, fundraising in favor of a foreign subsidiary, charitable donations to overseas religious educational institutions, etc. (Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008, pp. 221–222).

For example, observant Jewry provides for Chabad envoys and communities created in different cities. Emissaries (*shluchim*) are commissioned to go to the former Soviet countries and build synagogues and necessary infrastructure, such as Jewish kindergartens, Jewish schools, *yeshivas* and *kolel*, dining rooms, kosher food stores and so on. Both Chabad and Lithuanian rabbis raise funds for local synagogues, Jewish religious schools for boys or girls.

Transnational religious practices also imply lectures, seminars, training sessions by religious leaders, teachers and scholars of one country in communities and affiliated religious groups of other countries (Offutt, 2011, p. 796).

Both Chabad and Lithuanian communities have been inviting rabbis from abroad, mainly from the USA and Israel. While Chabad *shluchim* tend to bring their families and remain in the host community for a long time, their Lithuanian counterparties prefer to go on trips and stay on if required. Along with this, experts on the Torah and Jewish religious tradition can come to give lectures; *rabbanits* would teach women religious chastity, the concept of the Jewish home, the roles of spouses and mothers, etc.

There are objective and subjective dimensions to the above-mentioned transnational religious practices. The objective dimension is formed by the institutional communication between transmigrants and their home countries. For example, migrants securing their ties with the country of origin tend to join a religious organization, which they associated with before their migration (Levitt, 2001, p. 16). The subjective dimension means that religious commitment and religious practices are used for building social networks in a host country rather than for religious purposes, for example, for obtaining economic support, legal advice, expressing political interests, learning the language of the host country, visiting national schools, joining various hobby clubs, etc. (Carnes & Yang, 2004; Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003).

There are certain features of the subjective dimension for post-Soviet observing Jews. In the early stages of their return to the tradition, most respondents relied on religious practices to migrate and get integrated into the new network more easily. The subjective dimension for observing Jews meant abandoning the sociocultural and other contexts of the country of residence with the following involvement in the transnational network of observant Jewry.

Religious requirements compel believers to seek like-minded people and those who share this worldview. Lonely compliance is hardly possible because of kosher

food restrictions (meat of a properly slaughtered animal, dairy produce from kosher facilities); monthly immersion in the *mikvah* for women; three daily prayers in *minyan* for men, etc. Outside the community, it is difficult to carry out the key rites such as circumcision, the first haircut, *bar mitzvah* and *bat mitzvah*[10], Chuppah, and funeral. The difficulties with implementing observance practices in post-Soviet everyday routines result in people's inclusion into transnational networking and migration.

Other examples of non-religious interest in the Jewish community might be a job in a *yeshiva*, low-cost accommodation and food for children studying abroad through a transnational network, religious festivals of the year cycle, synagogue gathering for elderly Jews with a non-observant lifestyle. Some maintain long-term relations with observing communities to make a *shidukh*[11] and find a Jewish woman or a Jew as a bride or groom for themselves or their children. Jewish youth seeking to preserve their ethnic identity attend events held by Stars clubs in synagogues, which assist in their trips to Israel, finding a married couple, and learning the Jewish cultural and religious tradition.

The next key concept for transnational religious networks is "social remittances"—a term introduced by Peggy Levitt to define interaction of transnational actors over national, territorial and socio-cultural boundaries (Levitt, 1998, p. 926). Levitt compares these interactions with the financial transfers made by migrants from the host to home countries. Her research has shown that stable and long-term contacts between migrants and their homeland are not limited to money. In fact, they are transferring newly acquired or revived religious values, ideas and patterns of interaction. She refers to such "social remittances" as "religious remittances". Thus, "religious remittances" is a transfer of religious values, ideas, beliefs and practices from one sociocultural context to another, as well as their subsequent transformation. These transfers are carried out through the exchange of letters, e-mails, photographs, videos, telephone calls, short-term visits of migrants to their homeland, or relatives to them abroad (Ibid.).

"Religious remittances" carried out by post-Soviet Orthodox Jewry have altered with their integration. After migrating, the majority of respondents have chosen some religious practices to create their own pattern. In fact, they have even recast "religious translations" of professional envoys. This shows in the biographical narrative of Respondent B., born in 1980, NewYork, USA, into a Chabad family with relatives on the mother's side coming from Vitebsk and Nizhniy Novgorod, currently settled with her husband—*shluchim* in Minsk. She recalls the history of Minsk Chabad community covering the construction of a synagogue, kindergarten and school, as well as the census of Jews. She interprets her and her rabbi husband's goals as following:

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[10] Mitzvah—any commandment, ordinance, law, or statute contained in the Torah and, for that reason, to be observed by all practicing Jews. The Talmud mentions 613 such mitzvahs, 248 mandatory (mitzwot ʿase) and 365 prohibitive (mitzwot lo taʿase). Bat mitzvah—a Jewish ceremony held to celebrate a girl reaching the age of twelve, in which she is given the religious responsibilities and duties of an adult woman. Bar mitzvah—a Jewish ceremony held to celebrate a boy reaching the age of 13, in which he is given the religious responsibilities and duties of an adult man.

[11] Shidukh, or shidekh is a marital matchmaking.

> No, we do not work only with those who observe. Here's our class in the pictures. These are guys who don't. Our task is to expose them to the Torah, our traditions, history, and give them choice. Their choice. But of course, we want their positive decision. This is our ultimate goal. But first, we want them to be aware of their identity, so that they appreciated being Jews and wouldn't deny or hide it. Then again, it is crucial that younger people should marry each other. To preserve our people. If you have a Jewish family, you can then work with them, and if a guy marries a Russian girl, according to the Jewish law, the child is no longer a Jew, and there is no one to work with. We work only with halachic Jews, which means that the mom is Jewish, well, it is still difficult. Here we are now, we are preparing for the next school year enrolling children in the first grade. There's a family, their eldest daughter has stayed with us for some time. Then they had another little girl. And I really wanted this girl to come to us. It's a good family and a good mom. They came to the meeting and seemed pleased. But the day before yesterday I talked to her, and I was very upset when she said they wouldn't send her. The husband refused to. And I can't say I don't understand him. He's Russian. He has no connection to the Jewish people, except for the fact that his wife is Jewish. They are a non-observing family, but they are not against their Jewishness. Perhaps even proud of it. But still the husband stands in the way, interferes. And so, one of our goals is to get our children to marry each other.

Having lived in the post-Soviet environment for twelve years, knowing well the Russian and Belarusian urban environment, the respondent transforms the transnational pattern of observance by shifting the emphasis to the ethnic component.

Multiple Transnational Identity of the Post-Soviet Orthodox Jews

Transnational religious identity is a combination of practices acquired in the country of origin and those assimilated in the host countries. It is formed through the "religious remittances" of ideas, values and beliefs, their interpretation and further transformation. Thus, migrants perceive themselves as followers of a specific religious doctrine, and only then as members of a particular ethnicity or citizens of a particular state (Khagram & Levitt, 2008, p. 1). The transnational identity is a multiple identity involving local, regional and transnational dimensions. The local dimension means interaction with the family, friends, peers, and membership in a religious organization. The regional dimensions imply the socio-cultural environment. The national dimension involves the political ideology, traditions and customs of the host country, the attitude of governments towards religious and ethnic diversity, and migrants' integration.

I focus now on the identity of the post-Soviet Orthodox Jews who either have not left the place of socialization, or have returned there. They are not migrants in the literal sense, but rather transnational actors in the global networks of religious interaction. Among these are rabbis born and raised in the Soviet Union who migrated and returned as envoys or as leaders of a particular community. They change places travelling from

Belarus to Israel or from the United States to Russia and vice versa. Another example is ordinary members of the Chabad or Lithuanian communities residing in Belarus or Russia with or without Israeli citizenship, who stay for some months with their relatives in Israel, the United States, take religious courses or go on holidays abroad.

The Orthodox Jews define themselves as "returning to the Jewish tradition" (*baalei teshuva*), rather than citizens of specific states. This distinguishes their transnational religious identity from the conventional concept implying that adjustment begins in the host country with the previously acquired religious values, beliefs and practices transforming and being retransmitted to the countries of origin. By contrast, the assimilation of the new patterns started in Russia and Belarus with their refusal to identify themselves with the ideological, socio-cultural context of the country of their socialization. And here it is perfectly relevant to talk about the three contexts of such a "starting point": the Soviet context of "refuseniks", who sought to leave the country and were denied visas (1); the entropic context of timelessness and chaos of the "*perestroika* era", in which the only life-saving straw was the Jewishness of one's mother or father (2); and the modern context of the islet of Jewish observance in the situation of the post-Christian cultural majority (3).

Returning to the tradition and becoming observant meant becoming aware of the discontinuity in one's family and country. Most of the respondents have gone a long way to form their model of observance. The pursuit has implied migrating, studying at various Jewish institutions, attending religious seminars and educational camps, meeting different teachers and rabbis. As a result, the transnational pattern of observance in post-Soviet Jews involves the model they confronted at the very beginning of their journey, the model they learned in overseas educational institutions or through incoming envoys and rabbis in the country of residence, and the model of balance between the required and possible in the modern post-Christian and post-atheist environment.

I found that in the biographical narratives of different age groups one of the three models prevails. Respondent H. was born in Tashkent, 1960, into a non-religious Jewish family of a military servant, graduated from the Institute of Technology in Leningrad, migrated to Israel, became a rabbi, and returned to St. Petersburg to start a school, which formed the Lithuanian community:

> How did I start observing? Well, I wanted to get acquainted with the Jewish tradition, because there was only the entry in the passport we knew of. Yet to go and learn was not possible in those days. The viable option was to join the Jewish underground community, which wasn't at all easy. They were adamant. We had one "otkaznik"/"refusenik" (the person, who wasn't granted the permission to migrate) at our factory. He was an intelligent person with an engineering degree, who worked as a mechanic, which was considered lucky. Do you know about the Jewish "refusenik" movement? No? I'll fill you in. In short, when Jews applied for the permit to migrate and were refused, the Soviet government stripped them of their social status and canceled their distinctions. They became outcasts in the country where they were born and grew up, fell into the position of "declassed

elements". Are you familiar with this expression? It referred to any kind of deviants, such as drunks, parasites, criminals. So, the waiver of an exit visa placed a man in the "underclass". Their life didn't stop, though. They needed to provide for their families and teach their children. Most "refuseniks" worked at gas boiler rooms, became watchmen, attendants. Most of them had a degree, were the intellectual avant-garde of the time. The "renegade" status meant that they were dead for the state. Anyway, you need to read about that. As to your question, I addressed this "refusenik" at the plant saying: "Mark, I want to learn Hebrew, can you help?" He gave me a phone number and told me to mention his name. I wanted to study Hebrew, not Yiddish. I thought Yiddish was irrelevant to the Jewish identity. Our motto said Israel-Zionism-Hebrew. Israel was perceived as our only hope. What else does a man have when he is cut off from the tradition? There's a country out there where you can be a Jew, live in peace, study, work, have children, develop (...) I didn't think of religion then. I was not a "refusenik", I could not apply at the time, they did not accept applications. I joined the Hebrew group, it was called the Ulpan, which is Aramaic for "the place for education". I didn't know it then. There I began to learn Hebrew. It was nothing serious, a place for the youth to hang out. Mark's sister was there too. She offered me to study the Torah, which she said was "really dangerous". I agreed and got interested. She introduced me to a man, one of the few in the city who did religious texts. Mr. G. worked as a watchman at a construction site, although he was also an engineer. Now I realize that G. had just started to read the Torah, but it was deep in comparison with other groups in the city. And so, I joined them. I gradually became interested in Judaism. It was inevitable. When you immerse in these texts and study complex issues, you take obligations to adhere. After all, it is not solely academic. You begin to observe, like, stop eating non-kosher, then observe the Sabbath, abandon some habits. Many of my friends did the same. What happened next?

In '86 we went on a mountain hike, G. went with us. Once, during a break, we began to discuss our future. Most of us thought that the invincible Soviet government would crush us. The most resentful of us might be released. No one could think of its fall. Foreigners would come and speak of perestroika. We wouldn't listen: it didn't make any difference to us. Our future seemed bleak (...) in a year they started to summon the most notorious refuseniks and offer them to leave. Wow, we were excited! The first stage went smoothly, but we feared that the Soviet government would drop it. No one knew it was about to fall. G. was called on, and he left. Someone had to take up his classes. G. asked me to do it. At that time, I was observing. Obviously, it was necessary to quit the job, because it was difficult to do both. G. quit and so did I. He left in January '87, and in February '88 they began to take applications (...) I applied for a visa and got it in June–July. I had six months to prepare for the move. I took my time and left in December. As soon as I arrived, I entered yeshiva to study. It was a special yeshiva for Jews from the USSR. Then there were several such yeshivas. I was almost 30 at the time. I thought I would study for a year, and then go to work as an engineer because in Israel it is even easier to get an engineering position than in

> Russia. But I studied further. First, I studied, then I got married, then I was offered to come here and open a religious school. The Foundation sent me here in '91 and I opened a school, which lasted for 17 years. I was its Headmaster. After the first three years, I was going to leave, but it turned out otherwise. The Foundation agreed to a compromise: I continue my studies in Israel and come here for a while. As a matter of fact, then I got rabbi's *semicha*[12]. The funding was cut, and the school had to close leaving behind a community of former students and new people. I will support it while I can".

Another two biographical narratives belong to respondents born in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In younger years, they lived through the post-Soviet chaos of *perestroika* and religious revival.

Respondent H., the rabbi of the district synagogue of St. Petersburg, was born into a Leningrad non-religious Jewish family, 1966, studied in St. Petersburg, and remained in Russia to build an observing Chabad community. H. has stated that his dedication resulted from his mother's instructions. He has highlighted the cluster between his original ideas about observance and the pattern of "religious remittances" circulated at that time by Chabad envoys arriving in St. Petersburg. He communicated with Russian observing families, studied in a yeshiva in Moscow, and helped to build a Chabad synagogue in Moscow, which brought him to stay and return to St. Petersburg for the sake of a yeshiva:

> When I was 10, I had a friend, he was not a Jew, but with a Jewish surname. My mother once said to me: "(...) you know what? You and him need to be circumcised? – What? – Circumcised? – What is circumcision? I've heard of it". Mom: "That's how we do it. Jews are circumcised. – Why haven't I then? – Well, when you were born, your grandpa wanted, and I refused. – How come you said no? – In the war they figured us out by circumcision". I was confused then, but started to think of having it. It was the end of '89, Hanukkah.
>
> I also thought of leaving for Israel. I started to convince mom, because I couldn't leave her behind. I begged, but she didn't want. She gave in in six months. We changed the money. 330-odd dollars was it. Rubles to dollars. We got packed. I went to the synagogue at the time. There I asked one friend: "When I come to Israel, say, and want to study in a yeshiva, will they take me?" He said, "Well, of course, they will. But why go to Israel when we have an M.K. yeshiva here in the synagogue". Well, I came to the synagogue and found this M.K. I told him I wanted a circumcision. He pointed at the man standing next to him. I was back from a rehearsal with a guitar. And he says, "Let's go". I was taken aback, asking, "Where to?" – "Well, you wanted to have the circumcision? – Yes, well, I'm not ready. We have a concert in a couple of days. – Do you want to get circumcised or not? – I do. Well, come, then". I did want to. Then came the first Shabbat I observed. On the last day of Hanukkah I was at the concert in C.C. Kirov. M.K. organized it. So, I was slowly getting

[12] Semicha (semikah) is the traditional rabbinical degree conferred by Orthodox rabbis.

into it. On the day of the circumcision, I came home. Mom asked, "Did you get circumcised? – How did you know? – It's the way you walk, I can tell". I had a lie-in for two weeks thinking I did the hardest part. What was next? Shabbat, Kashrut (...) As for migration, it was quite a story. There were two Chabad Chassids I communicated with. I had some classes with M. K. In the morning we would come to the synagogue and study. In the afternoon, David Abramovich would bring some pie, in the evening we had borscht, that's all we ate. On Saturdays, we went to the Sabbath. But then it stopped. M. started a school and wanted to close the yeshiva. We lost touch with M. K. at some point. I was very, as you say, young and hot-tempered. It was all black and white for me. He was building the first school in the synagogue. Now it is on Dobrolyubova str. He expected us to help along. I asked him, "Will you do prayers there?" – "No, not there. It is not about religion". He wanted a non-religious school. I hoped for a religious teacher then, but he wanted a Jewish school. I told him I didn't see the point. "You do not see the point? Oh well, then you are not going to help me". – "Fine. I will not be helping you". At that time, he was already baffled by the school, did not go to the yeshiva. There was another thing with smoking. I wanted to ban women from smoking. Don't know why it bothered me then. I asked my friend to make a poster of a woman with a cigarette wearing trousers, all black and red. I hung it on the wall for everyone to see. The rabbi's wife was a smoker. She didn't wear trousers, but she liked to think she could if she wished to. When she saw the poster, she asked me, "I can't smoke then, can I? – No, you can't. – You can't come here then". So, there I was with no place to have the Shabbat. I was alone in the synagogue; there was nothing to eat. David Abramovich invited me, and I went to see him on the Sabbath [...] Soon I was finally ready to leave, but I had to fulfill the formalities. Once I spoke to one observing friend about my plans, and he suggested asking the Rebbe. Well, how would I do it? We called the Rebbe's secretary and he referred us to the Local Council of the Chabad Rabbi. There was no such thing in St. Petersburg. I went to Moscow to Berel Lazar. I told him that I wanted to leave, to be repatriated, while I couldn't leave or take my nephew with me.

He says to me, "What are you going to do in Israel? – I'm going to study in a yeshiva – Are you sure? You will have to earn to make a living. Your mother is retired. What will you live on?" I said I would let an apartment. He said, "You will hardly be able to study. You have to decide for yourself. I think you should stay". I thought carefully about his words. I didn't want to give up on my nephew. Then again, there was no point in leaving if I had to work there. In the end, I dropped this idea. But I wanted to learn and called Berel Lazar. He summoned me to Moscow. I went there to study, worked in the community, built a synagogue there, yeshiva. Then I married (...) then I came here to do yeshiva. I've been doing it since 1992.

The similar idea of conflicting transnational patterns of religious values and practices within the same community of Jews returning to the tradition can be traced in most narratives. Here is another narrative by Respondent M., a rabbi in Minsk, born

into a non-religious Jewish family in Mogilev, 1969, who studied in St. Petersburg and then migrated to Israel. He also mentions a non-religious reason for returning to the tradition; conflicting patterns of Judaism renaissance in Russia in the 1990s; final stages of integration into the tradition in Israel:

> I got to St. Pete in a very bad year, when all the students were taken to the army. And, frankly, I don't remember much of the first year. But then, when I left the army, I met E. (...) I'd always been interested in Jewry. By the way, there was this I. D. in St. Pete. You are not familiar with this name, are you? I'll tell you. He did research into Judaism. He founded the Jewish University of St. Petersburg (SPBP). Well, let's just say I love him very much. In fact, I did my first Sabbaths with him. Before I. D. met E., I attended some of his lectures. Well, I was interested in something Jewish. When perestroika started, they opened up some libraries. You could borrow some books there. I saw an ad for this Dvorkin University. Got interested. I went to see it. It wasn't a university then, it was more of a club with all sorts of lectures, Hebrew classes. You see, it wasn't really academic. There was an interesting guest speaker, we would go and listen to him. Well, I did another two years in St. Petersburg like this. I would come round now and then later. I mean. It was right not to go there more often. You see, Judaism is a lifestyle. See, it's a way of life. And Dvorkin's University was about teaching sacred texts to everyone, Jews and not Jews. I am against academic Judaism. In my opinion, it doesn't make sense to study religious texts from a non-religious point of view. For a historian it's OK. I. D. thought that it was possible to study religious texts with no intention to bring people closer to religion (...) E. taught me different things. He came to Peter in '89 to open a school. He started looking for Jews who might be interested. He went to Dvorkin's University and dragged me with a couple of others out of it. He rented an apartment where we celebrated the Shabbat. He studied there with us in-between his trips. He found a man to take care of us when he was away. He left money for us to spend on the Shabbat. I remember it was spacious there. We boiled potatoes, bought salmon. That was a pretty decent Sabbath, even in the absence of Kashrut. Vegetables, some fruit. We sat there geeking out, talking smart. And the apartment was near the Palace Square. We would come to I. D. sometimes, to one of these Ilya's meetings. Ilya was a very peculiar man. I didn't see him for a long time afterwards. Then he came to Kiev, where I worked and lived with my family. I invited him to the Sabbath. His first words were "You should know I'm against Keruva[13]. I teach people, but never persuade. E. had told us once that we should bring non-observing people to the God, and if it takes to persuade, then be it. So, it is none of D's business, whether his students become observant. It is for them to decide. We do not agree on this. We give them a hand when they are falling (…)" What happened then? I didn't get my degree and went to Israel with my parents. I didn't think twice. Everyone went, and so did I. In 1991 we thought it was our heaven on earth. We weren't right. On

[13] Keruva (lit. 'to draw closer' or 'in-rich') is a concept of Jewish outreach, which is directed at Jews who have 'gone astray', or who have been born Jewish in a non-observant family.

the third day I went to a yeshiva. Then started a course at Machon Lev. I married. I was 25 at the time, mind. I studied at Kollel, worked for Ash-a-Torah, an American foundation for observing Americans. They opened a Russian department with an interesting man at whelm. Ash-a-Torah has grown into an Empire, and he was one of those few who started it. He had a Ukrainian background and chose to work with Russian Jews. He comes from a Canadian wealthy respectable family. Ash-a-Torah claimed that Judaism is smart, so they educated a lot. I used to be a *madrich*[14] at their seminars. They raised a lot of money for the Kiev branch. I went to Kiev. My family came and went back. I would go to see them. The affiliate ran out of money. No clue. Raising money is difficult. I can't do it. I know some wealthy people, but I can't ask them. Judaism teaches that theory is better than practice. I've learnt that I got some things totally wrong. I had a dream once to build an ideal community in Kiev. It was a utopia. I see it now. There was this Belarus project. I joined it.

Two biographical narratives of the 1980 respondents reveal new approaches to the issues of the "Exodus", conflicting transnational patterns, life strategy. Respondent I., born into a non-religious Jewish family, 1981, a former long-term *mashgiah*[15] of the Lithuanian synagogue, contributed to the revival of Minsk observing community, repatriated to Israel. According to him, he has been "emerging into Jewry and observing Jewry" since he was 13. His ethno-religious self-consciousness was formed gradually, first, with the help of his parents, then, through closer observance of the tradition, through the reflection on the conflict patterns of religious practices:

(...) until I got into a Jewish Sunday school in '94, I knew nothing. Before his trip to Israel, my dad went to learn Hebrew for a couple of months. At some Jewish concert, he met his teacher, who had just opened a Sunday school for children. She said, "Bring your son, there're children of his age. He'll like it there". I was almost 13 years old. So, I did. The school was organized by the Israeli Cultural Center. It wasn't religious at all. They did some minimum for Hebrew on the then computers with floppy disks. There I learnt the alphabet. They taught us basic things about Jewish holidays. I enjoyed it, though. I went there every Sunday for several months. I didn't have classes on Sundays at school. Why not go then?

The Sunday school enrolled children for summer camping. Went to the camp, then another one. There I learnt that they had opened the second synagogue with classes for children on Fridays. First, children thought of it as a Sunday school rather than a synagogue. It was some sort of entertainment for them. I spent there 23 years (...) The Chabad and Lithuanian synagogues did not like each other, although they cooperated to deal with common problems. The Chabad community built the one and only mikvah at that time. The mikvah in the second synagogue was not completed. Visiting the "alien"

[14] A leader or teacher in Israeli youth groups.

[15] A supervisor authorized to inspect meat stores, bakeries, public kitchens, and commissaries to ensure adherence to Orthodox Jewish ritual cleanliness.

mikvah was not approved by the Rabbi, so he suggested going to Moscow. Then the husband of my wife's teacher stepped in. He taught at the newly opened boarding school Karlin-Stolin Hasidim in Pinsk. He called the rabbi and suggested a reasonable Jewish approach, saying that anybody can go to a kosher mikvah regardless of politics. As it turned out later, the rabbi of the second synagogue was reluctant to take us out of fear to cause a conflict. Anyway, thanks to Pinsk this case was settled (...)

Respondent V., 1979, St. Petersburg, graduated from the Lithuanian school for girls, distanced from and returned to the community with the subsequent migration to Israel. In her narrative, she emphasizes that the idea to move from a regular school to a Jewish school belonged to her mother and grandmother. However, her decision to move to a religious school for girls in the Lithuanian community had provoked protests from the family. She finished this religious school, but then rejected the tradition and went into it later:

When I finished the 7th grade, my mother and my grandmother took me to Sokhnut summer camp, where you come in the morning and leave in the evening. In this camp, I learned about a non-religious Jewish school Yerushalayim. We didn't mean to migrate. We already had 3 invitations from Israel in our closet. My mom didn't want all that, she would say, "St. Pete is our home". Anyway, this school was fun, because it was so non-Soviet. Academically it was no good, though. I decided to get out of there. My girlfriend left, and I was sad. I was 13 years old, when an adult called and asked for me. They asked me if I wanted to study at their religious school. I think the Jewish Agency probably learnt the phone number through Sokhnut. An all-girls school sounded great. And I told my mom and grandma that we would go for an interview the next day. We did and they took me. I learnt it later on August 29th when they called and asked for my documents. It was a big fight at home. My family changed their mind and thought […] Still my documents were handed in and I spent my last 3 years of school there. The schools for boys and girls were in different buildings. The first year was good. I philosophized, even tried to observe. I didn't get the point and felt bad about it. It felt like a burden. And all the time felt that I lump stone rests and presses. By the 10th grade, I had quit. Not that I was really observing, just did a little of something. In the 10th grade, I dropped the idea and decided that I was cosmopolitan and not associated with any religion in the world.

I finished school and entered the Academy of Film and Television. I liked the name. My only interest then was rock music. I walked for 4 hours a day with headphones on, all alone. When I graduated from the Academy, all my romance ended, I got lost, I did not understand who I was, I did not understand what to do (...) Suddenly it was over, studies were over. I had to look for a job, and there was none. When I found a job, I still didn't know what to do with myself. I quit that job, worked as a personal assistant. Gave it up again. Then I met a younger sister of one of my classmates who invited me to a religious camp. I refused. But she was

so persuasive. She pressed me, and I agreed. But I never came back. One girl called me for the Sabbath, but I didn't show up. But then God did something to me. During the class, I decided not to come another time. I went to a rock club one Saturday night. After the concert, I ran into a girl from the community in the doorway. I said, "What are you doing here on Saturday?—Well, I made it the last minute. Had to stand in the back". I thought, "Hmm. There are normal people in this community. I need to go again. That was it. It went from classes to the Shabbat".

Conclusion

Most of the respondents speak about their return to the tradition, which their parents or grandparents broke up with in Soviet times. They have a different pattern for the "Exodus". The country of their primary socialization is the country of departure in the context of regular inter-country migration. It is not the country they leave and return to. They go into and come out of the tradition, which they were fully exposed to as adults, having had some awareness as younger people. As a result, when they chose to stay, the country they were citizens of became their host country.

The generation of the 1950s and early 1960s took "refuseniks" as their first role model on the way to the tradition. They went underground to observe and study religious texts. They did everything by themselves under the pressure from the Soviet government. The second component of their pattern was formed after their migration and exposure to religious values and practices communicated in *yeshivas* and colleges of Israel or the United States. Their pattern was finalized when they returned to the country, which they had left. This time they came as rabbis, envoys, experts on the tradition, teachers, volunteers relevant to the Russian and Belarusian community. Interestingly, the voluntary decision to observe at the start of the pattern was made in the context of prohibition and ideological pressure. With regard to religious practices, we can speak of the subjective dimension here. The decision was made in the hope for migration, without any deep understanding of the ideological implications of the observance of religious texts.

The generation born in the late 1960s and early 1970s worked their way into the tradition at the time of Judaism Renaissance in Russia and Belarus. On the other hand, the total ideological and socio-cultural entropy offered a paradoxical combination of diverse opportunities and the lack of clear-cut patterns. In terms of religious observance, this meant studying, working and living in a country with established religious centers, or staying and coping with this chaos of various projects for religious Jewry revival. Those who stayed learnt different patterns of religious transfers from Chabad envoys, Litvak rabbis, or self-taught individuals. When they left for Israel or joined the community later, they were faced with the inconsistencies in the two patterns. Most interviewees referred to the concept of "ideal Jewry" conflicting with the requirements of the community.

The third feature in their pattern is the post-atheist, post-Christian environment they had to operate in. This environment was vulnerable. There were hardly any

stable elements in the community. Even those who had lived and observed in Russia and Belarus for years did not totally reject the idea of migration. Serious immersion in the tradition, compliance with the Jewish family and Jewish home concepts, religious education and upbringing for children are hardly manageable in Russian and Belarusian modernity. The most common option in both countries is forced migration to Israel for the sake of better schooling and more open lifestyle.

Respondents of the 1980s reveal the third transnational identity pattern. This pattern is not fully completed. Most of them have experienced voluntary deep immersion into the tradition as teenagers, as well as a period of doubt and conflict. As a rule, they were exposed to the tradition in Jewish religious schools, where they learnt to observe in the post-Christian majority, non-Jewish sociocultural environment. This made the first component of their pattern.

Going through the stage of distancing and doubts, they tried different models of observance or patterns with no ethno-religious affiliation. Comparative analysis of the St. Petersburg and Minsk interviews has shown that the second component of the pattern was activated by some events. For women, this event was the marriage to an observant Jew, followed by their further joint in-depth study of values and practices. In the male narratives, there was a variety of options, such as a religious school, migration to Israel to study in a *yeshiva* or *kolel*, frequent visits to the country of departure, imprisonment or fatal diseases of close relatives and friends.

It is crucial that with the 1980s generation, the first component of the "Exodus" was formed in the early stages of socialization through Jewish self-awareness and family-run ethnic identity. In most interviews, both in St. Petersburg and in Minsk, the initiators were the parents, who would offer their 13-year-old son or 12-year-old daughter to go to a Jewish holiday camp or Jewish Sunday school. In some cases, parents, especially Jewish mothers, chose for a son or daughter to study in a Jewish secondary school. However, this choice resulted from mothers' desire for better education with no awareness of the possible ideological consequences for their son/daughter. Thus, the first component of the pattern for this generation meant reflection on the Jewish identity. Later, the respondents would make their own choice in favor of religious education and even observance.

The second component of the 1980s pattern made a revised version of "religious remittances" typical of St. Petersburg and Minsk respondents, who had to compare multiple and partly conflicting religious patterns in their socio-cultural environment. Outside Jewish religious schools, they often examined the Chabad and Lithuanian patterns to make their own choice. Interestingly, some of those who started as Litvaks and went to Israel to study in a yeshiva would return and distance or join the Chabad community.

For the generation of the 1980s, returning to the tradition implied achieving a balance of the religious and secular lifestyles. The respondents of this generation could choose belief or disbelief, secular schools or religious ones, observant Jewry or non-observant Jewry. They established their identity, they took obligations to comply, their lives were bound up with their communities, then they abandoned their communities, and came back with a migration plan.

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ARTICLE

B(ordering) Utopia in Birobidzhan: Spatial Aspects of Jewish Colonization in Inner Asia

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ABSTRACT
The borderline territory serves a double purpose, being simultaneously zones of cultural contact and cultural barriers—administrative and often civilizational. This ambivalence frequently affects borderline area inhabitants turning them into hostages of border management regimes and outside projections concerning their cultural and civilizational status, and the authenticity of forms of their culture representation. In the case of Birobidzhan, we are dealing with an absolutely modern project of creating ethnic territoriality without reference to the historical context and far from the places of traditional settlement of the Jewish population. The implementation of this project put the Jewish settlers at the center of a complex process of border management and securitization of the border areas. The factors of border and "remoteness" are largely underestimated in Birobidzhan studies. The article fills this niche, emphasizing the spatial aspects of the implementation of the "anti-Zionist utopia" and its complex relationship with previous models of territoriality in the region and local inhabitants.

KEYWORDS
Birobidzhan, settler state, Inner Asia, Border Studies

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Birobidzhan is undoubtedly one of the most unusual cities in the Far East of Russia. A tourist visiting the Jewish Autonomous Region[1] will be surprised to see symbolic traces of the Jewish presence, Yiddish inscriptions and monuments to Jewish writers. Cultural policy in the region plays freely with its Jewish past, often reinventing it and creating the appearance of an intense revival of Jewish culture (Maksimowska, 2009). Over time, it will inevitably see the slightly phantom character of Russia's most Jewish city. Most residents have very conditional ties with Jewish culture, do not use Yiddish in their daily lives, and perceive Jewish scenery as regional specifics. Despite the mass exodus of Jews after 1991, the region continues to reproduce its special status and preserve its unique history. In this perspective, the rare enthusiasm for Birobidjan and the frequent criticism in the categories of inconsistency reflect the ambivalent nature of the place that could not become a full-fledged republic for Jews, but cannot stop being one, constantly re-inventing its past.

The vast literature devoted to the trajectories of the Jewish resettlement project in the Far East has left aside the spatial aspects of the project (Dekel-Chen, 2007; Estraikh, 2019; Gurevich, 2020; Weinberg, 1998). By adopting the "empty territory" postulate, the researchers ignored the project's border localization and its deep ties to the tsarist and Soviet border regimes. Studies of the borders of Inner Asia (Peshkov, 2012) provide an opportunity to fill this gap by presenting the essential role of the border regime for all stages of the project's existence. Localization in the border zone has largely determined the main factors of its development. The securitization of the border areas turned the region into a semi-empty territory, the irrevocable closure of the border increased remoteness, and the culture of border mobilization[2] made it possible to manifest state anti-Semitism in the most aggressive form not found in other areas of the USSR.

This perspective will help us to look at the creation of Jewish settlements in the Far East from an unexpected angle, showing the complex relationship of the new formation of immigrants with alternative models of territoriality in the region. An equally important task of the article is to de-colonize (Tlostanova, 2008) the dominant perspective of the Birobidzhan project research, in which the colonial categories of empty land, useless territory, natives, and comical distance from the center are accepted as legitimate descriptions of reality. All the classic features of the colonization project (the absence of historical roots, remoteness from places of compact residence, the desire to occupy empty space, the invisibility of local residents) (Balandier, 2010) in the descriptions of Birobidzhan appear as a heavy

[1] The ambitious and world-known Soviet Project of Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR) in the Far East was established in 1934. The main city and symbol of the project was Birobidzhan, wich was founded in 1928 based on the railway station called Tikhonkaya. Birobidzhan was Evenks' name (Бира бид(ж)енэ), and meant a nomad camp at the Bira River. The Project of JAR resulted from searching a pattern of Jewish autonomy in Soviet Union, which linked the elements of Zionism, Soviet model of national autonomy and socialist ideas of secular Jewish settler state and secular Jewish culture. The Soviet propaganda used the slogan "To the Jewish Homeland" to inspire Jewish workers from USSR, Europe, South and North America to participate in development of new socialist Jewish Land. For many reasons (hard leaving conditions, repressions, bad logistics and paranoia against international supporters) mass migration was stopped.

[2] Special cultural policy aimed at permanent emotional inclusion the border population in the defense of the boundary.

challenge to fate or even as punishment from the state. This shows that the colonial roots of the project have never been questioned and are still automatically transferred to scientific discourses.

The tragic history of the Jewish migration (Gessen, 2016) does not exclude Birobidzhan from the colonial archive of the Far East. The very situation when participants of the previous colonial project are destroyed or discriminated in the frame of a new model is typical for both Russian and Soviet models of frontier management. The role of the border management regime is key here: each change has led to the marginalization of some communities and the temporary ascent of others. The Russian border in the region was largely based on Cossack settlements; the Soviet regime of border management leads to disappearance of the Cossacks; the Jewish population is rapidly dissolving in the flow of new immigrants; and the post-Soviet model of the open border marginalizes the former residents of the border regions, leaving them without jobs and clear life priorities. Moreover, a slight weakening of the exclusivity of the Jewish project and its inclusion in the general logic of the cultural and administrative development of the region will allow a broader view on the problems of the past and present of the region. In this perspective, the inclusion of "colonialism of the weak" in the new imperial history of the region is a challenge both for historians of the region and for comparative studies of Jewish migrations. The localization of the Jewish project in the colonial archive of the Far East will provide an opportunity to show the tragedy of Birobidzhan in a broader perspective of the tension between the practices of national zoning, securitization of borders and the search for models for development of remote regions.

Border and Colonialism: from Russian to Soviet Version

The assumption of the target ethnic, confession and political coherence of the borderland area is crucial for the Russian (Tsarist) and Chinese (Qing) colonial experience in Asia, which based on agrarian use of nomadic frontier land and re-orientation of indigenous nomadic population towards colonial Centers by controlling the transborder movement, the separation of religious institutions from the authorities outside borders, state support for migration and active militarization of indigenous population. But these policies included the nomadic communities in new forms of modernity. The railways, airplanes and motor vehicles not only connected areas remote from the centers with national geography of industrial development, but also manifested the state's ability of modernization. The external modernity (in late imperial, nationalist and socialist versions) was manifested as complex of discourses and practices oriented toward the transition remoteness areas in coherent part of national body. The strong competition in Inner Asia between Russia/USSR, China and Japan has a strong connection to spectacles of great logistic and industrial projects. This fighting with "backwardness" and "remoteness" created the new forms of temporality and spatiality, which transformed the today "remoteness and backwardness" into space of development strictly connected with national economy. In the Far East case, the "coherence" in borderland was understood as a

Russia-oriented agro-nomadic space with the essential role of military institutions (Cossacks) and cultural domination of Orthodox communities (Peshkov, 2012).

With the victory of the Bolsheviks in the civil war, the situation changed in border areas to model of border-bastion. The center orientation and closed character of the Soviet space turned borderline areas into half-empty places remaining in absolute readiness for confrontation. Frontier forms of socialism were special not only because of the extremely intense implementation of Soviet methods of modernization, but also because they reached a particularly high level of political and social sterility of frontier population (Peshkov, 2014). According to the Soviet outlook on the world, borders were viewed as a source of danger and an area of confrontation with the enemies. The fact that the neighboring countries were political opponents of the USSR legitimized militarization of borderline regions and limitlessly fueled the civil war atmosphere. The model of frontier socialism was characterized by closed-border policy, special attention from state authorities to the supervision of border communities (special rights, movement control, the propagandist idea of a border as a bastion, etc.), and a very strong connection between socialist modernization and militarization of the area (on the economic, cultural and social levels).

Mass migration from the Centre together with the spread of primary education in socialist schools had the effect of marginalizing the hybrid culture of the border regions and sharply accentuating the cultural distance between the Russian and Chinese sides of the border. The incoming new populations began to dominate, bringing with them an absolutely different geographical imagination and gradually creating new forms of identity. The socialist conceptualization of a border (as a limitation of legal space and separation from the outside world) legitimized the military style of governing and the special attention paid to the governing of economic activity. The experience of the socialist border was in many ways re-formed, not only as regards its present but also as understandings of the past (Peshkov, 2018). Both theoretically and historically, borders have never been fixed categories and the ways of their conceptualization and location have varied depending on time and space. Border conceptualization constitutes an integral part of society's identity determining the processes and rituals of its integration to a considerable extent. State versions of history are also strongly determined by processes of borders defense and legitimization. In the Far East case, the main categories of border imagination were "waste areas" (waiting for colonizers) and quasi-invisible indigenous population (waiting for gift of Modernity). This led to amnesia and years of blindness to the region's pre-colonial past.

Who is the Owner of the "Waste Land"? Production of the Invisible

A common feature of all settler states is the involuntary nature of relocation and the transformation of a new place into own territory (Cooper, 2010). Locals in this perspective become "victims of victims", turning into an obstacle on the way of progress or becoming an exotic scenery for tourists. In this perspective, the case of Birobidzhan is special, being a classic example of the settler formation (two waves of refugees

from anti-Semitism); it simultaneously becomes a hostage of ethnic status and almost immediately turns into a subaltern settler formation. The specificity of this situation is the constant politicization of the Jewish question (ties with foreign countries, Zionism, cosmopolitanism, sympathy for Israel), which turns Birobidzhan into a trap for the remaining Jews (Gurevich, 2020). This type of formation (especially after the World War II) creatively combines the colonial status of the owners of the territory with the "forbidden life"[3]. The irony of the situation is that the Birobidzhan migrants practically did not enjoy privileges and, if possible, helped discriminated groups[4]. Nevertheless, this "human-faced colonialism" had all the features of a colonial situation: the empty space waiting for Jewish settlers long before they arrived was stripped of its past and the locals became the setting for a new project. This explains the situation that, despite the contradictory policy of the Center towards Jews, it is the Jewish identity that is reproduced in the Soviet conditions. Other stories and identities were simply erased.

The answer to the question who originally was the owner of the territory of today's Jewish Autonomous Region is quite complex. It should be noted that this place is a reservoir of failed colonization projects. As an integral part of the Manchu lands, it was annexed under the Treaty of Aigun (1858) and the Beijing Convention (1860). This acquisition leads to a sharp outflow of the population and disruption of economic ties. Most of the Manchu and Chinese leave the territory. Only the *Evenki* [Evenks], who retain their cross-border status, stay.

The place of the Chinese and the Manchus should be taken by the resettled parts of the Transbaikalian Cossacks, but weak organization and ill-conceived infrastructure leads to the failure of the project. The Cossacks' standard of living is rapidly falling; the area becomes a symbol of difficult life conditions and backwardness. At the same time, the flow of Korean refugees reaches the region and the number of the Koreans is rapidly increasing.

Together with the October Revolution (1917), the question of the status of the territory becomes much more complicated. Chinese leaders take both treaties as unequal, seeing the region as lost territories. Significant part of the Cossacks and Koreans support the Far Eastern Republic (1920–22) and see the future of the region in the framework of a moderate socialist project in alliance with Russia (Sablin, 2020). Even more of the Cossacks join ataman Semyonov[5] and hope for the inclusion of

[3] After the World War II, the USSR rapidly changed its policy towards Jews. From a country where the Jewish population enjoyed all rights and was even the object of an affirmative policy, the USSR is shifting towards state anti-Semitism (hidden behind slogans about the friendship of peoples), reinforced in the 60s by anti-Israeli policy. This situation turns the JAR into a trap, the only Jewish unit in the USSR must survive the full burden of responsibility for Zionism.

[4] The relations between former Cossacks and Jewish immigrants largely destroy the stereotype of a constant conflict between the two groups. After the negative and tragic experience of the civil war, Jewish immigrants were surprised to discover the Cossack subculture without anti-Semitic agenda. Mutual support and mixed marriages have led to the emergence of subcultures and biographies impossible for other regions.

[5] Grigory Mikhailovich Semyonov (b. September 13(26), 1896, d. August 30, 1946) was a leader and a controversial symbol of the anti-communist Transbaikalian Cossack uprising. After the collapse of the White Movement, he was forced to abandon Far East in September 1921. After the Red Army entered Manchuria, he was captured and executed, following a long investigation. The Soviet propaganda connected him to all forms of resistance against the communists in Transbaikalia, Mongolia and Inner Mongolia.

the region in his political projects, and after emigration—in the Japanese plans to create a frontier state under the Japanese protectorate. Due to the small number of indigenous people, they hardly participate in political processes, continuing to use the forest as a cross-border zone, where they have always been the masters. In this perspective, the history of the region is a cascade of exceptions, subject to changes in the border regime. Each subsequent change leads to the crossing out of the previous state and the effect of an empty land, where everything starts over. Except the Evenks, all other participants of this process perceive the region as a place of potential development or preservation, without much regard for local conditions. The Manchus see it as a protected area, preserving sacred places and real customs (Di Cosmo, 1998)—here the related Evenks turn into guardians of the Manchu power. For Russian administration—it is as an empty space that needs to be populated by Cossacks and peasants. For the government of the Far Eastern Republic, it is a forlorn corner which needs rapid modernization. And for the Far Eastern atamans—these are the Cossack lands in need of support.

This combination of orientation towards future and the impossibility of fundamental changes in the present has largely determined the trajectory of projects in the region. In addition to objective factors (weak infrastructure, long distance from the centers, limited opportunities for international exchange and insufficient population), the peripheral nature of regional development projects for China and Russia, and to a lesser extent for the USSR, played a huge role. In this perspective, the history of the region resembles the myth of the colonial Sisyphus. Endless efforts are drowned in new projects, participants of previous projects disappear, the memory of the past is very sparingly recorded by the local museum. This colonial present was created long before the October Revolution by the joint efforts of the Manchu and Tsarist administrations. The main difference between the Chinese and Russian projects is the attitude towards the indigenous peoples of the region.

The modern history of Evenks is related directly to the Sino-Russian border management in Inner Asia. The Russian conquest of the Transbaikalian region resulted in a long-term migration of Tungus tribes to the south (Hulunbuir in China) or north (Yakutiya in Russia). The transborder character of the nation has resulted in the clash of two official versions of Evenks culture and the dependence of official historical discourses about Evenks' origin on Sino-Russian relations. In this context, the Evenks indigenousness has a very modern origin since it resulted from Russian and Chinese border management. Imperial cultures see the history of a small transborder nation differently. From the Chinese point of view, Evenks are included in the state historical narrative by "Evenkizing" the archaeological artifacts of the region and emphasizing the role of the Evenks in the history of the Northern China. The ambivalent nature of the nation's image gives the possibility of a specific "division of labor": the northern Evenks symbolizes the authentic culture; the history of southern Evenki symbolizes the nation's contribution to defending China's frontiers against Russian Expansion.

The Russian version defines the Evenks as a people exposed to danger stemming from their backwardness and the resulting lack of preparation for living in the contemporary world. Both the state and the society position themselves

paternalistically as guardians of confused and vanishing nomads. Such perspective is deeply rooted in Russian culture and has resulted in an interesting combination of sentimental sympathy over the poor Tungus' fate and absolute indifference as regards constant and prolonged practices of controlling Evenks' agency through territorial barriers, inconsistent state development policy and disintegration of week ethnopolitical institutions. The Evenks stereotype in Russian culture has been shaped by post-Soviet museums and local cultural projects emphasizing permanent "traditionality" of indigenous cultures. Museum exhibitions and generally available information show the Evenks from an external viewpoint of an educated European viewer who is supposed to admire the legacy of old cultures. The sentimental image of the noble Tungus in Russian culture, which requires protection from modernity and Chinese merchants, with all its warmth only strengthens the idea of "people of nature" who do not need to be asked for permission to use their land. Any contact with civilization is a blessing in this perspective, and they should be grateful to visitors for a chance to be developed. This exotic image of a peripheral community completely excluded them from the political agenda and the status of the owners of the territory.

Since the Birobidzhanians have already developed the de-Evenkized territory, the Evenks are perceived as a distant exotic. Except for a few traditional costumes in the local museum and some statistics from pre-WWII reports, the region literally does not see the Evenks past of the territory. If the former Cossacks have become invisible to the State, but not to the Jewish residents of Birobidzhan, the Evenks, while remaining a recognized subject of state policy, continued to be invisible to the community. When I asked about the indigenous inhabitants of the region, local historians replied that there were few natives and they did not know anything about them. People spoke warmly about Evenks, but with protectionist notes (using the colonial term *tuzemtsy* [natives]), having no idea about their life and culture.

The destructive effects of state modernistic strategies towards communities defined as backward were clearly showed in development studies (Peshkov, 2004). The compulsory choice of the modernity instead of the autonomy allows the state to exclude the so-called "backward communities" from the legal boundaries in order to implement randomly established "absolute right" of communities to modern models of life (Scott, 1998). This biopolitical perspective situated state in its ability to call for a state of exception and a temporary suspension of rights. The radical expansion of a legal boundaries connected with transition to modern models of economic activity can be combined with simultaneous turning of the economic, cultural and social rights within paternalistic logic of development. The possibility to stop the economic, social and cultural rights in order to fight against "backwardness" shows not only their contextual nature, but also the priority of the state's right to biopolitical sovereignty. Common for all forced modernization projects was the imperative of linear movement from backwardness to development. In this context, the traditional culture of the communities was perceived as an obstacle to development and the main source of economic backwardness.

The idea of an empty space is not neutral and carries an unambiguous political declaration: only inclusion in modern life brings indigenous peoples out of the state

of savagery and gives them rights. Until this happens, they are perceived as part of nature, not directly related to large processes. In addition, empty lands are designated as cleared of indigenous peoples. All participants in the modernization attempts (except the Manchus) perceived and continue to perceive the indigenous people as wild people of the forest, related more to nature than to politics. The Birobidzhan case is very important for colonial research. In this situation, the "invisibility" of local residents is not directly related to either mass migration or the urbanization of the region. This once again shows the strength of the cultural formations of colonialism and their ability to produce negative effects, even if the colonial project fails.

The second group of "invisibles" is the "old settlers" communities of the region. The appearance of Russians in Inner Asia resulted in the development of new forms of ethnic and cultural identity based on cultural syncretism and miscegenation of the members of the analyzed groups with the inhabitants of the region. These mixed communities need to keep the balance between Russian culture and the elements of the indigenous one. The specificity of Eastern Transbaikalia as regards most part of its population was the overlapping of the quasi-indigenous status and the Cossack estate. After 1858, Transbaikalian Cossacks was replaced to Amur River. After the end of Civil War, the hostile attitude of the communist authorities to the Cossacks (*raskazachivaniye* [decossackization], *raskulachivanie* [dispossession] and deportations), and the new socialist border regime provoked radical ethnic and social changes in the area. In that context, active border cleansing policy finally isolated the new Soviet Far East from old social and cultural structures.

The first three decades of the new system were particularly traumatic for the analyzed groups. Their mass migration to China began in 1918 and initially it concerned only richer Cossacks escaping to avoid decossackization practices. A large percentage of Cossacks in the first immigration wave established the models for perceiving migrants to borderline territories for a long time (they were perceived according to their origin and political views). Soviet propaganda for many years defined both countries of exile as places of refuge of politically active White Cossack emigrants. We are dealing with a special situation here, i.e., mixed ethnic groups favored by the previous colonial system became the victims of both organized and unorganized violence despite the simultaneous activation of the new ethnic and racial order (Peshkov, 2012). Mixed communities that originated as a result of one colonial and modernizing project were consciously and systematically eliminated after the introduction of another.

Utopia and Settler State: Far Eastern Version

The Soviet proclamation of the Jewish Autonomous Region in the Far East was a historic event not only for the region, but also for the whole world (Kuchenbecker, 2000). The young Soviet state proclaimed the first Jewish ethno-political structure with its own territory, its own administration and cultural policy (Gitelman, 1988). This communist response to the Zionists has stirred up the Jews all over the world (Kotlerman, 2009). Despite its modest status as an "autonomous region about to

become a republic," Birobidzhan was an exclusive Soviet project. From the point of view of external observers, it was a state within a state: its international status and the historical experiment in the transition of the Jews to agriculture made it a real alternative to Palestine and projects of non-territorial autonomy (Patek, 2007). It is important to pay attention to the performative aspects of the proclamation—a remote area, not affected by urbanization, becomes a place of international effort and an important factor in international politics. Creatively combining the national and the class (Maksimowska, 2009), it was open to Jewish youth from everywhere and for a surprisingly long time (by Soviet standards) received technical and financial assistance from all over the world. The Soviet project of Jewish autonomy was to combine Jewish dreams of their own land with the demands of a new society: Jewish culture was to become modern, proletarian, and secular. The language of autonomy becomes Yiddish (Estraikh, 1999), the main branch of Jewish agriculture, the station Tikhonkaya turns into a town Birobidzhan (1937) with a rich theatrical and literary life. The combination of two utopias (national and communist) from the very beginning determined the specifics of the new life. The absence of Jewish history in the region freed up the imagination and possibilities for cultural experimentation. If the old life remains in the Pale of settlement, then the new life can be represented in any way. Hebrew was distrusted as the language of obscurantism and reaction, and religion was rejected as unnecessary for a new life. In this perspective, the paradoxes were written into the Birobidzhan project from the very beginning (Kotlerman & Yavin, 2007). Birobidzhan was anything but a *shtetl*. The mass fascination with agriculture, the absence of synagogues and Jewish entrepreneurs became a way of new life and preparation for communism on their land.

The two utopias listed above were in a complex relationship throughout the history of Soviet Birobidzhan, and at some point, the national one had to submit completely to the requirements of the party conjuncture. The disaster of the project was due not only to the lack of conditions to accept most of the Jews of the USSR, but also to the growing suspicion towards Jews from the government after 1945. Birobidzhan suddenly becomes a place of persecution of Jews: people are persecuted for using Yiddish in teaching, literature or theater (Gurevich, 2020). The culmination is the public burning of Jewish books in the main square of the city—despite the Holocaust, being a Jew becomes suspicious for the Soviet state and society. This transition from a state of affirmative action towards Jews to a semi-official state anti-Semitism was matched by the evolution of the project from a Soviet promised land to a territorial trap seized by a dangerous name and a wariness of everything Jewish (Gurevich, 2020). The influx of new Jewish population stops, but the region retains part of the cultural infrastructure and constantly balances between the culture of working Jewry and Zionism. Despite a very controversial policy, the post- WWII years were a period of rapid growth of the quality of life. Until the end of the Soviet Union, the state remained suspicious of Jews, reinforced by the remoteness and dominance of military institutions. The region almost did not notice *perestroika*, continuing to catch the Zionists and anxiously testing itself for loyalty to a large country.

In this perspective, the proclamation of Jewish Autonomous Region was an attempt to build its own territory within the USSR and permanently erase the history of Jewish exile[6]. The failure of this project does not negate its role in the history of Jewish colonization. Consciously or unconsciously mixing Zionist aesthetics with Soviet optimism, the region had to create a new person capable of forcing the harsh taiga to retreat and conquering the earth for a new life (Gurevich, 2020). Unlike Palestine, the Far Eastern project was not balanced by the idea of returning to native land. The land was given by the Soviet state, which made the entire project defenseless against changes in the Soviet political course. The gift of the Soviet state demanded reciprocity and gradually turned the owners of the territory into semi-invisible beings.

The example of Birobidzhan can tell us a lot about the problems of the settler society with the justification of its presence as the owners of the land. When historical arguments do not work, and the places of compact settlement are thousands of kilometers away, the performative aspects of the act of proclamation become the main one. It can be assumed that, as in the case of other Soviet ethno-political structures, the center and the region read the same declarations differently. The very localization in the "Soviet Brotherhood of Nations" made any national project completely dependent on the will of the center and its changeable approaches to the national question. Here the situation is complicated by the very position of the new formation—dependent on international aid, populated by a large number of foreigners and separated from cultural centers, the region was from the very beginning a foreign body in the system of managing national issues. The example of Birobidzhan provides an opportunity to take a fresh look at the Soviet national policy and its consequences. There are no final winners and losers, cultural dominance in the region does not mean security; any form of strengthening of ethno-political structures raises suspicions of disloyalty and nationalism. In this perspective, local nationalisms were subject to constant control and discipline, which gave rise to the effect of an unfulfilled desire in the republics.

This largely explains the spread of affective forms of nationalism after the collapse of the USSR. No less important is the example of the Jewish Autonomous Region in understanding the difficult combination of Soviet forms of colonialism with the proclamation of the equality of nations and the renunciation of the "dark tsarist past". All the communities that the migrants met became invisible or disenfranchised. The Cossacks were repressed as White Guards and spies, the Chinese and Koreans were deported, the Evenks were practically not included in the process of developing the region. Regardless of the status of "a former" or "invisible" person, the population of the border region was subjected to forced marginalization and deprivation of rights (Feferman & Epstein, 2010). We can talk here about the trap of a migrant in projects subordinated to external management: agreeing to the arbitral elimination of the rights to land of previous residents—he remains one-on-one with the state. The migrants themselves will quickly turn into phantom subjects, subjected to a severe test and to the expectation of atonement for the Soviet society.

[6] Performative effects of declaration (see: Derrida, 1984/1986).

Conclusion

Studies of the past and present of the Jewish Autonomous Region considered the project of resettlement of the Jewish population to the Far East in several overlapping perspectives: the reasons for the resettlement, its dynamics and scale, repression and the policy of state anti-Semitism after 1945, the impact of the confrontation with Israel and the problems of preserving and inventing Jewish culture in the region. In addition, a fairly large archive of memories was collected, revealing to us all the contradictions of the "Promised Land" in the USSR. Much less attention was paid to the spatial aspects of the Jewish colonization project—its relation to previous models of colonization, the local population, the Soviet security policy of border territories and relation to the imperial and Soviet models of colonial development of the periphery.

The proposed attempt to show a broader perspective of the resettlement project provides an opportunity to take a fresh look at the Russian model of presence in Inner Asia. The experience of the Jewish Autonomous Region shows that a colonial cultural formation can exist without the use of violence and even with a certain sympathy for the local population. The rejection of one-sided prospects for overcoming the backwardness of the region (where yesterday's owners of the territory turn into an obstacle to development) can be a step towards the decolonization of consciousness and the revision of the colonial experience of the region. In this context, decolonization means, first of all, the rejection of the rationalization of repressive policies, finding of a balance in relations with indigenous peoples, and the rejection of the idea of the region as a white sheet on which a migrant from Eastern Europe writes his history.

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ARTICLE

The "End of Times" and the Antichrist's Arrival: The Orthodox Dogmas and Prophecies in the National-Patriotic Media in Post-Soviet Russia[1]

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ABSTRACT
A return of the Orthodox religion and a renaissance of the Russian Orthodox Church gave a way for politically active movements of Orthodox fundamentalists and monarchists. They were obsessed with the idea of the "end of time" and argued that the Antichrist was at the door. The article focuses on several national-patriotic newspapers and their interest to Orthodox prophecies about the end of time, which can be traced from the turn of the 1990s. It is examined who exactly, in what way and for what goals developed and discussed eschatological ideas. The major themes, rhetorical means and key words are scrutinized, which helped consumers to disclose the "enemies of Russia" and to reveal their "perfidious plans" and "harmful actions" aimed at the destruction of Russia and its people. A relationship between this ideology and theological teaching of the end of time is analyzed.

KEYWORDS
Russian Orthodoxy, eschatology, fundamentalism, image of enemies, the Antichrist

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Introduction

A number of new political movements with their own programs and hopes had come onto the scene in the USSR at the wave of *perestroika* by the end of the 1980s. As the Communist ideology declined and a democracy arrived, there was an evident trend towards religion, including the Russian Orthodoxy, particularly after the celebration of the millennium of the Baptism of Rus' in 1988. Having thrown away the burden of totalitarian ideology, Russian society demonstrated a fast fragmentation. Various interest groups emerged with their own views on the further development of the country and even on the very goal of its existence.

The former uniform macro-ideology was replaced by numerous micro-ideologies based on a complex combination of political, social, economic, ethnic, religious and cultural ideas. In this article, I focus on the period of 1990–1993, which marked the beginning of political life in contemporary Russia. Political pluralism came into being, censorship vanished and a freedom of speech was introduced for the first time after a long period of the tough authoritarian regime. Religion became legitimate and turned into a useful resource for political projects. I will analyze an impact of certain Orthodox dogmas on the propaganda, which was actively disseminated by several national-patriotic media.

I will focus, firstly, on the Orthodox-Monarchist periodicals (*Tsar'-Kolokol* [Tsar Bell] and *Zemshchina*) with a limited circulation, secondly, on the well-known Russian nationalist newspaper *Russkiy vestnik* [Russian Herald] and, thirdly, on the *Den'* [The Day] newspaper of the so-called "spiritual opposition". These media were chosen because, while sharing (at least rhetorically) loyalty towards the Russian Orthodoxy, they applied to different audiences, represented different streams of the national-patriotic political wing, and had different political views.

Tsar'-Kolokol and *Zemshchina* aimed at a narrow circle of monarchists, as well as clergy and believers in the Russian Orthodox parishes and monasteries. *Zemshchina* appeared irregularly in ca. 990 copies; 97 issues were published in 1990–1993. The newspaper was officially issued by the *Soyuz "Khristianskoe vozrozhdenie"* (Union of "Christian Revival"–UCR), headed by Vladimir Osipov (see: Dunlop, 1983). Initially it represented also a voice of the *Bratstvo vo imya svyatogo Tsarya-iskupitelya Nikolaya II* [Brotherhood for the sake of Tsar-martyr Nickolas II] led by Andrey Shchedrin (Nikolay Kozlov), who was obsessed with a "ritual murder". The newspaper together with its editorial board was enrolled into the dwarf neo-Nazi People's National Party in 1994, and its content had changed since then. These media were established and run by the Orthodox monarchists who appeared in Russia in the 1980s and came out from underground in 1987–1988 (Platonov, 2012, pp. 184, 503–504). They hoped that a revitalization of the Russian Orthodoxy would bring about a radical transformation of the Russian society. At the same time, they were sensitive to rumors about some "mighty secret agents", who wanted to destroy Russia (Kruglov, 2004, pp. 324–327).

Russkiy vestnik was sponsored primarily by the Cossacks and initially aimed at all ethnic Russians regardless of their political or religious views. Yet, over time,

it turned to those who identified themselves with the Russian Orthodoxy. At the beginning, this newspaper enjoyed a press run of 100 thousand copies per issue, but had reduced to 60 thousand copies by the end of 1992.

Den' newspaper was established in 1991 by the Union of Writers of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, but its policy was entirely in the hands of its editor Alexander Prokhanov. The newspaper stood for the Great Empire and presented itself as a Neo-Eurasian voice. It appeared irregularly in editions ranging from 85 to 120 thousand copies.

Zemshchina claimed its Christian orientation from the very beginning, which made a point of reference for a discussion of any key problem. Initially, both *Russkiy vestnik* and *Den'* provided only a limited space for the Russian Orthodox issues, but over time it expanded. The *Zemshchina* discourse focused on the end of time and ritual murder; *Russkiy vestnik* aimed at the Orthodox monarchy; and the *Den'* authors were obsessed with conspiracy.

Eschatology, the Fate of Russia and Neo-Monarchists

In the turbulent years, when Russia's destiny was at stake all these newspapers took an active part in discussions around its history and did all their best to predict its future. The Orthodox fundamentalists extensively used the Christian sources of information. They stuck to traditionalist views and believed that the world was moving to a decline and a catastrophe as the *Book of Revelation of St. John the Divine (Apocalypse)* predicted. This part of Scripture is not easy to understand, and it has been provided with numerous interpretations for centuries. St. John tells us that the Antichrist would arrive at the end of time. He would tempt and charm many people, and they would proclaim him the ruler of the world and accept a uniform religion he would introduce. Yet, not everyone would be tempted, and being supported by Satan, the Antichrist would arrange harsh persecutions of the devoted Christians. According to a popular Christian belief appeared in the second century A.D., the Antichrist is identified with the Jewish Messiah originated from the tribe of Dan. He would establish his capital in Jerusalem and his headquarter in the Third Temple. The Jews would celebrate his arrival and support his attempt to eliminate Christianity. The disorder would last for three years and a half, after which the Savior would arrive to gain a victory over the forces of Darkness, and a millennial kingdom would be established.

An important point of this narrative is that bishops would also be tempted by the Antichrist, and the Church would be ruined almost entirely. Thus, the narrative is dangerous for the clerics because it permitted their criticism for apostasy from the side of parish.

The growth of eschatological mood has been observed many times over the last two thousand years, and sometimes people were scared of the end of time. Yet, this has never happened. That is why one of the key actors of the myth in question is the "restrainer", i.e., the factor, which stops Satan from using all its might and impedes the coming of the Antichrist. The term of *Katechon* ("restrainer") was borrowed from St. Paul's teaching (2 Thess. 2, 7).

Regardless of numerous and controversial theological interpretations of the term, certain Russian Orthodox thinkers of the 19th century identified the Russian Emperor with the *uderzhivayushchiy* ("restrainer") (Belyaev, 1898, Vol. 2, p. 522). According to the Russian clergy, the true Christianity survived only in Russia, and therefore God would save Russia from the Antichrist. And Russia would save the rest of the world.

This view was taken by the Orthodox-Monarchist media as a basis for their ideas on what was going with Russia and what would be its destiny. Therefore, they paid great attention to prophecies about the end of time and to signs of its coming, in particular. For them, the most important omens were linked with the Jewish activity because, according to the myth, Jews not only were anxiously waiting for the Antichrist's arrival but also did all the best to speed it up and to harm Christians as much as possible. Thus, the Judeophobe was embedded in this outlook by no means accidentally and was fostered by conviction rather than by emotions—this can be defined as the doctrinal religious anti-Semitism. It necessarily included blood libel closely linked with the idea of the restrainer (I. N., 1990, p. 7; Kozlov, 1990, pp. 29–56; Sel'ski, 1994, p. 65; Tsar'-Kolokol, 1990b, p. 44). Indeed, those who paved the way for the Antichrist had to eliminate the restrainer and to make that in a ritual way based on traditional practices. Hence, an idea was popular in these circles that the Tsar Nicholas the Second had been murdered ritually by Jews, which strengthened a parish's belief in the coming Apocalypse. The monarchist media were alarmed with the allegedly Kabbalist inscription left in the Ipatiev's house in Yekaterinburg where the Tsar and his family were executed, and republished an occult article of 1925, which claimed that the obscure signs reliably confirmed that the Tsar had been sacrificed (Enel', 1990, pp. 25–35; see also: Enel' 1991). And it is no accident that the American political scientist Walter Laqueur noticed a revival of the idea of the Antichrist among the contemporary Russian right-wing radicals (Laqueur, 1993).

Moreover, the right-wing media sometimes turned the Christian myth of the Antichrist into the Nazi myth of the eternal confrontation between the Aryans and the Semites. It was presented in a symbolic way as an opposition between the swastika and the Star of David (Tsar'-Kolokol, 1990a, p. 21; Demin, 1993, 1994).

Zemshchina and the Ritual Murder

Initially the Russian Orthodox monarchists disseminated their ideas through the *Tsar'-Kolokol* almanac issued in 1990–1991. Some articles were provided with comments discussing the "Jewish plot" as though its goal was to tempt Sacred Rus' for the sake of Satan's triumph. They stuck to a traditional view of the Apocalypse including "blood libel" together with prophecies about Russia's mission in the world and its salvation due to God's benevolence.

Monarchists viewed the Tsar's death as crucifixion at Golgotha, and an idea was developed that God's Mother had taken the restrainer's role after his murder. They treated Jews as a monstrous sect or a satanic force with the mission to pave the way

for the Antichrist. Ritual murders were considered one of the most convincing proofs for that. This point made up a core of the discussions in *Zemshchina* in 1990–1993. The ritual murders were extensively discussed in almost every single issue and ascribed to the Talmudic Jewry.

The key terms of the eschatological discourse were borrowed from the Apocalypse and St. Paul's epistles, such as a "secret of lawlessness", "Prince of this World", "children of Satan", "sons of death", "Satanic forces", "seal of the Beast", "end of time", "restrainer", etc. Notably, with a growth of the anti-Semitic emotions, a "Judeo-Masonic plot" turned in the newspaper into the world "Talmudic plot" (cf. Vozzvanie predsobornogo soveshchaniya, 1991), which emphasized the key role of Talmud in this discourse. Indeed, the UCR considered an unmasking of the world Talmudic plot against Russia and a struggle against the eternal enemy under the aegis of the Russian Orthodoxy as one of its most important goals. The nature of the struggle was emphasized by that, since the late 1991 the newspaper had begun using the swastika either for decorating articles or as a protection for the author's signature side by side with traditional symbols of a double-headed eagle and an Orthodox cross.

Zemshchina shared a traditionalist view on history, which claimed that after Creation the world was under a permanent decline up to the very end of time when the Antichrist had to arrive. Stability in the world was allegedly protected by Russia with its "God-bearing" people, and the Orthodox Tsar functioned as the restrainer. Yet, demonic, Godless forces came to power in 1917—they had murdered the Tsar ritually, and then occupied themselves with an extermination of Orthodox people under the aegis of *mestechkovy* [local] nationalism and Russophobe. Allegedly, they wanted not only to destroy Russia, but also to build up the world kingdom of the Antichrist. All of this was emphasized in the UCR Manifesto published in May 1990 in the first issue of the newspaper. According to this document, the movement's goals were Russian people's regeneration, their return back to the Church, the re-establishment of the Tsar's rule and building up of the Sacred Rus', which had to protect the world from the Antichrist (Manifest Soyuza, 1990, p. 1). Evidently, this program made a political factor derivative of a religious one.

While promoting the program, the newspaper focused on the following themes: a struggle against heresies (embracing Freemasonry, Catholicism and Protestantism) and Ecumenism; a rehabilitation of the Emperor Nicholas the Second as the Tsar-martyr, unmasking of the ritual murders (including an attempt to prove that many Russian Tsars were murdered ritually); a struggle for a restoration of monarchy and Sacred Rus'; an exposure of both the "godless West" and an idea of the World Government, a struggle against population recording through an introduction of personal identification numbers (viewed as the "Beast's number") implemented by authorities; a glorification of icons' miracle power; and a celebration of the Church Fathers and Russian Orthodox enlighteners, whose prophecies of the end of time were regularly published and discussed in the newspaper. Notably, the newspaper paid special attention to those prophecies or their fragments, which represented Jews as natural supporters of the Antichrist.

Thus, the image of the enemy proved to be one of the most important points. The enemies were depicted as Kikes, Zionists, Talmudic priests and Freemasons. The authors were searching for a "monstrous sect" among them, which was arranging ritual murders. It is worth noting that certain authors tried to make a sharp distinction between Jews and Kikes, although without great success. Whereas initially Jews were viewed as enemies without any reserve, over time the major authors began to claim that they struggled only against a "secret sect" among Jews. Later on, they began to single out and even approve of Orthodox Jews, who broke away from Judaism. While emphasizing that the Church originated from the Jewish Christian community, the authors began to argue that the terms *Jew, Judaists, Israelite* with a capital letter meant Christians, but unfortunately were viewed as Talmudic Kikes in everyday life. Later on, they began to oppose the Jewish people of the Old Scripture to Kikes, who turned into a sect of initiated and began to serve Devil in the New Testament times. In the late 1992, the newspaper acknowledged that the lion's share of the Moscow Orthodox Christian community consisted of ethnic Jews, and called for distinguishing between Jews-Christians and Judeans to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts. Yet, one of the major authors warned against an unreserved trust towards Jewish Christians even when they criticized or entirely rejected their brothers in blood. And in the very late 1993, the newspaper accused Jews-Christians of the aspiration to undermine the very basics of the Church. Thus, a circle was closed, and once again, all Jews found themselves guilty before the Church.

The newspaper authors tirelessly exposed Talmud as a case of human-hatred ideology. In addition, they permanently recollected the revolution of 1917 and argued (with a reference to less reliable documents of the Civil War [1917–22]) that it had been organized by the Jews, who were Freemasons. The authors represented the Soviet period as the Jewish yoke or a period of the Talmudic imprisonment. And they viewed socio-political confrontation either as a struggle of the Orthodox monarchism against the atheist Talmudism (Derzhavnoe stroitel'stvo, 1991; Shiropaev, 1991), or as a clash between the New Testament Church and the Talmudic Jewry (Talmudicheskaya konspiratsiya, 1991). In this regard, no rapprochement with Jews was possible at all. Indeed, all of them allegedly originated from the tribe of Dan and, thus, were the Antichrist's relatives. Certain authors tried to provide this argument with a racial foundation (Bolotin, 1991).

In addition, the newspaper was attentively analyzing the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchs and blamed them for apostasy. It criticized the Patriarch Alexy II for his favor of Judaizers and discovered a challenge in his visit to New York in 1991, where he visited Synagogue and talked before the Rabbis. While organizing a campaign against a celebration of Hanukkah in the center of Moscow in December 1991, the newspaper was puzzled with the inactivity of the Metropolitans, who declined to take part in the protests. And the newspaper could not but accused the hierarchs of the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox Church of betraying the Tsar. It went so far as to blame the contemporary hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church for the Judaizers' heresy. The newspaper did not wish to disguise its frustration and warned the hierarchs that those faithful could stop

to obey (Zayavlenie Dumy Soyuza "Khristianskoe vozrozhdenie", 1991). At the same time, the newspaper rehabilitated the *Chernaya sotnya* [Black Hundred] as a community of virtuous Russian patriots, and scarred the general public with secret murders of contemporary priests and Russian patriots. To put it another way, in this presentation the Russian patriots proved to be more loyal to Orthodoxy that the Russian Orthodox Church itself. That is why they suffered as the major target of the satanic forces.

The newspaper chose Hasidim as the key target and was searching among them for a monstrous sect occupying itself with ritual murders. In a very bizarre way, this accusation was coordinated with a ban on passing Rabbi Schneersohn's manuscripts from the Lenin Library to Hasidim—allegedly otherwise the anti-Christian era would come, and a triumph of the Talmudic human-hatred consciousness would begin (Delo Beylisa, 1991; cf. Bolotin, Demin, & Shiropaev, 1991; Igla satany, 1991; Novogodnee pozdravlenie, 1991; Odna tayna, 1991; Pomogite detyam, 1991; Zayavlenie o khasidskikh rukopisyakh, 1991; Zayavlenie Dumy Soyuza "Khristianskoe vozrozhdenie". K delu o khasidakh, 1991). The newspaper used to disseminate fantasies that the manuscripts contained data on human sacrifices and, moreover, plans for the Russian people genocide. All of this seemed very important for the newspaper with respect to prophecies claiming that the Antichrist had been already born and would be active in 1992.

Whereas initially the newspaper called for a spiritual battle (Bran' gospodnya, 1991; Nevidimaya bran', 1991; Slovesnaya bran', 1991) and for an enlightenment activity with the help of cross and prayers, later on its authors decided that this was less sufficient. They turned their eyes to *Oprichnina* as a Russian kind of inquisition. Noteworthy, they intended to enroll the baptized Jews and Muslims into a restored *Oprichnina*. Yet, in the early 1990s, its actions were still restricted to only rhetoric (Kozlov, 1991; Oprichnaya gramota, 1991; Oprichniy nakaz, 1991; Oprichnoe poslanie, 1991; Oprichnoe sluzhenie, 1991; Stenorushenie, 1991)[2].

The newspaper's infamous anti-Semitic mood was based on both certain prophecies about the end of time and faked *Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov* [Protocols of the Elders of Zion], as well as obsolete radical right publications on the Russian revolution, which had been previously used by German Nazis. The newspaper republished pre-revolutionary priests' opinions and Russian émigré discussions, yet it mostly respected the priests of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. It also used to republish materials from the *Tsar'-Kolokol* almanac. Notably, only a few contemporary authors published their articles by their own names—most of the publications came out anonymously.

It is also worth noting that, while viewing the Tsar as the restrainer, the monarchists were planning to pass power in future Russia not to a monarch but to All-Russian *Zemsky Sobor*, which, in their view, could take up the function of a restrainer (Gryadushchee Voskresenye, 1991). Simultaneously, the newspaper took an active

[2] The Oprichnina movement was initiated by Shchedrin (Kozlov), but the only result of his schizmatic activity was that the "Brotherhood for the sake of Tsar-martyr Nicholas the II" has been broken into two parts.

part in the campaign against Prince Vladimir Kirillovich Romanov (1917–1992) as a possible future ruler. It seems that it wanted to provide the authoritarian political body rather than the Tsar with the role of the restrainer. Therefore, it argued that the Soviet state partly maintained the function of the restrainer (Obrashchenie, 1991).

Some of these themes were discussed in 1993 in another almanac named *K svetu* [Towards the Light] issued by Russian Orthodox journalists. Although it focused on the Orthodox everyday life, its editors considered it important to devote one of the issues entirely to Sergei Nilus' life and works. They published various apologetic materials about this well-known eccentric mystic, including his prophecies about the coming Antichrist and arguments in favor of authenticity of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" (K svetu, 1993).

Russkiy vestnik and the End of Time

Over time, the Apocalypse became a point of discussions in *Russkiy vestnik*, which initially looked quite temperate. The newspaper was established in the very late 1990 to cover various aspects of Russian people's life. The goal was to unite all Russian patriots—communists and monarchists, Orthodox people and pagans. Yet, over time, the newspaper turned into a voice of the Orthodox-Monarchist faction of the Russian nationalist movement. That is why it was no accident that eschatological themes received more and more extensive coverage at its pages—initially as obscure hints, then as more clear messages. At the same time, they were discussed side by side with such issues as economy, military and Russian people's life, especially the Cossacks, as well as the Soviet Union dissolution, ethnic conflicts and local wars at the borderlands of what was formerly the USSR.

A search for the enemy started with the Trotskyists and Catholics, and further on encompassed Zionists, Freemasons, Protestants, Theosophists, Democrats and, in general, world back-stage and the New World Order. Thus, the discourse shifted to conspiracy, although it never reached an intensity demonstrated by the *Den'* newspaper. The newspaper's authors made their best to rehabilitate the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and to confirm the reality of the "world conspiracy". The enemy opposed Russian people, who looked as permanent victims, subjugated to foreign rulers and exposed to genocide. The heroes were represented by patriots, who struggled for their human rights as, for example, *Soyuz russkogo naroda* ("Union of the Russian People") that was depicted as a protector from social terror. Over time, the discussion of the murder of the last Russian Emperor and his family, as well as their inclusion into the list of martyrs became the third important theme in discussion. This theme was closely connected with the one of Orthodox monarchy, which already in 1992 was presented by the newspaper's authors as an ideal state establishment. Eschatological prophecies that had become more and more popular since the fall of 1991 made up the fourth theme. It was at that time that the newspaper began to celebrate certain Orthodox icons allegedly having secured Russia from foreign invasions. The fifth theme, not the major one but important for my analysis, was the criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church for its passivity and unwillingness to discuss

urgent social and political problems. It is in this context that one comes across the issue of apostasy.

Over time, all these themes have to be discussed with the eschatological overtones. Democrats (including "children of Synagogue") were depicted as being driven by satanic forces, as destroyers and parasites, strictly connected with forces of lawlessness. They were ascribed satanic plans as though they acted in the name of the "Prince of This World". The West having broken away from Christianity was listed among the evil forces. Only Christian monarchy as the natural statehood established by God could resist them. In this discourse, Russians looked but as natural proponents of the principle of *pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'* [Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Peoplehood], and democracy proved to be incompatible with Christianity. The Orthodox monarch served a restrainer, who did not let the Antichrist to arrive. And his dethroning was accompanied with the aggression of non-Russians against the Church. The author of these arguments did not want to know where the Antichrist was in the Soviet period. Having ignored this period, he focused on the *perestroika* time and accused it of Satanism. He made the Godless West its ally, who hated Russia for its loyalty to the Orthodox faith, which persistently resisted the Antichrist (Tuskarev, 1992, pp. 12–13).

The former view of the world and its history was radically changed by that discourse. The Soviet view of the capitalist and imperialist West hostile to the Soviet socialism was replaced by a civilizational paradigm with its emphasis on cultural and religious factors. For the newspaper authors, the major conflict of nowadays was a struggle between Western and Russian civilizations (Platonov, 1992, p. 13). According to the head of the *Soyuz dukhovnogo vozrozhdeniya Otechestva* [Union of Spiritual Regeneration of the Fatherland] Mikhail Antonov, market economy did not fit into the Orthodox milieu while being linked to the society of Protestant-Catholic-Jewish-Shinto world and life view. He called for resistance against this hostile world to respond the challenge of the end of time. He claimed that Protestants and Catholics wanted to introduce neo-slavery and to establish world government, which would open the door to the Antichrist. At the same time, the Russian Orthodoxy and Russia itself proved to be a shield against "forces of Darkness" (Antonov, 1992a, p. 4; 1992b, p. 6).

In this context, certain authors associated social revolutions directly with apostasy, which helped the Antichrist to arrive. Their driving forces were identified with non-Russians. Therefore, Russians had to throw away the spirit of the French Revolution of 1789 and to be reactionaries. To this end, they had to support the monarchist slogan of "Orthodoxy, Monarchism and Populism" and to build up a "Russian Kingdom" (Shiropaev, 1992, p. 11; cf. Balkov, 1992, p. 13).

To be precise, a reference to non-Russians was often replaced with the euphemism of Freemasons. In this discourse, masons included both social-democrats and Jews as though the latter organized the revolution of 1917. While putting the revolutionary events in Russia into the apocalyptic context, one author insisted on their religious rather than social motives. He recalled the Devil's hatred towards the Orthodox faith and Russian people. As a result, Russians were advised

to come back to prayers and to Jesus Christ (Bulgakov, 1992, p. 3). Thus, the circle was closed, and the reader had to come back to the idea of the Judeo-Masonic plot.

Notably, the newspaper referred to the Church hierarchs' authority—mostly from abroad, but also from the Moscow Patriarchate. It published the reflection of the late Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad Konstantin (Zaytsev), 1887–1975, who identified Great Russia, or Sacred Rus', with a restrainer and argued that the Western hatred towards it was rooted in religion. In his view, world was rapidly moving to the Antichrist epoch, and only the Orthodox Church was able to stop it (Konstantin, 1992, p. 12). This argument was shared by both the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad Metropolitan Vitaly (Ustinov), 1910–2006 (Vitaly, 1992, p. 2), and Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga Ioann (Snychev), 1927–1995. The latter identified a restrainer with Russian people, who were the only actors able to save humanity from the satanic evil, aspiring to enter the world (Ioann, 1992, p. 12). In saying that, Metropolitan Ioann did not hesitate to refer to Nilus's fantasies.

Thus, after the newspaper shifted to the Russian Orthodoxy, it began viewing contemporary world and its destiny through the glasses of Orthodox dogmas—it alarmed readers with images of the coming Antichrist and argued that only the Orthodox monarch as a restrainer could stop the catastrophe. Yet, the readers evidently were less interested in that. The newspaper received dozens of letters from them, but only a few (mainly youngsters) sharing the idea of the Orthodox monarchy (and immediately demonstrated their anti-Semitic stance) (Fedosov, 1992, p. 7; Sovet Nizhegorodskogo, 1992, p. 4), believed that nowadays the enemy of the humanity wanted to destroy the Orthodox faith (Evgenyeva, 1992, p. 8), and ascribed masonry a "Satanic cult" (Pis'mo iz Sankt-Peterburga, 1992, p. 2).

The newspaper's shift towards the Orthodox identity and a monarchic idea was marked with several landmarks. The first step was taken in July 1991, when, firstly, criticism against Masons and Zionists grew up, and secondly, the urgency of national ideology was emphasized. Thus, a way to rapprochement with the Russian Orthodox Church and to monarchist idea was opened. It is at that time that the newspaper made an attempt to put into question a faked nature of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and to argue that they were completed by the Freemasons and Zionists rather than by the Tsarist secret agents (A. Ivanov, 1991). Simultaneously, the newspaper re-published an article from emigrant media, which focused on rehabilitation of the swastika. Also, for the first time, it published an eschatological prophecy on great unrest, which had to be followed by a spiritual regeneration of Russia. The authors became fascinated with the miracle power of Orthodox icons. Finally, it was in July that a supplement focused on the "Russian question in the USSR" was published, which covered the issue of the Russian people' genocide arranged by Zionist-fascists. So, it is in July, i.e. at the eve of the August *putsch* [coup] that all the major themes of the Russian version of the Apocalypse were already on the scene.

A new step towards the Russian Orthodox Church was made in fall 1991; in September, the newspaper's office was sanctified by the priest Vasily Mel'nichuk,

and in November it was blessed by the Patriarch Alexy II. Ever since, the newspaper had stopped dealing with Neo-pagan authors. Instead, its Orthodox propaganda hardened, and *Zemshchina's* authors were welcomed, which provided them with a podium to appeal to the mass audience.

Ever since, the newspaper had published more and more materials on the Tsar's mission side by side with prophecies about the end of time. In addition, the newspaper began to participate regularly in campaigns organized by Orthodox fundamentalists—against Hanukkah in Kremlin in December 1991, against passing Rabbi Schneersohn's collection of manuscripts to Hasidim, as well as against recognition of Prince Vladimir Kirillovich as a legal monarch. In addition, the newspaper published discussions around the canonization of the Tsar's family initiated by fundamentalists. It also informed readers of a "Public Investigation Fund" established to investigate criminal deeds in secret circumstances including mystic murders (V zashchitu grazhdan, 1991, p. 2; cf. Obrashchenie, 1991). It goes without saying that they meant ritual murders. It is in this context that the newspaper informed its readers about deaths of certain well-known Russian nationalists from the hands of secret murderers and pointed to ritual (according to Judaist rite) nature of those murders committed by some anti-Russian agents. This stance grew up, especially after the nationalist musician Igor' Tal'kov's murder on November 6, 1991.

The newspaper's drift towards the Orthodox identity had finally come into fruition by the early 1992. Since that time on, it had been speaking on behalf of Russian Orthodox people alone rather than Russians in general, be them different Christians, pagans or non-religious at all. Priests appeared among the authors, and the Church-religious field expanded far beyond the space initially provided for that and received room even within political, economic and military discussions. The folk traditions that were associated with paganism earlier, found their place within the Orthodox doctrine. For example, folk medicine began to be represented mostly by the Orthodox pray. Kids' education and secrecy of marriage were directly linked to Orthodox rites. Even food recipes and festive table demonstrated the Orthodox spirituality. And the school of survival was now taken in the Orthodox way as a struggle against evil forces.

Ever since, the Russian way had been viewed by the newspaper as both Orthodox and monarchist, and its enemies had been associated with the rest of the world with its heresies, satanic sects, godless West and evil forces as though all of them wanted to establish the world government. Whereas in 1991 many authors still emphasized internationalism as natural for Russian people, a year later its interpretation has been changed to the opposite (Afonina, 1992, p. 14). Almost all Russian enemies were presented as Freemasons—the label, which was turned into a code word for any enemy, i.e. satanic forces. As a result, images of Jews, Zionists, Masons and democrats blended up into some awful mix that hung over Russia as a sword of Damocles and arranged the Black mess. All this made *Russkiy vestnik* closer to *Zemshchina*, although its authors never went so far as to blame the Talmudic Judaism.

Den', Eschatology and Conspiracy

The radical *Den'* newspaper was very active in 1991–1993, when it proclaimed itself a spiritual opposition. Whereas the Orthodox-Monarchist media and the *Russkiy vestnik* newspaper aimed at ethnic Russians, *Den'* stuck to the Eurasian program and favored both Russian Orthodox and Muslim people. Evidently, that is why it participated in the eschatological discourse less intensively than *Russkiy vestnik* and much less than *Zemshchina*.

Den' turned to the Russian Orthodoxy between late 1991 and early 1992, and in his New Year congratulation, Alexander Prokhanov addressed the readers on behalf of believers (Prokhanov, 1992, p. 1). The "New Year Address of Patriarch Tikhon" of 1918 was reprinted in the same issue, which demonstrated the Orthodox orientation of the newspaper. Yet, during almost the whole 1992, the newspaper was still eclectic and could not choose what sort of Orthodoxy to follow. It seems that the newspaper finally obtained its religious identity only in October 1992, when it asked radical Orthodox priest Dmitry Dudko (1922–2004) to be its spiritual father.

Nonetheless, eschatological themes closely connected with *Den's* favorite conspiratorial ideas began entering the discourse already in the early 1992. The newspaper addressed the same themes as *Russkiy vestnik* and *Zemshchina*, namely, Satanists and Evil forces; Russian autocracy and its religious origins; international Zionism and Hasidim. Latent anti-Semitism presented itself permanently in the newspaper, and sometimes it expressed itself in statements on the "Zionist Mondialism", which had allegedly destroyed the USSR. The rhetoric also included the idea of occupation of Russia by the new power of "Sverdlovs-Bronsteins"[3] who had not learned to pronounce "r" correctly (O. Ivanov, 1992, p. 3). Yet, Freemasons were the worst, and they were permanently blamed for secret evil plans. The newspaper accused Bolsheviks for their following Masons, Masons—for a service to some secret Jewish organization, and all of them—for the destruction of the Christian civilization in Russia. Sometimes even the Moscow Patriarchate was criticized for ecumenism and rapprochement with Judaism.

Although prophecies about the end of time were welcomed in the very first issue where Saint Serafim of Sarov's views on the tragic fate of Russia and an arrival of the Antichrist were published (Gryadushchie sud'by Rossii, 1991, p. 7), in 1991, this sort of materials appeared very rarely. At that time, only Father Antony focused on the Apocalypse (Antony, 1991, p. 5), and writer Vladimir Karpets recalled Serafim of Sarov's prophecies (Karpets, 1991, p. 4). Even Dudko in his attempt to understand the nature of the August *putsch* of 1991 mentioned satanic forces and the coming end of times, but avoided getting deeper into that (Dudko, 1991, p. 5). Finally, emigrant Mikhail Nazarov mentioned the end of time in his argument against Neo-pagans (Nazarov, 1991, p. 5).

Only in June 1992, Dudko put forward the idea of the end of time and God-bearing Russia, which was confronted by the entire world instigated by Sanhedrin (!).

[3] Yakov Sverdlov was the Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (1917–1919); Bronstein is the real surname of Leon Trotsky.

Noteworthy, while discussing Russia's mission, he initially referred to Dostoevsky's prophesy rather than to the Church Fathers. He claimed that the Antichrist had not come yet because of the restrainer. Initially, he did not know who the restrainer was precisely (Dudko, 1992a, p. 6). But in October 1992, he was already sure that it was Russia itself. While discussing the prophecies, he referred to the Russian saints, including Serafim of Sarov (Dudko, 1992b, p. 6).

After him, the same idea was discussed by Alexander Dugin, who introduced himself as an esoteric scholar. He claimed that the restrainer was either Russian God-bearing people or Russia, which he identified with the Soviet empire. In July 1992, he stated that *Katechon* had lost its power after the dissolution of the USSR. Yet, he believed that misfortunes arrived not for long; as Russia does not belong to this world, Jesus Christ still is its God, which promises a fast regeneration (Dugin, 1992, p. 5). To be sure, all of this looked like heresy from the theological point of view.

Finally, an interview with the aforementioned Metropolitan Vitaly was published in November 1992. On behalf of the Russian Orthodoxy as the genuine Christianity, he attacked all other religions as heresies brought by the Devil. He predicted that the Antichrist would arrive very soon. He also underlined a special role of Russia: the world's future depended on Russia—that is why it was hated by Satanists, who instigated the wave of Russophobe (Lish pravoslavie izluchaet lyubov', 1992, p. 5).

Conclusion

Thus, the Russian Orthodoxy coming back to public discourse and its usage by national-patriots were accompanied by a growing interest towards eschatology, which helped them to explain (in fantastic terms though) the nature of the current crisis and to develop their view of Russia's role in the world and its future, as well as to disclose its numerous enemies. The discourse covered several key themes—Good and Evil, friends and enemies, local and global, national and cosmopolitan, autocracy and democracy, the unity of empire and the value of national state, and the like. All these themes were perceived at two different levels—phenomenological and metaphysical. The former focused on the current events and their discussion in political, social and economic terms. At the latter level, one dealt with the traditionalist concept of involution. It depicted the movement from the Golden Age to decline and decay, which was explained by the Christian eschatology with a reference to satanic forces that paved the way for the Antichrist. Only a restrainer could resist, and from this point of view, the major conflict in the world emerged from a clash between the restrainer and Evil forces, whoever they were. The New Testament and the Church Fathers identified Evil forces with Jews, which view was secured by a long theological tradition[4], taken for granted by national-patriots. Therefore, fundamentalists have been tirelessly searching for the signs of the Antichrist's arrival in almost any activity of Jews, Zionists or Freemasons whatever they are called. To be sure, not all participants of the discussion understood the spiritual depth of these signs, which has been pointed out by Metropolitan Vitaly.

[4] The Second Vatican Council has declined that point of view.

The Russian Orthodox tradition has its own flavor. While proclaiming Russian people as God-bearing one and Moscow as the Third Rome, the conviction exists that only the Russian Orthodoxy maintains a genuine Christian spirit. Thus, Russia (or Russian people) as the only stronghold of the Christianity is viewed as a restrainer. Hence, it naturally opposes the rest of the world, which allegedly has given up with God and is under decay. It is in this context that messianic prophecies about the Russian wonderful future became popular among Russian priests and holy elders, who believed that Russia would avoid the Kingdom of the Antichrist and would rescue the world. At the same time, this made Russia a natural target for satanic forces; such idea caused paranoid emotions, as well as extreme forms of xenophobia among national-patriots. That is why the revival of the Russian Orthodox historiosophy with its eschatological attitude inevitably led to regeneration of the doctrinal religious anti-Semitism imbedded into it.

However, the narrative of Apocalypse can be interpreted in various ways; there is the distinction between Philo-Semitic, Judophobic, as well as quite neutral interpretations, which does not cover the Jewish factor at all (Shnirelman, 2013). Nonetheless, in the 1990s, Russian national-patriots were obsessed with the Jewish factor, which they viewed as the key one with a great explanatory power. For them, it not only explained what happened in the world history and what the humanity can expect in future, but also was both inevitable and harmful, as the New Testament and the Church Fathers have predicted.

Yet, the Russian nationalism was segmented into several factions with different ideas in mind, and also demonstrated a dynamic through time, which was reflected in the three newspapers that were under study. *Zemshchina* represented the most radical faction of the Russian nationalism, which entirely rejected the Soviet heritage as the Jewish project and looked back to highly romanticized pre-revolutionary past with its monarchic political arrangement allegedly given by the Lord. In this paradigm, Jews (and non-Russians in general) were viewed as the most harmful enemies of the established Russian order, who successfully undermined it, and the narrative of the Antichrist provided an explanation of what was happening and why. It is no accident that the editorial board had shifted to the Neo-Nazi program by the mid-1990s.

Russkiy vestnik was somewhat more temperate and initially provided a floor for various voices of Russian nationalists, including Neo-pagans. Yet, after the newspaper had shifted to the Russian Orthodoxy, it became more rigid and exclusive. *Russkiy vestnik* had begun celebrating the Russian monarchy and, since that time, it welcomed certain *Zemshchina* authors with their fundamentalist views. The newspaper was hostile to non-Russians (including the Jews) from the very beginning, but a shift towards Russian Orthodoxy provided a new understanding of history and Russia's messianic role in the world. Needless to say, eschatology played a key role there.

Finally, the *Den'* newspaper focused on the value of empire be it Soviet or non-Soviet. It was obsessed with the image of enemies, who made all the best to spoil and undermine it. The newspaper stuck to conspiracy, and an image of the Antichrist

helped to understand what the Russian mission was, and why exactly Russia was attacked by numerous enemies. Yet, the phenomenological approach seemed more appropriate for the newspaper's authors than a metaphysical one. That is why they stood for a strong authoritarian leader rather than for the Tsar.

The idea of the Orthodox monarchy was exploited by all three newspapers. It was no accident since it was instrumental with respect of the idea of a restrainer. At the same time, the image of the Tsar as a restrainer was easily replaced by Russia or Russian people. As a result, the fundamentalist approach to the Russian Orthodoxy transforms political factor into religious one. Thus, a new political theology was born in Russia at the turn of the 1990s. It is still alive, and although Judeophobe has shrunk during the recent decades it immediately comes back onto the scene in critical periods as, for example 2014 (Shnirelman, 2016) and 2017 (Shnirelman, 2020a, 2020b), when once again they recalled the end of time and the Tsar's ritual murder.

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ARTICLE

Time, Moment, Eternity: Hieroglyphs and Meditations in Yakov Druskin's Philosophy

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ABSTRACT
In this article, the author explores the interest of the interwar intellectuals in "time, death, God". This focus on temporality as an existential problem engendered some major philosophical projects, which aimed at complete revision of how philosophy should be done, including Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Franz Rosenzweig. The main part outlines a philosophical project of Yakov Druskin who addressed the problem of temporality in a highly original manner. Druskin combined philosophical reflection on time in its existential meaning with the search for intellectual methods and linguistic techniques to transcend our ordinary reality. Among these methods, in Druskin's works at least two major modes—meditation and "hieroglyphs"—can be identified. Both methods, however, aim at "transforming rather than informing" and at enabling us to linger in a "certain equilibrium with a minor error".

KEYWORDS
Russian Avant-garde, Russian philosophy, OBERIU, Druskin, temporality, time, languages of time, existential meaning of time

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Introduction

A century ago, Franz Rosenzweig published his *Der Stern der Erlösung* [The Star of Redemption] (1921), in which a prominent German Jewish intellectual sought to address "various themes already familiar to a new generation tutored in Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson" (Gordon, 2007, p. 122). Peter Eli Gordon enumerates among these themes further

> the primacy of poetic language, the bankruptcy of rationalist and idealist philosophy, the constitutive-existential function of temporality, the linguistic, spoken, and always intersubjective grounding of human meaning, the paradigmatic import of religious revelation, and, perhaps most of all, the turn from theoretical knowledge to 'life' itself as the chief field of hermeneutic inquiry (Ibid.).

These themes Rosenzweig developed in his "new thinking" laid out in *The Star* and, perhaps, they can be best summarised in a phrase, which Aleksander Vvedensky used: "I am interested in three themes—time, death, God" (see: Druskin, 1998a, p. 47, my translation from Russian—A. M.). This phrase was reported to us by Yakov Druskin, a Russian philosopher, who, in another work *Zvezda Bessmyslitsy* [The Star of Meaninglessness] (Druskin, 1998c), explicated Vvedensky's philosophical approach and literary method.

The interest of the interwar intellectuals in "time, death, God" was spurred by the profound suspicion towards or outward rejection of established systematic philosophy in its idealist or materialist versions. Systems of philosophy seemed too abstract and the laws of history, which had promised the progress of humanity, seemed too arid to validate the subjective existence of individual human beings who had to navigate through major transformations of the early twentieth century. A number of intellectuals focused on temporality, primarily in its existential and subjective function rather than on history in its majestic course because in the systems of philosophy, ironically, the explanation of the ongoing social transformations by the laws of history deprived the future of its novelty. As Leonard Lawlor notes, "continental philosophers are opposed to norms because norms stop thinking. Norms allow us to deduce actions, and then we do not really struggle with the decision. Norms stop thinking because they close off the new" (Lawlor, 2012, p. 50).

On the European continent, this focus on temporality as an existential problem engendered some major philosophical projects, which aimed at complete revision of how philosophy should be done, including Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Franz Rosenzweig, to name just a few. However, in order to explore this personal significance of time, to initiate new ways of thinking about time, it was necessary to find new ways of speaking about time. Thus, the philosophical reflection on time was interwoven with the search by philosophers, poets, artists, musicians for the new forms of conveying and expressing the experience of time. Moreover, as Lawlor aptly puts it, for these philosophers "the idea that thinking happens to you implies that

thinking is not a natural ability. It occurs under the pressure of extreme experiences and experimentation. Because thinking happens in an experience, continental philosophy is always interested in the experience of death, madness, and blindness. All of these experiences concern disorientation in time" (Lawlor, 2012, p. 47). Thus, apart from new ways of thinking and of speaking about time, it is necessary to find ways, methods, techniques of "disorienting" us, of pushing us out of the ordinary and the everyday in order to create the conditions for experiencing time existentially.

In the Bergsonian approach, access to pure time is gained by means of intuition. However, the way Bergson describes how intuition can actually work is mostly in negative terms and, as it were, in parables. In his lectures *Histoire de l'idée de temps* [History of the Idea of Time] (Bergson, 2016), Bergson strives to direct us to the comprehension of time by a number of oppositions: internal–external, direct–intermediate, simple–complex/composed, relative–absolute. Bergson outlines the distinction between internal (direct, simple, absolute, intuitive) and external (mediated, composed, relative, conceptual) knowledge of things by deconstructing our ordinary experiences of learning a foreign language, observing some movement, understanding a fictional character in a novel, grasping the notion of life in biology (Bergson, 2016). He gives an ordinary example and shows how it actually misconstrues the experience of duration, although it is this duration that makes it at all possible. In all these cases, Bergson proceeds in, what can be called, an apophatic fashion: we need to step out of our habitual ways of perception, use of concepts, reliance on analytical thinking, usage of language, and to replace it all with intuition, or direct knowledge of the absolute.

In phenomenological philosophy, this process of transcending the ordinary and the everyday is described by the concept of *epoche*, or phenomenological reduction. But, in a way, this procedure of lifting us out of the ordinary is similar to what various thinkers described as ecstasis or rapture and is fraught with religious overtones. Georgiy Chernavin highlights the following observation made by Druskin who berates Husserl for insufficient courage to accept the religious function of the *epoche*:

> Ambiguity of transcendental reduction, its madness is the same madness as the madness of religious conversion. Husserl himself says that many phenomenologists pass off their purely psychological descriptions for a phenomenological investigation. But if we deny the religious foundation of transcendental reduction, any phenomenological reduction will be merely a psychological description. Phenomenological reduction presupposes two states, or two orders, of mind. But there is only a natural state or an unnatural state, that is, a religious state, no third state of mind exists (...) Husserl himself wished to come to God. But this is impossible, it is contradictory: it is I who runs away from God. If God does not drag me to Himself, I can't come to God (…) transcendental reduction is necessary. Husserl is wrong in believing that it [transcendental reduction] is only theoretical, it is simultaneously practical.

> Therefore, I can't do it [reduction] myself, although I ought to do it. (Druskin's passage *Videnie nevideniya* [The Vision of the Unseen], cited from Chernavin, 2020, p. 75, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

Transcendental reduction, therefore, can be regarded as a religious act, an act of meditation aimed at ecstasis. But this act introduces rupture into the way we experience the world and splits it into two—or potentially many—worlds.

Rosenzweig interprets this division of the totality of knowledge, so vigorously sought for by systematic philosophy, in the context of religion. He claims that

> it is the unity of reasoning, which here insists on its right over against the multiplicity of knowledge by asserting the totality of the world. The unity of the logos establishes the unity of the world-as-totality (...) Thus a successful resistance against the totality of the world implies at the same time a denial of the unity of reasoning (Rosenzweig, 1921/1971, p. 12).

But for Rosenzweig, this exit from false totality, which systematic philosophy tried to impose by its notion of "all", or the "world", can only be achieved in emancipating individuality through an otherworldly experience given to us in religion and, in particular, in revelation. As P.E. Gordon explains, "through the encounter with divine love, we pass from abjection to reconciliation (…) Because they [Jews] remain open to the eternity of future redemption, they exhibit a profound indifference to history" (Gordon, 2007, p. 135). Thus, truly experiencing time presupposes actually stepping out of history. In other words, one has to establish a connection between one's immediate moment and eternity.

Both Bergson and Husserl showcase duration, the internal continuous process of experiencing time, the process, in fact, of living as a conscious being. Both philosophers try to lead us to this experience of time by affecting a rupture with the experience of the ordinary by means of intuition or reduction, that is, by reconceptualising traditional methods of philosophy. Both philosophers try to reinvent how philosophy should be done, while Franz Rosenzweig aims at "new thinking", which ought to be based on the old revelation. It is divine revelation alone, which can open our true selves and our actual place in the world to our reflection.

In what follows I intend to offer a brief outline of another philosophical project, which addressed the problem of temporality in a highly original manner. It combined philosophical reflection on time and eternity in their existential, subjective meaning with the search for intellectual methods and linguistic techniques to transcend our ordinary and everyday attitude to reality. This project was developed over the decades by Yakov Druskin who traditionally is mentioned in relation with the Russian Avant-garde stars—Aleksander Vvedensky and Daniil Kharms whose archive Druskin saved from the besieged and bombarded Leningrad, and whose philosophical discussions he reported and whose literary oeuvre he explicated in his own texts.

"Before Belongings to Anything": Yakov Druskin in His Circumstances

Yakov Druskin was born in 1902 in Yekaterinoslav, he was the first son to the Druskins, a Jewish family whose name probably stems from Lithuanian "salt", and who were involved in revolutionary activities, including participation in "Bund" ("General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland and Russia"). The family were also blessed with two more children—Mikhail, a famous Soviet musicologist, and Lidiya who preserved, helped publish and commented on Yakov Druskin's archives. Yakov attended Lentovskaia Gymnasium where he made acquaintance with Leonid Lipavsky and Aleksander Vvedensky, but their true intellectual friendship developed later. He graduated from the philosophy department of the Petrograd State University and Leningrad Conservatory (the latter while working as a teacher at school).

In the late 1920s, Druskin takes part in the *Chinari* group whose name refers to the Slavonic equivalent of "order" or "rank" and, omitting the disputes about precise titulature, more known due to the activities of another grouping OBERIU ("Association of Real Art"). Vvedensky and Kharms perished in the early 1940s, Druskin saved their archives and was evacuated to Sverdlovsk, but in 1944, he returned to Leningrad where he lived to the end of his days in 1980 (see Dmitrenko & Sazhin, 1998, for more details). Druskin was fascinated by music and published a volume on Bach and cooperated in translating Bach studies, though later he was no less thrilled by Webern and Schoenberg (M. Druskin, 1999). He also developed interest in painting due to his friendship with V. Sterligov. But overall, to the external view, his life was utterly uneventful.

Druskin himself reports two events that deeply affected his personality in his diaries, which Druskin named *Pered prinadlezhnostiami chego-libo* [Before Belongings to Anything] (Druskin, 1999). The first event was what he describes as a call of God and a realisation of the fact of human mortality in 1911. In 1928, some episode of revelatory experience was recorded by Druskin in a small piece under the title *Dushevniy prazdnik* [Spiritual Festivity]:

> I have seen something simple, something so simple, clear, and evident that I can't even understand how I could not see it before, how I could live without seeing it. This was simple, clear, and evident all the time, right before me, it was my soul.
> (...) This is so simple: think of your soul. Again, "think of your soul", but it is your soul, that is, when I think of my soul, I have my soul. Thinking about the soul is thought. But the soul is not thought, neither thinking nor reflecting. Soul is greater than thought, than thinking, because it is soul that thinks and has thought. Still, when I think of my soul I have my soul, this thought, this thinking about my soul actually is my soul. So, this thought is greater than this thought, it exceeds the limits of thought: as it is [this thought about the soul] is greater than it is.
> I have seen something new, something simple, something joyous, I always had it but I have not seen it. No, I have always seen it, could not not see it and still did not see it, only now I see it (Sazhin, 1998, p. 655, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

While highly important, it was not transformative unlike the second event, which occurred in 1932. It was a dream, in which his former teacher from Lentovskaia Gymnasium, L. Georg appeared to him and "showed me death (...) but this was the death in relation with the fear of God: 'I am not ready for the Judgement, and death scares me'" (Druskina, 1999a, p. 529, my translation from Russian—A.M.). This prompted the decision to abandon philosophical system building in a traditional way and align thinking and living in his personal development. His subsequent life was the exercise in finding ways to extricate oneself from the world, to transcend the ordinary and the everyday:

> I never felt myself at home in this life (...) Earlier I thought this was caused by personal circumstances, my school work, for instance, or the like. Every spring I thought: something is going to happen; I will leave the school by the fall and start a new life. Then I realised that nothing is going to happen, and even if it would have happened, I still will not feel at home in life (…) When Georg came to me and showed me death, I thought: I was insincere, I wanted to build a system, but a system is impossible, every system has gaps and contradictions, I bridged the gaps as I could and I ignored the contradictions. Before the face of death, we can't write like that. I have rejected the system (Druskina, 1999a, p. 529, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

Since this personal revelation, Druskin has decided to embark on the project of turning thinking into practice. He made himself and his thinking an object of experiment and investigation. He experimented both in his writing and in his thinking. His writing is extremely esoteric and, as it were, idiosyncratic.

Problems of Interpretation

Several scholars attempted to approach his philosophy and find it an appropriate context. Aleksey Kozyrev (Kozyrev, 1997) reviews Druskin's later work *Videnie nevideniya* [The Vision of the Unseen] and compares Druskin's quest for sanctity to Gregory Skovoroda's, while his philosophical methodology is described as phenomenological reduction and one of the ways Husserl's phenomenology was adopted in Russia. Georgiy Chernavin (Chernavin, 2020), on the other hand, suspects that Druskin was playing at phenomenological reduction, whereas, in fact, he parodied the literary genre of philosophical text, quite in line with his OBERIU friends, in order to create a poetic effect. Chernavin wonders whether it would not be more accurate to assume that Druskin actually aimed at producing "an applied psychedelic use of phenomenological methodology" (Chernavin 2020, p. 80, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

To some extent, this conjecture echoes the analysis of Evgeny Pavlov who sees Druskin in the context of literary experiments of other OBERIU members (see Roberts, 1997):

> Thus surviving Russian avant-gardists built literary machines of their own with which to critique and radically transform the commonly accepted notions of

> time and history. Kharms' and Vvedensky's machines were of the extreme variety, each in his own way questioning the very core of what constitutes our temporal perception and any philosophical and social systems we construct on its foundation (Pavlov, 2012, p. 298).

It is hard to agree, though, that the interest in time, and, we should remember, in death and God, of the OBERIU can be explained away as a competition with and a response to Stalinism. Particularly it is difficult to see the direct link between Stalin's "time machine" and OBERIU's "literary machines" when Pavlov claims:

> Yet the obsessive thinking about time that marks the entire oeuvre of both men is not a mere exercise in abstract speculation, but inevitably represents an engagement with the political in ways that are no less radical than an open confrontation with the regime (...) A certain time machine is at work during the years of high Stalinism: it aims to conquer time by "petrifying the utopia" of the future and remaking history, as it ought to have happened (Pavlov, 2012, p. 296).

Graham Roberts discusses philosophy of OBERIU (1997) in greater detail. While indicating the common aspiration of the *Chinari* group "to construct a new, non-substantial existential ontology", quoting from Druskin's remark (Ibid., p. 126), Roberts seems to overstate the common theoretical foundation and principles of their philosophies, as if it were a unified whole, and seems to ignore the substantial differences in philosophical orientations, methods, and achievements. Druskin describes his own interest, his own twist of the group's project in his essay *Chinari*:

> Thinking, by its own nature, contrasts what is thought with thinking itself, that is, it extracts from thinking, from the act of thinking its content and its object; and it opposes thinking to the content of thinking and then [it opposes] thought to the object of thought, which is independent from thinking. Unlike animals, human beings think and thereby oppose themselves to society (...) I am interested in this last division. This is what I mean: I am left alone. I must correct myself: by saying I, I mean everyone, not just myself. Everyone who thinks will say: I am alone, I am before God, I and God. Again, I must correct myself: I meant exactly myself and not everyone, I don't even know what everyone is, I don't even know if there is any other. When I think, I do not see him. Not some other, but exactly myself, and right now: I am alone. Not because I do not have any acquaintances. I am alone because there is no external comprehension: I comprehend nothing. This, however, does not imply that there is no internal comprehension, that nobody can understand anyone else. But to have actual internal comprehension—rather than hypocrisy—a complete incomprehension must precede it; I must remain alone: I and God. But once I said this, I see that not I, but God: there is no I anymore. But how can I say that there is no I? I repeat: there is no I. The first part of the sentence negates the second, but both are correct. This is what I call the last division: I am divided, I observe my own absence and do not comprehend it. But

> only through this incomprehension can one come to the internal comprehension, some incomprehension is comprehension, the rest is hypocrisy. Most of all I dread internal hypocrisy, the lie to myself. Only by dividing the incomprehension of others from myself and myself from the world will I be able to avoid internal lie. But this incomprehension is comprehension. Then, I can see life. Not the grid of relations and categories which reason imposes on life, but [I can see] actual life; [I can see] death and God, [I can see] mystery (Druskin, 1998a, pp. 63–64, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

Distinctly theological agenda of Druskin and his specific methodology, of which later, sets him clearly apart from other members of the *Chinari* and the OBERIU groupings.

While Druskin's name is rarely absent in the discussions about OBERIU (Ostashevsky, 2012), there are few scholars who analysed Druskin's philosophy in his own right. Tat'iana Rezvykh in explicating the antinomies of time in Vvedensky's writings (Rezvykh, 2014) addresses some aspects of Druskin's philosophical reflections, but some major effort at research is needed to give due to this remarkable and profound philosopher.

Translation Issues and Beyond

It should be noted that there is only one available translation of his texts published in English: some excerpts from the diaries (*Death* and *The End of the World*) and his *Letter to Kharms* (see: Ostashevsky, 2006). This lack of translations and the preference to abundantly quote rather than to analyse Druskin's writings can be explained, on the one hand, by the complexity of the task of translation. Because Druskin, firstly, uses a number of categories, which despite their apparent simplicity are hard to translate.

Two examples can be given here. His fundamental notion of *pogreshnost',* particularly in the formula *ravnovesie s nebol'shoi pogreshnost'yu,* has both mathematical and religious connotations. Thus, E. Ostashevsky chooses to translate this formula as "a certain equilibrium with a slight peccadillo" (Ostashevsky, 2006, p. 220): "Its meaning is deliberately vague, but the peccadillo is, as it were, departure from dead symmetry by either aleatory or voluntary error that constitutes creation in both the cosmological and the artistic senses of the word" (Ostashevsky, 2006, p. 252). On the other hand, G. Roberts uses "minor error" for *pogreshnost'* (Roberts 1997, p. 26). A wider range of connotations, in my view, can be evoked by using "minor error", the latter alluding to the "measurement error" and "margin of error" in mathematics as well as to moral sin and to cognitive lapse, but these remain crude approximations to the original.

Another example is his fundamental categories of "this" and "that". Despite his philosophical education at the best Russian university at the time and his extensive philosophical erudition, Druskin shuns from using traditional philosophical categories in his writings. One of the most remarkable things that a reader may notice in perusing

his texts is that there are practically no Grecisms, Latinisms or other philosophical terms of foreign origin. Druskin's vocabulary is astonishingly Russian in the choice of philosophical terminology. Yet, Druskin does not create any artificially Russian philosophical vocabulary; on the contrary, he relies primarily on the use of ordinary language such as, for instance, demonstrative pronouns this and that. Druskin, though, endows these simple pronouns with conceptual significance. But that makes them very difficult to translate because so much hinges on the underlying ordinary usage.

Secondly, the lack of translations and the preference to extensively quote him can be explained, by the methods Druskin uses in his philosophical work. Most of his texts are not purported to inform the reader, they intend to transform, to reproduce in a reader the transformation that was exercised and perfected by the writer. The editors often deplore the fact that Druskin did not date his texts and often returned to them and reworked them. The texts were, indeed, diligently honed instruments of meditation.

Commentators sometimes referred to the similarities of Druskin's methodology and *docta ignorantia* developed by Nicholas of Cusa and dating back to Dionysius the Areopagite's corpus (Rezvykh, 2014, p. 91). But it is important to keep in mind that this similarity does not lie in conceptual continuation. Nicholas of Cusa was a philosopher who tried to develop philosophical concepts, often drawing on mathematical notions and analogies, in building his late Renaissance theology. Unlike Nicholas, Dionysius, whoever might be hidden by this name, was a practicing mystic and in his *Mystical Theology,* the author was not trying to expound a theological doctrine *per se*, to argue and to convince a reader. He aimed at transforming the reader's mind, at inducing through meditation the experience of the divine. But how can one express the ineffable divinity, which is beyond all and every being? Dionysius relies on oxymoronic and paradoxical constructions such as "the rays of the divine darkness" (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1999, p. 212). These constructions are meaningless conceptually. But the semantic clash caused by "the most illustrious darkness", "eyeless minds" and "ignorant knowledge" (or "learned ignorance") in this mystical treatise is instrumental in achieving its practical purpose—to meditate out of the creation and into the state of ecstasis, that is, to achieve the union with the divine.

In his reflection on the aspirations and methods of *Chinari* group, Druskin distinguishes two types of the meaninglessness (Druskin, 1998a, pp. 47 ff.). Situational meaninglessness refers to the breaking of conventions and expectations, of norms of behavior, and of rules of acting and being in the familiar reality. For instance, Andersen's tale (*Keiserens nye Klæder* [The Emperor's New Clothes]) about the child who called off the bluff of the naked monarch. Semantic meaninglessness entails the clash of meanings in an utterance, in a sentence or a phrase. To illustrate the consequences of such a semantic clash, Druskin cites Vvedensky:

> If we experience wild incomprehension, we will acknowledge that none can dispel this incomprehension with anything clear. Woe to us who think of time. But then as this incomprehension grows, you and I realize that there is no woe, neither to us, nor to those who think, nor to time (Druskin, 1998a, p. 47, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

Semantic meaninglessness, thus, becomes a method of gaining access beyond the ordinary and the everyday, access to the other worlds.

Chinari used the notion of "neighboring worlds" to describe these alternative orders of reality, in which one or more of the familiar qualities might be reversed. For instance, "we live in the world of firm objects, we are surrounded by air, which we perceive as emptiness. How would a semiliquid jellyfish who dwells in the liquid water feel?" (Druskin, 1998a, pp. 60–61, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

Finally, could the inhabitants of those neighboring worlds communicate with us, and, if they could, what would be their message? *Chinari* used the word "*vestniki*"—messengers, literally angels, to describe the inhabitants of the neighboring worlds. One of the most significant philosophical reflections written by Yakov Druskin are included in the groups of texts under the title *Razgovory Vestnikov* [Conversations of Messengers] (Druskin, 1998b). The translation of a fragment from *Tret'e issledovanie ob etom i tom* [The Third Investigation about This and That], part VI, in *Razgovory Vestnikov* [Conversations of Messengers] is attached in the Appendix. But in this translation, I hope, it can be observed that unlike his partners in *Chinari* group Druskin deploys neither situational nor semantic meaninglessness. Yet, I would concur with the hypothesis made by G. Chernavin, though in a rather ironic manner, that Druskin's texts aim primarily at transforming rather than informing.

What Can Take Us Beyond?

When Druskin was disappointed in his idea of building a new system, he continued his literary and philosophical experimentations. But now they were all directed at practical aims. His writing and thinking were ascetic exercises that were needed to transform his life, or rather, in his own words, to find his true home. Instead of abstract reasoning and theoretical conceptualizations traditional for the European philosophy, in Druskin's works we can detect at least two major modes of "transforming rather than informing": meditation and hieroglyphs.

Reportedly, the notion of hieroglyphs was suggested by Lipavsky, but Druskin adopted it, perfected it, and reflected on it in several texts. In *Zvezda Bessmyslitsy* [The Star of Meaninglessness], Druskin elaborates on this notion in some detail:

> Hieroglyph is a material phenomenon, which I can directly perceive, feel, apprehend and which tells me more than it can directly express as a material phenomenon. Hieroglyph is ambivalent, it has its proper and additional meaning. The proper meaning of hieroglyph is its definition in its capacity of a material phenomenon—physical, biological, physiological, psychophysiological. Its additional meaning can't be defined precisely and unambiguously, it can be conveyed metaphorically, poetically, sometimes by joining logically incongruous notions, that is, by antinomy, contradiction, meaninglessness. Hieroglyph can be understood as an indirect or mediated speech of the immaterial, that is, of spiritual or supersensible, by means of material and sensible when it is addressed to me" (Druskin, 1998b, pp. 550–551, my translation from Russian—A. M.).

One might wonder to what extent this interpretation of the hieroglyph is similar to the notion of symbol in the Areopagite's corpus whose function is described as "to reveal and to conceal at the same time". But it is important to emphasize that hieroglyphs are much more diverse and poetic than theological symbols. Examples of hieroglyphs include fall of the leaves, fire in a fireplace, and a series of literary and cinematographic images such as the road in the final episode of Chaplin's *The Pilgrim*. Moreover, while theological symbols all point in the same direction—towards God, hieroglyphs reveal the multiplicity of neighboring worlds.

The other methodology, which I named meditation earlier, might seem a parody of philosophical treatise, as Chernavin suggested. Some of *Razgovory Vestnikov* [Conversations of Messengers], indeed, might seem repetitive, obscure, and uninformative. But I argue that this is precisely their point. They are not purported to report anything to us, to enlighten us or to educate us in any way. They work as music works by setting certain rhythm, and certain pitch, and certain mood, and by guiding our thinking in a very specific way. The ultimate purpose of these meditations is not to fall into any of the neighboring worlds, but to remain on the border between them, in the gap between different orders, different systems of logic and aloof from the norms, which subjugate into compliance our thinking, our living, our existing. Druskin strives to enable us not to succumb to any definite order and to linger in a moment, to hang at the tip of the balance in a "certain equilibrium with a minor error".

In conclusion, I would emphasize again the originality and the ingenuity of the philosophical project developed by Yakov Druskin. L. Lawlor claims that

> the experience of the moment being the experience of death implies that although all continental philosophy starts out being a relativism and a subjectivism, all continental philosophy ends up being an "absolutism" and an "objectivism." Death is what is outside of subjective experience; therefore, being non-subjective, death is "objective." Death is what I cannot relate to, since relating to it destroys my life; therefore, being non-relative, death is absolute (Lawlor, 2012, p. 32),

but I would caution against such a generalization. Druskin's philosophical practice of reflecting on "time, death, God" demonstrates that death is not "outside of subjective experience", its deeply personal acknowledgment initiates the search for an exit from the temporal world and for the means—philosophical and poetic—to enter the moment, in which God meets its "thinking creature".

Many intellectuals of the interwar period sought to make meaning of the historical transformations, which undermined the Enlightenment's expectations of progress. The latter was supposed to combine social, technical, and moral development of the humanity. But while technology and societies were becoming more and more complex, they were also growing more and more overbearing towards individual subjectivity. In this article, I outlined a number of ways that philosophers proposed to reconnect human existence with transcendent dimensions of reality and to renew the relation between philosophy and religion. While H. Bergson leaned towards traditional

Catholic Christianity, F. Rosenzweig offered a renewal of Judaism, Yakov Druskin practiced his own sort of religion, though based on the Gospels.

In my view, the study of the religious aspects of the Russian avant-garde will greatly enrich our understanding of the "continental philosophy" and will place Yakov Druskin on par with most prominent intellectuals of the interwar period Bergson, Husserl and Rosenzweig.

Appendix

Razgovory Vestnikov [Conversations of Messengers]
Tret'e issledovanie ob etom i tom [The Third Investigation about This and That]
VI

1. Watching trees in a garden during the rain, or watching fire in a fireplace, or the flow of a river you find some certainty and clarity. You say: I have achieved an equilibrium, I have seen the great moment, when there was no time, [I have seen that] something truly exists. But then you notice a minor error, and the equilibrium is disturbed.
2. When the great moment exists, something can be named. There will be an affirmation, but there is yet no reasoning. This is the way of messengers and trees to give names. If, however, you have noticed a minor error, the names are doubtful.
3. Once I noticed a small error in some equilibrium, I began my investigation. I said something and said this. I noticed some duplication here: I supposed that something existed, but by naming it this, I gave it existence anew. And it exists as if for the first time: I have realised that it had not existed before it was named.
4. By saying this, I say it [is] different from that. If I could say this directly, I couldn't doubt its existence. Moreover, I would regard its second existence as the first and the only. But now I see a minor error: I didn't say this, but this in contrast to that. I reverted the error to the beginning. I noticed some duplication and in recollecting how I said this by saying something I supposed that I had noticed it then.
5. By saying this in contrast to that, I simultaneously said that. I said that before actually saying that, simply by referring to this. Now I say that before that and here a number of suppositions follow because even the first that was a supposition. These suppositions emerge at the first distinction, or division. When there is a series of suppositions, I can see nothing determinate and clear and remain in doubt.
6. I said this and that, and by saying this and that, I said one thing; one thing because it is no greater than this or than anything, thus, the doubt remains. If I join this and that, I say one and the other, I find some certainty.
7. I named something and I made a minor error in doing so. Then I observe it. I observe it twice: first, I observed a minor error when I made it. Some observation was a minor error. Later, I observe it again, this second observation is the second error. Thus, I observed some duplication here.

8. Comprehension is recollection of some certainty of a moment. I recollect now some certainty of a moment, I had it before. At that time I gave a name to something, I recollected then something that had not existed before naming. Thus, in recollection there is also some duplication.
9. If there were only one error, who would notice it? By naming something I made a minor error, but noticed it later, by observing it and by recollecting it. This is the second error.
10. Something exists and needs affirmation. Naming something will be its affirmation; it will be [an affirmation] without reasoning, if I haven't noticed the error; and it will be [an affirmation] with reasoning when I notice it. Thus, here, too, some duplication exists.
11. If there is affirmation without reasoning, then might there be an equilibrium without error, too? – If there exists something that does not need affirmation, then there truly exists equilibrium without error. But any affirmation is some duplication and some error. Thus, every equilibrium is equilibrium with a minor error. But to see that it is complete equilibrium, no affirmation is needed.
12. Some wearisome waiting, impatience, boredom accompany observation of time. This is the feeling of reality. It is tiresome and gives no pleasure. The other feeling of reality is in the great moment, and it does not make us weary.
13. You can stop the flow of time for a moment. You can see the beginning of a moment, but it can't be retained, its ending will be lost. The beginning of a moment is the beginning of some reality. This is the third feeling of reality.
14. You have named something this. You have noticed some certainty and said this or that. Some sign – a turn of the head, an observation or a word – has by chance acquired certainty; it became this or that. In some interval, in the great moment, you have named something this. Now, just now, you have uttered some word, perhaps, some word of no specific meaning, and thereby something got affirmation. This is the fourth feeling of reality.
15. In order to find some certainty, it is necessary to join one with the other. But for doing so there needs to be something irrelative. I have found the irrelative: some accidental token of time, the naming in the great moment, the beginning and the sign, which possibly has no specific meaning. These are the tokens of a minor error in some equilibrium: something that had not existed before naming was named because it needed affirmation (Druskin, 1998c, pp. 805–807; my translation from Russian—A. M.)

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ARTICLE

Preventing Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Barbarism in the Present and in the Future through Art: Using the Example of the Play "The Investigation. Oratorio in 11 Songs" by Peter Weiss

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ABSTRACT
75 years have passed since the liberation of Auschwitz, but racism, nationalism and xenophobia (including anti-Semitism) are still widespread; in fact, due to an increasingly solipsistic policy of international leaders, hostility against those who don't match race, religion, culture or sexual orientation is even experiencing a renaissance. Fake news start to replace facts. In Germany, politicians of the (democratically elected) right-wing party AfD [*Alternative for Germany*] publicly question the significance of the Holocaust. According to the polls, around 33% of European youths have little or no knowledge about the attempted annihilation of Jews during World War II. In order to prevent the return of barbarism it is essential to remember and understand the characteristics that actually led to barbarism in the first place. Peter Weiss' play *Die Ermittlung: Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* [The Investigation. Oratorio in 11 Songs] written in 1965, takes a very thorough look at what Auschwitz was, how it had been made possible and how it survived in society even after the war. The following article examines the play and its context in literature and films on the Holocaust, paying particular attention to the possibility of explaining the, as Elie Wiesel has put it, "unexplainable" and converting it into a teaching experience for current generations.

KEYWORDS
Auschwitz, Holocaust, Remembrance, Education, Alternative for Germany, populism, xenophobia

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A (Rather Personal) Introduction

Last year I met with some old friends in Berlin. Thinking of how to spend our time reasonably, someone suggested to visit the former Nazi concentration camp *KZ Sachsenhausen*, which, since 1993, serves as a public remembrance site under the name *Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum*. The idea was spontaneous and somehow peculiar, since all of us went to school in Germany in the seventies, where, in history class, "The Holocaust" was a recurrent (some jesters then even claimed: the only) subject being taught. Hence, none of us felt a particular need for further "education" as to the nature of the Nazi terror and its implications.

We went anyway and, as expected, I found my suspicion confirmed. Though the entire site is lovingly designed with the required professionalism and thoughtfulness, featuring a large number of permanent and travelling exhibitions, paying elaborate attention to detail—still there was nothing, virtually nothing new to me. The structure of power within the SS; the hard-to-bear descriptions of all sorts of atrocities; the individual stories of the ones who have been killed (and of the very few who were lucky to escape)—I had heard and seen them countless times before.

Nevertheless, the visit wasn't in vain; on the contrary, while the head remained calm, the heart vehemently reacted. Standing right in the place, where "it" had happened, resulted in an emotional chill I was completely unable to shake off. The horror of the events became palpable, at least to some extent. I'm not prepared to enter the discussion if there is an *energy of a place*—a theory which is very popular within the New Age movement and is usually rejected or even ridiculed by natural sciences. I would rather call it "the power of a live experience". And I have seen it many times myself, especially in former concentration camps that I have visited: *Dachau*, *Buchenwald* and now *Sachsenhausen*. I have even experienced it even with visitors, mainly school classes that are habitually being brought out to these sites. When, under normal circumstances, there is constant chatter and merrymaking, here even the most hardboiled class hooligans keep silent, obviously taken aback by the intrinsic atmosphere this place exudes.

The Current Situation

During the celebrations to the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in January 2020, politicians from all sides have again solemnly invoked the responsibility that Auschwitz *shall never happen again*. They do this actually every year, but with regards to how the world is changing right now their appeal is probably not unfounded. Currently, we are facing two fundamental problems in this respect: the first one lies within the rise of populism that enables politicians to offer simple answers to complex problems by dividing the world into "us" and "them"—them being preponderantly migrants, political dissidents or Jews who serve as real scapegoats for actually not real crises. It is striking in how many European parliament's right-wing parties have a seat right now (Ehmsen & Scharenberg, 2018). Besides raising hatred against migrants or, quite general, "foreigners", many of these parties—for example, Jobbik and Fidesz in

Hungary (Ehmsen & Scharenberg, 2018, p. 4), the PiS in Poland (Cienski, 2020) or the FPÖ in Austria (Goldenberg, 2018)—share an anti-Semitic worldview, too, oftentimes entertaining the notion that there is a worldwide *conspiracy* going on, usually involving George Soros or other major players of Jewish descent who supposedly desire the downfall of the West by infiltrating it with foreigners, conducting a "Great Replacement" in order to weaken and finally topple Western cultures (Bergmann, 2018).

Consequently, in the last years—since the infamous Utøya massacre, carried out by Anders Breivik in 2011—more and more individuals, seemingly fueled by the rhetoric of these parties and the cheering of like-minded supporters on some websites, or in the echo chambers of their closed Facebook[1] and WhatsApp[2] groups have decided to take matters into their own hands: the car attack in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017; the Las Vegas shooting in 2017; the Christchurch mosque shooting in New Zealand and the El Paso shooting, both in 2019, just to name the most prominent ones. All perpetrators were far-right white men who acted on the same ideology of racism and self-proclaimed supremacy of the white race as once the Nazis did.

In Germany, as said above, a party called AfD [Alternative for Germany] is growing in more and more numbers ("Germany's AfD", 2020). One of their chairmen, Alexander Gauland, thinks the Germans are not acknowledging enough "the achievements of our soldiers during World War II" (as cited in Storbeck, 2017), and another leading figure, Björn Höcke, states that in the future the use of "a policy of well-tempered cruelty" (Höcke, 2018, p. 254; my translation from German—O. K.) for Germany will be unavoidable: "The responsibility will then lie with those who with their pathetic actions have made these measures necessary" (Höcke, 2018, p. 254; my translation from German—O. K.). Höcke has actually taken the boldness of his fantasies to such an extent that since September 2019 it is not only legal to call him a "fascist" (Hänel, 2020) but a part of his party (the so-called "Wing") has been in March 2020 officially declared "extremist" by the *Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution*, which is "the first time in Germany's postwar history that a party represented in the federal Parliament has elicited such intense scrutiny" (Bennhold, 2020).

This party consciously tests the boundaries of what can be said out loud every day; it revels in permanent provocation, occasionally paddles back when the outcry is a little too loud, only to stylize itself afterwards as the victim of misunderstanding and over-exaggerated political correctness (McGuinness, 2019). With this tactic, they have successfully poisoned the political landscape. And the fact that within the last 8 months from writing this article three major shooting have occurred in Germany—the murder of politician Walter Lübcke in June 2019, the synagogue shooting in Halle in October 2019 and the Hanau shooting in February 2020—all of them carried out by avowed neo-Nazis who had attended meetings of the AfD and who clearly were under the impression that they had to "defend" their country against Jews and migrants, is indeed a signal that a politician's words and actions can encourage people to want to contribute from their side.

[1] Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

[2] WhatsApp™ is a trademark of WhatsApp Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

Admittedly, these terrorists are a rarity. Almost all of them were loners who, like in a cliché movie, still lived with their parents, never had a girlfriend, felt neglected and unappreciated—lost individuals who, for once in their lives, wanted to be "someone" (in this respect, by the way, they are no different from Muslim terrorists who are willing to sacrifice their life for the *Jihad*). It clearly has to be emphasized that the majority of citizens of said countries is definitely not inclined yet to murder people for a "cause".

But—and it is the second fundamental problem—polls show an increasing approval of what right-wing politicians and their ready accomplices say and do, even to the point that "every second German (48 percent) expects the party to be involved in a state or even federal government within the next ten years" ("Nearly 50 percent of Germans…", 2020). Returning to the phenomenon of the Holocaust and its inherent lesson—and it should be clear that "the Holocaust" is a metaphor for racism and xenophobia in general—this results in a decreasing factor of deterrent. Marc Santora fears, that "the horrific lessons of the death camp are being lost" (Santora, 2020). Aaron Breitbart, a senior researcher at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, says: "Not only are people willing to forget about the Holocaust, they're willing to deny it" (Popescu, 2018). The list goes on and on.

It is a natural process that, with every generation, the horror of an incident becomes more and more diluted. The generation that has seen World War II (by the way, the generation of my grandparents) had sworn to themselves and to their children that something like this *must never happen again.* This (positive) attitude is being passed on to their children but evidently weakens with every additional step.

As with anti-Semitism in Europe, it is not only growing due to an "imported" Jew hatred by migrants from (primarily Arabic) countries for whom "Israel" and "Jews" are synonyms. It is also growing amongst generic German and European citizens (Großbongardt, Rapp, & Schaefer, 2019) for whom Jews—as they are much less recognizable in daily life than, say, migrants from Northern Africa—serve as a concept of culprit responsible for everything *that does not go well in my life.* Florette Cohen Abady states: "Often those who are the most antisemitic have never even encountered a Jew" (Abady, 2019, p. 273).

Subsequently, the question is what can be done about it? How is it possible to reach anti-Semites or racists in general? Or at least those who are yet undecided but susceptible to extremist thinking? Of course, there are countless initiatives worldwide with the goal to fight oblivion and to prevent the return of Nazi ideology: Holocaust museums like *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem; the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin; *the Holocaust Memorial* at Auschwitz itself, only to name a very few.

Many survivors of the Holocaust have made it their lifelong task to teach the following generations, amongst them Simon Wiesenthal, Otto Frank and Elie Wiesel who, although he "stopped teaching Holocaust studies at the universities" (Potap, 2019, p. 106) after a very trying semester at Yale, anyway went on "talking about oppressors, victims, observers, and survivors relevant to the Holocaust or other forms of genocide" (Ibid.).

There are initiatives like the *Shoah Foundation*, founded by Steven Spielberg after the success of his film *Schindler's List*, which puts its major effort on recording

testimonies of Holocaust survivors "to help silence the Holocaust deniers who'd popped up during the making of 'Schindler's List'" (Cohen, 2014).

And not surprisingly, a huge number of initiatives include the arts. Looking back on history, the arts have always been regarded a decisive factor in improving a human being. When analyzing the Greek tragedy and its power to purge the soul of the spectator, Aristotle famously deployed the term "catharsis", achieving this "through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (Aristotle, trans. 1964, p. 296). Friedrich Schiller's programmatic essay *Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet* [The Theatre Considered as a Moral Institution] went even a step further: "The theatre is more than any other public institution of the state a school of practical wisdom, a guide through the daily life, an infallible key to the most secret access to the human soul" (Schiller, 1879, p. 46; my translation from German—O. K.).

Within the arts, it is probably—this claim, of course, is controversial but it is a major element of my argumentation—said *live experience* that has the most auspicious potential to reach people both on an emotional and, in an ideal scenario, on an intellectual level.

This article examines Peter Weiss' play *Die Ermittlung: Oratorium in 11 Gesängen* [The Investigation. Oratorio in 11 Songs] as a possible example of displaying and exercising such a potential. I would like to point out that the main focus of the analysis will neither lie on a literary discussion of the play, nor on the nature of the documents, their authenticity and how Weiss has translated them into his play. I count on the reader's knowledge that *Die Ermittlung* [The Investigation] is based on Weiss' *Frankfurter Auszüge* [Frankfurt Excerpts] (Weiss, 1965, pp. 152–188), which in turn are based on Bernd Naumann's reports (Naumann, 1965) and Hermann Langbein's protocols (Langbein, 1995) of the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt am Main between 1963 and 1965, both published in 1965 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (as cited in Kaiser, 2013). I furthermore do not plan to conduct a general discussion on the dangers and possibilities of manipulating historical facts in theatre, since no one ever accused Weiss of deliberately falsifying history. The analysis will rather focus on two central questions: the first part will take a look at the text itself in its formal construction and its corresponding ideological intention; in the second part, the question of why this very play might serve as a means of fighting increasing ignorance and separation will be looked upon. In other words, it should be examined which intentions Peter Weiss himself tries to pursue with his play; which parts of the phenomenon "Holocaust" he captures and which techniques he uses in doing so; which comparable plays, books, films, operas there are, and why Peter Weiss' play actually occupies a special position amongst them, without any judgment of quality.

The Play

In order to demonstrate what *The Investigation* is, it would be advisable to break down first what it is not. It is not a report of the Frankfurt Trial, as Bernd Naumann and Hermann Langbein have presented it, without no further intention than to dryly document it. As Weiss himself writes in the foreword to *The Investigation*, the intention

is “not to attempt to reconstruct the court before which the proceedings of the camp trial took place” (Weiss, 1966, p. 1)[3].

Nor is the play, in contrast to the natural task of the trial, the attempt to define guilt, on a legal or rather moral level. Weiss explains in the preface that the “bearers of these names” (he speaks about the defendants) should not be accused once again in this drama (Ibid.), probably because any doubt of their “guilt” would be absurd. Incidentally, this is also supported by the fact that *The Investigation* was already completed before the actual closing of the trial (Haiduk, 1977, p. 132). Thirdly, the play is not at all an attempt to visualize the reality of Auschwitz, since, to quote the preface once again; it is “impossible trying to present the camp itself on the stage” (Weiss, 1966, p. 1).

Peter Weiss’ intention is a different one: Firstly, he aims at a (basically factual) analysis of what happened in Auschwitz, or, as Erika Salloch puts it, “*The Investigation* shows the functioning of a concentration camp” (Salloch, 1972, p. 43; my translation from German—O. K.). Weiss’ claim in this respect is as comprehensive as possible, taking into consideration a large number of different factors: the meticulously planned and carefully organized mass extinction of people; the logistic procedures without which Auschwitz would not have been able to operate as a killing *factory*; the description of various perpetrator types represented in the camp; and the perspective of the victims who were subjected to all kinds of repression, torture and murder.

Weiss’ second goal is the following: when he takes up historical topics, he is interested above all in their relation to the present (as cited in Schumacher, 1965b, p. 4). Weiss’ standpoint is a decidedly Marxist one, as he himself had unmistakably stated in his *10 Arbeitspunkte eines Autors in der geteilten Welt* [10 working points of an author in a divided world] (Weiss, 1971, pp. 14–24). His theatre is to be understood as a socio-critical and politically engaged art form that attempts to directly influence social developments. His technique hereby is the one of *The Documentary Theatre*.

There is neither the space (nor the need) to extensively discuss *The Documentary Theatre*, which actually emerged from Bertolt Brecht’s *Political Theatre* in the twenties in Germany, and was at its height in the sixties with Peter Weiss as one of its most prominent representatives. As Weiss himself had pointed out in his programmatic *14 Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater* [14 notes on the documentary theatre], the most important characteristics are that the authors in their works point to existing social and political actualities, disclose them, and present them as pure facts for discussion and critical reflection: “The documentary theatre presents facts for evaluation. It presents various ways to perceive events and statements. It presents the motives for that perception” (Weiss, 1968b, p. 34; my translation from German—O. K.). They capture reality, which they understand as changeable in so-called “models” (Weiss, 1968b, p. 33) in order to achieve universal validity. They reflect political current events, aspire to uncover any form of government-induced conspiracy in order to expose them and its corresponding organs. *The Documentary Theatre* therefore is a theatre

[3] In this paper, all quotations from the play *Die Ermittlung* [The Investigation] (including the foreword) have been taken from the English translation by Jon Swan and Ulu Grosbard (Weiss, 1966).

For some reason—which we will not discuss here—parts of the dialogue of the original German version have been omitted in the English translation. Hence, I will quote them directly from the Suhrkamp edition (Weiss, 1976a), translating them myself – O. K.

of public protest that lays its finger into the wounds of society in order to stimulate a process of critical thinking, which might finally lead to political action (Zipes, 1967).

Consequently, *The Investigation* offers permanent cross-references from the past to the present, for example in comments and remarks of the defendants that prove that fascist and racist ideas are still virulent even twenty years after the downfall of the *Third Reich*. Yes, its ideology might possibly even roar up again, as suggests the closing statement of Mulka at the end of the play, followed by "loud approbation from the accused" (Weiss, 1966, p. 270). Likewise, the last sentence in Weiss' *Meine Ortschaft* [My place], a text with a similar topic that he wrote prior to *The Investigation*: "It is not over yet" (Weiss, 1968a, p. 124; my translation from German—O. K.); or the concluding words of his play *Marat/Sade*, a story that thematically, too, plays in the past but can be understood as a model for the present: "When will you finally learn to see / When will you finally understand" (Weiss, 1976b, p. 255; my translation from German—O. K.).

The cross-references also show that former Nazi figures still (or again) hold honorable and well-paid positions in post-war German society, proving that the necessary process of *denazification* is in constant danger and far from being completed: "They live undisturbed / They hold high offices / They increase their possessions / And continue to work in those factories / In which the prisoners of that time / Were wasted" (Weiss, 1976a, p. 445; my translation from German—O. K.). Finally, *The Investigation* casts light on leading corporations and companies that were then involved in the killing of millions of people, and that have been re-established in present Germany, having "ended up today in magnificent condition / and that they are now in the midst of/as they say/a new phase of expansion" (Weiss, 1966, p. 131).

This way Weiss strives to reveal the typical patterns of the past in order to validly transfer them to the present. His method is that of discursively arranging the very facts that he has derived from Naumann's and Langbein's trial reports and from his own fact compilation, the *Frankfurter Auszüge* [Frankfurt Excerpts]. In this respect, he tries to avoid any form of individualization, in order to create a distance that still allows critical, intellectual weighing; include as many perspectives to the story as possible—Weiss himself speaks of a "condensation" of facts (Weiss, 1966, p. 1)—while at the same time keeping their authenticity intact.

Indeed, his play is not based on the biography of just one character, and it doesn't even bother with culture or race—the expression "Jew", for example, does not appear even once throughout the entire drama. Consequently, there is no actual *hero*, either, unlike, for example, in Friedrich Schiller's classical historical dramas (*William Tell*, *Don Carlos, Wallenstein* and many more), or—to come back to typical representatives of *The Documentary Theatre* in Germany in the sixties—in the works of Rolf Hochhuth (Father Ricardo in *Der Stellvertreter. Ein christliches Trauerspiel* [The Deputy, a Christian Tragedy] (Hochhuth, 1963) and Heinar Kipphardt (J. Robert Oppenheimer in *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*) (Kipphardt, 1964) or Joel Brand in *Joel Brand* (Kipphardt, 1988). Peter Weiss' heroes (in this case the "witnesses") are deprived of their names, their stories are no longer their own. They are a *condensation* of those suffered by many hundreds of thousands of fellow victims. The technique is clear: to keep the reader (and/or: the spectator) in a distance, similar to Bertolt Brecht's

"distancing effect" (Brecht, 1957), from which he does not pity, consumed by his emotions, but recognizes human and social patterns and transfers them to his present time. The fact that no solutions are being offered during the process is consequent and immanent to the method.

This way, Peter Weiss differs fundamentally from many other authors of the Holocaust literature who have opposed Theodor W. Adorno's verdict "to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric" (Adorno, 1977, p. 30; my translation from German—O. K.) which, of course, was honorable, however even Adorno himself could not maintain it during his own lifetime. In view of the fact that Weiss had not been at the concentration camp himself, even though his name was "on the list of those who were to be transferred there for good" (Weiss, 1968a, p. 114), his literature is decidedly not a *personal* one, like, for instance, the poems of Nobel prize winner Nelly Sachs, especially the collection *In den Wohnungen des Todes* [In the Habitations of Death] (Sachs, 1947); the memoirs of Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo* [If this is a Man] (Levi, 1947); the work of Giorgio Bassani, for example, his novel *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* [The Gardens of the Finzi-Contini] (Bassani, 1963); or, of course, the poems of Paul Celan, amongst them the most famous *Todesfuge'* [Fugue of Death] (Celan, 1952). All these authors—and this is just a very sketchy collection—wrote mainly in order to somehow deal with their own traumatic experiences during the Nazi time.

Neither is it Weiss' intention to just historically record the Nazi crimes and save them for later generations, nor does he, as we have seen, pursue a plan to recreate the reality of Auschwitz (or other infamous camps) on stage, as, for instances, Rolf Hochhuth has done it in *Der Stellvertreter* [The Deputy] (1963) and, evidently, countless Hollywood films have tried it, too, the most known amongst them *Schindler's List* (1992), *La Vita è bella* (1997), *The Pianist* (2002), *Defiance* (2008), *Son of Saul* (2015).

Weiss' goal is the factual report of what actually happened, presenting the spectator with a picture as accurate and complete as possible. The phenomenon of Auschwitz as a whole shall become intelligible, setting off a process of reflection that gives way to an understanding of fascism itself (the most monstrous expression of which indeed was the Holocaust) to serve as a model for each recipient's current life.

Striving to an Utmost Level of Comprehensiveness—the Three Hells

What makes *The Investigation* so unique in the history of art dealing with the Holocaust, is the depiction of the various, as Ernst Schumacher has called it, "hells" (Schumacher, 1965a, p. 934; my translation from German—O. K.) of Auschwitz. Those hells can be found separately in other works, but in *The Investigation*, as a matter of fact, all three hells are present at the same time: the *hell before Auschwitz,* which describes all the activities before and around the concentration camp; the *hell of Auschwitz* itself, which takes the spectator right into the heart of the *Final Solution*, capturing the closed universe of the camp in its different expressions and perspectives; and the *hell after Auschwitz,* which focuses on the repercussions.

For all three "hells", there are numerous dramatic examples. The *hell before Auschwitz* is being featured in plays such as *Incident in Vichy* by Arthur Miller (Miller,

1965) which—within the talks of the detainees—sheds light on how the Nazis acted in order to implement their terror in Europe; said *Joel Brand* by Heinar Kipphardt, a story around the attempt to exchange Jews in a gigantic deal with Adolf Eichmann; or Max Frisch's *Andorra* (Frisch, 1961) that indelibly describes how anti-Semitism develops from humble beginnings to inhumanity.

And not to forget (though we want to focus more on dramatic works than on films) the 1982 American television film *The Wave*, based on the psychological experiment *The Third Wave* by Ron Jones in 1967 (Jones, 1981), that showed exemplary how ordinary people, in this case a high school class, can be seduced into becoming ardent fascists.

The second field, the *hell of Auschwitz*, can be detected in plays such as Hochuth's already mentioned *The Deputy* (at least in its 5th act), Hedda Zinner's *Ravensbrück Ballad* (Zinner, 1961), *Ghetto* by Yehoshua Sobol (Sobol, 1984) or—in a broader sense—in *Through Roses* by Marc Neikrug (Neikrug, 1989), a "musical drama for one actor and eight solo instruments".

For the third field, the hell after Auschwitz, we can name theatre plays such as *Die Sperrzonen. Eine deutsche Tragödie* [Restricted Areas. A German Tragedy] by Stefan Andres (Andres, 1959) or *Der schwarze Schwan* [The Black Swan] by Martin Walser (Walser, 1964).

All three approaches pursue a specific goal, but their perspectives are limited, and the fact that, as a rule, only one area is illuminated at a time, while other parts of the Holocaust phenomenon are being neglected, lies in the nature of things and is, of course, no subject of reproach to any of the authors. However, all three approaches contain an inherent danger, which I would like to outline briefly. Works about the *hell before Auschwitz* do indeed have the potential to conduct a discourse about the premonitions and preconditions of the *Third Reich* and the *Final Solution*; something which—as has been emphasized in the introduction of this article—might be deemed considerably important in today's world in order to recognize and tackle any form of awakening barbarism. But such works usually succeed less in *shocking* the audience, since the immediate examples of the *consequences* are missing. Dieter Lamping (1992) writes (and I agree with him) that "all poetry of rank about Auschwitz is shocking—whether it is realistic or abstract. Yes, one can even say: it has rank only in so far as it shocks" (Lamping 1992, p. 279; my translation from German—O. K.). This cannot be stressed enough: the sheer phenomenon of the Holocaust is so horrendous, so beyond the realm of humanity that it cannot leave any other sentiment than shock. Thus, when a piece of work of art that deals with Auschwitz itself does not shock, it has missed its aim.

Moreover, using the first approach might force the artist to yet attach some unambiguous references to the present—or otherwise "to have to trust in the political-social ability of abstraction and concretion of their viewers" (Schumacher, 1965a, p. 934; my translation from German—O. K.), which, for example, can be seen very clearly in Heinar Kipphardt's *Bruder Eichmann* [Brother Eichmann] (Kipphardt, 1983), which attempts to fill the historical gap by inserting "analogy scenes" (p. 6; my translation from German—O. K.) of American generals discussing the neutron bomb, reports on

junta torture activities, statements by the *Baader-Meinhof Investigative Committee*, and even an interview with the then Israeli Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon.

Works about the *hell after Auschwitz* suffer from this incompleteness, too. In *Der schwarze Schwan* The Black Swan] (Walser, 1964) the author manages to convey a psychologically intense portrait of Rudi, the post-born child, who accidentally learns about his father's concentration camp doctor's past and is no longer able to cope with his guilt (for which he consequently shoots himself); but the actual *hell of Auschwitz* necessarily gets lost along the way. At best, it can be conjured up in the metaphor of the black swan and move the audience. However, again, it in no way does shock them.

As for the works of art that place the *hell of Auschwitz* right in the center of their story, one is first confronted with the quite understandable difficulty of depicting the horror. Here, the line between shock and incredibility, true intensity and false pathos is traditionally very thin. Especially in their finales, a number of plays succumb to the tendency to sink into "conventional theatricality" (Schumacher, 1965a, p. 932; my translation from German—O. K.). One of the most prominent examples in theatre is certainly Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy.* I think that no one will contradict the fact that the showdown between the diabolically oversized doctor, the opera-like death of Carlotta and Father Riccardo's heroic, though drowned in pathos struggle with himself and the world is bordering hard with the unbelievable and destroys a lot of the credit of the drama. Likewise, Hedda Zinner's *Ravensbrück Ballad* which ends in a downright mushy agony scene of the block elder Maria, the positive hero of the play, while outside the victorious tanks of the Red Army are already standing in front of the barbed-wire fences—at such points it might become difficult to take the story still seriously.

And yet another problem emerges. Even when assuming that it is actually possible to reproduce the atmosphere of the camp "authentically" (which should never be doubted *a priori*), we are nevertheless presented with a very narrow section of the Holocaust phenomenon. For characteristic and "new" are certainly not the extent of brutality and perversity of the perpetrators towards their victims—ruthless, brute violence against individuals by an oppressive regime, along with the will to annihilate an entire people, has existed practically at all times—Armenia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sudan, Bosnia, etc. are just the most recent examples (Andreopoulos, 1994).

What is indeed new and up to this point still unprecedented about the Holocaust is the highly perfected, industrialized system of killing—oftentimes even without any genuine hatred, as Hannah Arendt has shown in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Arendt, 1963), describing killers who killed just because they considered it their necessary duty. This kind of cold professionalism and, as the cliché goes, typically German thoroughness, which resulted in the death of 6 million Jews, not to count all the other victims of World War II, has never before been witnessed.

Which leaves the question inasmuch a play like the *Ravensbrück Ballad* or a musical piece like *Through Roses*, which tells its story from the seemingly naive perspective of a gullible, inexperienced violinist, is able to achieve this kind of comprehensiveness. To be clear: It doesn't have to do this, either. Every author is

completely free to deal with the Holocaust the way she or he wants. No one is under the obligation to cover every aspect of the *Shoah*—which, of course, is impossible anyway. My only concern is to draw attention to the theoretical and practical advantages and disadvantages that arise from the choice of which *hell of Auschwitz* one decides to portray. And—which is the main idea of this article—to determine which approach might be the most suitable so that the piece of art develops its utmost potential to reach the recipients.

Coming back to *The Investigation*, Ernst Schumacher states (absolutely correctly, in my view) that in this drama all three "hells" are equally covered (Schumacher, 1965a, p. 937), which is already evident from the three-dimensional concept of time: *The Investigation* recounts a trial from the present in which witnesses tell of the camp's past and the time before it. But this is only one basis of Weiss' discursive method. By depicting a truly extensive number of defendants and witnesses, each in his or her very own way of speaking and behaving, Weiss succeeds in drawing an immensely complex picture of the fascist apparatus and its executors, their activities, their ideological preconditions and their morals. There is the sadistic torturer Boger who enjoyed tormenting and killing beyond his mission; the smug Kaduk who cannot understand why he of all people was arrested (Weiss, 1966, p. 54); the always friendly doctors Dr. Vetter, Dr. Schatz, Dr. Capesius, "well-bred" (Weiss, 1966, p. 91) men, who did not kill out of hate but "because they had to" (Weiss, 1966, p. 91); the accused Hofmann who affirms "I personally didn't have anything / against those people / There were some like them at home too / Before they were taken away / I always used to tell my family / You go right on buying from them / After all they are humans too" (Weiss, 1966, p. 18); the medical employee Klehr who loved the "round numbers" (Weiss, 1966, p. 186) and who refuses to take any personal responsibility: "Mr. President / we were all in a strait jacket / We were nothing but numbers / just like the prisoners" (Weiss, 1966, p. 191); or the *Unterscharführer* Stark who held lectures on "humanism in Goethe" (Weiss, 1966, p. 136) in the camp while murdering detainees, and whose excuse is this: "It was hammered into us (…) we weren't supposed to think for ourselves" (Weiss, 1966, p. 156/157); or the camp doctor Flage who showed that "it would have been possible / to influence the course of the camp operations" (Weiss, 1966, p. 103).

This is only a tiny part of the perpetrators before the and in the *hell of Auschwitz* that are being presented and exposed. The play features a vast number of very different types of fascist personalities, conveying a solid image of how diverse—and in their thoroughness to destroy—how even the German Nazi society actually was.

With regards to the *hell after Auschwitz*, Weiss detects certain stereotypes, both in the terminology and a certain behavior of justifying themselves, which can be noticed in almost all of the accused and which implies a clear warning to the present day. This begins with the use of language, which has a clear method of linguistic diminishing: words like "only", "never", "not one time" or phrases like "I had to..." as well as sentences like "I don't know", "I don't know anything about that", etc. run through almost all statements. This is similar to looking back at their crimes: hardly anyone is aware of their guilt, let alone acknowledge it. The views vary between that they still

consider themselves “innocent even today” (Weiss, 1966, p. 198), to the adamant request to finally be left in peace, after all in the past years one has demonstrated what a good person one has been, for example the defendant Kaduk (Weiss, 1966, p. 55). Many refer to having only received “orders” (e.g., Weiss, 1966, p. 177), or to having been corrupted and forced by the system, as one of them states: “I was against the whole thing / I myself was / persecuted by the system” (Weiss, 1966, p. 269). The play ends with the cynical demand to be acquitted of all crimes because “our nation has worked its way up / after a devastating war / to a leading position in the world / we ought to concern ourselves / with other things / than blame and reproaches / that should be thought of/as long since atoned for” (Weiss, 1966, p. 270).

As for the *hell of Auschwitz* (which is primarily depicted in the victims), it should be mentioned first that Weiss’ method is more linear here. Since it is no longer a question of individuals, but of the fate of millions of people—that’s why the witnesses lose their names, become “mere speaking tubes” (Weiss, 1966, p. 1)—the author has the opportunity to tell the story in different thematic stages. The content of the 11 songs (from which, by the way, the two middle songs by Lili Tofler and Unterscharführer Stark must be subtracted as contrapuntally contrasting individual songs) is constructed in a narrowing of perspective, because it describes the path of the victims from the ramp (1st song) to the life in the camp and finally to the ovens (11th song).

What happens along this way and is recorded in the reports of the witnesses, I would like to describe only in its most important parts due to the enormous amount of information. It describes the various types of interaction with the executioners, the methods of torture and repression; the various sections of the camp, that is: the life in the barracks, the work conditions, the medical experiments; the logistic and bureaucratic procedures; the behavior and degree of suffering from the part of the victims; the possibility or impossibility of resistance; the extent of extermination based on statistical figures. Weiss thus succeeds not only in “conveying an astonishingly rounded impression of the course of the trial on some 200 pages, but also in giving a very clear picture of the *hell of Auschwitz*. A comparison with the extensive documentation by Langbein (1027 pages) and Naumann (552 pages) gives the impression that there is hardly any important fact or context that Weiss did not include in his oratorio” (Haiduk, 1977, p. 142; my translation from German—O. K.).

The third important complex of topics, that of the social-industrial survival of fascist activities, is interspersed by Weiss in many places in a flashlight-like manner, such as the numerous references that former Nazi criminals today once again hold respectable positions, for example as “superintendent / of the government railroads“ (Weiss, 1966, p. 8) or as “the director / of a large business concern“ (Weiss, 1966, p. 168), just to name two examples out of many more. And as far as the entanglement of industry in the organizational process of the concentration camps is concerned, which for the Marxist Weiss is particularly important, company names are mentioned explicitly several times, e.g., the IG-Farben, Krupp or Siemens (Weiss, 1966, p. 6); their continued existence after the war (“The manufacturers of these furnaces / The Topf und Söhne company / As it says in its patent specification / After the war / Improved

their facilities / On the basis of experience gained") (Weiss 1976a, p. 439; my translation from German—O. K); to the fact that these companies hugely profited from the cheap labor in the camps—even worse, the camps could not have even existed without the support of the industry.

Conclusion: "The Investigation" as a Teaching Experience

It is precisely this approach: to draw a picture of the Holocaust and its implicit regularities as comprehensively as possible, which (in my opinion) makes *The Investigation* a most appropriate and effective piece of art to reach and teach today's generation. According to Martin Esslin, the text displays "such objectivity that it can provide the basis for a fully effective artistic experience" (Esslin, 1965; my translation from German—O. K.), or, to use the words of legendary theatre director Peter Brook, it has the chance to become a "total theatre" (Brook, 1968, p. 168). Because of the fact, that *The Investigation*, unlike a book or a movie, is a *live experience*—here I'm coming back to my initial story of my visit to the concentration camp *Sachsenhausen*—its effect might even be stronger.

Hence, this article is also a plea to make this play more accessible to the public again: in the form of theatre performances, mandatory school tours, public events of any kind. Because it is shocking, but at the same time offers a great amount of information to also intellectually grasp the full magnitude of the Holocaust. It comprehensibly demonstrates how fascism emerges, but also gives a very vivid—to use the key word again, "shocking"—impression of its devastating consequences. It does not get lost in individual stories, which would make it easy for the recipient to view the protagonist's fate merely as an isolated event, detached from his own reality, but instead presents him with a model to detect the inner mechanism of fascism and its epidemic character. And, by the way, it rids the recipient of the opportunity to act like many Germans after the war did who—involuntarily paying tribute to the beautiful *bon mot* from the Hollywood movie *American Beauty*, where Ricky establishes: "Never underestimate the power of denial"—claimed before themselves and before the world that *We really had no idea of what was going on*. For *The Investigation* exhibits too clearly the ever-same patterns how healthy patriotism degenerates into nationalism and finally into barbarism.

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BOOK REVIEW

Justin O'Connor and Xin Gu (2020) Red Creative. Culture and Modernity in China. Bristol: Intellect Books.

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"Red Creative" is a welcome, spirited and conceptually rich book that traces the adoption and development of creative industries in China. The book offers the reader a dense set of considerations at a moment when creativity discourses are ubiquitous but fewer people are thinking about what they portend. It demonstrates how differently the discourses of neoliberalism, civilization, culture and creative industries are translated and implemented in this country.

It is often thought that the strength of cultural policy analysis rests on the extent to which it accords with key successes and pitfalls of the on-going capitalization on and commodification of culture. Since the massive shift from an industrial Fordist to a post-industrial post-Fordist economy is truly global, it includes the imaginaries and best practices of re-inventing and regenerating localities through cultural activity, including festivals and biennials as the promising remedy. The creative industries are praised for increasing productivity through spillovers and generating jobs. Creativity, more generally, has been widely considered as the major source of producing economic value. Yet when cultural policy analysis comprehends principled moral reasoning, misgivings and ambivalences are abounding. These include our doubts about whether it is permissible to reduce cultural values to financial and organizational KPI, whether the processes of adjusting culture to management are always beneficial and rational, and whether justified and popularized recipes for success are sufficient for increasing knowledge of both the general educated public and academics.

These doubts increase in case of the non-Western countries which are variously prompted to embrace the creative economy discourse. A tension exists between the Western models of cultural and creative industries and the local contexts in which stakeholders operate. Traditionally, cultural policy analysts have relied on their Western expertise as the basic data for cultural policy inquiry. The problem with that strategy is that they often share the same educational

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background as well as a similar way of thinking. The more valuable then are the attempts to expand the base of expertise and analysis by combining intellectual efforts of scholars with significantly different background. While one of the book's authors—Justin O'Connor, starting from his work in Manchester, UK, in 1996, has become a key scholar in cultural and creative industries policy development, the other—Xin Gu—focused more closely on small-scale local creative industries development services not only in UK but in China and Indonesia which has made her a specialist in the ways different social, economic and political conditions impact understanding and implementation of creative economy. Both authors are UNESCO experts and thus are closely familiar with actors coming from different countries, from national associations to international institutions, and with diversified links among these actors, covering consultancy and funding, together with both scientific and market interests.

In this book, the authors argue for the usefulness and power of diverse analytical tools—a deep historical account of the links among culture and modernity, participant observations in numerous field sites over an extended period of time, a holistic approach rather than a focus on one particular topic, focus on the ambivalences stemming from the authors' attempt to capture "unknown knows". They elaborate on this as follows: to see your country of birth anew, via a foreign narrative of an alternative future, of what is useful and what should be jettisoned in order to get there, is to make that unknown known visible; to do this demands you learn to "re-know" your own country, in an internal struggle made familiar by much postcolonial writing. At the same time, for the non-Chinese author, the process involved making the known unknown—or at least strange. For what was this discourse demanding that a country of one billion, with historical roots reaching back into the Axial Age, must now be creative? (p. 7)

Conceiving of this discourse as a case of Western developmentalism (p. 9), the authors develop three main conceptual frameworks, each amplifying a particular facet of "reddening" creativity ("Red Creative", to remind, is the title of the book): from theory of neoliberalism, the authors spotlight the significance of depoliticization and a restriction of individual expression to narrow Chinese subjects' choices to consumer ones; theories of modernity (classic Western ones and otherwise) provide a means of articulating the agentic force of change, located somewhere between material and affective; finally, the authors turn to conceptualizations of culture to think through its implication in the production of cities: culture, among many things, was used "to cement the 'spatial fix' under the imperative to be creative or lose the future" (p. 203). These three strands are synthesized throughout the course of the book in ways that refract the thick knowledge of cultural economies, the national cultural history, soft power concerns, etc. through the intriguing complexities, disjunctures and frictions of today's urban China.

The authors zoom in on Shanghai (they have devoted two chapters to this city) and this writing strategy does let them to develop complex historic narratives that more fully engage the interdependencies of culture and state and economy than just a general analysis. They capture the "deep" history of creative industries in this city, spanning the whole twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century. The book

traces Shanghai's emergence by the mid-1920s as the great cosmopolitan center of an international intellectual and artistic avant-garde (p. 98) to its remaking as the cultural hub which rapidly rose up the global creative cities index (p. 201) and the largest art market in the world. The 2010 Expo, Xintiandi, a redeveloped area of Lilongs, numerous art galleries and "hip" areas are presented by the authors as the embodiment of "haipai". Shanghai's recognizable "haipai" is the opposite of both Beijing culture and rurality. *Haipai* culture was formed in the context of Shanghai's cosmopolitanism, and then, by the end of the twentieth century, the golden years of the 1920s and 1930s were carefully brought back to life by intellectuals to be later appropriated by the Shanghai government. "Old Shanghai" became an asset in the nostalgic context of the 1990s and the combination of both pre- and post-Communist layers in *haipai* has helped to Shanghai to return into the global orbit. O'Connor and Gu poignantly describe how the city's past, including its pride—*haipai* culture—was selectively employed to find a new place for the city in the global order. Rather than simply shifting the urban economy towards the post-industrial mechanisms (real estate speculation and advanced business services), the authorities retrieved the old Shanghai to make the city look and sound less soulless (the opposite example here is Shenzhen, which is built on the "industrial park" model): "Shanghai's haipai culture was used to reprogram the urban cultural landscape and rebrand its identity as a global cultural city" (p. 265).

Creativity is justifiably conceived in the literature as an individual capacity and thus creative subject comes to the fore. Not only she or he forms unique esthetic or organizational content but this subject also crystallizes collective experience into the singular works that are often meaningful for millions. The authors devote to creative subjects the final chapter where they interestingly portray the links among creativity and conformity, a lack of time and opportunities to properly "gestate" the new products, and impossibility to nourish one's uniqueness and unpredictability in a heavily disciplined milieu. Acknowledging that the Chinese creative subjects definitely need to be studied in more depth, the authors compellingly demonstrate that it is the government that finally attests to their creative talents: "a stronger nationalist sense of beating them at their own game" (p. 279) is always present.

This is a vigorously critical book that in effect challenges many those who are too eager "to force Chinese history into a Western format" (p. 60). It is also strongly concerned with the current state of creative affairs. A peculiar combination of the "post-cultural" and "post-creative" industries, amplified by the aggressive use of "smart cities" ideology and related technologies, the authors demonstrate, leads to directing the opportunities of artificial intelligence towards increased manipulation of the Chinese society, made easy by the wide-spread preoccupation of its citizens with consumption. Combining wide learning with a tenacious and undogmatic focus on the problems of creative industries, O'Connor and Gu have written a book that identifies fresh solutions to many important problems and should become a key reference point for cultural theorists, "creatives", scholars of China, and cultural policy experts.

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BOOK REVIEW

Karpov V., Svensson M. (Eds.). (2020). Secularization, Desecularization, and Toleration. Cross-Disciplinary Challenges to a Modern Myth. Palgrave Macmillan.

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The book under review examines the relationship between secularization and tolerance. For a long time the conventional view on this problem has been that secular societies provide religious tolerance better than religious ones. Karpov and Svensson question this statement and use particular cases to demonstrate that it is not true. On the other hand, the statement that the religious societies provide religious tolerance better than the secular ones is also false. The situation is much more complicated—the secular/religious status of the state/society does not influence the perception of and attitude towards the adherents of different religious traditions and non-believers.

But let me start with an overview of the editors' introduction to the book. Vyacheslav Karpov and Manfred Svensson write about the ups and downs of the secularization theory and its relation to the ideas of the Enlightenment. They claim that the direct link between secularization and tolerance is also rooted in the Age of Reason. The origins of tolerance were connected to the rationalization of society, to the development of secular and non-orthodox religious thought, whereas the religious mainstream was considered to be a source of intolerance and violence. Such assumptions were conventional and they existed if not as a part of the secularization theory but at least as parallel to it. At a certain point, however, social sciences started to seriously question the universality of the secularization process and the situation in Europe started to be regarded not as an example for all the rest of the world but rather as an exception. In this case, such a connection between toleration and secularization, according to the book editors, should also be questioned. The imagined or real connections could be proved or disproved by the study of real cases, which is the idea underlying the

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whole book. Its main focus, however, is to show the absence rather than existence of such connection.

Karpov and Svensson represent two distinct research traditions or rather research areas: one of them specializes in the history of tolerance and the other, in secularization/secularity theory. Therefore, the book is divided into two parts: *Religion, Secularization, and Toleration in the History of Ideas* and *Secularizations and Regimes of Toleration: Comparative Perspectives*. In the first part, the chapters are dedicated to tolerance in the works of Augustine, Aquinas, John Owen, Ibn ʻArabī, William Penn, Moses Mendelssohn, and Abraham Kuyper. For example, Manfred Svensson studies the development of a concept of toleration by Western Christian theologians. His essay explores the relationship between tolerance, on the one hand, and patience, endurance, power, permission, justice, respect, recognition, and hospitality, on the other. In his discussion of Ibn ʻArabī's understanding of tolerance, Stephen Hirtenstein also provides an overview of the general idea of tolerance in Islam, contending that "Islamic civilization is founded on principles of toleration" (p. 63). Andrew R. Murphy describes not only Penn's theoretical justification of tolerance, but also its political implementations. Mendelssohn's understanding of secular state and individual religious freedom is discussed by Holger Zaborowski. The views of a Dutch neo-Calvinist theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper on freedom of conscience and pluralist society are examined in George Harinck's chapter (it is especially interesting how Harinck links Kyuper's views with the current affairs).

There are two more contributions to the first part. Steven D. Smith proposes to doubt the secularization thesis. He argues that there was no decline of religion but substitution of its old forms with a new one and instead of the disappearance of religion there was its privatization. By the new forms of religion, Smith understands *immanent religion,* Dworkin's "Religion without God", or a-theistic religion. In this case, the "secular"/"religious" dichotomy is not working, and as a result secularization theory loses its meaning. The author demonstrates that the notion "tolerance" has also been revised and become useless. In that way, the question about the link between secularization and toleration is meaningless.

Eduardo Fuentes claims that there is no "clear line between religious and secular practices" (p. 153) and even *shopping* could be described as a religious phenomenon. In this context, the religious tolerance exists in this dual description: killing a calf could be seen as a secular practice and as a religious one—a sacrifice.

In the second part of the book, we find texts dealing with social, legal, and historical issues. For instance, Jean Meyer and Fenggang Yang in their contributions on Mexico and China respectively trace the history of religious (in)tolerance in particular regimes. Barbara A. McGraw, James T. Richardson and Effie Fokas investigate the legal aspects of religious toleration in the U.S. Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights. Carol and Ilan Troen claim that in the discussions around the Israel/Palestinian conflict, the secular and religious arguments are intertwined and reinforce each other.

The chapter that I find the most interesting in this part of the book is written by Daniel Philpott, who demonstrates the absence of any connection between Islam

and religious (in)tolerance in Muslim-majority countries. Philpott asks the question "Is Islam tolerant?" and tries to find the answer by analyzing the data collected by the Pew Research Center. He identifies three types of Muslim-majority states: states with religious freedom (11 countries, in particular, Albania, Kosovo[1], and Senegal); secular repressive states (36 countries, in particular, post-Soviet Central Asian countries, Kemalist Turkey, Saddam Hussein's Iraq); and states considered as religiously repressive (21 countries, in particular, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia). In his view, although the Muslim world is less free, we cannot hold Islam responsible for this fact. Secularism, according to Philpott, can be both positive and negative. The secular repression of religion in the Muslim world is a result of the imported Western ideology, according to which religion can be the enemy of economic and technological progress.

The final chapter of the book is written by one of the editor—Vyacheslav Karpov. Karpov disproves the statement that "secularization begets toleration while society's movement from secularity leads to intolerance" (p. 299) by looking at the case of the USSR and ex-Soviet countries. Karpov not only compares contemporary Ukraine and Russia, but also draws some historical parallels. For instance, Karpov writes about the differences between the Ukrainian religious cultures of the 16th and 17th centuries. Karpov links the pluralistic situation of the religious landscape of contemporary Ukraine to Russia's regime of desecularization and tolerance. It is important to note that the chapter reflects the latest events in Ukraine—the Revolution of Dignity, Russia's annexation of the Crimea, and the military conflict in Donbass.

Then Karpov goes on to the theoretical conclusions. Here we encounter some remarkable insights into (de)secularization and *dedifferentiation.* Karpov argues that desecularization can be analyzed as dedifferentiation, but then notes that "[s]ecularization can combine differentiation and dedifferentiation" and that "[i]n some cases, a secular dedifferentiation takes time" (p. 318). Secular differentiation can be illustrated by the case of the Soviet Union. In the end, Karpov confirms the main idea of the chapter—desecularization can lead to toleration (at least limited and selective) or even to the emergence of a pluralistic and inclusive regime.

The main question that arises with respect to the analysis presented in the book is the understanding of the secular state. It appears that when we are looking to (dis)prove the relationship between secularization and secular state (as we see in some of the book's contributions), on the one hand, and toleration, on the other, we should first define what a secular state is. For instance, if we consider the USSR as a secular state, it means that it should be neutral towards religion[2] (Casanova, 2011). In the case of the USSR, however, the state used force against religion and, therefore, cannot be defined as secular. Victoria Smolkin writes that seeing religion as a private matter, as well as a neutrality towards religion, were never considered acceptable in the USSR (Smolkin, 2018, p. 242). A similar situation was characteristic of Communist China and Kemalist Turkey. At the same time, Smolkin in her study of Soviet atheism points out that in the late Soviet period, sociological surveys showed people's indifference towards religion, as well as atheism. During the *perestroika*

[1] Kosovo (officially the Republic of Kosovo) is a partially recognised state in Southeastern Europe.

[2] Such understanding is also found in some of the book's contributions.

period, however, there was a surge of interest in religion, which turned into its revival after the collapse of the USSR. Therefore, the forced secularization in the USSR, in my opinion, should be studied separately—as a special case of secularization, leading to indifference and what can be described as neutrality towards religion (and that is what we mean by *secularity*). The liberalization of the Soviet religious policy (*or better to say—loosening of the state control over religion and public demonstration of non-atheistic views*) instantly increased desecularization.

I would like to comment on one more point about the desecularization and (in)tolerance in post-Soviet Ukraine. There was a considerable unrest in the religious sphere in the 1990s and early 2000s. For instance, there were clashes between Orthodox Christians from various churches and Greek-Catholics; traditional churches used hate speech towards Protestant missioners and preachers of new religious movements; the Orthodox Church and the Muslim community had conflicts in the Crimea concerning the use of toponyms and religious symbols. As a result, some scholars evaluated religious pluralism or multiconfessionalism as a negative phenomenon because it brought about religious conflicts (Zdioruk, 2005, p. 91). A similar situation was observed in Ukraine after Tomos was given to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine from the Ecumenical Patriarch: the stigmatization of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) has become a norm of public discourse. These facts prove the main statement of the book—there is no straightforward connection between (de)secularization and religious tolerance, but at the same time the scholars should be more careful in their evaluation of the relationship between them. One should not examine only general trends in state-church and inter-confessional relations, but rather follow "the devil is in the detail" principle.

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BOOK REVIEW

German Yu. Kapten (2020). Problema sakralizatsii voiny v vizantiiskom bogoslovii i istoriografii [Problem of Sacralization of War in Byzantine Theology and Historiography]. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkoi khristianskoi gumanitarnoi akademii.

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The question about whether there was the idea of *sacred war* in the Orthodox Eastern Roman Empire has been in the focus of scholarly attention for a long time. In her seminal study, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki argued that the Byzantine warfare against the Persians and the Arabs prefigured the western European knighthood's Crusades (Kolia-Dermitzaki, 1991). Some scholars in Byzantine Studies (Koder & Stouraitis, 2012), though, contested that thesis. There is still no scholarly consensus about the role that religion played in Byzantine wars (see, for example, Stephenson, 2018; Stouraitis, 2018). German Kapten's book is thus the first attempt (in Russian) to systematize the questions related to sacralization of war in the Eastern Roman Empire in a comprehensive manner.

In the introduction to his book, Kapten remarks that the "Byzantine attitude to war is underpinned by a rather complex conflict between Eastern Orthodox theology and the everyday lives of the people who built their world outlook in accordance with its religious dogmas" (Kapten, 2020, p. 9). He then goes on to define the key features of the *sacred war* in the following way:

1) it is an armed conflict between adherents of different religious traditions;

2) the decision to start the war is authorized by the leaders of these religious traditions;

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3) combatants are promised spiritual rewards;

4) refusal to assist in such a conflict may be considered sinful (Kapten, 2020, p. 11).

Kapten distinguishes between the notions of *sacred war* and *just war*. The latter, in his view, is waged by a lawful ruler for a just cause and for the benefit of all. In making this conclusion, Kapten cites Thomas Aquinas and Hugo Grotius and points out that the Byzantine Church Fathers took little interest in social philosophy (Kapten, 2020, p. 28). However, it might be a more viable approach for the researchers to look at the vast body of Byzantine political literature which reflected on the questions of public peace, responsibilities of the emperor, the limits to his power, and so on (see: Valdenberg, 2015).

The first chapter in the book, *Voina v bogoslovii* [War in Theology], discusses the views of the early Christian thinkers, who, according to Kapten, strove to protect the believers from all that is sinful; bloodshed was included in the latter. The author focuses on Tertullian, whose reasoning is undoubtedly of great interest. It should be noted, however, that this theologian's views belonged to Montanism, which was a radical movement without a universal support in the Roman Empire. Therefore, Tertullian's ideas should be considered more as an exception rather than as a general rule (Shean, 2010, p. 77).

Kapten also mentions the diversity of opinions expressed by the Church Fathers of the 2nd and 3rd centuries concerning the permissibility and nature of military service. He emphasizes that in the Christian circles the unquestionable preference was given to peace although there was also a general agreement that wars are inevitable. As a result, many Christians chose to abstain from military service, devoting themselves to peaceful occupations. The Edict of Milan of 313, however, removed some of the moral objections to military service, which had been theretofore associated not only with violence but also with participation in the worship of the imperial cult (Kapten, 2020, pp. 20–24). Nevertheless, as John F. Shean has shown, Christians were enlisted in the army as early as in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Moreover, Christian religious pacifism of the late antiquity should not be equated with modern ideology of pacifism (Shean, 2010).

Kapten points out that the works of the Church Fathers of the 4th century also dealt with the questions of war and violence: for instance, St. Basil of Caesarea wrote in his canonical epistle that although the killing of the enemy in self-defense is allowable, it still remains a reprehensible act. For this reason, St. Basil admonished that the soldiers who had taken enemies' lives should be excommunicated from the Holy Communion for three years. However, John Zonaras and Theodore Balsamon, 12th-century commentators on St. Basil's epistles, remarked that his words in this case should be considered a recommendation rather than a strict rule (Kapten, 2020, pp. 28–32).

Kapten argues that the diverging historical paths of the Latin West and the Greek East resulted in different models of war sacralization in these regions. In Byzantium, the distance between the clergy and the military was defined rather clearly. The Catholic tradition saw sin as a legal breach of one of the commandments, while the

Eastern Church Fathers did not provide any precise definitions of guilt. Rather, they saw sin as a disease, which made war inadmissible in their eyes, even if the secular law did not see warfare as objectionable (Kapten, 2020, pp. 38–39). Any warfare was to defend the empire's borders or to win back the territories that used to be a part of the empire (Kapten, 2020, p. 42).

In Kapten's exposition, the Byzantine emperors' will had not acquired equal status with God's will, coercion in religious matters and forceful conversions were inadmissible, while the doctrine of just war was hardly developed (Kapten, 2020, pp. 46, 50–51). The idea of war as it was presented in the Holy Scripture was not adopted by the Eastern Roman tradition. In the eyes of the Byzantine intellectuals, the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucids was an isolated incident belonging to the distant past while the figures of the Old Testament's heroes were primarily a source of literary allusions.

In the second chapter *Sakralizatsiia voiny v istoriografii* [The Sacralization of War in Historiography], Kapten points out the incompatibility of the notions of "war" and "sacred" in Byzantine historiography. Epithets ἅγιος and ἱερός ("saint" and "sacred") were used to denote categories related to the religious sphere and also to characterize the emperor's power. War as a cause of misery and destruction by definition cannot be sacred (Kapten, 2020, pp. 70–71). Therefore, the ideal to strive for was the world that excluded the need to wage war (Kapten, 2020, p. 74).

Kapten emphasizes the Byzantine rulers' desire to maintain social justice. Similarly, a war should only be fought for a just cause. Piety of the soldiers and their righteous conduct were necessary to ensure divine support for the army. Remarkably, protection of faith proved to be an important factor that determined much of the Eastern Roman foreign policy in the 6th century. Kapten observes that this is particularly true in regard with the wars of Justinian I (527–565) against the Germanic kingdoms in the Western Mediterranean. The rulers of these realms belonged to Arianism, anathematized by the Ecumenical Councils of 325 and 381. Kapten contends that the foreign policy doctrine of Justinian I stemmed primarily from his desire to exterminate heresies. This opinion, however, seems questionable for the simple reason that the idea of the Reconquista of the West started to crystallize only after the first victories Belisarius had won in Africa and Italy in the 530s (Serov, 2008).

Under Emperor Heraclius (610–641), when Byzantium engaged in the devastating war with the Sasanian Empire, the attempt was made to give wars religious significance and turn them into *sacred wars*. Kapten argues that Heraclius was strongly influenced by the Sasanian model of the relationship between secular and religious authorities. Thus, at the beginning of the 7th century, warfare in defense of religion was sacralized and the emperor assumed the role of a spiritual leader (Kapten, 2020, pp. 93–103).

During Iconoclastic crises (730–787, 814–842), the emperors sought to expand their power by subjugating the Church. The preamble to the *Ecloga*, a compilation of Byzantine law published under Emperor Leo III (717–741), stated that the task of utmost importance for the ruler is to ensure that all his subjects are secure and well protected, which can be achieved by maintaining a just order, and that the

cornerstone for the success on the battlefield is piety (Kapten, 2020, pp. 114–121). According to Kapten, between the 7th and 10th centuries, in Byzantium the prevailing principle that prioritized justice was replaced by the one that prioritized Orthodoxy. A righteous ruler, regardless of his moral qualities, could bring peace to his subjects. The emperor's military expertise was of no importance because the enemies of the pious empire were weak (Kapten, 2020, pp. 122–123). However, Kekaumenos, a prominent 11th-century Byzantine general and writer, postulates that adherence to the principles of justice only entitles a person to be in command positions but the victory on the battlefield depends entirely on the commander's personal qualities and faith in God (Kapten, 2020, p. 126).

It should be noted that the *Taktika* of Leo VI (Taktika, 2010) written in the early 10th century describes at some length the ways of ensuring that war has a just cause. The treatise uses a common rhetorical device by claiming that although wars are the devil's work, the empire has to engage in warfare in order to defend itself from its aggressive neighbors (Mokhov & Kapsalykova, 2019, pp. 84–85). We cannot overlook the fact that among the Byzantine writers there were not only armchair experts but also those who had real combat experience.

Unfortunately, in his book Kapten fails to describe how Byzantine idea of war evolved during the rule of Komnenoi and Palaiologoi, while the author occasionally makes extensive digressions into the history of cultural contacts between the Byzantines and the Latins. The book also makes scarce use of the rich variety of sources of that period, including the renowned works of John Kinnamos, Nikephoros Gregoras, Laonikos Chalkokondyles and others. Regarding the last centuries of the empire, Kapten observes that it was hard to maintain the sacred status of war while being on friendly terms with the Ottoman sultans. Moreover, there was a shift from the universalist imperial ideology to the national Greek vision, which undermined the traditional models of war sacralization (Kapten, 2020, p. 181).

The third chapter *Sakralizatsiia voiny v nekotorykh aspektakh vizantiiskoi kul'tury* [Sacralization of War in Some Aspects of Byzantine Culture] is especially riddled with controversial statements and unsupported generalizations. The chapter begins with outlining the Byzantines' attitude to the barbarians, including foreign immigrants. The author notes that valor was considered as a merit only among the peoples surrounding the empire while in Byzantium itself warfare was not seen as a respectable occupation (Kapten, 2020, p. 205). However, this statement is contestable since Byzantine literature provides ample examples of soldiers being praised for their courage on the battlefield (Mokhov & Kapsalykova, 2019, p. 177 ff.).

Kapten then goes on to discuss the *hierotopy of the battlefield*. The author describes various sanctificatory rituals for the troops and offers examples of how religious imagery was used in the propaganda (Kapten, 2020, pp. 205–222). Then, the analysis of the Byzantine soldiers' worldview follows (Kapten, 2020, pp. 223– 242), which deserves strong criticism. It should be noted, first, that there was a significant difference between the soldiers of the early Byzantine army, where the traditions of the imperial army of the Principate period were still very strong, and the late Byzantine

pronoiarioi[1]. Moreover, even if we do not take into account foreigners, the imperial army was ethnically quite diverse. There were differences that stemmed from the specific living conditions and military traditions, for instance, between natives of Isauria and Thrace. In short, the author's attempt to embrace the Byzantine army's culture in its totality leads him to undue oversimplification.

To sum up, the most successful part of Kapten's book, in our view, is the first chapter, which analyzes the ideas about war in the early Byzantine theology. But in the subsequent chapters the author seems to be misled by his own conceptual framework, in particular, by trying to maintain his distinction between the notions of justice and righteousness for the Byzantine political thought. Moreover, the third chapter sticks out in the general argumentative structure of the book. In our view, the book has failed to take into consideration necessary primary sources and recent relevant literature on the subject. Despite these weaknesses, Kapten's book is well worth reading as it sheds a great deal of light on the understanding of war in the Byzantine Empire.

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[1] *Pronoiarios* was a person whom the emperors granted a right to collect taxes on a certain territory (*a pronoia*). This practice was common from the 11th to 15th centuries and often these grants were bestowed for military service.

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More authors	Include all names up to seven. If there are more than seven authors, list the first six with an ellipsis before the last. Author, M., Author, B., Author, E., Author, G., Author, D., Author, R., …, Author, P. (2001).
Organization as author	American Psychological Association. (2003). Title of Article: and subtitle. *Title of Journal*, 2, 12–23. doi:xx.xxxxxxxxxx
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Peer-reviewed article published online ahead of the issue	Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (2012). Article title. *Title of Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:xx.xxxxxxxxx If you can update the reference before publication, do so.
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Paper	Presenter, A. A. (2012, February). Title of paper. *Paper Presented at the Meeting of Organization Name*, Location.
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Thesis	Author, A. A. (2012). *Title of Thesis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation or master's thesis). Name of Institution, Location.
Unpublished work	
Manuscript	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2008). *Title of Manuscript*. Unpublished manuscript. Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2012). *Title of Manuscript*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
Forthcoming article	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (in press). Title of article. *Title of Journal*. doi:xx.xxxxxxxxx
Forthcoming book	Author, A. A. (in press). *Book Title: Subtitle*.
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Personal communication	Personal communication includes letters, emails, memos, messages from discussion groups and electronic bulletin boards, personal interviews. Cite these only in the text. Include references for archived material only.
Other reference types	
Patent	Cho, S. T. (2005). U.S. Patent No. 6,980,855. Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
Map	London Mapping Co. (Cartographer). (1960). Street map. [Map]. Retrieved from http://www.londonmapping.co.uk/maps/xxxxx.pdf
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Computer program	Rightsholder, A. A. (2010). *Title of Program* (Version number) [Description of form]. Location: Name of producer. Name of software (Version Number) [Computer software]. Location: Publisher. If the program can be downloaded or ordered from a website, give this information in place of the publication information.

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