

Vyacheslav Likhachev

**Political Anti-Semitism
in Post-Soviet Russia**

Actors and Ideas in 1991-2003

Edited and translated from Russian by Eugene Veklerov

SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET POLITICS AND SOCIETY

ISSN 1614-3515

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ibidem-Verlag
Stuttgart

Bibliografische Information Der Deutschen Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <<http://dnb.ddb.de>> abrufbar.

Cover picture: A rally of the anti-Semitic *Natsional'no-derzhavnaya partiya Rossii* (NDPR, National Great Power Party of Russia) in Moscow on November 19, 2002. The two men in the middle (not holding posters) are the Party's leaders and well-known Russian nationalist activists: Stanislav Terekhov (left), and Aleksandr Sevastyanov (right, with a beard). The poster contains thinly veiled anti-Semitic slogans in the form of a rhyming pun.

The left poster reads: "Eti' – 'antifashisty', poznyary i ZhviDkYe khuzhe Gebbel'sa, no NDPR im ne po zubam, a po *zubam!*" In English: "These' [so-called] 'Anti-Fascists', Pozners [Pozner – a liberal TV commentator] and Zhvidkoys [misspelled Shvydkoy – a liberal former Minister of Culture] are worse than [Joseph] Goebbels, yet the NDPR is a hard nut for them to crack; but [let's] crack their teeth!" The four capitalized letters in the former Culture Minister's name form the word "zhidy" – a derogatory term for Jews comparable to the English "kikes".

The right poster adapts a famous line from Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov and makes it sound like an anti-Semitic slogan: "Skazhy, Luzhkov, naskol'ko darom Moskva toboy zdana khazaram?" In English: "Say, [Moscow Mayor Yury] Luzhkov, did you really surrender Moscow to the Khazars for free?" (The Khazars were a Turkic people who founded an independent medieval kingdom in what is now southern Russia and adopted Judaism. In contemporary Russian "patriotic" lexicon, Khazars are a code word for Jews.)

The photograph can be found on the web at: <http://ndpr.ru/data/photo/02s.jpg>.

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First Russian-language publication:

Vyacheslav Andreevich Likhachev, *Politicheskii antisemizm v sovremennoi Rossii* (Moskva: "Academia", Moskovskoe byuro po pravam cheloveka, 2003). 240 pp. ISBN 5-87532-052-4.

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ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-5529-3

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Book Editor's Preface

When Dr. Andreas Umland, the editor of the series *Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, told me about his idea to publish an English version of this book and asked me if I would like to be its translator and editor, I immediately agreed and here is why. As a Jewish child who grew up in the Soviet Union, I was not interested in anti-Semitism, but anti-Semitism was interested in me, so that eventually I had to reciprocate. This Introduction is not an appropriate platform for personal reminiscences, but suffice it to say that in the schizophrenic reality of the Soviet Union, anti-Semitism was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. You could encounter it everywhere from Nazi-style cartoons in *Pravda* to derogatory slurs on buses, but had you had enough guts to complain, you would have been officially told that anti-Semitism did not exist there, and had you persisted, you could have been jailed for slander. To be exact, official propaganda did not really use the word 'Jew'. Instead, it used code phrases, like 'Zionist circles' or 'rootless cosmopolitans'. But however complex the code phrases were, the rank-and-file anti-Semites always managed to decipher them.

Among other things, we were barraged by propaganda ranting that Jewish, oops, Zionist money controls everything in America, and America, of course, was our enemy number one, since its main goal was to conquer the Soviet Union. To prove the tenet that the Jews control everything in Washington, the propaganda often mentioned the two most prominent and wealthiest Jews who had America in their pockets: Ford and Rockefeller.

It took me a long time to discover that the above proof was slightly flawed: neither man was Jewish. In fact, Henry Ford donated his money to support anti-Semitic causes. Many other prominent Americans were perceived to be Jewish, such as Mark Twain, perhaps because the name Mark was popular among Russian Jews. Which reminds me of Sholom Aleichem's characters who believed that Abraham Lincoln was Jewish, because his first name was

such a quintessentially Jewish name in Russia that it was used as a derogatory name for all Jews. But since Lincoln was a 'good' president according to the official propaganda, the Russian media was careful to spell his first name differently from the equivalent Russian Jewish name, lest the Jews get an undeserved credit. Namely, Abraham Lincoln's first name was spelled as 'Avraam', whereas the Russian Jewish version of that name was spelled as 'Abram'. (It is common in the Russian language to spell proper foreign names like Michael or John phonetically. In other words, the media made an exception for Honest Abe by using the Russian Biblical version of his name).

The same Mark Twain I mentioned above (who, of course, was not Jewish) has more in common with our subject than his "Jewish" name. Specifically, the evolution of Twain's own position on the Jewish question mirrors, to some extent, similar processes occurring in Russia. As a young writer, Twain embraced the negative stereotypes of the Jews that prevailed in Missouri in the 1850s and used those stereotypes in his early newspaper articles. As he personally got to know more Jews and their contributions to the contemporary society, Twain gradually changed his position and in the later part of his life he became a staunch and ardent defender of the Jews against anti-Semitism.

Many, if not most, Russian citizens have followed a somewhat similar path. So far as anti-Semitism is concerned, Russia is largely a success story. To be precise, there are many anti-Semitic groups, including those that espouse violence. But such groups are relatively small and marginalized. Some 15 years ago, there were grim predictions – some of which were made by reputable academics – that Russia would follow the path of the Weimar Republic, i.e. e. it would slide into a Nazi-style dictatorship or chaos. Yet, the Russian people turned out to be mature enough to choose another path. There are still many local pockets harboring anti-Jewish feelings, notably in areas populated by Muslims, and there is plenty of social anti-Semitism. But as far as the government policies and mainstream public opinion are concerned, the trend is definitely positive.

The anti-Semitism among the Muslim minorities in Russia is a sad new development. The author of this book, Vyacheslav Likhachev, seems to attribute

this intolerance to the influence of foreigners and especially the Wahhabi sect. Interestingly enough, the Jews and the Muslims lived amicably in the past. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, the Crimean Tatars, who had been deported from the Crimea by Stalin, started to demand their right to return home. At that time, the foreign Muslims ignored their plight, and the only champions of their cause were the Soviet human rights activists, notably A. Sakharov, P. Grigorenko, D. Kaminskaya, N. Scharansky. In particular, human rights activists, disproportionately many of whom were Jews, were active in the defense of Mustafa Dzhemilev who had been imprisoned by the Soviet government and who is presently Chairman of the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* (Parliament).

In the middle of June of 2006, when the work on this translation was largely over, leaders of the Muslim and Jewish communities in Russia held a successful forum titled “Islam and Judaism: Prospects for Dialogue and Cooperation”. Its active participants included Ravil Gainutdin, Head of the Council of the Mufties of Russia, and Adolf Shaevich, Russia’s Chief Rabbi. Both sides appealed for friendlier relations between the two communities. However, since both communities are considerably fractured, it remains to be seen how persuasive their appeals will be.

We live in a topsy-turvy world. As anti-Semitism lessens in Russia and other historically anti-Semitic countries, it is increasing in other parts of the world. Newspapers accuse the Mayor of London of making anti-Semitic remarks and show photographs of the Mayor of Moscow lighting the first candle of the Jewish menorah on Chanukah. Here are two more pieces of recent news. “The majority of Russians do not harbor negative feelings toward Jews and the percentage of Russians who disapprove of anti-Semitism has increased since last year, according to a new nationwide poll. <...> Seven percent of the respondents distrust or dislike Jews, 84 percent do not have these feelings and 9 percent found it difficult to answer this question”*. Poland, which is another “country so many Jews love to hate has consistently pursued a pro-

* Krichevsky L. Poll: Russians don’t dislike Jews, www.jta.org/page_view_story.asp?intarticleid=16282&intcategoryid=2.

American and pro-Israel policy. <...> Israel events at this country's major universities draw large and positive audiences, while the rare anti-Israeli demonstrations are so small they do not even make it to the local media"^{**}. Compare that with growing anti-Semitism in England, France and on many US college campuses. Hopefully, the positive trend in Russia and Eastern Europe will continue, while the negative trend in the West will reverse.

This book deals mainly with anti-Semitism in political life, in media and in religion in contemporary Russia. In other words, its author is interested in anti-Semitism as it appears in political and religious ideology, rather than in the more common sense as persecution of, or discrimination against, Jews or Judaism. The author is a young man, born in 1979, who pursues the study of anti-Semitism in his homeland as an academic subject. Appropriately, the book is written in a dispassionate style that largely conceals the author's views and makes the book more credible. To his credit, he manages to be consistent and to refrain from editorializing even when he describes really bizarre anti-Semitic stories, such as those based in astrology or quoted from an alleged document from an unidentified "World Zionist Congress" which contains insidious plans to increase the acidity of the goyim's blood.

As the translator and editor, I added footnotes explaining certain terms or concepts that may be less familiar to a Western reader. My footnotes are easily distinguishable from the author's footnotes, as they are labeled E1, E2, etc. With all due respect to the author, I disagreed with him on a few occasions and took the liberty of using a couple of my footnotes to express my opinions on those occasions. To make reading of the book easier, I also added a Glossary that lists the Russian names of political and religious groups, parties and organizations and their English translations. The Glossary also contains a list of commonly used abbreviations in the text.

The Russian version of the book was completed by the summer of 2003. Hence, the author could only make guesses about the 2003 Duma election, in which case I used Editor's footnotes to provide the actual results. Finally, the

^{**} Taube T. Who's one of Israel's best friends? www.jta.org/page_view_story.asp?intarticleid=16289&intcategoryid=2.

English version corrected a few minor errors in the original, such as misspelled English words and names in the References, and removed textual duplications.

A few terminological explanations are also necessary for the English reader. Russia is a multi-ethnic state. In addition to the ethnic Russians, the country is populated by other Slavic and non-Slavic ethnic groups, which often maintain their languages and other attributes of their culture. Hence, the English word 'Russians' is ambiguous and, in fact, it corresponds to two distinct Russian words – *Russkie* (the members of the Russian ethnic group) and *Rossiyanе* (the people permanently living in Russia). When the meaning of the term was not clear from the context, I tried to clarify it.

Since the Soviet Union was an atheistic state, the word 'Jews' was not used in the religious sense for 70 plus years, and it has largely lost that sense. Rather, it usually denotes belonging to the pertinent ethnic group the way the words Ukrainians, Armenians or Tatars do. Thus, an ethnic Russian who chose to convert to Judaism would still be referred to as a Russian. Conversely, a person who was born to Jewish parents, but later got baptized and even became a Russian Orthodox priest may still be referred to as a Jew, and in fact, this book includes such examples.

Having a specific ethnicity was obligatory in the Soviet Union and it was inscribed in one's internal passport. To make things more confusing, it was inscribed under the item *natsionalnost*, a Russian word that sounds similar to the English word nationality. For the English speaker, however, the word nationality appearing in a passport would automatically refer to citizenship, whereas the Russian word *natsionalnost* does not have the same denotation for the Russian speaker.

Also, the reader should be careful about the usage of the words 'left' and 'right' in this book. For example, the author classifies Eduard Limonov's National Bolshevik Party as a radical right-wing party. In fact, its ideology is so eclectic that it might as well be classified as a left-wing party. Perhaps, that is just an example of a worldwide phenomenon, whereby the extreme left and

the extreme right actually merge, instead of being opposite as geometry suggests. A good example would be the meeting of David Duke and Albert Makashov in 1999 covered by the press. The former is an ex-leader of the American Ku Klux Klan, a racist and a rabid anti-Communist. His notion of “Jewish crimes” is exemplified by the case of the Rosenbergs who stole American nuclear secrets and sent them to the Soviet Union for ideological reasons. Makashov is a prominent leader of the Russian Communist Party and a big fan of Stalin. One could not think of more implacable enemies, yet common anti-Semitism turned a Communist and an anti-Communist into allies. They had a cordial meeting covered by *Zavtra* under a characteristic title: “Duke to Makashov – ‘We are Brothers in Arms’”^{***}.

A final word of caution applies to anti-Semitic expressions attributed to prominent figures of the past. Such expressions may not necessarily be judged as anti-Semitic; it all depends on the historical context and on the norms prevailing at that time. Applying our standards of political correctness to people who lived centuries ago would be misleading, as would taking those quotations out of historical context.

Several friends and colleagues have provided useful comments to me as I was working on this translation. Dr. Basya Gale read the English version twice. Her numerous suggestions substantially improved the style of the book and I am deeply indebted to her. Bett Martinez, Dr. Lawrence A. Shepp and Doreen Stock also read fragments of my translation. I am grateful to them for their comments.

Eugene Veklerov
University of California

^{***} “My s vami brat’ya po bor’be!”, www.zavtra.ru/cgi/veil/data/zavtra/99/306/82.html.

Abbreviations

CCRNP -	Coordinating Council of Radical Nationalist Parties
CIS -	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMR -	Council of the Mufties of Russia
CMSB -	Central Muslim Spiritual Board
CPRF -	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CRU -	Christian Revival Union
EP-URP -	Eurasian Party - Union of Russian Patriots
FP -	Freedom Party
FSU -	Former Soviet Union; a group of independent states formed after the disintegration of the Soviet Union
LDPR -	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
MP -	Moscow Patriarchy
MSA -	Movement in Support of the Army
MSB -	Muslim Spiritual Boards
MSBES -	MSB of the European part of the USSR and Siberia
NBP -	National Bolshevik Party
NPGR -	National Party of Great Russia
NRPR -	National Republican Party of Russia
NSF -	National Salvation Front
NSRM -	New Social Russian Movement
PNP -	People's National Party
PPPR -	People's Patriotic Party of Russia
PPRU -	Popular Patriotic Russian Union
RA -	Movement "Russian Action"
RAU -	Russian All-People Union
RCWP -	Russian Communist Workers' Party
RF -	Russian Federation
RMC -	Russian Muslim Community
RNC -	Russian National Council
RNU -	Russian National Unity

RNU-KK -	Russian National Union (headed by K. Kasimovsky)
RO -	Russian Orthodox
ROC -	Russian Orthodox Church
ROCA -	Russian Orthodox Church Abroad
RPPM -	Russian Patriotic People's Movement
SU -	Slavonic Union
TOC -	Russian True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church
UOB -	Union of Orthodox Brethren
UOC -	Union of Orthodox Citizens
UOG -	Union of Orthodox Gonfaloniers
UPP -	United People's Party
URF -	Union of Right Forces

Glossary of Organizations' Russian Names

- Christian Revival Union - Soyuz Khristianskoe vozrozhdenie
- Communist Party of the Russian Federation - Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii
- Eurasian Party - Union of Russian Patriots - Evraziyskaya partiya - Soyuz patriotov Rossii
- For Holy Russia - Za Rus' Svyatuyu
- Freedom Party - Partia Svobody
- Interregional Movement Unity - Mezhhregionalnoe dvizhenie Edinstvo
- Joined People's Party - Obyedinennaya Narodnaya Partiya
- Joint Detachment of RNU - Svodny otryad RNE
- Liberal Democratic Party of Russia - Liberalno-demokraticheskaya partiya Rossii
- Memory – Pamyat'
- Movement in Support of the Army - Dvizhenie v podderzhku armii
- Movement "Russian Action" - Dvizhenie "Russkoe Deystvie"
- National Bolshevik Party - Natsional-bolshevistskaya partiya
- National Party of Great Russia - Natsionalno-derzhavnaya partiya Rissii
- National Republican Party of Russia - Natsionalno-respublikanskaya partiya Rossii
- National Salvation Front - Front natsionalnogo spasenia
- New Social Russian Movement - Novoe obshchestvennoe russkoe dvizhenie
- People's Nationalist Party - Narodno-natsionalnaya Partiya
- People's Patriotic Party of Russia - Narodno-Patrioticheskaya partiya Rossii
- Popular Patriotic Russian Union - Narodno-patrioticheskyy soyuz Rossii
- Russian All-People Union - Rossiysky obshchenarodny soyuz
- Russian Communist Workers' Party - Rossiyskaya kommunisticheskaya rabochaya partiya
- Russian National Council - Russky Natsionalny Sobor
- Russian National Union - Russky Natsionalny Soyuz
- Russian National Unity - Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo

Russian Nationalist-Socialist Party - Russkaya natsional-sotsialisticheskaya partiya

Russian Party - Russkaya Partiya

Russian Party of Russia - Russkaya partiya Rossii

Russian Patriotic People's Movement - Russkoe patrioticheskoe narodnoe dvizhenie

Russian Phalanx - Russkaya Falanga

Russia's Revival - Russkoe vozrozhdenie

Salvation - Spas

Slavonic Union - Slavyansky Soyuz

Slavonic Unity Party - Partiya slavyanskogo edinstva

Union of Officers - Soyuz ofitserov

Union of Orthodox Brethren - Soyuz pravoslavnykh bratstv

Union of Orthodox Citizens - Soyuz pravoslavnykh grazhdan

Union of Orthodox Gonfaloniers - Soyuz pravoslavnykh khorugvenostsev

Union of Realists - Soyuz realistov

Union of Right Forces - Soyuz pravnykh sil

United People's Party - Ob''edinennaya narodnaya partiya

White World - Bely mir

Working Russia - Trudovaya Rossia

Foreword

This book is based on the research conducted by the author in 2000 – 2002 in collaboration with several organizations. Most of the material was commissioned by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights. Certain parts were prepared within the project “Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia in the Russian Federation” carried out by the author through the sponsorship of the Moscow Office of the Anti-Defamation League, the Russian Jewish Congress and the Tolerance Foundation; part was presented as talks at various conferences and published in scholarly journals and collections of papers. Most of the talks that formed the basis for further research (and took advantage of valuable comments made during the discussions) were presented at multidisciplinary conferences on Judaica organized by the Center for Researchers and Teachers of Judaica at Sefer^{E1} colleges. The main part of the text consists of information that the author gathered and processed for many years as part of his work in the Information and Research Center Panorama. I am sincerely grateful to all organizations mentioned above for their support of my research projects. These materials in a recast form comprise the skeleton of this book.

I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues who have helped me in my work in the last several years. It is impossible to mention every colleague I had while I carried out my research; I will list only those without whom this book would not have seen the light of day. I am deeply grateful to Viktor Aleksandrovich Shnirelman, my first teacher and advisor. His suggestions and demanding style of work were extremely helpful to me at the first steps of my research activities in the field of ideological anti-Semitism. I am thankful to Vladimir Valerianovich Pribylovsky, possibly the greatest specialist in political history of post-Soviet Russia, who taught me research methodology in the area of the most recent Russian political history. It is impossible to overesti-

^{E1} Sefer is an organization that coordinates the teaching of Jewish studies at universities and colleges.

mate his contribution to shaping my research skills. I am proud of my acquaintance with him.

I am grateful to my relatives and close friends whose support and understanding made this work possible. I would like to express my special appreciation to my spouse, Anna Nekrasova. Her love and friendship help me live.

I am grateful to everyone who has read this manuscript. Their comments and friendly criticism certainly improved the book substantially. Particularly valuable comments were made by Aleksandr Verkhovsky, Valentin Oskotsky, Vladimir Pribylovsky, Anatoly Podolsky, Artur Fredekind and Viktor Shnirelman. Naturally, all errors and inaccuracies remain the author's responsibility.

Within my specialization, I am mainly interested in anti-Semitism in the political life of contemporary Russia. Actually, anti-Semitism in the strict sense of the word is primarily a political ideology, whereas widely spread prejudices are secondary. Religious issues are covered only insofar as they are part of the political context. However, it is impossible to talk about political anti-Semitism without examining the issue of how common this bigotry in mass consciousness is. Not being an expert in sociology, I have summarized results of specialized studies and have referred the reader to the specialized literature that I used.

The main part of this book is divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to an analysis of anti-Semitism in the context of the political parties in the contemporary Russian Federation (RF). Two elements of this issue are discussed: moderate anti-Semitism in the ideology of 'serious' parties belonging to the political mainstream, and the situation in marginal groups on the extreme right (ultra-nationalist and religious fundamentalist groups). In addition, we discuss the attitude of the state towards such movements.

The second part of this book is concerned with anti-Semitic propaganda. We describe in detail the anti-Semitic press and its financial resources. Then, in a very general way, we discuss and analyze the structure and content of anti-Semitic propaganda in periodicals and newspapers.

Finally, the subject of the third part of this book lies on the boundary between the study of politics and religion. This part is devoted to the analysis of the function of anti-Semitism in the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and in Islam in contemporary Russia. The last chapter of the third part offers an analysis of the Russian extreme right-wing movement as a 'religious' movement.

Each part and each chapter can be viewed as independent articles devoted to specific issues.

The work on this book was largely completed in the beginning of the summer of 2003. Undoubtedly, by the time it reaches the readers, the rapidly changing political life in post-Soviet Russia – accelerated by the upcoming elections – will bring further corrections. The reader should not forget this.

Introduction: Anti-Semitism in Mass Consciousness

In order to evaluate the extent to which anti-Semitic prejudices are common in Russian society, we have to turn to the results of public opinion polls. The most prominent sociologist working on this problem is Lev Gudkov. His studies are used as the basis for the following¹.

According to Gudkov², the core of the most convinced anti-Semites (i.e. the people providing consistently negative answers to most of the questions) is a cluster of respondents whose percentage may be approximately estimated as 6% – 9%. Their relative numbers practically do not change from year to year. They are the people paying extraordinary attention to the ‘Jewish question’. Anti-Semitism is a substantial element of their view of the world. About 1% - 1.5% of the polled people (the margin of error in such sociological studies is plus or minus 2% - 2.5%) are ready to support, or already participate in, radical nationalist organizations such as *Russkoe natsional’noe edinstvo* (Russian National Unity, RNU) or *Pamyat* (Memory). They regularly read anti-Semitic and xenophobic periodicals and books.

The percentage of those who gave manifestly negative answers only to certain diagnostic questions about the Jews is much larger: 15% - 18%. For these people, anti-Semitism is not the main, or even an important, part of

¹ Analyzed results of several public opinion polls sponsored by *Vserossiyskiy tsentr izucheniya obshchestvennogo mneniya* (All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Study) and conducted by L. Gudkov were published in the following publications: Gudkov L., Levinson A. Otnoshenie naseleniya SSSR k evreyam i problema antisemitizma. *Vestnik Evreyskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, No.1, 1992; Gudkov L., Levinson A. Izmenenie v otnoshenii k evreyam naseleniya respublik na territorii byvshego SSSR. *Vestnik Evreyskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, No.4, 1993; Gudkov L. *Antisemitizm v postsovetsoy Rossii – Neterpimost’ v Rossii. Starye i novye fobii*. Moscow Carnegie Center, 1999 (further referred to as *Neterpimost’ v Rossii*).

² Gudkov L. *Antisemitizm v postsovetsoy Rossii*, pp. 74 and on.

their ideology. Rather, their attitude is caused by their generally intolerant xenophobic position.

About half of the respondents (from 35% to 52%) form the outer, disparate layer of the distribution of the anti-Semitic feelings. Their anti-Semitism is passive and defensive, meant to set limits. The most negative reaction was in response to the question about whether a Jew could be a Russian president (64% of the respondents answered in the negative). A general characteristic of this group of people is their negative attitude on issues such as letting the Jews have their active political parties, letting them have loud and in-your-face celebrations of their religious holidays, etc. Many respondents from this group doubt the Jews' loyalty.

Therefore, according to Gudkov, the most common negative anti-Semitic reactions have a defensive or compensatory character. They are directed towards restricting the Jews' access to positions that are symbolic of the Russian national consciousness.

Apparently, the last group making up 35% - 52% of the population should be defined as sharing anti-Semitic opinions.

According to the results of the same public opinion polls, consistently pro-Jewish (philo-Semitic) groups in the society are as small as overtly anti-Semitic ones: their size does not exceed 10% - 12% of the polled. Combined with liberal respondents who are deliberately tolerant towards various ethnic groups, the size of this layer reaches 18% - 20%. Such a small size of the consistently tolerant population should not cause a panic. This social layer has a high prestige in the society, because it includes more highly educated, professional people holding influential positions in the media, in politics and the economy, and therefore, significantly influencing the society at large.

According to the results of another public opinion poll commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 1999 (the results were published in September)³, strong anti-Semitic views are held by 44% of the polled. The ab-

³ Highlights from the September 1999 Anti-Defamation League *Survey on Anti-*

sence of anti-Semitism was demonstrated by 19%, and 37% belong to the gray area. The respondents were asked to say if they agree or disagree with eleven statements, such as “Too many Russian banks are controlled by Jews”, “The Jewish businessmen tend to be dishonest” or “The Jews are more concerned about the interests of Israel than those of Russia”. Those who agreed with 6 – 11 statements were categorized as ‘consistent anti-Semites’; those who agreed with 2 – 5 statements were put into the gray area.

Of course, from the sociological point of view, the public opinion poll was implemented incorrectly for various reasons that we are not going to discuss here, as we are not experts in this field. But a strong side of the ADL methodology is the fact that a similar system has been used in the USA for dozens of years and we can compare the results. In the United States in 1998, 12% of those polled supported anti-Semitic views consistently, 53% demonstrated essential tolerance. In 1964, the results were 29% and 31%, respectively. Hence, the situation with anti-Semitism in Russia in 1999 was worse than that in the USA in 1964.

According to a very common point of view, the strong position of anti-Semitism in the mass consciousness is caused by traditional stereotypes of ‘populist’, ‘rural’, ‘patriarchal’ consciousness. These stereotypes, in turn, are rooted in the rudiments of the religious view, on the one hand. On the other hand, they are rooted in narrow-mindedness, lack of education, provincial aggressiveness towards strangers, etc. However, recent sociological studies (their results have not been verified yet) carried out by a Siberian group showed that anti-Semitism in contemporary Russia does not conform to traditional stereotypes. Rather, it is part of the urban culture. The modern Russian society does not have much in common with a traditional society. The intense and partly forced modernization intentionally destroyed the rudiments of the patriarchal culture and radically changed the people’s mentality. Although sociologically, the arguments of the proponents of the idea above are not flaw-

less, the suggested theory seems reasonable. In any case, it deserves further verification.

To understand anti-Semitism adequately in the context of the social life of modern Russia, it is necessary to point out this important fact: the Jews, obviously, are not the main target of the ethnic phobias. The prejudices against natives of the Caucasus, Gypsies, etc. are much more widely spread, more radical and more overtly stated. The primary role in shaping the phobias towards the natives of the Caucasus and the Muslims is played by the recent events (military actions in Chechnya and Dagestan, ethnically flavored terrorism, migrations, a difficult economic and ethno-demographic situation, etc) and, to a greater degree, their distorted coverage by the media⁴.

According to public opinion polls, the respondents feel the most negative emotions towards the Chechens and other groups from the Northern Caucasus, Armenians, Azeris, Gypsies, Blacks, the Balts, and only then towards the Jews followed by the Tatars and Americans⁵. According to Zinaida Sikevich⁶, on the average, 40.9% of the polled in Russia openly expressed some hostility towards another ethnic group. In other polls detecting 'latent' rather than declared xenophobia, that number reached 85% of the respondents, out of which almost three quarters (from 69% to 76% depending on the region) targeted only the natives of the Caucasus. According to the same data, hostility towards the Jews was declared by 5.6% of the polled.

⁴ We are not talking about nationalist and radical publications that are xenophobic by definition – they have a small circulation and a very small effect on mass consciousness. However, the contemporary Russian press is widely contaminated with subconscious xenophobia – on the level of terminology, the choice of topics, subtle accents, etc. It is hard to say which comes first: does the media form mass xenophobia or does mass xenophobia determine the demand, and therefore, shape the media in its own image and likeness? The book written by a group of authors – Verkhovskiy A. (editor) *Yazyk moy... Problema etnicheskoy i religioznoy neterpimosti v rossiyskikh SMI*, Moscow: Panorama, 2002, deals with the role of the media in shaping negative ethnic stereotypes.

⁵ See, for example, the table "The attitude of the Russians towards other nationalities". *Neterpimost' v Rossii*. p. 48.

⁶ Sikevich Z., *Etnicheskaya nepriyazn' v massovom soznanii rossiyan – neterpimost' v Rossii*. pp. 107-108.

The figures above are supported by other public opinion polls⁷, including more recent ones, and they seem reliable.

We should add that the polls sense a nearly constant level of the anti-Semitic feelings in the society starting in 1990 (a small growth in anti-Semitic feelings was noticed in 1993 – 1995). In the meantime, the layer of tolerant and essentially tolerant people slightly increased, mainly owing to the attitudes of young people. This increasing attitude of tolerance among young people provides grounds to predict a further growth of such feelings in society.

Besides, while there was a relatively common anxiety (or a hope, for those on the 'other side') in the early '90s that extremes, like anti-Jewish pogroms, were possible within a year, lately such expectations almost do not exist⁸. Public opinion is, of course, not the best indicator in this case, but one may draw certain conclusions based on it.

In the study referred to above, L. Gudkov claims that "the attitude towards the Jews in Russia is about the same as it is in Western or Eastern Europe, more tolerant than it is in Austria, Germany or Poland, but worse than it is in the Czech Republic, Hungary or Ukraine". That gives reason for optimism. However, as Gudkov states later, the most important structure of the value system in the Russian society is deeply sick, since its consolidation occurs "not because of positive values and achievements. Rather, it occurs because of a general oversimplification of collective life, including keeping a hostile attitude towards those who are ethnically 'other', who are often imagined or fantasized, and indifference towards the problems of people who are the object of

⁷ See, for example, the results of public opinion polls in: Gessen M. *Iz chego tol'ko sdelayu natsi*. *Itogi*, May 12, 1998.

⁸ In 1990, in response to the question "Are anti-Jewish pogroms probable in Russia this year or next year?", 12% of the respondents said "very probable" or "sufficiently probable" and 43% - "less probable" or "not probable at all" (the rest could not answer). In 1997, the results were 5% and 77%, respectively. See the table "Opinions regarding anti-Jewish pogroms and anti-Semitic feelings". *Neterpimost' v Rossii*, p. 79.

antipathy and hostility”⁹. This analysis was given before the beginning of the second Chechen campaign. Unfortunately, the analysis was confirmed by the following course of events.

The modern Russian mass consciousness is characterized by a negative model of collective self-identification. While the positive model of national self-identification (“we are good, nice, cultured, etc.”) stabilizes the society and provides a high level of tolerance, the negative one (“they are bad, evil, aggressive, etc.”) leads to a high degree of xenophobia and bitterness. Clearly, elements of both the positive and the negative models of self-identification always co-exist in reality and form a complicated value complex of mass consciousness. However, the problem of the collective self-identification for contemporary Russians lies in the fact that the negative elements prevail both qualitatively and quantitatively. Indeed, the trend to consolidate by demarcating the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is extremely strong both at the top and at the bottom of the society. This demarcation assumes an enemy (often fantasized) who possesses clearly expressed ethnic characteristics. The xenophobic emotions are shamelessly exploited by the high-level leaders in order to consolidate the population (the sociological term is ‘ethnic mobilization’), which makes the problem very serious. The fact that they presently use anti-Chechen rather than anti-Semitic feelings should not confuse anyone¹⁰. The very existence of such feelings is what is dangerous.

Western studies similar to ours are often accompanied by recommendations to State bodies. Such bodies in the West tend to pay attention to the opinions of independent experts and public organizations. That is part of the mechanism still lacking in our civic society. The ethno-political situation in the RF is so complex that it is very difficult to give definite and, more importantly, realistic and workable recommendations. Nevertheless, let us try to formulate our

⁹ Gudkov L. *Antisemitizm v postsovetskoy Rossii*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰ For the sake of fairness, let us note that the concept of xenophobia under the conditions of suppression of a military center of ethnic separatism has a connotation different from that in a multi-ethnic state without hot spots. However, discussion of this issue may lead us too far away from our main subject.

opinion on desirable changes in the most problematic spheres in the area of inter-ethnic relations and human rights.

First, state bodies should rein in chauvinistic and xenophobic propaganda and activities promptly and vigorously, especially when they originate from the state bureaucrats themselves. Naturally, the actions countering extremism should be carried out in a deliberately polite and lawful manner, without the illegal arbitrariness common in Russia (this obvious principle is not presently observed). To lower xenophobic feelings in the society, high-level statesmen should promptly denounce specific instances of intolerance and chauvinism, especially aggressive ones. Any discrimination against ethnic minorities (Turk-Meskhetians, Gypsies, Chechens and ethnic migrants) by law-enforcement or other state bodies should definitely cease. There should be no inequality of various religious groups from the point of view of the state. In general, the state's interference in religious affairs should be minimal.

Second, it is necessary to develop and implement a number of steps (primarily, in the sphere of education and mass culture) aimed at forming a tolerant consciousness. It seems to us that it is especially important to implement educational programs devoted to the danger of racism, chauvinism and xenophobia, and fostering a respectful attitude towards cultural diversity among state employees, especially the police, judges and other law enforcement officials.

We may state that, for the most part, however, the situation may be radically changed with only systemic changes solely in the area of implementing the laws that already exist 'on paper'. So far, the formation of a civic society and law-abiding state is a dream for Russia. However, as the world's experience has shown, this dream is achievable.