

## CHAPTER ONE

### **IRELAND'S INTERNATIONAL JEWISH CONTEXT: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, ANGLO-JEWRY AND THE ERA OF MASS EMIGRATION (1881-1914)**

This chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the thesis, which hinges on a proper understanding of Ireland's Jewish community beyond its most immediate setting. This is dependent on three main contexts: the Russian empire, Anglo-Jewry and the so-called mass emigration period. The Russian empire was the main point of origin for Ireland's Jewish community, and is central to the communal arrival myths that will be surveyed in Section 2.1. An awareness of the conditions of Jewish life in Russia is therefore crucial to any rigorous analysis of these anecdotes, and to the development of a more accurate understanding of the reasons behind Jewish immigration to the apparently unlikely destination of Ireland. As Ireland was part of the British empire throughout the period of this study, any meaningful assessment of the communal life, structures and inter-relationships of Irish Jewry is contingent on an appreciation of its context as a set of British 'provincial' communities. Finally, the most significant exchange of Jewish population between the Russian and British empires took place during what is known as the mass emigration period, which began with the pogroms of 1881 and concluded with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. An insight into the mechanics of mass emigration, the broader dilemmas that it raised for western Jewry and the political concerns that governed the western response to this phenomenon, is therefore necessary in order to evaluate the actions and interactions of Ireland's 'native' and immigrant Jewish communities.

For well over a century, the incredibly vibrant, complex and fascinating Russian Jewry has been reduced to a monochrome stereotype, that has been subordinated to the cultural and political interests of its western counterpart. A strong emphasis of the first part of this chapter is the correction of many of the popular misapprehensions that have arisen as a consequence of this imbalance. This will allow me to examine their influence on the existing historiography of Irish Jewry in Chapter Two. To this end, Section 1.1 provides a brief outline of some of the most salient findings of recent research on Russian Jewry. This area has undergone something of a turnaround in recent decades, revolutionising our view of Jewish life

in the Russian empire. However, as Jewish historiography has tended to be divided by an invisible demarcation line into two discrete areas of ‘east’ and ‘west’, these developments have made little impact beyond their immediate scholarly sphere. As a result, traditional western constructions of the ‘east’ continue to dominate academic and anecdotal interpretations alike, an issue that is particularly obvious in the Irish case. Section 1.2 resumes and expands some of the themes that are raised in Section 1.1 in terms of their relevance to the ‘Jewish Question’ in its particular Russian form, namely the public discourse surrounding the place of Jews within wider non-Jewish society that accompanied the gradual process of Jewish emancipation. Here it is important to note that, while historically there was no shortage of anti-Jewish sentiment in Russia, the modern ideology of antisemitism was a relatively late import and, until the late nineteenth century, was viewed as a western phenomenon. I author therefore follow John Klier’s preference for the indigenous term ‘Judeophobia’ to describe earlier forms of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Russian empire.<sup>1</sup> Section 1.3 investigates the violent consequences of Russian anti-Jewish prejudice, with a particular focus on the impact of contemporary historiography upon popular conspiracy theories and received wisdom regarding the pogroms and the emigration process that they kick-started. One widely neglected cause of largescale emigration, the Moscow expulsions of 1891-1892, is also discussed.

With Section 1.4, the emphasis of the chapter shifts westwards to examine the emergence of modern forms of Jewish solidarity. The response of the western Jewish establishment to accelerated east European immigration is placed within the continuum of modern western Jewish diplomacy from the Damascus Affair of 1840 to the outbreak of war in 1914. In particular, the focus is on the concerns that underpinned western Jewish activism and their impact on the interactions between acculturated western Jews and their foreign-born counterparts. Section 1.5 brings the reader to the final context for Irish Jewry, as a set of satellite communities of the Anglo-Jewish ‘centre’ in London. After outlining the broader approach of the Anglo-Jewish leadership to mass east European immigration, the way in which central policy was played out in the relationship between London and the so-called ‘Provinces’ is explored. This provides the basis for the detailed examination of communal life that follows in Chapters Three and Four.

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<sup>1</sup> John D. Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question, 1855-1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xix.

For the sake of convenience and clarity – as opposed to absolute precision – ‘Russia’, ‘Russian’ and ‘Russian Jewry’ are used as shorthand throughout this chapter for the Russian empire and its subjects, non-Jewish and Jewish.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 THE ‘SILENT MAJORITY’: THE JEWS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE<sup>3</sup>

Russian Jewish historiography was born of unique internal and external circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Its myopic, Judeocentric legacy was prevented from maturing and

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<sup>2</sup> Any inconsistencies in the transliteration from Russian to English are due to anomalies within the secondary sources which are beyond the remit of this work.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: ‘Ritual Murder,’ Politics and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 255-56. The ‘silent majority’ is how Frankel sums up the position of Russian Jewry at the time the Damascus Affair of 1840 (see Section 1.4). Although the Russian empire was host at this time to the world’s largest Jewry, it was completely cut off from the rest of the Jewish world. This prevented Russian Jews from making any contribution to global public opinion, Jewish or non-Jewish, regarding major international incidents such as the Damascus Affair. As a result, their views on many such issues remain largely unknown.

<sup>4</sup> Nineteenth and early twentieth century Russian Jewish historiography tended to have a legalistic focus and methodology which reflected the occupational background of most Russian Jewish historians. This was the result of the professional restrictions which excluded them from the Russian academy and, by extension, from the historiographical mainstream. Other subliminal influences included the active role of Russian Jewish intellectuals in the ongoing struggle for emancipation, which made historians prone to superficial comparisons between Russia and the west; the new forms of Jewish identity and expression then being explored within the Russian empire; and the long shadow that had been cast by traditional Jewish schematisations of the past. The origins of Russian Jewish historiography and its shortcomings are considered in various historical works on Russian Jewry in a handful of dedicated essays and, most significantly, in Hans Rogger’s seminal collection, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1986). Essays considering this topic in its own right include Eli Lederhendler, ‘Did Russian Jewry Exist Prior to 1917?’ in *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Yaacov Ro’i (Ilford: Frank Cass, 1995), 15-27; Benjamin Nathans, ‘On Russian-Jewish Historiography’, in *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession and Writing of History in a Multinational State*, ed. Thomas Sanders (New York: Armonk, 1999), 397-432. For a discussion of Russian Jewish historiography as an introduction to other historical topics see, e.g., I. Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters: The Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990), Introduction and chap. 1. This theme also forms a backdrop to Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Most books on the Jews of the Russian empire begin with some kind of survey of Russia’s ‘Jewish Question’. In addition to the works cited above, this introduction is primarily based on Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (London: Viking, 1988), chap. 1, 2; Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Tradition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*; David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza, eds., *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews: Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia 1772-1917* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993); Simon M. Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland: From the Earliest Times Until the Present Day [1915]*, trans. I. Friedlaender (Bergenfield NJ: Avotaynu, 2000); Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), chap. 1; Klier, *Jewish Question*; Klier, ‘The Origins of the “Blood Libel” in Russia’, *Newsletter of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia* 14 (1986): 12-22; Steven J. Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), chap. 2, 3.

finding its place in mainstream academia by Nazi genocide and Communist repression. The upshot has been a web of inaccuracies, generalisations and presuppositions. This has been easy prey over the years to the dominant western Jewish narrative and to the reductive assumptions that are outlined over the coming sections. Since the 1970s a much-needed hermeneutical revolution has been brought about by developments in Russian and Russian Jewish historiography, and in Jewish Studies in general. This has been nourished by the wealth of information that was made available by the opening of the Russian state archives following the fall of Communism. The new, if at times limited, awareness of Russian Jewish diversity and appreciation of the rich tapestry of its culture, politics and literature, have made tentative steps towards bridging the vacuum created by the Holocaust, and transcending the monochrome stereotypes bound in the past. Nevertheless the legacy of the late nineteenth century continues to be disproportionately influential, sustaining a host of misunderstandings and misrepresentations within the wider field of Jewish studies. The immense breadth of recent research on the Jews of the Russian empire mirrors the overwhelming complexity of its object. What follows, therefore, is merely a brief sketch of some of the most important findings of recent decades. A number of these themes will be considered in greater detail in the coming sections.

Before the partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth century, a policy of religious and cultural protectionism had kept the majority of Jews out of Russia. Suddenly the Russian empire became host to several hundred thousand Jewish subjects through the acquisition of territories in Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. By the time of the first reliable Russian census in 1897, the empire was host to the world's largest Jewish community with its 5.2 million Jewish inhabitants constituting almost fifty per cent of world Jewry. Jews formed the largest non-Slavic and non-Christian minority in the empire, and the fifth-largest of its approximately one hundred ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to the enduring misapprehension created by the traditional Jewish nationalist narrative, of a largely homogenous, tight-knit community rooted in the hoary mists of time, Russia's new Jewish subjects were politically and culturally diverse. Thus, the change in sovereignty did not result in a simple transfer from

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<sup>5</sup> In western Europe, Jews typically formed 0.5 to two per cent of the general population at this time. The second-largest Jewish community was that of Austria-Hungary which, at approximately two million, was significantly smaller than its Russian counterpart.

‘Polish’ to ‘Russian’. Although the majority of new ‘Russian’ Jews were Ashkenazi, this contingent appears to have had little or no sense of collective identity. Ashkenazim were divided regionally into the often fiercely opposing spiritual camps of Hasidism and Mitnagdism, and had been exposed to a range of cultural influences such as German, Habsburg, Polish, Russian and Turkish. There were also a variety of minority Jewish cultures, including Karaite and Sephardi. This had led to an abundance of local customs, dialects, folklore and cultural stereotypes. By the nineteenth century, additional social, religious and economic factors had contributed to what Nathans terms a ‘cauldron of intramural conflicts’ far more turbulent than those previously witnessed in the west.<sup>6</sup> The pressures of a steadily deteriorating legal and economic situation, combined with a host of new and competing political and cultural ideologies, caused Jewish intellectuals to ponder by the turn of the twentieth century as to what, if anything, the future held for traditional communities.<sup>7</sup> No real sense of a specifically Russian Jewish identity developed until well into the twentieth century, owing to the diffuse and fragmented sense of nationality that pervaded the Russian empire as a whole. In general ethnic rivalry was rife, having been perpetuated by years of counterproductive government policy. This was driven by the chauvinistic and exclusive Russian conception of ethnicity, and by the then embryonic Russian cultural consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Nathans, *Pale*, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Orbach, ‘The Development of the Russian Jewish Community, 1881-1903’, in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 156-60. Orbach disputes this pessimistic assessment, citing the growth of activist political consciousness among all sectors of the Jewish population, including the very religious. For an overview of this newfound Jewish political activism, which emerged in response to the 1881-1882 pogroms, see John D. Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chap. 8ff. The deteriorating Jewish legal position, together with its impact, is outlined in below and will be considered in greater detail in the coming sections.

<sup>8</sup> Nathans explains pre-revolutionary Russia as a collection of separate national histories within an imperial state, as opposed to a nation-state in the making (*Pale*, 334). He notes that the term ‘Russian Jew’ (*russkii evrei*) did not become an element of Russian Jewish discourse until the 1850s when it appears to reflect more of an aspiration than a reality. Jewish self-perceptions were influenced by Russian conceptions of ‘Russianness’. Separate adjectives existed to denote Russianness by nationality (*russkii*) and Russianness by political or cultural affiliation (*rossiskii*). This corresponded to two distinct conceptions of Russia herself, ethnic (*Russkaia*) and territorial (*Rossiiskaia*). These complex identity politics reflect the impossibility of ever being accepted in the contemporary western fashion, as Russians ‘of the Mosaic faith’. It also made conversion a far less attractive option in the Russian empire by contributing to an innate sense of prejudice and disdain towards others. This led to the long-term stigmatisation of converts and their descendants. For an engaging insight into the politics of surnames in the Russian empire, and its impact on the integration of converts, see Andrew M. Verner, ‘What’s in a Name? Of Dog-Killers, Jews and Rasputin’, *Slavic Review* 53, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 1046-70.

Initially Jews were expected to be of use in developing Russia's rural market. This was due to their historical importance in the economy of the Pale, where they had acted as middlemen for the local nobility and had dominated, in particular, the grain and liquor trades. Consequently, unlike many of the other social and ethnic groups that came under tsarist governance at this time, the Jewish community was granted significant concessions by Catherine the Great. These included the right to buy out of military service and permission to retain the traditional form of autonomous Jewish self-government, known as the *kahal* or *kehilla* (community).<sup>9</sup> This was an extensive and continually evolving entity which had originated in the medieval era and encompassed all areas of communal life: social, religious, economic and political.<sup>10</sup> The Pale itself was vast; while accounting for only four per cent of Russian territory, it was roughly equivalent in size to France. The Pale was uncrowded and offered good economic opportunities. Jews, unlike most other Russian subjects, had complete freedom of movement within its designated area. In relative terms, the rights that were granted to Russian Jews under Catherine the Great were more extensive than those enjoyed by their western peers at this time.<sup>11</sup>

This comparatively positive situation was not set to last for long. Within one hundred years the position of Jews within the Russian empire had deteriorated beyond measure. The tsarist administration was quick to realise that Jews were not particularly suited to Russia's mercantile ambitions or easily integrated into its feudal system, the traditional means of absorbing minorities. This led to the adoption by Russian bureaucrats of the negative anti-Jewish stereotypes that had abounded in Polish and Lithuanian folklore. The conclusion that Jews were distasteful economic parasites who exploited and corrupted a gullible peasantry at every turn became one of the keystones of Russia's 'Jewish Question'. This notion would not only exercise a

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<sup>9</sup> Löwe emphasises the significance of the concessions that were initially allowed to Jews, given the rigid social uniformity that was favoured by Catherine the Great. This represented a notable contrast to the position of other ethnic and social groups at this time, such as the Ukrainian Cossacks or German Baltic lords (*Tsars*, 28).

<sup>10</sup> On the origins and evolution of Jewish communal government in the tsarist empire, cf. Lederhendler, *Road*.

<sup>11</sup> On the contrasting perceptions and expectations of Russia and the West regarding Jewish emancipation, see John D. Klier, 'The Concept of "Jewish Emancipation" in a Russian Context', in *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, ed. Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 121-44; also I. Michael Aronson, 'The Prospects for the Emancipation of Russian Jewry During the 1880s', *Slavonic and East European Review* 55, no. 3 (July 1977): 348-69; Eli Lederhendler, 'Modernity Without Emancipation or Assimilation? The Case of Russian Jewry', in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 324-43.

strong influence on wider public opinion but would, ultimately, determine the course of tsarist Jewish policy itself.<sup>12</sup>

Russia's Jewish legislation was an outgrowth of the unexpected nature of the initial Russian Jewish encounter.<sup>13</sup> Defying repeated attempts at systematisation, it evolved into a massive and cumbersome edifice, rambling, ill-thought-out and often *ad hoc*. By the late nineteenth century, this legal *corpus* had been dismissed by commentators in both east and west as the product of capricious, unadulterated antisemitism. This was an impression that would persist as inherited wisdom for many years. More recently tsarist Jewish legislation has been found to have corresponded in many ways to that which governed Russia's many other minorities, which was collectively shaped by the anxieties of the highly conservative and cautious bureaucratic elite.<sup>14</sup> The government was plagued by suspicions of a volatile and unpredictable Russian peasantry and fearful of the potential demographic threat that was posed by the plethora of ethnic minorities, not least the rapidly expanding Jewish population. In addition, Russian bureaucrats nurtured a deep mistrust of progressive, western-style cultural and political values and a growing dread of any rash or over-enthusiastic reforms. Tsarist paranoia grew apace with the mounting political volatility of the late nineteenth century (see Section 1.3), ensuring the survival of discriminatory Jewish legislation in full until the overthrow of tsarism in 1917.

Despite its similarities to Russian minorities legislation in general, tsarist Jewish policy was distinguished by chimeric underpinnings, and by excessively harsh implementation in areas such as conscription and educational and professional quotas. From its unwieldy bulk scholars have extrapolated underlying principles of sorts, which are encapsulated in the frequently-recurring Russian terms *sliianie* (merger) and *sblizhenie* (rapprochement). These were ideas that had been lifted from west European absolutist ideology without ever being precisely defined, understood, or even fully explored within the Russian context. Nevertheless these terms were used interchangeably in official and public discourse over a long period, and were

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed examination of the evolution of this narrative, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, chap. 3.

<sup>13</sup> The most comprehensive overview of Russia's Jewish policy and the mindset that underpinned it is Rogger, *Policies*.

<sup>14</sup> Although Rogger seems to understand Russian bureaucratic fears as genuine, it is arguable that much prejudice is rooted in anxieties that appear genuine to the person in question (*Policies*, 106-07). On the irrational underpinnings of racist thinking in general, cf. George L. Mosse, *Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

implemented in ‘carrot-and-stick’ fashion by the tsarist administration as Section 1.2 will show. The resulting confusion among both Russians and Jews as to precisely what was required of the Jews and what outcome was expected from the exercise as a whole continued to influence Russian Jewish relations until well into the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup>

In its attempts to remould the Jews into ‘useful’ and ‘productive’ Russian subjects, the tsarist administration attempted to refashion or, at times, to replace traditional educational, occupational, fiscal and communal structures. Most of these ventures were doomed to limited success at the very best, owing to the often well-founded Jewish suspicion of conversionary motives.<sup>16</sup> They did, nevertheless, have some significant and far-reaching repercussions for Jewish communal life and solidarity. One particularly dramatic example was the extension of military service to the Jews, which occurred under Nicholas I (1825-1855). This led to irrevocable divisions within individual communities along class lines due to the corruption of *kahal* leaders. Conscription lists were cynically manipulated, and the draft was ruthlessly marshalled to enforce communal discipline and to quash the widespread and sometimes violent popular opposition.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the bureaucracy’s best efforts, the Jewish occupational pattern always remained inverse to that of other Russian subjects. The low-level uptake of government schemes to promote agriculture reinforced existing negative stereotypes.

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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed examination of the attempted implementation of the tsarist principles of *sliianie* and *sbliizhenie*, see Nathans, *Pale*. Nathans charts the vicissitudes of these ideas and their effect on Jews, often in fascinating detail.

<sup>16</sup> For an overview of the failed Russian intervention in Jewish education, for example, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, 222-44.

<sup>17</sup> Military ‘queue-books’ were doctored by those in power to ensure that the poor would always serve in place of the more socially and economically privileged. The gruelling standard tour of twenty-five years only took effect from the age of eighteen. Underage recruits, sometimes as young as five years old, made up approximately 50,000 of the estimated 70,000 Jewish recruits during this period. Most of these unfortunates either died or succumbed to the army’s policy of systematic abuse that was designed to induce conversion. Memories of their original identity and birthplace tended to be lost by survivors by the time they were discharged from the army, leaving them as good as dead to their families and communities. Conversion rates rocketed among Jews during the Nicholine period, and flight and self-mutilation became widespread. Disruption of the synagogue service, the customary manner of raising a public complaint, became so routine that the disgruntled were simply brushed aside by synagogue authorities. Poorer Jews who attempted to rebel by breaking traditional taboos on informing to the authorities were often subject to brutal vengeance at the hands of the communal leadership. For a comprehensive survey of the reign of Nicholas I and its devastating impact on Russian Jewry, cf. Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews: The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia, 1825-1855* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1983). Ironically, the progressive relaxation of the conscription laws after Nicholas’s death eventually led to a slight over-representation of Jews in the Russian military; see Cormac Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A Socioeconomic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 28.



The image of the parasitic Jew who was unable or unwilling to engage in the ‘honest’ labour of the soil contrasted starkly with the idealised agrarian self-image that was cherished by Russians in the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> As the century progressed, customary Jewish occupations were increasingly affected by tsarist policy. Other factors combined with punitive legislation to have a devastating impact on Jewish economic life. These included the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the extreme social and economic destabilisation resulting from belated and rapid industrialisation, the state takeover of the liquor industry in 1893, and a Jewish population explosion.<sup>19</sup>

Restrictions on Jewish residence, ownership and leasing of land within the Pale were introduced and progressively hardened. This was ostensibly to protect the peasants from Jewish ‘exploitation’ and, conversely, to protect Jews from outbursts of righteous peasant indignation. This was a favourite tsarist euphemism for the anti-Jewish violence which occurred, sometimes in waves and with growing intensity and frequency, from 1881 onwards (see Section 1.3). The most notorious legislative response to these outbreaks was the so-called May Laws of 1882. This supposedly temporary ban on the owning or leasing of rural property by Jews, which disregarded the fact that pogroms were actually an overwhelmingly urban phenomenon, remained in place until 1917.<sup>20</sup> Although new research suggests that the actual economic impact of the May Laws may have been considerably exaggerated,<sup>21</sup> they certainly mark a negative turning-point for Russian Jewry.

As a result of the May Laws, Jews were forced into the increasingly overcrowded urban centres of the Pale. There they subsisted in often horrendous

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<sup>18</sup> According to Löwe, by 1900 a maximum of 63,000 Jews inhabited approximately three hundred agricultural settlements throughout the Russian empire (*Tsars*, 67, 109).

<sup>19</sup> Klier notes the impact of tsarist policy on Jewish economic pursuits: the feudal system had obstructed the rise of non-Jewish artisans, while residence restrictions had led to a surfeit of Jewish middlemen (*Jewish Question*, 450). The alleged role of Jewish tavern-keepers in peasant drunkenness (Klier, *Jewish Question*, 311ff), arising from elite paranoia regarding the Russian peasantry after the abolition of serfdom, was one ostensible reason for the state takeover of the liquor industry. Ironically, however, statistics show that this was a greater problem in the Russian interior, where there were no Jewish-owned inns, than in the Pale. Aronson elucidates the dramatic increase in the Jewish population at this time and discusses its impact on internal welfare systems, which included infirmaries, orphanages and old-age homes (*Troubled*, 38-39). One work which vividly conveys the destabilising effects of industrialisation within the Russian empire is Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms: The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Leading Zionist Chaim Weizmann reflected ironically that ‘Nothing in tsarist Russia was as enduring as “Temporary Legislation”’ (quoted in Nathans, *Pale*, 269).

<sup>21</sup> Klier emphasises that the May Laws were significantly less punitive than the measures that had initially been discussed. He argues that there were plenty of possibilities for circumventing the legislation and notes a number of successful legal appeals by Jews (*Pogroms*, chap. 5).

conditions, competing ruthlessly for the meagre economic opportunities that remained available to them. As cheating was often necessary for survival, the Russian administration continued to believe that Jewish traders wilfully exploited the peasantry.<sup>22</sup> In reality many were worse off than their Christian neighbours; a high proportion, immortalised in Yiddish lore as *luftmenschen* (literally ‘air-people’), lived off their wits, drifting from one temporary job to the next.<sup>23</sup> These harsh circumstances led to a proliferation of left-wing thought and activism among Russian Jews that has been well documented. Nevertheless, Jewish radicalism was often exaggerated by right-wing publicists and political reactionaries in order to rationalise growing anti-Jewish violence and to justify increasingly harsh legislation.<sup>24</sup> Another consequence of Jewish economic hardship was the emigration of approximately 1.5 million Russian Jews, in what Nathan characterises as a ‘wave’ of the poorer and less educated towards the west and the New World, and a ‘trickle’ of idealists into Palestine (see Section 1.4).<sup>25</sup> The formal historical record of this period has been distorted through the disproportionate influence of the Jewish folk-memory of this era. This has resulted in a conflated, anachronistic popular metanarrative where dramatic tales of pogroms and draft evasion are substituted for what were, in reality, largely financial ‘push’ factors.<sup>26</sup>

Also contributing to the increase in Jewish emigration, and to the radicalisation of Jewish youth, were mounting educational and professional quotas.

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<sup>22</sup> The circularity of this self-fulfilling negative stereotype is, in a way, comparable to Mosse’s observation regarding the Holocaust (cf. *Racism*, chap. 13). Mosse notes the effects of the daily struggle for survival on concentration camp inmates. This led to an appearance and behaviour that outwardly conformed to expectations regarding Jewish uncleanness, cunning and ruthlessness that were the product of systematic Nazi indoctrination.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 21-23. Antin describes in her memoir how the ‘costly luxury’ of being a Jew led to the development of an instinctive cunning from an early age.

<sup>24</sup> There are a plethora of memoirs that discuss Russian Jewish political radicalism, such as Eva Broido’s fascinating *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, ed. and trans. Vera Broido (London: Oxford University Press, 1967). Scholarly analyses of this phenomenon include Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Nora Levin, *Jewish Socialist Movements, 1871-1917: While Messiah Tarried* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Nathans, *Pale*, 85-86.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., Michael A. Clein, ‘The Clein Family’ (Judaic Studies Program, University of Miami, 1989), 7, which states: ‘Taxation and military conscription were but two problems facing the Jews. Many Jewish families sent their sons away. Between 1880 and the early twentieth century the great mass exodus of Jews from Lithuania to the United States occurred’. See Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 1, for recent examples of how collective Jewish memory continues to be widely accepted, even among historians, without sufficient evaluation. The ensuing narrative is examined in detail in Section 2.1, with particular reference to the Irish context.

From the 1860s, when Russian Jews first began to avail in earnest of higher education, to the 1880s, when quotas were gradually introduced in response to popular demographic anxieties, Russian universities had provided a rare opportunity for Jews to experience genuine integration, tolerance and progress. As a consequence of educational quotas, the numbers of Jewish students in foreign universities soon came to outstrip their counterparts in Russia.<sup>27</sup> Direct experience of the anti-Jewish prejudice that was endemic to western universities steered young Russian Jewish intellectuals further in the direction of left-wing ideologies.<sup>28</sup> The isolation that they had experienced abroad brought these thinkers together to form radical political movements that had a specifically Jewish orientation, such as Zionism and Bundism (Jewish socialism).<sup>29</sup> Those who were desperate to acquire or complete an education, but were forced to remain in Russia, had no choice but to live illegally in the Russian interior. There it was common for students to masquerade as artisans or servants or, perhaps, worse.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile many genuine artisans were forced to resort to other occupations, leaving themselves vulnerable to expulsion by the Russian authorities.

The advancement of secular education within the Jewish community led to the emergence of a new, Russian-speaking Jewish intelligentsia. The *intelligenty* found

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<sup>27</sup> On the positive Jewish experience in Russian universities in this period, see Nathans, *Pale*, 201-307. As a relatively recent innovation in Russia, universities initially provided a remarkably neutral meeting-ground for young Jews and Russians. The freedom that this allowed, combined with the effects of a tsarist Jewish policy that encouraged secular education (see Section 1.2), led to a massive influx of both men and women into the Russian education system. Nathans observes that the number of female Russian Jewish students alone exceeded the combined numbers of Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Muslims, of both genders (*Pale*, 222-25). Universities gave many Jews their first taste of Russian culture, as well as the opportunity to completely immerse themselves in it if they so wished. The unique solidarity and fraternalism that characterised Russian universities persisted into the early twentieth century, only to dissipate overnight owing to reactionary efforts to discredit the revolutionary movement by association with Jews.

<sup>28</sup> On the Jewish experience in German universities in general see, e.g., Norbert Kampe, 'Jews and Antisemites at Universities in Imperial Germany (I) – Jewish Students: Social History and Social Conflict', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 30 (1985): 357-94; on the Russian Jewish experience in particular, see Jack Wertheimer, 'The "Ausländerfrage" at Institutions of Higher Learning – A Controversy over Russian-Jewish Students in Imperial Germany', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982): 187-215.

<sup>29</sup> The 'Bund' was the popular name for the the Algemeyner Yiddisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland (the General Jewish Labour Union in Lithuania, Poland and Russia), founded in 1897 (see Section 1.4).

<sup>30</sup> Nathans, in *Pale*, examines in detail illegal Jewish residence in the Russian interior. St. Petersburg was a favourite destination for legal and illegal work and study, as it boasted commercial as well as intellectual and cultural attractions. After 1860, its only decline in Jewish numbers occurred under the draconian governorship of Petr Gresser (1882-1892). A contemporary joke depicts one Jewish intellectual crawling on all fours and barking in the streets in the hope of being granted residence rights through being mistaken for a dog. Likewise the handful of female Jewish students who purportedly registered as prostitutes in the Russian interior never having setting foot in a brothel is something of an urban legend. After Gresser's departure from office, St. Petersburg's Jewish population again rose dramatically.

themselves well-placed to represent their co-religionists before the authorities and wider reading public. They also used this unique position to promote their own agenda for the future of Jews within the Russian empire over and above those of the conservative traditionalists and notables.<sup>31</sup> The *intelligenty*, however, accounted for only a small proportion of the Jewish intellectual and political flowering that occurred in the Russian empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the 1860s, a new breed of *maskilim* had emerged, the product of state-sponsored Jewish schools and rabbinic seminaries. These intellectuals were better placed than their isolated and inconsequential predecessors to influence the course of Jewish life and to challenge more conventional authority-figures and intellectual pursuits.<sup>32</sup> The growth of Palestine-oriented nationalism was nourished by a Hebrew literary revival which provided linguistic and cultural foundations for the eventual establishment of a Jewish state. The Yiddish literary coming-of-age retained a more prosaic orientation, in celebrating and immortalising the lives of ordinary Russian Jews. This complemented more grassroots cultural and political movements such as Bundism and Diaspora-based nationalism.<sup>33</sup> These authentically Russian intellectual and political developments were propagated by a flourishing press which promoted the various new agendas their three representative languages.<sup>34</sup> During this period, the traditional Jewish intellectual centre of Vilna (Vilnius) was transformed, and a new one created in the vibrant city of Odessa.<sup>35</sup> Although Russia never boasted a significant religious

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<sup>31</sup> Klier's *Jewish Question* provides a comprehensive and detailed survey of the Russian-language Jewish press and its role in the public discourse surrounding the 'Jewish Question' in Russia. See also Lederhendler, *Road*, 82-143.

<sup>32</sup> Pauline Wengeroff, *Rememberings: The World of a Russian-Jewish Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2000). The first wave of Haskalah in Russia had been a somewhat marginal affair whose debt to its German predecessor is reflected in its early nickname, 'Berlinism'. Wengeroff vividly describes the escalating generational conflict that arose from the growing interest in secular pursuits among younger Jews.

<sup>33</sup> One of the founding fathers of Russian Jewish historiography, Simon Dubnov (1860-1941), was a leading proponent of the now largely forgotten cause of 'Diaspora Autonomism'. Dubnov makes a compelling case for its programme over and above that of Jewish regeneration in Palestine in his *History*, 438-45. For a resumé of Dubnov's career and his contribution to Russian Jewish historiography, see Nathans, 'Historiography', 397-432. Diaspora Autonomism was subsequently adopted as a key aim of the Bund, through a combination of internal Jewish and external political considerations. This ensured that, by the time of Russia's first parliamentary elections in 1905, Diaspora Autonomism was almost universally advocated among Jewish political parties. For a detailed examination of this process, see Frankel, *Prophecy*, 141, 171-257.

<sup>34</sup> Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Responses to Modernity: New Voices in America and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), deals extensively with the significance of language politics in this period; see also Lederhendler, *Road*, esp. 122-33, 137-40.

<sup>35</sup> The historic city of Vilna now boasted a range of Jewish cultural influences, old and new. The younger city of Odessa, which was isolated from the traditional Jewish heartlands, was a more exuberant and innovative centre, often dismissed by outsiders as superficial and brash. The Yiddish

reform movement new forms of Jewish worship and expression were explored, albeit to a limited extent.<sup>36</sup> The host of internal and external challenges that confronted traditional Jewish forms of solidarity, observance and lifestyle in this period acted, in Nathans' words, as a 'solvent' to unite hitherto warring Orthodox factions.<sup>37</sup>

Intellectual developments with the potential to further Jewish integration into Russian society were supported by a select circle of so-called Jewish 'notables'. This fortunate few had been granted residence rights in the Russian interior, in recognition of their contribution to Russian industrialisation and economic advancement. Their wealth, visibility and advanced level of assimilation attracted stringent criticism from Jews and non-Jews alike. The notables used their privileged position to promote Jewish emancipation among the Russian elite. Within the Jewish community, they collaborated with the *maskilim*, using their influence and wealth to nurture the educational and occupational modernisation that they believed would promote the cause of emancipation among the Russian reading public. In addition, the notables used their social and political connections to act as *shtadlanim*, high-placed intercessors for their poorer, less influential co-religionists.<sup>38</sup>

The course of wider Russian history itself would propel some of the emergent Jewish movements of the nineteenth century to a central place in the cataclysmic

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adage 'zibn mayl arum Ades brent der gihenum' (hell burns for seven miles around Odessa) reflects its perceived religious laxity and, indeed, its attraction. See, e.g., Zipperstein, *Imagining*, 66-77.

<sup>36</sup> Nathans notes the contrasting responses of those dissatisfied with religious orthodoxy. The educated and wealthy sought reform, which tended to favour aesthetic or functional adjustments above meaningful and systematic theological change. The poor, in contrast, simply abandoned organised religion altogether (*Pale*, 137-42).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>38</sup> The story of the Russian Jewish notables has, until relatively recently, been written from the perspective of the so-called 'new' Jewish politics that opposed their allegedly timorous, passivist approach. The notables have therefore received somewhat offhand treatment by historians, and their activities have tended to be downplayed and under-researched. In fact, Klier has argued that the notables were far better placed to represent Russian Jewry and to effect meaningful political change than proponents of the rival 'new' ideologies. He has also found their political programme to have been far more radical than has hitherto been acknowledged (*Pogroms*, chap. 10). Nathans provides a detailed reappraisal of the overall role of the notables, with a particular emphasis on their support of the *maskilim* and their efforts to promote the Jewish enlightenment. In terms of their political approach, Nathans discusses the way in which the Jewish elite came to use Russia's newly-reformed judiciary to challenge the state on its treatment of Jews. This was prompted by a decline in success of traditional intercessionary strategies, in combination with the shock of the 1881-1882 pogroms and the inadequacy of the government response. Nathans compares the function that the Russian Jewish notables came to fulfil to that of Jewish representative organisations in France, Austria and Germany. However, in contrast to Klier, he holds with traditional criticisms that the elite approach was overly cautious and politically naïve (*Pale*, 322-29). *Shtadlanut*, in its own right, remains a largely uncharted area of Jewish history; for a rare evaluation, cf. Aharon Klieman, 'Shtadlanut as Statecraft by the Stateless', *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* II, no. 3 (2008): 99-113. On modern forms of this phenomenon, see Section 1.4, below.

events of the Soviet and Nazi eras, while dooming others to irrelevance and obscurity. In the first instance, however, the direction of many of these new Russian Jewish intellectual and political trends was to be determined by mounting anti-Jewish violence with the Russian empire itself. In order to gain a better understanding of these outbreaks and of the different forms of response that it evoked – Jewish and non-Jewish, Russian and international – it is necessary first to consider their ideological underpinnings. Section 1.2, therefore, examines in greater detail the way in which Russia's unique cultural and political setting influenced the tsarist approach to the 'Jewish Question'.

## 1.2 AN 'IDÉE FIXE' OF TSARISM: THE 'JEWISH QUESTION' IN THE RUSSIAN CONTEXT<sup>39</sup>

Russia's 'Jewish Question' was largely the product of the incompatibility of Jews with Russian corporate society. This was a persistent irritant from the very outset of the Russian Jewish encounter, and was crucial in shaping official attitudes towards Jews throughout the entire tsarist era.<sup>40</sup> The Jewish failure to bend to the Russian social order was fully matched by its unwillingness to accommodate them. Consequently Jews were labelled as troublemakers, whose very existence centred around the exploitation of others for economic gain and egotistical gratification. The situation was gradually exacerbated as the vague, de-personalised insecurities of Russian Orthodoxy met with the traditional anti-Jewish prejudices of Poland and Lithuania and, subsequently, with the modern antisemitic discourse of western Europe. Disturbing 'Jewish' traits came to be attributed to a 'fanaticism' that was allegedly instilled by traditional Jewish education, reinforced by Jewish ritual, and nurtured by stubborn insularity. Anti-Jewish stereotypes were nourished by paternalistic concerns for the peasantry, who were deemed the most vulnerable to 'Jewish exploitation', especially after the abolition of serfdom. By the late nineteenth century, the image of 'Jewish exploitation' was so ingrained in the official mindset as

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<sup>39</sup> Klier, *Jewish Question*, 299. As noted in Section 1.1 above, the 'Jewish Question' is a pillar, when not the sole focus, of all research on nineteenth-century Russian Jewry. This outline has been based, in particular, on Klier, *Jewish Question*, and Nathans, *Pale*. Other key sources for this section are Aronson, *Troubled*, 11-43; Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*, 1-15; Klier, 'Emancipation'; Löwe, *Tsars*; Rogger, *Policies*.

<sup>40</sup> This point is particularly well-illustrated in Nathans, *Pale* and Löwe, *Tsars*.

to govern the callous bureaucratic response to pogrom violence that shocked the world.<sup>41</sup>

Traditional perspectives on Russian Jewish history are posited on the existence of a clean socio-cultural and political dichotomy between Russia and the west. This assumption arose from a combination of Jewish frustrations at tsarist oppression, and popular western disgust at the pogrom violence that was universally believed to have been state-sponsored (see Section 1.3, below). The shedding of old political baggage has allowed contemporary scholars to recognise a number of parallels between east and west regarding the nature of the ‘Jewish Question’ and the social function of anti-Jewish sentiment. Most notably an exchange of ideas has been identified, and recognised as having played an important role in the evolution of more traditional forms of anti-Jewish prejudice into the modern ideology of antisemitism. This interrelationship of east and west constitutes a particular focus of this overview of the ‘Jewish Question’ in the Russian context, which expands on a number of the themes that have been raised in Section 1.1, above.

The multi-national context of the Russian empire together with the paranoia of its administration, indicate that the ‘Jewish Question’ was somewhat more complex there than it was in western Europe. Russia’s divisive cultural politics left little scope for common ground, compromise or empathy. During the nineteenth century the many ethnic and religious groups, including Great Russians themselves, were struggling to define themselves both in their own right and in relation to each other. The as yet immature Russian identity and culture were regarded by the tsarists as unifying forces that would compensate for the numerical inferiority of ethnic Russians. This led to the implementation of unpopular russification policies in newly-acquired territories, which often contributed to the deterioration of relations between Jews and local ethnic groups.<sup>42</sup>

As has been shown in Section 1.1, demographic fears and an embattled mentality played a considerable role in shaping the tsarist legislative approach towards ethnic and religious minorities. Throughout its history the Russian imperial administration continuously attempted, against mounting odds, to shape and regulate

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<sup>41</sup> Klier, *Jewish Question* (esp. 1-4, 123-24) charts the evolution of tsarist claims regarding Jewish exploitation of the peasantry, together with their consequences. The official allegation that this was a direct cause of pogrom violence explains the seeming paradox of the May Laws. As noted in Section 1.1 above, these aimed to remove as many Jews as possible from rural communities, notwithstanding the origins and general predominance of anti-Jewish violence in the urban setting.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed examination of tsarist russification policy see Klier, *Jewish Question*, chap. 2.

society in order to sustain and reinforce its own ascendancy. As tsarist society was predicated on inequality and the general absence of rights, civic emancipation in the western sense was never on the cards for any of the underprivileged ethnic, religious or social groups.<sup>43</sup> Alexander II's (1855-1881) 'Great Reforms' did attempt to modernise Russian society, but in a largely superficial manner that was intended to placate public opinion and secure the *status quo*. However, change had gradually gathered its own momentum and begun to slip out of the official grasp. Socio-cultural crisis was the inevitable outcome of the abolition of serfdom and the belated processes of industrialisation and urbanisation that came on its heels. Widespread unease was accentuated by an economic transformation, where periods of massive growth were outweighed by prolonged and severe financial depression. Russian bureaucrats were acutely aware that popular dislocation, anxiety, alienation and discontent had the potential to explode at any time into revolution. This volatile situation, together with its far-reaching consequences, will be examined in the coming sections.

We have already seen the way in which tsarist policy sought, from the beginning, to neutralise Jewish 'harmfulness' by transforming alleged economic parasites into 'useful' and 'productive' subjects who would be capable of merging into Russian society, preferably completely. The implementation of the undefined principles of 'merger' and 'rapprochement' wavered between the carrot and the stick. Forms of coercion and intimidation included military conscription and the discouragement of traditional Jewish costume.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile privileges such as residence rights or exemption from military service were conferred as a reward for engaging in 'desirable' economic activity or 'raising moral standards' by means of secular education. The unforeseen consequences of these policies and, especially, their successes created still further dilemmas for the Russian administration which are discussed below.

With further resonances of the western Enlightenment, it was periodically suggested that the moral failings of Russian Jews were the result of their low legal

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<sup>43</sup> 'Emancipation' was a concept that Russians initially associated with western politics. It was only applied by Russian Jews to their own aspirations in the late nineteenth century. Cf. Klier, 'Emancipation', 122-23.

<sup>44</sup> Wengeroff (*Rememberings*, 94-96) describes the public humiliation by Russian police of Jews who persisted in wearing traditional dress in contravention of the 1845 government ruling. She points out the radical impact of such legislation at a time when costume was representative of one's social position and ethnic identity, as opposed to being a mere expression of fashion.



standing.<sup>45</sup> Those who advocated the extension of Jewish rights held that the Jewish potential to enrich wider society had been demonstrated in the west. Tsarist officials rejected such comparisons on the grounds that Russian Jews were of too low a moral calibre to benefit from the sudden removal of state moderation. For a time some Judeophobes also supported the abolition of the Pale, holding that this would dilute the allegedly harmful Jewish influence on Russian society and improve Jewish moral standards.<sup>46</sup> Sporadic appeals to remove Jewish legal disabilities were rejected by the majority of tsarist bureaucrats as the administration was unwilling to relinquish control – such as it was – on any area of society. Calls to relax residence restrictions were finally dropped after 1881, due to the fear that a spread of Jews would be accompanied by a spread of violence.<sup>47</sup>

Overall the disparity between the visions, aims and aspirations on both sides of the ‘Jewish Question’ was significantly more pronounced in Russia than in the west. State legislation set out to erode Jewish distinctiveness as completely as possible, by fair means or foul. Jews meanwhile clung tenaciously to unrealistic hopes of acceptance, integration and the normalisation of their legal status in line with other minorities. It is hardly surprising that western antisemitic thought provided a welcome rationale for disturbing socio-economic change and the perpetual anomaly of Jewish distinctiveness. When transplanted into Russia’s unique setting, this allowed anti-Jewish violence to take hold, and to spiral in a manner that had long been inconceivable in the west.

The Reform Era was crucial to the popularisation of the ‘Jewish Question’ among Russia’s reading public. Previously discussions had been limited to official circles, where rudimentary, traditional Russian stereotypes were favoured. Now censorship was relaxed in order to pave the way for a public consultation process which was to be conducted through the emergent periodical press. Practically all

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<sup>45</sup> For an outline of western Enlightenment opinion concerning the integration of the Jews, and its role in the development of negative Jewish stereotypes, see Mosse, *Racism*, chap. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Judeophobes argued that the dispersal of Jews throughout the Russian empire would render them into ‘a drop of poison lost in an ocean’. Others, in contrast, feared that this would allow the *kahal* to spread to the Russian interior, like a parasite entering a healthy organism. Cf. Klier, *Jewish Question*, 200, 220, 296. Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories involving the *kahal* are outlined below.

<sup>47</sup> Blaming immigrants and other so-called ‘out groups’ for the social problems of the host society is, of course, not uncommon. The notion that Jews ‘bring’ antisemitism with them was repeatedly cited as a reason for restricting the immigration of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany during the 1930s in Ireland and elsewhere. In contemporary Ireland, increased immigration is likewise seen by some as having caused a corresponding increase in racism. See, e.g., Ronit Lentin and Robbie McVeigh, *After Optimism? Ireland, Racism and Globalisation* (Dublin: Metro Éireann Publications, 2006), 120-22. For a more detailed analysis of anti-Jewish sentiment in Ireland, see Section 2.3, below.

aspects of the ‘Jewish Question’, including government policy, were hastily thrust into the public arena.<sup>48</sup> This discourse went through various evolutionary phases, which have been charted by Klier. Having begun with a preoccupation with defining precisely what constituted Jewish identity, discussions swiftly moved towards the articulation of anti-Jewish sentiment. Key milestones were the recasting of traditional religious themes into more widely acceptable contemporary forms and the integration of racial and occult theories, which involved the exposure of allegedly secret activities and conspiracies, and incorporated elements of the fantastic, esoteric and supernatural. All of these developments are indebted to western antisemitic thinking. This provided a convenient, flexible and increasingly appropriate vehicle for projecting the concerns of the day onto the Jews, not least the continued failure of Jewish integration. Russian adaptations of western themes were then successfully re-exported to western Europe, the prime example being *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. As a result, many of these ideas are now most widely associated with the Russian empire as opposed to the west.<sup>49</sup> In common with broader racist and anti-Jewish thinking, Klier identifies the most salient characteristic of Russian Judeophobia as its chameleon-like affinity to the changing fears and obsessions of a traumatised society. The sometimes vitriolic public debate strongly influenced Russian assessments of the ‘Jewish Question’. Thus Klier observes that, although its acuteness did not change throughout the Reform Era, this was neither the popular nor the official perception of the situation.<sup>50</sup>

The Russian press, and notably the popular Slavophile journal *Kievlianin* (‘The Kievan’), played a vital part in disseminating and popularising Judeophobic motifs and in lending authority to their most notorious proponents.<sup>51</sup> These included Ivan Aksakov, a prominent Slavophile publicist, who adapted outmoded religious

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<sup>48</sup> Klier (*Jewish Question*, xiii-xv, 27) notes that this very public exchange of views created a ‘symbiotic’ relationship between official policy and wider opinion. He points out, however, that ‘public opinion’ was, at this time, the domain of a privileged few. The Russian-language reading public was composed of landowners, professionals, intellectuals and bureaucrats, as opposed to the millions of illiterate, uneducated peasants whose views were never solicited. The emergent Jewish intelligentsia was similarly unrepresentative of the Yiddish-speaking, insular, Orthodox majority. It was the widespread practice of reading and discussing journal articles aloud in public places that served to make the ‘Jewish Question’ a matter of ongoing popular concern. Under certain conditions, this had the potential to fuel the type of sentiment that could lead to anti-Jewish outbreaks.

<sup>49</sup> Klier observes that the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy was actually a longstanding motif of the European anti-Jewish tradition, and a relative latecomer to Russia (see *Jewish Question*, 440-47). On the gradual evolution of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories in western Europe, cf. Mosse, *Racism*.

<sup>50</sup> Klier, *Jewish Question*, 455; cf. Mosse, *Racism*, on western Europe.

<sup>51</sup> Klier, *Jewish Question*, 194-200.

stereotypes into more modern secularised forms and coined a number of well-known nineteenth-century Judeophobic catchphrases.<sup>52</sup> Ippolit Liutostanskii was a controversial figure who helped to propagate the notorious west European myths of the ‘blood libel’ and ‘ritual murder’ in the Russian empire.<sup>53</sup> Most influential of all was Iakov Brafman, who laid the popular foundations for the *Protocols* with his claim that the *kahal*, rather than the Talmud, was the root of all Jewish evils. As Brafman was extremely well-connected in the north-western Pale, his anti-Jewish writings received official patronage. This gave him an ongoing influence on the tsarist approach to Jewish policy.<sup>54</sup> The advent of occult Judeophobia set the scene for a series of sensational Russian murder trials involving Jews, which made either direct

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<sup>52</sup> One of Aksakov’s most enduring catchphrases was ‘International Jewry’. Aksakov also popularised negative images of the Talmud and helped to introduce occult themes into popular discourse. Cf. Klier, *Jewish Question*, 125-43.

<sup>53</sup> Liutostanskii was a former Roman Catholic priest who had been defrocked for sexual misdemeanours and is described by Klier as thoroughly unscrupulous and opportunistic. Klier regards Liutostanskii as the most versatile, successful and obstinate purveyor of the ‘blood libel’ and ‘ritual murder’ myths in the Russian empire. Liutostanskii alleged that the Talmud inspired small groups of fanatics to ritual murder, unbeknown to the majority. This successfully cast suspicion on all shades of Jews, whether ‘enlightened’ or traditional. Although the Russian press was divided on Liutostanskii, the publicity he achieved gave his contentions a foothold in the popular consciousness. ‘Ritual murder’ maintains that Jews brutally murder Christians, usually young boys, in a triumphal re-enactment of the passion and death of Christ. The ‘blood libel’ claims that the victim’s blood is extracted for ritual or healing purposes. These myths have been used since Antiquity to demonise despised minorities and were particularly popular in western Europe during the Middle Ages. ‘Ritual murder’ and the ‘blood libel’ were, however, unknown in Russia until her expansion into Poland in the late eighteenth century. As a quick trawl of the internet reveals, these legends remain popular among antisemites. However they have received little academic attention as a socio-cultural phenomenon in their own right; Hillel Kieval’s work in this area remains unpublished (*Blood Inscriptions: The ‘Ritual Murder’ Trial in Modern Europe*, University of California Press, forthcoming). Research has instead tended to focus on particular ‘affairs’ (see Section 1.4, below). On close examination, it is evident that these cases, in common with the Limerick Boycott of 1904 (see Section 2.3, below), are more about broader social, economic and political concerns than about ‘Jews’ *per se*. There may indeed be little more to add to these assessments beyond the filling in of any remaining gaps in the historical record. On the incorporation of the ‘blood libel’ and other occult themes into Russian Judeophobic thought, cf. Klier, *Jewish Question*, 417-49; Klier, ‘Blood Libel’: 12-22. On Liutostanskii, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, 423ff.

<sup>54</sup> Klier, who dubs Brafman the ‘grandfather’ of the *Protocols*, provides the most detailed treatment of his chequered career and of his main themes in *Jewish Question* (165-81, 263-83). Brafman had converted from Judaism to Russian Orthodoxy after repeated conflicts with the Jewish communal authorities and had obtained his influential contacts during a brief period as a Christian missionary. Although Brafman’s writings reveal his ignorance on matters Jewish, he succeeded in passing himself off to Russian officials as an expert. His writings were given an air of authenticity by the creative use of the apparently genuine records of the Jewish community of Minsk. Brafman’s allegations that individual *kehillot* fed into a universal network that was overseen by large Jewish representative organisations first appeared in print in the late 1860s. He also accused communal leaders of using the ritual that governed even the most intimate areas of Jewish daily life as a means of securing their control over the Jewish masses. Brafman’s works were eventually collated into *The Book of the Kahal* (*Kniga Kahal*, 1882). Klier (*Jewish Question*, 437) notes that Brafman was so successful in his propaganda that even his own death – from natural causes – was widely attributed to the *kahal*.

or indirect reference to the ‘blood libel’ and ‘ritual murder’.<sup>55</sup> These allegations were also a prominent element of the anti-Jewish violence that broke out in places such as Niszhnii Novgorod (1884) and, infamously, Kishinev (1903).<sup>56</sup> Erudite refutations by Russian Jewish intellectuals were ineffectual, at best, against the simplistic, all-encompassing arguments of demagogic publicists. At worst, these had the potential to fuel popular anti-Jewish prejudice.

Tsarist utilitarian policy, which had facilitated the rise of the Jewish elite, was soon supplanted by a new government panacea for Jewish integration: education.<sup>57</sup> Again in the spirit of the western Enlightenment, this was seen as a vital means of elevating Jews to a moral and cultural level that would enable them to assimilate into wider society. Thus ‘enlightenment’ became a key pillar of the government policy of ‘merger’. As Section 1.1 has noted, state-sponsored Jewish education was often a thinly-veiled vehicle for conversion. Although this ensured that it would remain a shortlived and largely unsuccessful phenomenon, it paved the way for the emergence of two important new contingents: the Russian-speaking *maskilim* and the Russian Jewish intelligentsia. The role of these groups in representing Jews in the Russian public arena, both in a cultural and an apologetic sense, has already been noted. In common with assimilated western Jews, the *maskilim* and *intelligenty* shared many Russian criticisms of Jewish cultural and economic life.<sup>58</sup> They were, however, somewhat short-sighted when it came to grasping, on the one hand, the underlying rationale for tsarist Jewish policy and, on the other, the extent of Jewish resilience to externally-imposed change. The failure of their collaborative project with the Russian

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<sup>55</sup> For a list of ‘blood libels’ from the time of their first known appearance in Europe in 1144 to 1900, see Richard Gottheil, Hermann L. Strack and Joseph Jacobs, ‘Blood Accusation’, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1173&letter=B> (accessed 6 May 2008). At least three further cases occurred in the early twentieth century: Blondes (Vilna, 1900), Beilis (Kiev, 1911-1913; see Section 1.4, below) and Fastov (Ukraine, 1913-1914). Although modern ‘ritual murder’ cases tend to be associated with the Russian empire, they were also in fact a significant phenomenon in central Europe during the nineteenth century (with thanks to Dr. Guido Hausmann for this observation).

<sup>56</sup> For a brief description of the brutal anti-Jewish attack in Niszhnii Novgorod, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, 433. The most comprehensive study to date of the Kishinev pogrom is Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*.

<sup>57</sup> Nathans, *Pale*, 214-15.

<sup>58</sup> A notable west European analogy to Russian maskilic critique of traditional Jewish life would be Max Nordau’s ‘Muskeljudentum’ (*Jewry of Muscle*, 1898); cf. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1997), 233-45; Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), esp. chap. 4.

authorities of ‘enlightening’ the Jewish masses, resulted in bitter disillusionment among more assimilated Russian Jews.

The opening up of third-level education, in contrast, was the most notable success of the Russian government policy of ‘selective integration’ as well as the grounds for its very undoing.<sup>59</sup> Between 1861 and 1879, legislation was introduced that gradually brought the privileges of Jewish graduates into line with those of their non-Jewish counterparts. This led to a growing correlation by Jews between secular education and social and economic progress, resulting in a massive Jewish influx into the Russian education system.<sup>60</sup> As noted above, the Jewish elite supported the promotion of secular education as part of its strategy for obtaining greater civil rights for Russian Jews. Initially this was achieved by subsidising needy students on an individual basis. Subsequently the provision of educational stipends would become a key function of the OPE, the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia, which was founded in St. Petersburg in 1863.<sup>61</sup>

Despite an initially positive press reaction to these developments, by the mid-1860s reactionary publications had begun to propagate the fear that Jews were using educational institutions as a springboard for infiltrating wider Russian society. The turning point came in 1880, when the leading conservative daily *Novoe vremia* (‘New Time’) published a sensational, purportedly anonymous letter under the provocative headline ‘The Yid is Coming!’ (*Zhid idet!*). This represented a radical departure from previous Judeophobic discourse by attacking the fashionable assumption that secular education would ultimately resolve Russia’s ‘Jewish Question’. A protracted public debate ensued concerning the merits of introducing educational quotas. These were finally implemented in 1887, with drastic consequences for Jews.<sup>62</sup> Quotas, and the attached stipulations, were progressively narrowed in response to Jewish strategies

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<sup>59</sup> Nathans, *Pale*, 201-02.

<sup>60</sup> See Section 1.1.

<sup>61</sup> The OPE, which was the first and most enduring Jewish public organisation in Russia, was largely financed by the Jewish elite. While dismissed by many scholars as ineffectual and self-important, Nathans (*Pale*, 173-74, 224-30) argues that the OPE did sponsor some important scholarly activity. From its inception, two-thirds to three-quarters of the OPE budget was set aside each year for philanthropy. At times, as many as fifty per cent of all Russian Jewish third-level students benefited from OPE support. Another valuable activity was the production of accessible scholarly publications on a range of themes. Together with the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU; see Section 1.4, below), the OPE featured prominently in Brafman’s conspiracy theories.

<sup>62</sup> *Zhid idet!* echoed a popular contemporary slogan, ‘The commoner has arrived’ (*raznochinets prishel!*), which celebrated the accession of non-nobles to Russian universities. For an overview of the controversy surrounding the *Zhid idet!* piece, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, 403-07; Nathans, *Pale*, 257-60. *Evrei* (literally, Hebrew) is the politically-correct Russian term for ‘Jew’.

to circumvent them.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps the most serious effect of these restrictions in the long term was the politicisation of the Jewish student body that has been noted in Section 1.1. The Russian bureaucracy thus became responsible for transforming fears of Jewish radicalism into another self-fulfilling prophecy.

As this overview has shown the ‘Jewish Question’, which was a function of broader social, cultural, economic and political issues, impacted to some extent on every aspect of relations between Jews and non-Jews in the Russian empire. The concluding comments of Klier’s *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question* neatly encapsulate the situation. Klier remarks that, by the end of the Reform period Jews were viewed, at best, as a particularly recalcitrant social problem. This assessment of the ‘Jewish Question’ was marked by dissipating confidence in traditional educational and economic remedies. At worst, Jews were considered to be nihilist child-killers whose very presence, culture and values constituted an insidious, malevolent threat to the entire Christian world. The anti-Jewish violence of 1881-1882 provided the final catalyst for the merging of official policy with popular prejudice.<sup>64</sup>

### **1.3 POGROMS, EXPULSIONS AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES: CRISIS IN THE EAST?**

Now that the political, social and cultural conditions of Jewish life in late imperial Russia have been outlined, we move to a consideration of their more dramatic consequences. As noted above, the widespread Judeophobia within the Russian bureaucracy facilitated the spread of anti-Jewish discourse and sentiment, and led to mounting discriminative legislation. Inferior legal status created the popular impression that Jews were somehow outside the routine protection of the law. These conditions enabled a level of anti-Jewish violence to prevail in the Russian empire that would only ultimately be surpassed by the horrors of the Holocaust. Beginning

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<sup>63</sup> Nathans (*Pale*, 274-79) explores the impact of the Jewish educational quotas, which hit hardest at gymnasium level. For example, in Vilna, the densest Jewish educational district, the proportion of Jewish applicants admitted to Russian gymnasia plummeted from fifty-eight per cent in 1888 to sixteen per cent in 1900, despite an overall expansion in student numbers during this time. Jews attempted to circumvent government restrictions by attending schools in areas with smaller Jewish populations, by choosing forms of higher-level institution to which quotas did not initially apply, and by preparing privately for university entrance examinations as ‘externs’. Statistics could also be manipulated by sponsoring a Christian student, as this created a corresponding place for a Jewish applicant. The final resort, for those who could afford it, was to attend university abroad. This determination to access secular education against all odds unintentionally reinforced negative stereotypes of Jewish cunning and ambition.

<sup>64</sup> Klier, *Jewish Question*, 455.

with the May Laws, the Russian bureaucratic response to pogroms was to extend and tighten anti-Jewish legislation. Between 1881 and 1914, approximately 1.5 million Russian Jews responded to legislative discrimination, economic hardship and violence by trying their luck abroad. Most of these emigrants headed for western Europe, including Ireland, the United States and the New World. This influx of east European Jews, mostly in poor economic circumstances, radically altered the inner social, cultural, economic and political life of their destination communities. These developments will be outlined in terms of their broader impact over the rest of this chapter, and with relation to their specific impact on Irish Jewry in Chapters Two to Four.

In the collective Jewish imagination pogroms, the May Laws and conscription are viewed as the principal causes of mass emigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This section investigates the interplay between the popular narrative and recent historiography of this period, including those of the emigration process itself. This illustrates the historiographical and methodological principles that underpin my reappraisal of its legacy in terms of the Irish context in Section 2.1. While conscription is also widely cited in Irish communal narrative as a ‘push’ factor with relation to east European immigration, this will not be examined here as my review of the sources for this period have indicated that it is not, in fact, relevant to the Irish setting.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, although the mass expulsions of Jews from the Russian interior during the 1890s was another significant ‘push’ factor,<sup>66</sup> these events remain underexplored by historians and largely neglected by the narrative of this period, whether academic or popular. The outline provided in this section is intended to restore the expulsions to the historical record of Jewish immigration to Ireland.

Although the historiography of anti-Jewish violence has never evolved into a dedicated area of research, pogroms have come under steady scrutiny as part of the broader reappraisal of Russian Jewish history that has already been discussed. A series of detailed and ground-breaking studies have revolutionised the scholarly understanding of anti-Jewish violence in the Russian empire. The new research has drawn extensively on varied sources: personal testimony, official accounts, archives,

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<sup>65</sup> On the contemporary historiography of conscription in the Russian empire, see Section 1.1, above; on conscription in the context of Jewish immigration to Ireland, see Section 2.1, below.

<sup>66</sup> The 1901 census found that between 1891 and 1901 the Jewish population of Ireland had increased by 111.9 per cent (*Jewish Chronicle*, 31 May 1901).

memoirs and a wide range of contemporary publications.<sup>67</sup> For historians of Russian Jewry, this has firmly removed pogroms from the realm of folklore. Many of the assumptions that began with the violence of 1881-1882 and had previously been accepted uncritically as fact, have now been extensively revised or overturned altogether.<sup>68</sup> So far, however, these advances have made little impression on the romance and adventure of the popular metanarrative of mass emigration.<sup>69</sup>

A number of factors have contributed to general misperceptions regarding anti-Jewish violence. Any mass disturbance is a highly complex phenomenon to unravel after the fact. This is due to the chaotic internal patterns of events themselves, the numbers of people involved, the varying capacities of their involvement, and the diffusivity of their motivations.<sup>70</sup> This has made the disentanglement of fact from speculation a particularly tricky matter when it comes to the anti-Jewish violence that occurred in the Russian empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Collective memory was shaped by the perceptions of those who were directly affected by the pogroms and their consequences. These were the victims, eyewitnesses, refugees and succourers, both within the Russian empire and abroad.<sup>71</sup> The press played a vital role in shaping popular expectations by

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<sup>67</sup> New analyses of pogroms upon which this outline is based include Aronson, *Troubled*; Jonathan Dekel Chen, David Gaunt, Natan M. Meir and Israel Bartal, eds., *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*; Klier and Lambroza, *Pogroms*; Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa: Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), chap. 7; Robert Weinberg, 'The Pogrom of 1905 in Odessa: A Case Study', in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 248-89; Robert Weinberg, 'Anti-Jewish Violence and Revolution in Late Imperial Russia: Odessa, 1905', in *Riots and Pogroms*, ed. Paul R. Brass (London: Macmillan, 1996), 56-88; Robert Weinberg, 'Workers, Pogroms, and the 1905 Revolution in Odessa', *Russian Review* 46, no. 1 (Jan. 1987): 53-75; Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms*. Klier is particularly significant as the most comprehensive analysis of the violence of 1881-1882 that has been undertaken to date (*Pogroms*). This revises and supplements some of the most important conclusions of the contemporary historiography of this period.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed analysis of the evolution of the traditional pogrom narrative in the British setting, see Sam Johnson, *Pogroms, Peasants, Jews: Britain and Eastern Europe's 'Jewish Question'* (Basingstoke: Palgrave & Macmillan, 2011). On the American context, see Robert Weinberg, 'Visualizing Pogroms in Russian History', *Jewish History* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 71-92. For a more general overview of pogrom mythology, see Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 2 and Epilogue.

<sup>69</sup> Hans Rogger, 'Conclusion and Overview', in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 314-15. Rogger notes the persistence of popular misapprehensions surrounding pogroms, even in scholarly literature.

<sup>70</sup> For a good account of the range of complexities relating to situations of mass violence and the consequent inadequacies of the Russian legal system in 1881-1882, cf. Aronson, *Troubled*, 145-53.

<sup>71</sup> The memory of 1881-1882, which laid the foundation for popular perceptions concerning pogrom violence, has been decisively shaped by the collective Jewish narrative of trauma. This has left little room for nuanced interpretations of these pogroms so that the experience of the individual, whether as a victim of violence itself or of its legal or emotional repercussions, is now largely impossible to



sensationalising pogrom violence in a slew of gruesome and exaggerated reports.<sup>72</sup> Conspiracy is another prominent element of the pogrom narrative, which has been fuelled by the intricacies of Russian politics in the twilight years of the autocracy. This period was marked by a growing conflict between the forces of revolution and reaction which gave rise to a plethora of secret societies, and a change in the official relationship with anti-Jewish violence. Finally, there is the tendency to place anti-Jewish violence within wider Russian or Jewish historical or ideological frameworks, as opposed to examining this in its own right.<sup>73</sup> Section 1.1 has noted the ongoing impact of pogrom mythology on the formal historical record of Russian Jewry. Section 2.1 reviews its legacy with respect to Ireland's particular historical and

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determine. Thus Nathans argues that the effects of these pogroms, as opposed to the causes, have largely escaped critical examination (*Pale*, 187-94). Although Klier did make some significant advances in this respect (see below), much remains to be done. In the aftermath of Kishinev, in contrast, individual experience was a prominent element of the attempt to make sense of events. One possible explanation for these differences in nuance is the escalation in violence that occurred with the Kishinev pogrom. This saw a considerable increase in attacks on individuals as opposed to property, which had been the main target of mob violence in 1881-1882. For contemporary reports on Kishinev, see Michael Davitt, *Within the Pale: The True Story of Anti-Semitic Persecutions in Russia*, ed. Carla King (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2001); Vladimir Korolenko, 'House No. 13: An Episode in the Massacre of Kishinieff', *Contemporary Review* 85, no. 31 (Jan.-June 1904): 266-80; Prince Sergei Dmitrovich Urusov, *The Kishinev Pogrom: Memoirs of a Russian Governor*, ed. and trans. Herman Rosenthal (New York: Bergman, 1970). On Klier's analysis of pogroms as 'deadly ethnic riots', which accounts for the steady escalation in pogrom violence with each recurrence, see below. Davitt's sympathetic presentation of Russia's 'Jewish Question' and of the Kishinev pogrom is particularly pertinent to his place in Irish Jewish narrative. Davitt's ambiguous relationship with Irish Jewry is examined in Chapter Two, below.

<sup>72</sup> Klier, *Pogroms*, 45ff, 83ff, 399ff; Johnson, *Britain and Eastern Europe's 'Jewish Question'*, chap. 2, 3. Klier and Johnson have paid particular attention to the role of the press in laying the foundations for popular understandings of 'the pogrom'. They note especially the role of the 'Special Correspondent' (believed to be Meier Bankanovich) of Manchester's *Jewish World* newspaper, who furnished a series of graphic reports between July and October 1881. These emphasised the purportedly dismissive attitude of the Russian authorities and included exaggerated accounts of murder and rape. As Bankanovich's reports cannot be independently verified, Klier believes them to have been largely fictional. Johnson traces the evolution of the 'pogrom legend', noting the way in which early reports shaped popular expectations and set the tone for the reporting of subsequent anti-Jewish violence.

<sup>73</sup> In the Russian context, shortfalls in the analysis of pogroms have led to the failure to discern the connection between the attitudes of Russian workers towards Jews and the pogrom violence of 1905-1906. This omission has been addressed by the work of Robert Weinberg and Charters Wynn (see above). The still powerful '*B'Ir ha-Hareiga*' (In the City of Slaughter) by future Jewish national poet Chaim Nahman Bialik is a classic example of the power of interpretation in the Jewish milieu. This is the most famous and enduring product of Bialik's 1903 evidence-gathering exercise in Kishinev. Bialik had been mandated by Russian Jewish leaders to record the full horrors of the pogrom with the aim of rallying international opinion and securing the historical record. He was deeply moved by his findings, concluding that Jewish honour had been disgraced by the passivity of Kishinev's Jewish menfolk and their failure to protect their wives and daughters. Bialik deliberately set out to provoke the Russian Jewish youth into restoring this lost Jewish pride with a poem that subordinates factuality to shock-value. Although most strident in the original Hebrew, 'In the City of Slaughter' was rapidly translated into Russian and Yiddish in order to maximise its impact and remained a continuing influence on Zionist politics into the 1930s. See Chaim Nahman Bialik, 'In the City of Slaughter', trans. A. M. Klein, *Prooftexts* 25, no. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 2005): 8-29; Monty Noam Penkower, 'The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History', *Modern Judaism* 24, no. 3 (2004): 187-255.

cultural setting. This demonstrates the way in which metanarrative can distort the understanding of history at an individual and a local level, contributing to the longevity of popular legend.

The word ‘pogrom’ is derived from the Russian *pogromit’* (to break, smash or conquer), and is related to the Russian word for thunder (*grom*). In the popular imagination, the pogrom is visualised as a calculated and unrestrained attack by Russian police, soldiers and Cossacks on defenceless Jewish villages, with the full endorsement of the tsarist authorities.<sup>74</sup> The word ‘pogrom’ was originally used to describe the violence and destruction that accompanies military campaigns, with no direct ethnic or political connotations. It came to be associated with anti-Jewish violence in 1871, when the latest in a series of anti-Jewish riots in Odessa became national news, owing to the evolution of Russian journalism. The term ‘pogrom’ only entered the international vocabulary with the outbreaks in 1881, and did not come into popular usage until much later.<sup>75</sup> In contrast to the west, in Russia the term retained its more general sense, as an expression to describe political and interethnic disturbances. With the advent of Communism, it was largely stripped of any Jewish implications.<sup>76</sup> Anti-Jewish violence was virtually unknown in the Russian interior prior to 1881 due to the scarcity of Jews, and Klier stresses that it remained an extraordinary, as opposed to a regular feature of Jewish life in eastern Europe. Because of the issues that have been raised of late regarding the meanings, implications and usage of the word ‘pogrom’, some scholars prefer to avoid it altogether. Nevertheless the term has, frequently and inappropriately, been retrojected into the history of those parts of eastern Europe which were later subsumed into the Russian empire, especially the Ukraine. There the Cossack heritage, which incorporates brutal anti-Jewish attacks, continues to be widely

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<sup>74</sup> Weinberg, ‘Visualizing’, 71.

<sup>75</sup> Johnson has found that, in the British context at least, the term ‘pogrom’ did not come into regular usage until 1904 (*Britain and Eastern Europe’s Jewish Question*, chap. 3).

<sup>76</sup> Klier, ‘Paradigm’, 35; Klier, *Pogroms*, 58-9; Rogger, ‘Conclusion’, 315. Klier notes that anti-Jewish violence was previously described by Russians as ‘demonstrations’ (*demonstratsii*), ‘persecution’ (*gonenie*), ‘fights’ (*draky*), or ‘disturbance/disorders/riots’ (*besporiadok/besporiadki*), the latter being particularly favoured by the government. One cannot help but wonder whether the spontaneous, elemental quality of the word ‘pogrom’ was consciously intended to reflect the official interpretation of anti-Jewish violence. Johnson likewise notes that, prior to 1904, terms such as ‘outrages’ were favoured by the British press (*Britain and Eastern Europe’s Jewish Question*, 13). This observation is particularly relevant when it comes to assessing popular interpretations of the Limerick Boycott of 1904 (see Section 2.3, below).

celebrated. It is therefore significant that Klier identifies the Odessa riots of 1821, 1849, 1859 and 1871 as ‘proto-pogroms’.<sup>77</sup>

Recent analyses emphasise that anti-Jewish violence was the outcome of a range of short- and long-term social, political and economic variables.<sup>78</sup> These became increasingly complex as time progressed, reflecting the broader political scene and the increasingly volatile atmosphere in the Russian empire. Klier believes, however, that significant aspects of the pogroms cannot fully be accounted for in this manner. He finds the social scientific model of the ‘deadly ethnic riot’ a useful means of identifying the full range of circumstances that made Jews especially vulnerable to attack. This model also addresses anomalies regarding the spread of pogroms, the sole targeting of Jews and the steady escalation in violence.<sup>79</sup> The relative absence of anti-Jewish attacks in Lithuania and Belarus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is particularly significant to the Irish Jewish immigration narrative. This can be explained through the differences in socio-economic climate between the rapidly industrialising south-western provinces of the Russian empire, and the more industrially backward north-west.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Klier, ‘Paradigm’, 13-15, 33; Klier, *Pogroms*, 58, 59. For a thumbnail sketch of the Ukrainophile interpretation of history, see Klier, *Jewish Question*, 207-08. Klier clarifies that although Cossacks are popularly accused of participating in pogroms they were, in fact, by the late nineteenth century more likely to have been the force to repress anti-Jewish violence on behalf of the tsarist administration (*Pogroms*, 50).

<sup>78</sup> Klier notes the role of Rogger, Aronson and Löwe in establishing interpretations of anti-Jewish violence that stress the importance of negative developments in Jewish life and Jewish-peasant relations after peasant emancipation, in particular in their economic aspects (*Pogroms*, 62-64). For analyses of the socio-economic circumstances that underpinned particular anti-Jewish outbreaks, see Aronson, *Troubled*; Klier, *Pogroms*; Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*; Shlomo Lambroza, ‘The Pogroms of 1903-1906’, in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195-247; Lambroza, ‘The Pogrom Movement in Russia, 1903-1906’ (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 1980).

<sup>79</sup> On the application of Donald Horowitz’s model of the ‘deadly ethnic riot’ to the anti-Jewish violence that occurred in the Russian empire from 1881 onwards, see Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 2. Klier sets out the variety of religious, cultural, social, economic and legal factors that isolated Jews from non-Jews within the Russian empire on a continuous basis. Contrary to traditional stereotypes of Jewish passivity, daily relations between Jews and non-Jews were characterised by a mutual antagonism, and non-Jewish resentments were fuelled by aggressive behaviour on behalf of Jews. The ‘ethnic riot’ model explains why violence was limited to certain parts of the Russian empire when socio-economic change was widespread, why Jews alone were targeted when other social groups were also blamed for unsettling developments, and why the violence steadily escalated from attacks on property to brutal interpersonal violence.

<sup>80</sup> Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 2. Recent research has challenged the current tendency to downplay the tensions that existed between Jews and non-Jews in Lithuania prior to 1941. At the same time it is clear that, although there were some ‘classic’ pogroms in Lithuania in the late nineteenth century, anti-Jewish violence was relatively uncommon. Klier argues that there is insufficient proof to support the view that some serious outbreaks of fire in parts of the north-west at this time were caused by arson, and intended as a form of anti-Jewish attack (*Pogroms*, 54-5). These observations are particularly pertinent to the critical re-evaluation of Irish Jewish communal narrative in Section 2.1, below. Klier

Klier observes that the interpretative framework for rationalising anti-Jewish violence within the Russian empire was established with the Odessa riots. This remained largely static, despite ongoing political, social and economic developments. Russians saw the pogrom as a form of spontaneous uprising against Jewish ‘exploitation’, religious intolerance and cultural backwardness. The Russian Jewish response was marked by sentiments of outrage, betrayal and impotence, and shaped by traditional narrative cycles. This concealed an underlying agenda of rallying international opinion against tsarist injustices.<sup>81</sup> Notwithstanding the powerful emotions and mixed motives that were involved in Russian Jewish constructions of ‘the pogrom’, they have derived a formidable authority through a physical and temporal proximity to the events in question. Beyond Russia the foundations for interpreting pogroms were first laid in 1881-1882, to be completed in 1903 with Kishinev.<sup>82</sup>

The trend that was set by contemporary commentators of conflating outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence into ‘waves’ obscures the often significant variations in context and nature between individual attacks.<sup>83</sup> This has contributed to a range of pogrom conspiracy theories over the years. Principal among these is the notion of official complicity, instigation and/or involvement. This suspicion originated with the circumstances of the riots themselves, and was fuelled by the callousness of the Russian authorities in their aftermath. The leading Russian Jewish historian Simon Dubnov played a vital part in the crafting of a continuous narrative of anti-Jewish violence from the Khmelnytsky Uprising in 1648-1649 to World War One.<sup>84</sup> Dubnov

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also points out that the actions of Governor-General E. I. Totleben, to which the lack of violence in 1881 has widely been attributed, simply followed the directives of the central tsarist government. These were no different to the measures that were implemented, with varying effectiveness, in other provinces. On recent reassessments of anti-Jewish violence *vis-à-vis* Lithuania and Belarus, see Darius Staliūnas, ‘Anti-Jewish Disturbances in the North-Western Provinces in the Early 1880s’, *East European Jewish Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2004): 119-38; Vladas Sirutavičius and Darius Staliūnas, ‘Was Lithuania a Pogrom-Free Zone? (1881-1940)’, in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel Chen, David Gaunt, Natan M. Meir and Israel Bartal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 144-59; Claire Le Foll, ‘The Missing Pogroms of Belorussia, 1881-1882: Conditions and Motives of an Absence of Violence’, in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, 159-73.

<sup>81</sup> On Russian interpretative frameworks for pogrom violence, see Klier, ‘Paradigm’, 15-34; Nathans, *Pale*, 320-23.

<sup>82</sup> Johnson, *Britain and Eastern Europe’s ‘Jewish Question’*, chap. 2, 3.

<sup>83</sup> For a reappraisal of traditional classifications of pogrom violence, in particular the notion of pogrom ‘waves’, see Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Klier, *Pogroms*, 59 (n.3), citing Roskies, *Apocalypse*, 12ff. Klier notes that virtually the only common feature of the attacks that Dubnov interprets as one long continuum, is that Jews were among

claimed that key outbreaks had been triggered by prearranged signals and that all pogroms followed a set ‘routine’. He believed that these anti-Jewish attacks formed part of a concerted government campaign, which was intended to justify official oppression of Jews and to encourage reactionary sentiment.<sup>85</sup> Despite amassing what remains the most extensive collection of primary materials on Kishinev,<sup>86</sup> Dubnov fell short of corroborating his suspicions and remained unsure who precisely was supposed to have masterminded any of the pogroms. Nevertheless his importance as a contemporary observer and historian has lent significant weight to popular conspiracy theories.

The common notion of a ‘hidden hand’ behind the pogroms appeared to be supported by the conditions of life in the Soviet Union.<sup>87</sup> However all suspects, whether revolutionary or reactionary, have now been absolved of having had anything to gain through the orchestration of pogroms.<sup>88</sup> The *agents provocateurs* of conspiracy theory have easily been accounted for by contemporary scholarship. This emphasises the role of local inhabitants, especially business competitors of the Jews, in instigating and participating in anti-Jewish violence. In addition, in 1881, migrant railway workers and local peasants played a vital part in spreading the violence, by disseminating news of individual outbreaks and encouraging ‘copycat’ attacks.<sup>89</sup> Local antipathies are a crucial element of the ‘deadly ethnic riot’.

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the victims. They were not necessarily always the primary target. Dubnov was a leading instigator of Bialik’s intelligence-gathering mission in Kishinev (cf. Penkower, ‘Kishinev’, 195).

<sup>85</sup> Dubnov, *History*, 322-28, 453. Dubnov’s allegations are exhaustively addressed by Aronson and Judge, while Rogger emphasises the implicit contradiction within his overall interpretation of the pogroms (‘Conclusion’, 316). The ‘patterns’ that Dubnov and others identify are easily accounted for by way of a thorough historiographical analysis.

<sup>86</sup> S. M. Dubnov and G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, eds., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1919).

<sup>87</sup> Rogger, ‘Conclusion’, 359. Rogger suggests that Reichspogromnacht (‘Kristallnacht’) is the best – and perhaps the only – example of a state-orchestrated outburst of purported ‘popular wrath’. This view is controversial in itself, given that Reichspogromnacht marked the beginning of the Holocaust, and an entirely new and different phase of anti-Jewish violence (with thanks to Dr. Zuleika Rodgers for this observation).

<sup>88</sup> For example, some commentators have claimed that the pogroms were a ploy to force Russia’s Jews to emigrate *en masse*. Rogger, however, has argued that such a move would have been completely inconsistent with tsarist policy on emigration in general and on Jewish emigration in particular (see below). For other scholarly challenges to prevalent conspiracy theories see Aronson, *Troubled*; Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*. Löwe cites the fact that the riots did not extend throughout the entire Pale as proof, in itself, against any kind of conspiracy (*Tsars*, 56).

<sup>89</sup> For the most up-to-date views on the identity and motivations of the pogromists in 1881-1882, see Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 1, 2. Judge also emphasises the role of local resentments in contributing to the Kishinev pogrom. He has found the Kishinev rioters to have been proportionally representative of the local population, which was religiously and ethnically mixed (*Kishinev*, 56, 69-71).

Recent findings have almost conclusively dismissed suspicions regarding active government collusion in the pogroms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>90</sup> It was not in the government interest in such a volatile political climate to encourage mass violence, as there was the distinct risk that any popular disorder could spontaneously erupt into revolution. Nonetheless, the inability of the forces of law and order to mobilise effectively to combat pogrom violence created the perception that it was condoned, if not desired, by the Russian authorities.<sup>91</sup> A certain amount of blame is, therefore, attributable to them in their failure to prevent, address and contain anti-Jewish outbreaks. Klier notes that, while pogrom waves tended to die down of their own accord irrespective of official intervention, the impression of approval from ‘above’ is a crucial factor in the continuation and escalation of interethnic violence.<sup>92</sup>

The belief that anti-Jewish violence was authorised or excused by the Russian authorities was also encouraged by the judicial response. In the early 1880s, the Russian legal system was ill-equipped to tackle the volume and complexity of the crimes that were committed in the course of the pogroms. Rather than devise complicated mechanisms of compensation, reparation and punishment, it was decided to promote the anonymous return of stolen property. Retribution was often summary and *ad hoc*. The absence of any systematic deterrent allowed unrest to persist throughout the spring and summer of 1881. Over two hundred communities were affected, in eight out of the fifteen *guberniias* (provinces) of the south-western Pale.

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<sup>90</sup> See, in particular, the findings of Rogger, Wynn and Weinberg with respect to notions of official orchestration of anti-Jewish violence in the period under consideration. Scholarly opinion is, however, not entirely unanimous on this question. While Weinberg believes that received wisdom has been ‘laid to rest’ of late, Rogger is somewhat more cautious as to whether suspicions of official complicity can ever conclusively be written off, and Lambroza and Löwe suggest an *unspoken* government policy of supporting pogroms. More recently, Klier has observed that although neither the regime nor its supporters wanted pogroms, they did, in many ways and often indirectly, condone anti-Jewish violence. Cf. Weinberg, ‘Visualizing’, 71; Rogger, ‘Conclusion’, 38; Lambroza, ‘Pogroms of 1903-1906’, 238-42; Löwe, *Tsars*, 147-59; Klier, *Pogroms*, 82-87.

<sup>91</sup> Historians of the pogroms have pointed out that the forces of Russian law and order were hopelessly outnumbered by rioters. They were also beset by indecision on a number of counts. The respective responsibilities of police and military were ill-defined and fraught with petty rivalries. Officials were often reluctant to be seen to be protecting an unpopular minority, sometimes purely through fear of exacerbating already volatile situations. The frequent inefficacy of the police and military, as well as the decision by some individuals to join the rioters, has resulted in the widespread but mistaken assumption that state forces collectively instigated or condoned the pogroms. For a comprehensive evaluation of the issues that influenced the response of the police, military and local government at this time, cf. Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 1. Klier also highlights a number of incidents where those in positions of power attempted to intercede with the rioters, sometimes at considerable personal risk (*Pogroms*, 68).

<sup>92</sup> Klier, *Pogroms*, 82-87. Rogger had already challenged the basic assumption that police action was decisive in containing urban violence in the days before riot squads and water cannon (‘Conclusion’, 359-60).

The introduction of the May Laws in 1882 provided further corroboration for the view that pogroms were endorsed at the highest levels of government, and that normal legal processes were not applicable where Jews were concerned. The May Laws responded to the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence by tightening Jewish residence restrictions in rural areas.<sup>93</sup> Section 1.1 has already noted that scholars have begun to question the widely-held belief that the May Laws had a devastating impact on Russian Jewry. This is a particularly pertinent point with respect to my examination of the narrative of Jewish immigration to Ireland in Section 2.1.

Those convicted of involvement in the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 were also treated with relative leniency, despite vast advances in the Russian legal system and the introduction of anti-incitement legislation in 1891.<sup>94</sup> Little sympathy was shown to Jewish victims, and Jewish civil suits were mostly dismissed.<sup>95</sup> The Russian government again resorted to time-honoured stereotypes in an attempt to deflect unfavourable international scrutiny. The years 1904-1906 marked a period of intensifying political ferment in the Russian empire as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 was swiftly followed by revolution. In its wake came a bitter struggle between progressive and reactionary elements, during which Jews were increasingly depicted as a threat to the security and stability of the Russian state. These allegations were lent apparent substance by the increase in Jewish self-defence organisations following the Kishinev pogrom. Anti-Jewish violence provided a convenient outlet for popular frustrations at the poor progress of the war and the mismanagement of military conscription, and later served as an expedient rallying point for counter-revolutionary forces. Members of the Jewish defence were tried alongside pogromists and meted out similar, if not harsher punishments. In keeping with the graduated pattern of ethnic rioting, pogroms during this period were marked by increasing

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<sup>93</sup> There are many scholarly outlines concerning the formulation and content of the May Laws, one of the most recent and detailed being Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 5, 6.

<sup>94</sup> The 1891 anti-incitement law stipulated heavy punishment for 'attacks by one part of the population upon another'. However Rogger has noted that this appears to have been sporadic and arbitrary in its application (*Policies*, 108-09). He has found that it was frequently violated by Russian officials with impunity during the 1905-1906 pogroms. For a case in point, that of Jewish lawyer Arnold Gillerson who was convicted under this law for challenging the official interpretation of the 1906 Belostok pogrom, see Nathans, *Pale*, 329-31.

<sup>95</sup> The most detailed overview of the legal proceedings following the Kishinev pogrom is Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*, 108-19. The attorney A. S. Shmakov, and his Jewish counterparts Alexander Zarudny and Oscar Gruzenberg, were all later involved in the Beilis case (see Section 1.4, below). Shmakov, who was a convinced Judeophobe, displayed a marked antagonism towards Jewish witnesses during both proceedings.

frequency and escalating brutality.<sup>96</sup> As the tsarist regime steadily lost its grip on power, the official relationship with pogrom violence became correspondingly complex.<sup>97</sup> From 1914 to 1921 Jews repeatedly became the victims of attacks during the widespread upheavals that accompanied the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Russian Civil War. This violence reached devastating levels, and had deep and lasting repercussions for Jewish life in the Soviet Union.<sup>98</sup>

Unlike pogroms, expulsion was an ongoing element of the Jewish experience in the Russian empire from the time of the Polish partitions in the late eighteenth century to the overthrow of tsarism in 1917.<sup>99</sup> The convenient cliché of ‘Jewish exploitation’ served to justify these on the grounds of everything from the prevention of smuggling in border areas to the constantly shifting minutiae of residence restrictions.<sup>100</sup> The mass expulsions of Jewish artisans from the Russian interior in the early 1890s were the consequence of a harsh tightening of Jewish residence restrictions. This triggered a serious crisis for Jews both within Russia and abroad. Although the expulsions targeted a significant occupational group and caused a major emigration wave,<sup>101</sup> they remain largely underexplored by historians. This is

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<sup>96</sup> Although they are generally understood as a ‘wave’, besides Lambroza’s 1980 doctoral dissertation (see above), there is no comprehensive overview of the pogroms that occurred in the period 1903-1906. This is perhaps the best corroboration for Klier’s argument against the traditional classification. He emphasises the historiographical complications surrounding the use of the terms ‘pogrom’ and ‘pogrom waves’ to describe these attacks. These include the broader political circumstances, the targeting of other social groups and the appearance of an organised Jewish self-defence, which was often sponsored by revolutionary parties (Klier, *Pogroms*, 59-60).

<sup>97</sup> Klier, *Pogroms*, 60; Johnson, *Britain and Eastern Europe’s ‘Jewish Question’*, 136-37. From 1914 onwards, Jews did become the target of violence that was instigated by agents of the Russian state, such as military officials, although this was not necessarily directed by any higher authority.

<sup>98</sup> For an overview of the anti-Jewish violence that occurred in the course of the Russian Civil War (1919-1921) and its consequences, see Gitelman, *Ambivalence*, 95-118. An estimated two thousand anti-Jewish riots occurred in this period, leaving more than 150,000 dead and 500,000 homeless, and affecting Jewish economic life into the 1930s. These figures are substantially higher than the cumulative toll for the anti-Jewish violence of 1881 to 1903.

<sup>99</sup> For an overview of the historical context of the Russian expulsions including some brief examples, see Löwe, *Tsars*, 27-49.

<sup>100</sup> From as early as 1816 Jewish residence within fifty versts (thirty-three miles) of certain border areas had been restricted, allegedly as part of the official battle against smuggling. Periodic crackdowns sometimes entailed expulsions. While the association of Jews with this illicit trade appears to have been somewhat justified, even according to Jewish sources, apologists argue that it was a necessary evil given the considerable economic pressures on Jews. For the only significant (and rather entertaining) account of Jewish contraband activity, see Lederhendler, *Road*, 61-64. In the periodical *Darkest Russia: A Journal of Persecution (DR)* (1 (15 July 1891): 8), it was asserted, somewhat predictably, that the so-called ‘Fifty-verst law’ was solely intended to prevent Jews from benefiting from a highly profitable trade (for similar allegations, see *DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 4; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 1-2). On the implications of the constantly shifting Russian residence restrictions, see Nathans, *Pale*.

<sup>101</sup> Jewish artisans outnumbered Jewish merchants, students and soldiers combined, making them the most potentially significant of all Jewish occupational groups in terms of residence rights (Nathans,



somewhat ironic given that these, in contrast to pogroms, were the result of deliberate and systematic government-sponsored persecutions. Their lack of impact on contemporary Jewish thinkers has deprived the expulsions of an intellectual legacy to pique scholarly interest. While there may be little about them to excite the historian, the expulsions do constitute an important landmark in the history of Jewish mass migration and therefore deserve greater prominence within its narrative.

The rationale behind the mass expulsions does not appear ever to have been closely investigated by scholars. The Anglo-Jewish publication *Darkest Russia* (*DR*) attributes them to everything from genocide and ethnic cleansing, to the imposition of Russian Orthodoxy on religious minorities.<sup>102</sup> Some contemporary observers cite more plausible economic reasons. An American diplomatic investigation offers the view that the Moscow expulsions represented an extension of the May Laws to

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*Pale*, 64). According to contemporary estimates, Jews made up some twelve per cent of Russia's skilled artisans; see *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 10.

<sup>102</sup> For allegations that tsarist policy would result in the extermination of the Jews, whether or not this was its direct intention, see *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 1; *DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 2. For assertions that the government wished to make the Russian Empire in effect 'Judenrein' (Jew-free), see *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 5. For claims that expulsions were part of a more general 'anti-foreign crusade' see *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4; *DR* 6 (18 December 1891); *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 5; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 5; *DR* 14 (1 June 1893): 4. As these items often discuss the imposition of the Russian language and restrictions on the use of minority languages, they may actually be referring to tsarist russification policy. One of *DR*'s most frequent allegations is that the official intention was to impose Russian Orthodoxy on religious minorities such as Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists and Siberian 'aborigines'. These polemics may well have had the journal's intended audience in mind. See, e.g., *DR* 5 (13 November 1891): 6; *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 2, 5; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 5. *DR* began life as a supplement to the *Jewish Chronicle* and was intended to mobilise international opinion both public and political. Its content consisted mainly of articles taken from the British and international press, and contributions by recognised non-Jewish experts on Russian affairs. *DR* was extensively circulated among royalty, clergy, politicians, journalists and other leading public figures in Britain and abroad, including as far afield as India, Australia and the United States. In its efforts to appeal to non-Jewish public opinion, *DR* reported on the persecution of all Russian minorities, especially Protestants. The journal also devoted considerable coverage to non-Jewish organisations that aided Jewish refugees, and to the refutation of tsarist stereotypes notably those of Jewish 'exploitation', alleged revolutionary activity and the fitness of Jews to engage in agricultural pursuits. The tone of *DR* is pompous, melodramatic, polemical and unashamedly partisan, and it contains many inconsistencies, contradictions and, doubtless, exaggerations. Nevertheless it does bring home, sometimes with great poignancy, the harsh and wide-reaching realities of the mass expulsions on a personal and individual level. During its second incarnation, from 1912 to 1914, *DR* was edited by Lucien Wolf, who used it as a vehicle for his wider anti-Russian agenda. Soon after the outbreak of World War One, publication was ceased due to popular pressure on Anglo-Jewry to prove its patriotic credentials. On the historical context of *DR*, see Sam Johnson, 'Confronting the East', *East European Jewish Affairs* 36, no. 2 (2006): 199-211. On the changing diplomatic relationship of Britain and Russia in the lead-up to World War One and its impact on Anglo-Jewry, see Johnson, *Britain and Eastern Europe's 'Jewish Question'*, chap. 5. On Lucien Wolf, see Mark Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Chimen Abramsky, 'Lucien Wolf's Efforts for the Jewish Communities in Central and Eastern Europe', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 29 (1982-1986): 281-95.

Moscow.<sup>103</sup> Another suggestion was that the expulsions were intended to remove all Jewish artisans from Russia proper.<sup>104</sup> Significantly, Dubnov agrees that the motivation was economic. He locates the Moscow expulsions in the context of the so-called counter-reforms that were implemented the latter period of Alexander III's (1881-1893) reign. For Jews, this involved an increase in residential, occupational and electoral discrimination.<sup>105</sup> Existing legislation was also enforced with renewed vigour.<sup>106</sup> The economic argument is further corroborated by official statements that were made for the benefit of the foreign press. These asserted that the expulsions were intended to counter dangerous Jewish 'separateness'.<sup>107</sup> Despite this loose rationale, expulsions tended to have a harmful, sometimes ruinous, impact on local economies, which were highly dependent on Jewish activity. In the past, the potential consequences had at times been sufficient to impede, or even prevent, the implementation of expulsion orders.<sup>108</sup> Latterly, however, central government often

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<sup>103</sup> The findings of Col. John B. Weber and Dr. Walter Kempster are quoted at length in *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 5-7.

<sup>104</sup> *DR* 13 (1 February 1893): 8.

<sup>105</sup> Dubnov, *History*, 405-06. Dubnov and others imply that well-known reactionaries in Alexander III's circle had been instrumental in the implementation of the Moscow expulsion decree. Possible suspects include Alexander's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei, who was known for his anti-Jewish prejudice, and Alexander's spiritual adviser, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, who was Ober-prokurator (head) of the Holy Synod. However there is no hard evidence to support these allegations. For speculations as to the possible influences behind the expulsions, see Dubnov, *History*, 406; Löwe, *Tsars*, 71; Ann E. Healy, 'Tsarist Anti-Semitism and Russian-American Relations', *Slavic Review* 42, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 414. For more measured assessments of Pobedonostsev and his anti-Jewish sentiment, see Aronson, 'Prospects', 358-60; Rogger, *Policies*, 66-8. Grand Duke Sergei has received no scholarly attention beyond the occasional passing reference. This implies that, in reality, he had little or no influence on government policy. Although Dubnov presents Sergei as a thorough antisemite, anti-Jewish prejudice was common among the Russian elite and bureaucracy at this time. Anyone regarded as moderate towards Jews, such as Nicholas II's finance minister Sergei Witte, has to be understood in terms of the anti-Jewish sentiment that was prevalent in Russian high society as a whole. Indeed, any western political concept such as 'moderate', 'liberal' or 'pro-Jewish' can only be applied to the Russian context in a relative and cautious manner.

<sup>106</sup> For Jews living in the Pale, renewed restrictions incorporated the May Laws and anti-contraband regulations. *DR* devotes much attention to the extent of the anti-Jewish restrictions which were being introduced or reinforced on an ongoing basis at this time. For example, *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 7, discusses (on one page alone) educational discrimination against the Russian-born children of foreign Jews, a new decree forcing Jewish shopkeepers to open on Saturdays and Jewish festivals, an extension of the May Laws and further expulsion orders.

<sup>107</sup> Löwe, *Tsars*, 71.

<sup>108</sup> One concrete example of the way in which local economic concerns could take precedence over official policy is the 'Fifty-verst law', which had repeatedly to be reiterated in various forms. Dubnov relates that, in 1843, Jews in restricted border-zones were given two years to sell up and relocate (*History*, 228). He believes that the drastic economic implications for the Russian exchequer were what ultimately prevented the consistent enforcement of this ruling, as opposed to the international outcry or the outright refusal of a number of communities to comply. Alternatively, Wengeroff (*Rememberings*, 107-08) attributes the halting of expulsions in restricted border regions to Sir Moses Montefiore's 1846 'mission' to Russia. This is probably more a reflection of the Montefiore legend (see Section 1.4, below) than of the efficacy of Montefiore's intervention, given that his views would have been classed by the Russian administration as unwelcome western intervention.

disregarded the economic consequences which, contemporary observers claim, were considerable.<sup>109</sup> The expulsions were undeniably a form of persecution. However, their probable economic underpinnings together with their ruinous economic consequences for many Jews, corroborate the current scholarly consensus that Jewish mass migration was driven by economic considerations as opposed to persecution alone. This is another important point with respect to my re-evaluation of the Irish Jewish narrative in Section 2.1.

The largest of the mass expulsions began in Moscow in March 1891, and affected between 15,000 and 20,000 people.<sup>110</sup> Further Jewish settlement in Moscow was forbidden, and a timeframe set out within which Jews with valid residence permits could leave the city legally.<sup>111</sup> According to contemporary reports, these

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<sup>109</sup> *DR* alleges that, as a result of the Moscow expulsions, commerce and industry had suffered acutely, the property market had collapsed and the international standing of Russian banks had been severely damaged, with serious economic repercussions. See *DR* 6 (18 December 1891): 7; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 5; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 1, 4; *DR* 14 (01 June 1893): 7. On the plight of local economies in the wake of further expulsions, see *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 3; *DR* 12 (30 June 1892): 4. In contrast, Dubnov alleges that a planned expulsion of Jewish artisans from St. Petersburg, also in 1891, was only forestalled by the vetoing of a significant French loan to Russia by the Parisian Rothschilds (*History*, 405, 409-11). He believes that in this case, high-level financial blackmail was far more effective than the open concerns that were expressed by the United States government. However, it is unclear to what extent Dubnov's claims are based on hard evidence. The Russian press response to the withdrawal of the Rothschild loan simply reflected the characteristic Russian resentment at western interference in domestic affairs. Nevertheless, the pressing need for financial aid in this period is evident. The bellicosity of the official press could plausibly be viewed as an attempt at saving face, given that it acted as a mouthpiece for the government. On the politics underpinning international loans to Russia, see C. C. Aronsfeld, 'Jewish Bankers and the Tsar', *Jewish Social Studies* 35, no. 2 (April 1973): 95-97.

<sup>110</sup> Due to the lack of scholarly interest, there is no substantial secondary literature on the expulsions. This outline is largely based on Dubnov, *History*, 405-12 and *DR* (1891-1893). Estimated figures for those affected by the expulsions are conflicting, inflated and impossible to establish with any certainty (cf. *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 3-4; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 5; *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4). Hamburg claimed to have seen off 5,000 refugees a week to the United States and elsewhere during the summer of 1891, while the border post of Memel in East Prussia (now Klaipeda, Lithuania) reported having processed some 20,000 Russian Jews throughout the same year (*DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 4; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 5). More recent scholarly estimates put the total at 15,000-20,000 expellees for the whole of 1891 to 1893.

<sup>111</sup> Illegal and semi-legal Jewish residents were targeted immediately in police raids. Those legally resident in Moscow for up to three years, together with unmarried and childless Jews, were required to leave within three to six months. Apprentices and residents of up to six years and with four or fewer children had six to nine months to leave. More longstanding residents and those with larger families or businesses were given nine to twelve months. See Dubnov, *History*, 406-09; *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4. Although two years were allowed for the liquidation of real estate (*DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4), this was probably of little use to the majority given the distance of Moscow from the Pale, the lack of modern communications and the probable absence of any third party in Moscow to oversee the transaction. *DR* carries many tales of the way in which non-Jews exploited this situation in order to acquire goods or property at knockdown prices, to evade debt, or to extort considerable sums of money in exchange for food (e.g., *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 3; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 5; *DR* 12 (30 June 1892): 6; *DR* 15 (11 August 1893): 6). However this is only one side of the story. Many other instances are related of the kindness of non-Jewish Russians, who sometimes went to great lengths in order to

deadlines were ruthlessly enforced by the Russian authorities and those who found themselves with even the slightest anomaly in their residence permits were liable to immediate expulsion.<sup>112</sup> According to contemporary reports many Jews were rendered homeless and destitute as a consequence of the expulsions, and the mental or physical health of many others was irreparably and sometimes fatally damaged by their ordeal. Those who could not afford to pay for their own transport including women, children, the old and the sick, were returned to the Pale under military escort (known as *étape*). This was considered to be deeply shameful.<sup>113</sup> Those permitted to remain in Moscow were also affected by the expulsions. Jewish customers, upon whom many Jewish-owned businesses were reliant, became thin on the ground and charitable funds were diverted to aid expellees. Communal life suffered as rabbis, ritual slaughterers and other vital functionaries were gradually expelled, and Moscow's twenty synagogues were closed by the police.<sup>114</sup> Many expellees had been living in Moscow for years, and had maintained few – if any – links with the Pale. For these people, returning to unknown territory was a traumatic and daunting prospect.<sup>115</sup> Families were routinely torn apart due to illness, anomalies with individual residence permits and other reasons.<sup>116</sup> The American observers remarked that the suffering that was experienced in the course of the expulsions was universal,

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provide whatever assistance they could, often to complete strangers. See, for example, *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 5; *DR* 6 (18 December 1891): 5; *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 4.

<sup>112</sup> Dubnov, *History*, 403, 408-09; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 4. The Russian police were reportedly open to bribery by those who could afford it and while funds were available, and were accused of having profited considerably from the expulsions. For allegations of police corruption, see *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 5, 8; *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4; *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 4, 7; *DR* 15 (11 August 1893): 6.

<sup>113</sup> There are a number of dramatic accounts in *DR* of the hardship and trauma that were suffered by Jews forced to return to the Pale under military escort. The journey often lasted for weeks, conditions were horrendous, and those attempting to escape risked being shot. *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 2, describes Russian rural prisons as 'mud hovels, in which the water freezes in the winter' and compares the women's quarters to 'dog-kennels, stables, black-holes'. The report also carries a photograph of the manacles that were allegedly used on detainees. Other examples of *étape* stories include *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 5, 6, 8; *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4; *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 2-3, 6-7; *DR* 9 (14 August 1891): 10; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 2; *DR* 12 (30 June 1892): 4; *DR* 14 (1 June 1893).

<sup>114</sup> This bleeding dry of Moscow's Jewish community is extensively reported in *DR*; e.g., *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 4; *DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 4; *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 1-2, 2-3; *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 4; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 4; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 4; *DR* 14 (1 June 1893): 5, 6; see also Dubnov, *History*, 403-04.

<sup>115</sup> *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 3-4, notes that many of those expelled had not returned to the Pale for decades, while a significant number were native-born Muscovites who had never so much as visited. Some appear to have had only vague notions as to their ultimate destination, let alone what awaited them there. Many shared the negative perceptions of life in the Pale that were common to assimilated Jews in Russia and abroad, and to wider Russian society.

<sup>116</sup> One report tells of a family that received three days' notice to leave St. Petersburg having lived there for twenty years. Unable to realise their assets, they were left destitute. The husband ended up in the Jewish shelter in Whitechapel while his wife and children were stranded indefinitely in Königsberg, East Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia), unable to travel onwards. See *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 2.

regardless of social status or gender. According to their official report, even the reasonably well-off were at risk of becoming completely bankrupt and destitute.<sup>117</sup> The largely sensational tone of the press together with the precedent of the 1881-1882 pogroms, suggests that many reports were exaggerated.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, there is ample eyewitness testimony from the ports through which Russian Jewish refugees travelled to confirm that the expulsions did indeed have a devastating effect.<sup>119</sup> *Darkest Russia* commented that, by 1892, any Jew with the money and opportunity to leave the Russian empire was preparing for early departure.<sup>120</sup> The west, and in particular its Jewish communities, felt the reverberations of the Moscow expulsions in a steady flow of mostly impoverished migrants (see Section 1.4).

The tsarist perspective on emigration in general and on Jewish emigration in particular, is one final aspect of the legacy of pogroms and expulsions that is frequently subject to popular misperception.<sup>121</sup> Russian bureaucratic attitudes were contradictory, reflecting the general fear, uncertainty and paranoia that beset Russian officialdom. Remarks made in 1881 by interior minister Nikolai Ignatiev have frequently been taken as indicative of the government's intention to solve its 'Jewish Question' by exporting the problem.<sup>122</sup> Rogger, however, argues that a combination of official wavering and a degree of realism prevented mass emigration from ever

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<sup>117</sup> *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 5-7.

<sup>118</sup> The alleged eyewitness reports of this suffering and misery that appear in *DR* must be treated with caution. Many are unattributed or related at second- or third-hand, and rumour is often presented as established fact. These items are probably, to some extent, analogous to the unverifiable reports of 1881-1882 that appeared in the western press, and are examined by Klier and Johnson (see above). One definite example of distorted reportage appears in *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 6. This eagerly relates that the tsarina had requested that Jewish soldiers be excluded from a military inspection as she found Jews 'offensive' and 'wished to be spared the sight of them'. The following issue was quick to set the record straight, reporting that the decision to exclude these soldiers had, in fact, been taken on behalf of the tsarina by a 'zealous Russian officer'. The writer sycophantically added that 'as sister of our beloved Princess of Wales, [the tsarina] could scarcely be other than humane and just' notwithstanding her long residence in Russia (*DR* 3 (21 September 1891): 4).

<sup>119</sup> On the pitiful condition of Russian Jewish refugees, see the reports of Rev. William Paterson, who helped to organise relief in the port of Leith, e.g., *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 8; *DR* 3 (21 September 1891): 7; *DR* 5 (13 November 1891): 6. For similar reports from Berlin, see *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 5; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 9-10; on Cork, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1891 (also Section 3.1 and Chapter Four, below).

<sup>120</sup> *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 5. The expulsions appear to have coincided with, or provoked popular anti-Jewish violence in many areas, an aspect that might well benefit from scholarly investigation; cf. *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 5; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 6; *DR* 5 (13 November 1891): 2, 4; *DR* 6 (18 December 1891): 2-3; *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 4; *DR* 11 (20 May 1892): 2-3; also Dubnov, *History*, 411.

<sup>121</sup> For an overview of the tsarist attitude on emigration, see Rogger, *Policies*, 176-84.

<sup>122</sup> Ignatiev, who was the architect of the May Laws, infamously commented: 'The Western frontier is open to the Jews. They have already taken ample advantage of this right, and their emigration has in no way been hindered' (Rogger, *Policies*, 178).

being envisaged as a feasible, or even desirable, outcome. He believes that emigration is more likely to have been regarded by the Russian administration as a convenient way of thinning out the Jewish population. It offered the opportunity to offload social, political and economic undesirables abroad, leaving behind those that may have had something to offer Russian society. As we have seen, freedom of movement at this time was a privilege that was not available to the vast majority of Russian subjects. Furthermore emigration and the changing of one's nationality were classed as punishable offences, although this legislation was applied with characteristic Russian inconsistency and minor officials were notoriously open to bribery. Rogger dismisses the theory that procedures were made unduly arduous in order to support the traffic in illegal emigration, however he also notes that emigration, although illegal, was a significant source of official revenue. He is no doubt correct in observing that, had conditions been relaxed, it is likely that many more Jews would have departed the Russian empire at this time. However, the tsarist administration repeatedly refused requests to change its stance on emigration.<sup>123</sup>

While the obstacles that were faced by those wishing to emigrate were certainly not insurmountable, they were considerable, and required great perseverance and determination to circumvent.<sup>124</sup> Acquiring a passport was a lengthy and expensive procedure involving a number of steps, which could be expedited for an additional fee. In larger cities, dedicated expert services helped make the process less onerous and long-drawn-out. However, the vast majority appear to have travelled without passports.<sup>125</sup> This indicates that sidestepping the legal obstacles to emigration was more cost-effective and, perhaps, less complicated than resorting to legitimate channels. Most border officials were open to monetary persuasion and false documents were readily available. The inflated fees of the notoriously unscrupulous emigration agents had to be weighed against the sum total of the bribes that even

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<sup>123</sup> Notable exceptions to the tsarist ban on emigration were Baron Maurice de Hirsch's Jewish Colonisation Association (JCA) (see Section 1.4, below) and forms of Zionism that supported existing pioneers but did not encourage or assist further emigration. From May 1892, emigration was facilitated and made quasi-legal for protégés of the JCA, perhaps as a response to international outrage at the Moscow expulsions. Unfortunately this did little to alleviate the overall situation. See Moshe Zimmerman, 'German Jews and the Jewish Emigration from Russia', in *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period*, ed. Selwyn Ilan Troen and Benjamin Pinkus (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 133.

<sup>124</sup> The obstacles in the way of emigration are outlined by Rogger (see above). For a more detailed and, at times, colourful description, see Zosa Szajkowski, 'Sufferings of Jewish Emigrants to America in Transit Through Germany', *Jewish Social Studies* 39, no. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1977): 105-16.

<sup>125</sup> For example, Szajkowski estimates that as few as ten to fifteen per cent of the Russian migrants who passed through the German border-post of Eidtkuhnen did so by lawful means ('Sufferings', 112).

quasi-legal migrants were forced to pay. The venality of Russian minor officials is a frequent element of popular narrative, but one that has been vastly underestimated in its potential to open borders that were otherwise closed to Jews. Needless to say, bribery makes for far less exciting reading than tales of dramatic escapades from the brutal clutches of the Russian border police.<sup>126</sup> The current scholarly consensus holds that, as emigration required money, the poorest of the poor were forced to stay put in the Russian empire. The existing evidence suggests that those who boasted pluck and cunning but lacked sufficient funds may well have found a way to leave regardless. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that we will ever know for sure.<sup>127</sup>

The pogroms are a keystone of the narrative of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewry and its shifting social, cultural and political demographics. This section has outlined contemporary historiographical advances in our understanding of anti-Jewish violence, as the basis for my re-evaluation of Irish Jewish arrival myths in Section 2.1. We have seen that the mass expulsions of the 1890s were an additional cause of emigration that, notwithstanding their contemporary significance, are now widely forgotten. The predominance of anti-Jewish violence in the collective memory of the mass emigration period is undoubtedly a reflection of its formidable intellectual legacy. Pogroms served as the catalyst for the reshaping of Jewish identity and the recasting of Jewish politics through a host of new ideologies (see Section 1.4). The expulsions simply confirmed the basic assumptions of the so-called ‘new politics’ of Zionism and Bundism, increasing their foothold on Jewish society. Mass emigration was the physical manifestation of a growing Russian Jewish disillusionment, that was set in train by the pogroms and enabled by broader political circumstances. The rest of this chapter will

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<sup>126</sup> One example relevant to the Irish context, is Davida Noyek Handler’s anecdote of illegal Jewish migrants in the port of Libau (now Liepāja, Latvia). She relates that the fugitives cowered breathlessly as the authorities used bayonets to search the wooden coal bunkers in which they were hiding. In fact, illegal emigrants tended to favour the ports of Hamburg and Bremen where, prior to World War One, no passport was required. Those who left via Libau were generally legitimate. The sources suggest that when border guards were not amenable to bribery, the most practical alternative was to sneak across the border with the help of a local guide and to travel openly on a German or English steamer. Some shipping lines did reportedly make provision to conceal illegal emigrants from the authorities. Stowing away unbeknown to the crew, however, was probably a last resort for fugitives given the alternatives. See Davida Noyek Handler, ‘The Noyek Family History’ (1990 revision); Veronica Belling, ‘When Rivke Left Home: Women’s Journeys from Eastern Europe to South Africa’, in *Jewish Journeys: From Philo to Hip Hop*, ed. James Jordan, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010), 92-93; Lloyd Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 31.

<sup>127</sup> On the outstanding historiographical issues concerning Jewish mass emigration, see Section 1.4, below.

survey the variety of modern Jewish responses to crisis and, in particular, the extent to which these were shaped by external considerations. This will allow me to assess these issues with specific relation to the Irish setting in Chapters Two to Four.

#### **1.4 IDENTITY, SOLIDARITY, DIPLOMACY: JEWISH RESPONSES TO CRISIS (1840-1914)**

This section outlines the evolution of the western Jewish response to the growing crisis in the Russian empire over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a close but not exclusive focus on the effects of mass emigration. In particular, the dilemmas that rapid and largescale immigration raised for the acculturated Jewries of the west are closely considered. These were the communities of Britain, France, Germany, Austria and the United States which are termed collectively hereafter ‘western Jewry’ or the ‘western Jewish establishment’. My intention is to identify the underlying social, political and cultural factors that influenced the activities that were undertaken by these communities on behalf of their persecuted east European brethren. As the focal point is mainstream western Jewry, alternative responses to crisis – the ‘new politics’ of Zionism and left-wing radicalism – are explored here largely in terms of the challenge that they posed to the cultural and political agenda of the western Jewish establishment. The findings of this section constitute a major point of departure for my assessment of Ireland’s Jewish community in Chapters Two to Four.

The apparent differences between the ‘old’ society of Europe and the ‘new’ society of the United States belies similar concerns regarding the place of Jews within the non-Jewish world. Most European Jews did not achieve full civic emancipation until the second half of the nineteenth century. The public discourse that surrounded this process raised many questions pertaining to the appropriate place of Jews within European society, which would not easily be resolved.<sup>128</sup> The United States was founded on a pluralistic ethos and boasted a young and dynamic society that embraced many nationalities and cultures. Nevertheless the struggle of Americans to define the nature of their society and culture brought similar concerns to the fore

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<sup>128</sup> On the evolving discourse surrounding the relationship of Jews with English society, see Brian Cheyette, *Constructions of ‘the Jew’ in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).



regarding Jewish integration. In spite of this, by the mid-nineteenth century western Jews were relatively well-established and at ease in their host communities, and eager to prove their worth as prospective citizens. The vast majority had adopted the language and culture of the surrounding society and were enthusiastically availing of secular educational opportunities. Many were also in the process of modifying their religious practices in line with prevailing cultural *mores*. A proportion of western Jews had attained significant social, economic, and/or political status. Despite their advanced degree of assimilation and social mobility, some retained a strong sense of Jewish identity and exercised a close interest in Jewish affairs. High standing in non-Jewish society brought many of these notables to positions of leadership within the Jewish community. These leaders, who represented the political and cultural interests of acculturated western Jewry, are termed hereafter the ‘western Jewish establishment’.

The history of the so-called mass emigration period (1881-1914) remains somewhat unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. The progressive acculturation and socio-economic advancement of immigrants and their descendants have led to a general waning of interest in the cultural politics of this period. In terms of the broader perspective, therefore, there has been little adjustment to findings that first appeared decades ago. Their underlying assumptions and potential biases, whether in favour of ‘west’ or ‘east’, have never fully been evaluated. More significantly, the range of countries and contexts that were touched by mass emigration makes it likely that its historiography will always be somewhat fragmentary and incomplete. Notwithstanding a degree of commonality that is evident from the existing secondary literature, the methodological difficulties that would be involved in compiling a comprehensive overview of mass emigration are considerable, and perhaps insurmountable. One consequence is that a number of areas are, as yet, underexplored or neglected entirely. In particular, I believe that an analysis of Zionism in the context of Jewish activism would enrich our understanding of the broader Jewish political mindset during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

However, there is one particular aspect of mass emigration that is finally receiving due scholarly attention, and supplementing our understanding of the overall phenomenon. This is the historiography of the smaller Jewish communities that were either established or radically altered as a result of rapid and largescale east European immigration. The narratives of these communities are gradually claiming their

rightful place in the historical record, as opposed to remaining subordinated to the perspectives of the centralised Jewish political establishment.<sup>129</sup> My re-evaluation of Irish Jewry within its proper historical context compliments this tendency. Hitherto Irish Jewry has been assumed to have followed the broader European – primarily, British – cultural patterns that are set out below and in Section 1.5. When the Irish communities are investigated in their own right, however, it becomes evident that a degree of common Anglo-Jewish political and cultural heritage does not equate to a common policy on largescale immigration. The reasons for this are examined in detail in Chapters Three and Four.

The genesis of modern Jewish politics can be traced back to a number of decades before the mass emigration period. The Damascus Affair of 1840 was the event that set the precedent for Jewish activism and diplomacy until well into the twentieth century.<sup>130</sup> The sensitive political backdrop to the Damascus Affair

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<sup>129</sup> Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 129-30. Endelman argues that, as such a high percentage of Jews were concentrated in six major British mainland cities, the history of British Jewry is essentially the history of these communities. As up to seventy per cent of east European immigrants settled there, London is the primary focus of Endelman's analysis. Although the logistical merits of this approach are clear, Endelman's basic premise has the effect of distorting our understanding of British Jewry as a whole, as my analysis of Ireland's Jewish community will show. My findings tie in with existing critiques of the flaws that are inherent within the limited analytical frameworks of conventional Jewish historiography. Alternative, more sophisticated historiographical models have been proposed by other scholars, that pay greater attention to the local, putatively 'peripheral' Jewish experience. Tony Kushner (*Anglo-Jewry*) advocates an approach to local Jewish historiography that recognises the interplay of global as well as local factors, both past and present. In addition, he notes a number of weaknesses in the traditional presentations of London Jewry that still dominate British Jewish historiography (*Anglo-Jewry*, 42ff.). Sander L. Gilman contends that a more holistic and inclusive understanding of the Jewish experience is to be achieved through a shift in focus from models of 'core' and 'periphery' to one that acknowledges the significance of the 'frontier', whether cultural, psychological or physical ('Introduction: The Frontier as a Model for Jewish History', in *Jewries at the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1-25).

<sup>130</sup> The Damascus Affair arose from the unsolved disappearance of an Italian monk and his Muslim servant. As the purported victims were last seen in the Jewish quarter of Damascus, this was quickly assumed to be a case of 'ritual murder' and prominent members of the Jewish community were arrested and tortured by the local authorities. An appeal for help eventually reached the west, where steps were promptly taken to assist the detainees. The most comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the Damascus Affair is Frankel, *Damascus*. Other sources include Frankel, 'The Crisis as a Factor in Modern Jewish Politics, 1840 and 1881-1882', in *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period*, ed. Selwyn Ilan Troen and Benjamin Pinkus (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 33-49; Sonia and V. D. Lipman, eds., *The Century of Moses Montefiore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Jacob Ezekiel, 'Persecution of the Jews in 1840', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 8 (1900): 141-45; Heinrich Graetz, *Popular History of the Jews; Vol. V: From the Reign of Stephen Bathory of Poland (1575-1586 CE) to the Present Time (1873 CE)*, trans. Rabbi A. B. Rhine (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1926), chap. 6; S. Posener, *Adolphe Crémieux: A Biography*, trans. Eugene Golob (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940) [this appears to be the only biography of Crémieux to date and is certainly the only major source on him in English]; Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Israel Bartal, ed., *The Age of Moses Montefiore: A Collection of Essays*

determined the stance of various European governments with respect to the ‘ritual murder’ allegations. As the case coincided with a high-profile diplomatic standoff between Britain and France, it made international headline news.<sup>131</sup> This is probably the best example of how international politics impacted directly on the capacity for effective Jewish intervention in times of crisis.<sup>132</sup> Following an appeal from Jewish leaders in Damascus, prominent representatives were chosen from the Jewish communities of the then ‘great powers’ in the region, Britain and France. Sir Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux undertook a joint ‘mission’ to press the local authorities for a proper investigation of the purported murders, and to petition for the release of the Jewish detainees. This was used as a platform for international fundraising and publicity, and full-blown propaganda campaigns were conducted in France and England to combat ambivalent press coverage.<sup>133</sup> Damascus was a success in terms of Jewish political assertiveness, openness, solidarity and mobilisation. However, just as the achievements of Damascus signalled the future course of Jewish diplomacy, the localised political pressures that divided Montefiore and Crémieux and caused the newfound Jewish intercommunal solidarity rapidly to disintegrate, prefigured subsequent national-cultural tensions. This friction, an inevitable outcome of increased acculturation and integration, is representative of the

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(Jerusalem, 1987). The diaries and selected letters of Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore have also been reissued of late in various forms; for other contemporary perspectives, see the archives of the *Jewish Chronicle*, 1842-1845.

<sup>131</sup> Had it not been for the broader political situation, the Damascus Affair would most likely have been settled locally using traditional Jewish methods of *shtadlanut*: intercession with local notables and the offering of a financial reward for information. See Frankel, ‘Crisis’, 44; Frankel, *Damascus*, 35-36, 79-81; on traditional forms of Jewish diplomacy, see Klieman, ‘*Shtadlanut*’.

<sup>132</sup> The diplomatic backdrop to the Damascus Affair prefigures subsequent political developments in France and England and has, in a sense, determined the way in which its principal Jewish protagonists are remembered. The cautious backing of the British political establishment gave Sir Moses Montefiore an air of legitimacy. This helped to secure his reputation as a nineteenth-century Jewish saviour, despite the somewhat ambivalent outcome of the ‘affair’. Although Montefiore succeeded in obtaining a favourable pronouncement from the Ottoman sultan concerning the ‘blood libel’, he failed in his other objectives of obtaining a papal condemnation, of having an anti-Jewish inscription erased from the tomb of one of the purported murder victims, and of engineering the removal of the French consul to Damascus, who had strenuously supported the ‘ritual murder’ accusations. Adolphe Crémieux, in contrast, had received no support from the French political establishment either at home or in the Middle East. Despite his importance as a lifelong representative of French Jewry and a founder of the AIU (see below), Crémieux, like the AIU, is largely forgotten today. For an insight into Montefiore’s enduring reputation as a type of modern-day Jewish saviour, see Marilyn Lehrer and Peter Salinger, ‘The Testimonials and the Legend’, in *The Century of Moses Montefiore*, ed. Sonia and V. D. Lipman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 349-61.

<sup>133</sup> On the mixed press coverage of the Damascus Affair, see Frankel, *Damascus*, chap. 6.

way in which the demands of emancipation were beginning to interfere with – and even override – traditional notions of Jewish solidarity.<sup>134</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Jewish response to Damascus was the harnessing of the public meeting, an existing British institution, to promote a Jewish cause. Although the meeting that was held in London's Mansion House in July 1840 was attended by a number of prominent Jews, all of the speakers were non-Jewish. A large sum of money was raised to finance the Crémieux-Montefiore 'mission', and the resolutions were forwarded to foreign governments via their local ambassadors. The non-Jewish-led public meeting would remain an important weapon in the Jewish arsenal as the century progressed and the plight of Russian Jewry steadily worsened.<sup>135</sup> The ability to enlist influential establishment figures to the support of persecuted Jewry can be seen as evidence of a growing Jewish political assertiveness.<sup>136</sup>

At the same time, the desire to hide behind influential non-Jewish advocates reflects a discomfiture among even apparently well-integrated Jews regarding their position in Christian society. While the Jewish position in society remained unresolved, great importance rested on the reputation of Judaism itself. During the nineteenth century, this was coming under increasing scrutiny as the emerging discipline of biblical criticism prompted a widespread re-evaluation of religion in general as a social and cultural phenomenon. Slanders such as 'ritual murder' and the 'blood libel' were not just slurs on Judaism but a potential threat to the ongoing project of Jewish integration and civic emancipation. Throughout the nineteenth century therefore, western Jewish responses to the resurrection of these hoary allegations must be understood in part as an exercise of containment, as opposed to a straightforward display of concern and solidarity with persecuted co-religionists. The highest vindication of Jewish honour was non-Jewish public opinion. As we will see below, this interplay between public opinion and the ambiguous position of western

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<sup>134</sup> On the reasons for the Montefiore/Crémieux personality clash and its consequences in terms of joint strategy, see Frankel, *Damascus*, 339-47; R. D. Barnett, 'A Diary that Survived: Damascus 1840', in *The Century of Moses Montefiore*, ed. Sonia and V. D. Lipman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 149-71.

<sup>135</sup> Frankel, *Damascus*, 217ff. On the broader phenomenon of non-Jewish support for Jewish concerns, see William D. Rubinstein and Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

<sup>136</sup> Frankel, *Damascus*, 432-33.

Jewry would be a crucial factor in determining the Jewish establishment response to accelerated east European immigration.

The new approach to Jewish diplomacy that emerged with the Damascus Affair combined old-fashioned *shtadlanut* with models that were drawn directly from contemporary society. Damascus encouraged the formation and development of European Jewish communal institutions both at local and transnational levels, and the engagement of local representative institutions in international Jewish diplomacy. It also marked the tentative beginnings of American involvement in international Jewish affairs.<sup>137</sup> These were important milestones in the evolution of modern Jewish diplomacy, reflecting the impact of acculturation on internal Jewish affairs, and on Jewish dealings with the non-Jewish world.

The next significant landmark was the Mortara Affair of 1858-1859.<sup>138</sup> While this did not have a successful outcome – from the Jewish perspective at any rate – the Mortara Affair led directly to the establishment of two important new representative organisations, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites (1859) and the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) (1860).<sup>139</sup> The founding of the AIU was particularly significant, owing to its ambition to serve as an international Jewish representative body. For this reason, the AIU received a great deal of attention in its early years, especially from Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists (see Section 1.2). The AIU's international pretensions were rapidly undermined by cultural and political rivalries. This led to the establishment of national representative bodies in England,

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<sup>137</sup> Joseph Jacobs, 'The Damascus Affair of 1840 and the Jews of America', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 10 (1902): 119-28.

<sup>138</sup> The Mortara Affair refers to the removal of a Jewish boy, Edgardo Mortara, from his family in Bologna by the Catholic authorities, on the grounds that he had been baptised in secret by a servant. The international outcry that ensued owed much to traditional religious animosities, a point that caused great anxiety to Rome's Jewish authorities, who had initiated a publicity campaign on behalf of the Mortara family. Edgardo remained in the care of the Catholic church and grew up to become a priest and missionary. There is very little scholarship on the 'Affair', in the English language at least. The most extensive and recent account, which is well-researched but undermined by its somewhat sensational style, is David I. Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (London: Picador, 1997). See also Bertram W. Korn, *The American Reaction to the Mortara Case: 1858-1859* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1957); Josef L. Altholtz, 'A Note on the English Catholic Reaction to the Mortara Case', *Jewish Social Studies* 23, no. 2 (1961): 111-18; Danny Loss, 'Catholics and Jews in the Antebellum American Mind: A Study of Reactions to the Mortara Case', <http://www.dannyscl.net/academic/mortara.pdf> (accessed 11 November 2009); Moses Aberbach and Pamela Melnikoff, 'Anglo-Jewry and the Mortara Case'; for contemporary coverage, see *Jewish Chronicle* archives.

<sup>139</sup> On the foundation and aims of the AIU in which Crémieux played a leading role, see Posener, *Crémieux*, chap. 10; on the establishment of the Board of Delegates, see Korn, *Mortara*, 158. The Mortara Affair was not completely at a loss for *shtadlanut*; James and Lionel Rothschild attempted, without success, to intercede with the Vatican to have Mortara returned to his family.

Austria and Germany: the Anglo-Jewish Association (1871), the Israelitischer Allianz (1873) and the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden (1901), respectively.<sup>140</sup> The frequently strained relations between local representative bodies impacted on their capacity – and willingness – to deal with crisis, and with mass emigration in particular.

The years 1881-1882 introduced a new and more immediate form of crisis in the shape of anti-Jewish violence and largescale westward Jewish migration. Before we move on to examine the western Jewish response, however, it is necessary to sketch out some of the political developments that occurred within the Russian empire itself. Although Russian Jewish responses to the pogroms of 1881-1882 were broad and varied in range, the sketch below concentrates on the so-called ‘new politics’ of Zionism and left-wing radicalism.<sup>141</sup> These became increasingly influential in shaping the way in which east European immigrants were perceived by their western counterparts, adding a further ingredient to the mix of cultural and political concerns that shaped the western establishment response to crisis. The early interactions of the rival ideologies of ‘west’ and ‘east’ have influenced both the popular memory and the formal historical record of the mass emigration period.

The most important Russian response to the pogroms was the emergence of modern Jewish nationalism. This began modestly, with small circles of student activists (Hovevei-Zion, ‘lovers of Zion’) based in various Russian intellectual centres. Almost insurmountable practical, political and financial barriers prevented these groups from coalescing into a broader and more effective movement. Advocacy of the ‘subversive’ act of emigration drove Jewish nationalism underground, while rash attempts at colonisation resulted in abject and disheartening failure. The publication of Theodor Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* (The Jews’ State) in 1895 acted as the catalyst for uniting these scattered groups with Herzl’s western sympathisers to form a coherent political entity. Russian Zionists provided Herzl with a considerable

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<sup>140</sup> On the fracturing of the AIU, see Zosa Szajkowski, ‘Conflicts in the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Founding of the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Vienna Allianz and the Hilfsverein’, *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 1-2 (Jan.-Apr. 1957): 29-50.

<sup>141</sup> For an overview of the full range of Jewish responses to anti-Jewish violence and legal repression, see Gitelman, *Ambivalence*, chap. 1; Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 8. For a close examination of the evolution of the so-called ‘new’ politics, see Frankel, *Prophecy*, 49-131. Scholars agree that the main impact of 1881-1882 was psychological, namely the decisive challenge that the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence had posed to Jewish hopes of emancipation and integration within the Russian empire. On the way in which this influenced the Russian establishment approach to Jewish diplomacy, see Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 8.

readymade support-base, and played a crucial role in the development of his crude, largely philanthropic programme into a plausible political ideology which would play a major role during the formative years of the Jewish state.<sup>142</sup>

As a philosophy Zionism is widely recognised as having a degree of continuity with earlier forms of Jewish thought. As a derivative of modern secular nationalism, however, Zionism is characteristically seen as a radical departure from earlier forms of Jewish politics. Its comprehensive negation of all aspects of Diaspora life included the rejection of traditional methods of Jewish diplomacy, which were viewed by Zionists as a symptom of Jewish weakness, disempowerment and wretchedness. This raised many uncomfortable questions for acculturated Jews, who believed that any open show of Jewish identity would lead to accusations of divided loyalties. Continuing immigration from eastern Europe brought Zionist elements into increasing conflict with the Jewish establishment.<sup>143</sup> Ireland appears to have been unusual in this

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<sup>142</sup> The Russian receptiveness towards Zionism was fostered in part by the isolation and prejudice that was experienced by those who studied in German universities, which has been noted in Section 1.1, above. For a detailed overview of Russia's early Zionist societies and the way in which these eventually came together under the tutelage of western leaders, see David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); also Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 8. For some considerations of Zionism and Zionist thinkers in the formative period of Jewish nationalism, see Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), chap. 1, 2; Joseph Goldstein, 'Some Sociological Aspects of the Russian Zionist Movement at Its Inception', *Jewish Social Studies* 47, no. 2 (1985): 167-178; Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1997); Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira, eds., *Essential Papers on Zionism* (London: Cassell, 1996); Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle*; Jacob Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1972); Alex Bein, *Theodore Herzl: A Biography*, trans. Maurice Samuel (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962); Steven Beller, *Herzl* (London: Peter Haliban, 1991); Steven Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (London: Peter Halban, 1993); P. M. Baldwin, 'Liberalism, Nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau', *Central European History* 13, no. 2 (June 1980): 99-120; Jacques Kornberg, 'Theodore Herzl: A Reevaluation', *Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980): 226-52; Yosef Salmon, 'The Emergence of a Jewish Nationalist Consciousness in Europe During the 1860s and 1870s', *AJS Review* 16 (Spring-Autumn 1991): 107-32; Carl E. Schorske, 'Politics in a New Key: An Austrian Triptych', *Journal of Modern History* 39, no. 4 (Dec. 1967): 343-86; Moshe Zimmermann, 'Jewish Nationalism and Zionism in German-Jewish Students' Organisations', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982): 129-53; Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (London: Collins, 1978); Yossi Katz, 'Agricultural Settlements in Palestine, 1882-1914', *Jewish Social Studies* 50, no. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1988-1992): 63-82.

<sup>143</sup> On the largely negative reception of established western Jews to Zionism see, e.g., Joseph Goldstein, 'The Attitude of the Jewish and the Russian Intelligentsia to Zionism in the Initial Period (1897-1904)', *Slavonic and East European Review* 64, no. 4 (1986): 146-56; Reinharz and Shapira, *Zionism*; Naomi W. Cohen, 'The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922)', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1950-June 1951): 361-93; Isaac M. Fein, 'Israel Zangwill and American Jewry: A Documentary Study', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1970-June 1971): 12-36; Moses Rischin, 'The Early Attitude of the American Jewish Committee to Zionism (1906-1922)', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 49, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1959-June 1960): 188-201; Lucien Wolf, 'The Zionist Peril', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17, no. 1 (Oct. 1904): 1-25; Israel Zangwill, 'Mr. Lucien Wolf on "The

respect, as the sources suggest that support for Jewish nationalism was relatively unanimous among all sectors of the community (see Chapter Three).

The friction between Jewish nationalists and the established communal leadership has tended to influence the way in which modern Jewish nationalism has been evaluated by historians. Hence, although Zionism has been the subject of extensive critical analysis, its links with other forms of nineteenth-century Jewish activism have never really been considered. One major consequence is that, although the attitude of individual Zionist thinkers towards the masses has been closely examined, paternalism has been overlooked as a factor – and even a common denominator – within the movement as a whole. All forms of Jewish nationalism presupposed a following that had been deeply tainted by Diaspora life. The Jewish grassroots were deemed to be lacking psychologically, physically, culturally and/or politically, according to the particular programme for national reconstruction that was being advanced. Only after a radical transformation would they become fit to construct a modern Jewish state. The nature of this transformation was the main point of disagreement between individual Zionist thinkers, as opposed to their attitude towards the foot soldiers who were necessary to the fulfilment of their national vision.<sup>144</sup> It is questionable therefore whether even the most radical left-wing Zionist movements were indeed the mass movements they claimed to be.<sup>145</sup> In this respect, the conflict between Zionists and the Jewish establishment can also be interpreted as a battle for the hearts and minds of the masses. Its outcome would determine whether east European immigrants were to become acculturated Diaspora Jews or the pioneers of a reconstituted Jewish state.<sup>146</sup>

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Zionist Peril”, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17, no. 3 (1905): 397-425; Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), chap. 4.

<sup>144</sup> Nordau, for example, considered the Jewish masses to be physically inadequate, Ahad Ha’Am regarded them as culturally immature, labour Zionists believed that the grassroots needed to develop a political consciousness, and Herzl simply espoused then fashionable paternalistic middle-class attitudes towards the ‘deserving poor’ that are discussed in Section 1.5, below. On Nordau, see Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, 233-45; Stanislawski, *Zionism*, chap. 4; on Herzl cf. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988). Examples of writings by Ahad Ha’Am and key left-wing Zionist thinkers can be found in Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, 249-77 and 331-90.

<sup>145</sup> Golda Meir, *My Life* (London: Futura, 1982). For example, Golda Meir recalls that in some *kibbutzim* the workers were expected to share even their clothes. Meir was derided as bourgeois for suggesting that the tasteless menu of her *kibbutz* could easily be improved in order to bring some small degree of pleasure into the hard lives of the workers.

<sup>146</sup> Feldman (*Englishmen and Jews*, 330ff.) makes a similar point with respect to the cultural politics of the Jewish East End of London. He notes a general critique of the Jewish masses that was common to anarchist, social democratic and Zionist groups as well as, to an extent, the Jewish elite.



Another Russian Jewish response to the pogroms that troubled the traditional Jewish leadership was the increasing swing towards left-wing political and intellectual movements that has been noted in Section 1.1. Socialism represented an explicit threat to the existing social, political and economic order to which the aspirations of acculturated and increasingly prosperous western Jews were so closely aligned. The growing popular association of east European Jews with left-wing radicalism appeared to corroborate allegations that Jews were intent on destroying the existing world order. In 1897 the Bund was established, in response to the ambivalence of Russian socialists towards anti-Jewish violence, and towards their colleagues of Jewish origin.<sup>147</sup> In response to the needs of its constituency, the Bund progressed rapidly from a broader socialist agenda to focus on more specifically Jewish labour concerns. The Bund was a major forerunner to the Russian Social Democratic party and was, for a time, the largest socialist party in the Russian empire. The Bund, along with labour Zionist organisations, was instrumental in the formation of an organised Jewish defence against pogrom violence in the early twentieth century. The courageous Jewish defender provided an uncomfortable contrast to the traditional images of Jewish defencelessness and victimhood that were reinforced by the pogrom narrative.<sup>148</sup> As Chapter Two will show, the notion of Jewish powerlessness was

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<sup>147</sup> Scholars remain divided as to the extent of anti-Jewish sentiment among the main branches of Russian socialism and the degree to which this influenced the broader left-wing response to the pogroms of 1881-1882. Negative Jewish stereotypes were also prevalent among socialists of Jewish descent. This included the collective characterisation of Jews as exploiters of the masses regardless of widespread Jewish poverty and the notion that pogroms were a potentially useful form of popular ‘uprising’ were they to be redirected against the government. Socialists were therefore reluctant overtly to condemn anti-Jewish violence through fear of antagonising the masses whom they wished to court, and some radicals of Jewish background feared marginalisation within the movement were they to speak out. Pogroms did, nevertheless, ultimately prompt most to revisit their Jewishness and to empathise more with the plight of their fellow Jews. For differing assessments of the socialist response to the pogroms, see Moshe Mishkinsky, “‘Black Repartition’ and the Pogroms of 1881-1882’, in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62-97; Erich Haberer, ‘Cosmopolitanism, Antisemitism, and Populism: A Reappraisal of the Russian and Jewish Socialist Response to the Pogroms of 1881-1882’, in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 98-134. For a detailed analysis, see Frankel, *Prophecy*, 97-107; on the specific context of socialism in the Ukraine, see Aronson, *Troubled*, 193-216; on how the particular concerns of the Jewish labour movement in 1905-1906 related to those of the wider movement, especially with respect to anti-Jewish violence, see Frankel, *Prophecy*, 134-70.

<sup>148</sup> The successful Jewish defence efforts during the Gomel pogrom of September 1903 fast became the stuff of legend and served as an inspiration to other Jewish communities to form similar organisations. According to one of the Gomel defenders (quoted in Lambroza, ‘Self-Defence’, 125): ‘Despite the suffering it was good for the soul. There are no longer the former, downtrodden, timid Jews. A new-born unprecedented type appeared on the scene – a man who defends his dignity.’ Existing assessments suggest that the Jewish defence was initially effective in containing pogrom violence. However, it is likely that the narrative of Gomel – and indeed the topic of Jewish self-defence as a

useful to establishment and immigrant alike, as a counterpoint to popular stereotypes of the calculating and opportunistic east European Jew. These counterstereotypes have had a disproportionate and lasting influence on the Jewish historical narrative of the British Isles.

In addition to their combativeness in the Russian empire, Jewish radicals raised a number of other, more immediate quandaries for acculturated western Jewry. As immigrant communities grew in numbers and influence in the west, Jewish socialists increasingly vented their resentment at the mainstream authorities, and especially at their treatment of impoverished Jewish migrants, which is outlined below and in Section 1.5. Growing confidence also encouraged these radicals to become more vocal in protesting against the persistence of anti-Jewish discrimination and violence in eastern Europe. This set them on a direct collision course with the more reticent diplomacy of the western Jewish establishment, with its sensitivity to public opinion and its concern for political expediency.

The escalation of anti-Jewish violence and discrimination in the Russian empire caused an almost continuous fallout for western Jewry from the time of the first pogroms in 1881 until the outbreak of First World War in 1914. International opinion was relatively unanimous in denouncing the Russian regime for its perceived barbarity. The tsarists were roundly condemned for their promulgation of discriminative legislation, accused of inciting popular interethnic violence and denounced for causing humanitarian crisis in the west. Outrage united Jews and non-Jews, from all walks of social, economic, political and religious life, in many different countries across the world. These sentiments were expressed through a variety of means, in particular the press and the public meeting, but also occasionally through diplomatic channels. Crisis was no longer something that could be safely contained abroad. Instead it would begin to have an immediate impact on the lives of western

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whole – would benefit from a thorough and objective re-examination in the light of recent queries concerning the taxonomy of the pogroms and the efficacy of the Jewish defence (Klier, *Pogroms*, 59 and Section 1.3, above; Penkower, ‘Kishinev’, 199-200). The other pogroms of 1903, which occurred in Smiela, Rovno and Sosnowiec, have received virtually no scholarly attention. Although early successes greatly enhanced the prestige of the Bund in particular, the revolutionary overtones of its so-called ‘battle groups’ (*boevie otriady* in Russian, or *kamf-grupe* in Yiddish) dissuaded many Jews from joining. Furthermore, the overt aggression of Jewish militias was widely regarded as having contributed to the escalation of anti-Jewish violence. The Jewish defence was unable to withstand the breadth and intensity of the disturbances that came with the signing of the October Manifesto in 1905, and collapsed entirely. See Shlomo Lambroza, ‘Jewish Self-Defence During the Russian Pogroms of 1903-1906’, *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1981): 123-34; Lambroza, ‘Pogroms of 1903-1906’, 195-247; Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*, 105, 141-44; Rogger, ‘Conclusion’, 341-44; Dubnov, *History*, chap. 32; Löwe, *Tsars*, chap. 7, 8.

Jews, and on their cultural agenda. Public opinion was largely sympathetic towards the victims of Russian oppression and violence. Nevertheless the foreignness, traditional observances, perceived radicalism and poverty of the Jewish immigrant community had the potential to become, at best, a barrier and, at worst, a direct threat to the course of Jewish integration in the west. This spectre would shape western establishment policy on mass Jewish immigration, sometimes with drastic consequences.

Jewish activism in 1881-1882 did not deviate greatly from the pattern that had been established decades earlier with the Damascus Affair. Leaders remained satisfied to stay behind the scenes, allowing popular sympathy for pogrom victims take its course. Again, broader political considerations circumscribed their ability to push for diplomatic intervention. In Europe the Jewish authorities were shy of pressing their governments, as all of the major powers were reluctant to offend the Russian bureaucracy. The American administration did not share this concern and openly expressed the wish in 1882 that the tsarists would alleviate the condition of Russian Jewry.<sup>149</sup> This indicates the beginnings of a shift in the balance of political power from Europe to the United States, which would be replicated in the relationships of the respective Jewish authorities over the coming decades.

In the English-speaking world newspapers and journals, led by *The Times* of London, were crucial in mobilising public opinion in 1881-1882. Damascus had set the precedent for popular displays of solidarity and anger at the plight of persecuted Jews. This time around, over forty public meetings were held throughout the British empire and the United States to protest at anti-Jewish violence and tsarist repression. These were primarily led by non-Jewish dignitaries and attended by the non-Jewish public. Huge amounts of money were raised for the relief of pogrom victims and refugees. British resources were used, among other things, to forward several

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<sup>149</sup> Gary Dean Best, *To Free a People: American Jewish Leaders and the Jewish Problem in Eastern Europe, 1890-1914* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 12-13; Zosa Szajkowski, 'The European Aspect of the American-Russian Passport Question', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 46, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1956-June 1957): 88; Szajkowski, 'Mass Migration', 292-95. Szajkowski notes that Britain did not wish to endanger its friendly relations with the Russian empire. Austrian and German Jews were not faced with any major refugee crisis and were not, therefore, under any great pressure to act. In France, the Jewish authorities tended to be indecisive and ineffectual owing to their close historical alignment with government interests, and consequently failed to take advantage of public opinion in order to press for diplomatic intervention. When Count Dmitri Tolstoi, a liberal by Russian standards, was appointed to replace Ignatiev as interior minister, the Americans felt vindicated in their rebuke to Russia.

thousand Russian migrants to the United States and Canada.<sup>150</sup> However the western Jewish establishment remained in denial of the steadily worsening humanitarian crisis that was created by the pogroms. Instead it vainly continued to support convenient and cost-effective – but futile – projects for containing Russia’s ‘Jewish Question’ within the Russian empire itself. These included ‘enlightened’ schooling and internal migration.<sup>151</sup> Organised relief efforts for refugees, which were co-ordinated by the AIU, were slow to materialise and completely inadequate to the crisis at hand. The AIU worked with local committees in London, Berlin, Vienna and Paris, in which prominent non-Jewish notables played a central part.<sup>152</sup> Concerted efforts to discourage further emigration by issuing stern warnings of the perils that awaited Jewish migrants abroad, and by keeping assistance minimal and low-key were spectacularly unsuccessful.<sup>153</sup> News of dedicated relief organisations spread rapidly, attracting migrants in their droves to the Austro-Hungarian border point of Brody where panic and chaos became the order of the day.<sup>154</sup> Repatriation was viewed as the most favourable solution to the humanitarian crisis, and up to one-third of all intending emigrants were sent back to the Russian empire.<sup>155</sup>

Conditions in Brody are vividly described in the diary of George M. Price, who was detained there with his family while en route from Kremenchug (Ukraine) to

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<sup>150</sup> Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 40-47.

<sup>151</sup> On this policy, see Zosa Szajkowski, ‘Emigration to America or Reconstruction in Europe’, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 42, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1952-June 1953): 157-88; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 51.

<sup>152</sup> Zosa Szajkowski, ‘The Alliance Israélite Universelle in the United States, 1860-1949’, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 39, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1949-June 1950): 389-443; Szajkowski, ‘Conflicts in the AIU’, 29-50; Szajkowski, ‘How the Mass Migration to America Began’, *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 4 (Oct. 1942): 291-95; Szajkowski, ‘Jewish Diplomacy: Notes on the Occasion of the Centenary of the Alliance Israélite Universelle’, *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 3 (July 1960): 131-58. The AIU had taken the lead in co-ordinating the western response to the first wave of mass emigration as the only transnational Jewish organisation then in existence.

<sup>153</sup> For examples of the type of warnings that were placed by Anglo-Jewish leaders in the Hebrew press and circulated to east European rabbis, see Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 24ff.

<sup>154</sup> Szajkowski quotes a proverb that was coined, ‘verfallen wie in Brod’ (‘lost, as in Brody’), as homeless and hungry families roamed the streets of Brody waiting for western leaders to decide on their best course of action. See Szajkowski, ‘European Attitude’, 135-36. The most up-to-date account of western establishment deliberations is Klier, *Pogroms*, chap. 8; see also Szajkowski, ‘Mass Migration’, 291-310.

<sup>155</sup> Repatriation and return migration, another significant feature of the mass emigration period, remain largely under-researched. On these topics see Severin Adam Hochberg, ‘The Repatriation of Eastern European Jews from Great Britain: 1881-1914’, *Jewish Social Studies* 50, no. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 88-92): 49, 52; Jonathan D. Sarna, ‘The Myth of No Return: Jewish Return Migration to Eastern Europe, 1881-1914’, in *Labour Migration in the Atlantic Economies: The European and North American Working Classes During the Period of Industrialization*, ed. Dirk Hoerder (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 423-34.

New York, in 1882.<sup>156</sup> Price estimates that, at this time, some fifteen thousand emigrants were stranded in Brody often for weeks and months at a stretch. The six hundred or so people who were sent onwards each day were immediately replaced by new arrivals. Accommodation, food and bedding were mostly basic, makeshift and insufficient, and assistance was distributed in a haphazard fashion. As a result, migrants were plagued by anxiety and uncertainty.<sup>157</sup> Price witnessed vicious mêlées over the few precious tickets and travel permits that were on offer. Police intervention was brutal, resulting in serious injuries and even the occasional fatality. The Prices were eventually forced to resort to what he describes as the traditional ‘Russian’ method of bribery in order to obtain a travel permit. Even with papers, the station at Brody was so overcrowded that gaining access to a train involved a protracted and exhausting struggle. During the Prices’ journey to Hamburg local relief committees were kind and generous but upon arrival all assistance dried up, as Hamburg’s Jewish community wished to discourage immigrants from staying there any longer than was necessary.

Where repatriation was not feasible, the United States was seen by European Jews as the most convenient solution to their refugee problem.<sup>158</sup> Procedures were gradually established for classifying intending emigrants in Brody and forwarding the most suitable candidates to the United States and Canada via Hamburg and Liverpool. In New York, the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States (HEAS) was founded to provide material relief to new arrivals and to assist them in re-establishing themselves in the United States.<sup>159</sup> Due to financial constraints, only a minute

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<sup>156</sup> Leo Shpall, ‘The Diary of Dr. George M. Price’, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1950-June 1951): 173-80.

<sup>157</sup> Price estimates that approximately 3,300 people were housed in factories and stables on the outskirts of town, where they were forced to huddle on the floor, hungry, thirsty, cold and miserable. Those who, presumably, could afford to, stayed in private homes. Others were simply left to wander the streets. Price’s own family was taken under the wing of the Kiev branch of the Zionist Am Olam organisation, having been registered with a local representative by an acquaintance. Am Olam provided them with money, provisions and meals from a communal kitchen, but Price mentions nothing of the nature of their accommodation (Shpall, ‘Diary of Dr. Price’, 176).

<sup>158</sup> *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 7; *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 3, 7. For much of the mass emigration period, Palestine was not a viable option for the majority of Russian Jews. The political situation in the region was unfavourable for largescale immigration, Zionist settlement remained rudimentary and dependent on western philanthropy, and the Jewish establishment was wary of being seen to support Jewish nationalism. Nevertheless, following the Moscow expulsions in 1891, *DR* reported that Jewish immigration had created a desperate humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

<sup>159</sup> Gilbert Osofsky, ‘The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States (1881-1883)’, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 49, no. 1-4 (Sept 1959-June 1960): 173-87. The HEAS provided temporary accommodation, kosher meals, employment and some instruction in the

proportion of those who applied to American charitable institutions actually received relief, and this was inadequate to their needs.<sup>160</sup> Significant tensions arose as the European Jewish authorities persistently disregarded American requirements, even after a formal agreement was reached in 1882 to absorb a proportion of the migrants within Europe. American Jewish leaders had stipulated that only limited numbers of able-bodied, conscientious young men be sent to the United States, and that they should preferably be skilled and free of dependants. American protests regarding financing, the inadequacy of European assistance, and existing obligations towards domestic Jewish poor were completely ignored. The validity of these arguments has only been recognised relatively recently.<sup>161</sup> Although the United States was in principal more pluralistic in outlook, Jewish leaders nevertheless shared European concerns regarding public opinion. They were, therefore, equally anxious that large numbers of poor and noticeably foreign Jewish immigrants would cause a negative

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English language. The organisation disbanded in March 1883, having processed some fourteen thousand refugees.

<sup>160</sup> Esther L. Panitz, 'The Polarity of American Jewish Attitudes towards Immigration (1870-1891): A Chapter in American Socio-Economic History', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1963-June 1964): 113-15.

<sup>161</sup> Many of the contentious issues are encapsulated in a letter that was sent in 1881 by Manual A. Kursheedt, Secretary of America's Russian Emigrant Relief Fund, to the AIU (quoted in full in Zosa Szajkowski, 'The Attitude of American Jews to East European Jewish Immigration (1881-1893)', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1950-June 1951): 263-70). Kursheedt admonishes against viewing the United States as 'the great panacea for the woes of the Russian Jews', given that only a 'comparatively small' number were equipped to adapt to the hard life that awaited them there. According to him, only one-third of the latest consignment of immigrants had been desirable while a further third had been completely unsuitable being unskilled 'theological students merely'. Kursheedt goes on to request detailed advance information on all prospective immigrants, and suggests a future limit of fifty per week or 150 per month. He also advises that they be assiduously warned of the adverse conditions that could be expected in the United States, including potential difficulties with religious observance. Kursheedt states that American Jews were not in any position to risk incurring the disfavour of their fellow citizens by fostering negative sentiments towards Jews. He concludes that American leaders were keen 'to co-operate in any reasonable scheme for ameliorating our brethren' but wished to avoid 'making matters worse by precipitate or ill-judged measures'. The lack of American regard for Jewish religious observance angered European Jewish leaders and was one of the main issues that prompted migrants to return to the Russian empire. American leaders responded to the situation by denouncing immigrants for their inability to adapt to the employment opportunities that were available. Elsewhere, Szajkowski notes that European financial support subsidised just over fifty per cent of Russian Jewish immigrants in 1881-1882. When added to private donations and charitable allocations within the United States, the total remained far short of addressing increasing need over the course of the decade. Panitz estimates that the five hundred thousand dollars per annum that was dedicated to immigrant aid counted for a mere twenty to twenty-five per cent of what would actually have been required in order to provide appropriate services. Although wealthy Jews were on the increase in the United States, they still counted for only a tiny proportion of the community as a whole, and Szajkowski believes that their efforts on behalf of Russian co-religionists have been unduly downplayed through the biases of scholars of East European extraction. See Zosa Szajkowski, 'The *Yahudi* and the Immigrant: A Reappraisal', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1973-June 1974): 13-44; Panitz, 'Polarity', 113-15. These basic arguments could just as well be applied to the various European communities, including Ireland, as will be seen in Chapters Three and Four, below.

backlash.<sup>162</sup> Repeated impasses arose when the Americans threatened to return ‘unsuitable’ refugees to Europe or to put an end to Russian immigration altogether. This ongoing friction, together with the perceived inadequacy of European financial support, were the source of considerable anger for American leaders throughout the 1880s.

The internal redistribution of immigrants who could not be repatriated or otherwise relocated rapidly became a cornerstone of Jewish establishment strategy in Britain and the United States. Dispersal was envisaged as a way of reducing the impact of the east European influx by preventing the formation of visible enclaves of foreign Jews in major cities. In America, local branches of the HEAS were promptly established to facilitate the distribution of immigrants throughout the west and south of the United States. A few agricultural colonies were also created for this purpose but these were largely unsuccessful, both financially and as a means of absorption. Although the failure of these colonies was mostly down to mismanagement, the American Jewish establishment laid the blame squarely upon the immigrants. As Chapter Two demonstrates, Anglo-Jewish dispersal policy is the most likely reason for the dramatic increase in Ireland’s Jewish population at this time.

During the 1890s, international protests resumed in response to the renewed persecution of Russian Jews. In December 1890, a series of successful public meetings was held in Britain deploring the injurious effects of residence restrictions. A Jewish socialist mass demonstration also took place in London’s East End. The Anglo-Jewish leadership attempted to distance itself from this protest through fear of fuelling popular suspicions of Jewish radicalism. *DR* indicates that European public sympathy remained high towards Russian Jews in this period, and that non-Jewish individuals and organisations continued to play a prominent role in relief efforts. All forms of popular display, along with various private approaches by dignitaries including Queen Victoria, were resented and either disregarded or rebuffed by the

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<sup>162</sup> Esther L. Panitz, ‘In Defence of the Jewish Immigrant (1891-1924)’, *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1965-June 1966): 57-97; Panitz, ‘Polarity’, 99-130; Szajkowski, ‘Attitude of American Jews’, 220B-80; Sarna, ‘Return Migration’, 423-34. Panitz notes that the American Jewish leadership consistently opposed the official attitude on immigration. Initially, while immigration was seen as a desirable solution to the labour shortages that had arisen from industrialisation, Jewish leaders advocated a policy of selective Jewish immigration. As official attitudes gradually hardened in favour of restriction, the Jewish establishment began to relax its attitude and vocally to campaign against the introduction of any measures to control immigration.

Russians.<sup>163</sup> *The Times* of London ran a comment by *Novoe vremia* that Russia would remain unmoved even ‘if the whole of Europe were turned into a pro-Jewish meeting’.<sup>164</sup>

As in the 1880s, the official response to Russian persecution was dictated by broader political concerns and this, in turn, impacted on the options that were available to the western Jewish leadership. Anglo-Jewish lobbying was, however, underpinned by the self-serving belief that a relaxation of tsarist anti-Jewish policy would lead directly to a convenient fall in immigration.<sup>165</sup> The British Foreign Office nevertheless still declined to intervene with Russia, on the grounds that her treatment of her Jewish subjects was a domestic matter which did not merit government intervention.<sup>166</sup> Sources imply that diplomatic silence was, likewise, the order of the day on the Continent. In the United States, the administration remained more amenable to Jewish representations and had no qualms at openly criticising either Russia or Britain. The Americans also launched an official investigation into the Moscow expulsions.<sup>167</sup> From this time on, Anglo-Jewish leaders would look increasingly to their American counterparts to take the diplomatic lead. It is not unreasonable to assume that this was as much down to expediency as to the more favourable attitude of the American government, given American aspirations in terms of international diplomacy.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless American government interventions met with no more success than informal British representations. Perhaps the only visible

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<sup>163</sup> On popular sentiment towards Russian Jews at this time, see Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 47-52; also Dubnov, *History*, 399-402. For contemporary reports on public meetings in Britain and its colonies, see *DR* 6 (18 December 1891): 3; *DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 7; *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 7; *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 8; *DR* 12 (30 June 1892): 7.

<sup>164</sup> Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 51.

<sup>165</sup> Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 173.

<sup>166</sup> Szajkowski, ‘Passport Question’, 88; Best, *To Free*, 28.

<sup>167</sup> Best attributes the apparent receptiveness of the American administration to Jewish representations at this time to a combination of political factors: the then strength of the Jewish vote, the weight of public opinion in general, and concerns – probably unfounded – at increased Jewish immigration as a consequence of Russian persecution (*To Free*, Introduction and chap. 1). *DR* reports on a speech delivered to Congress by President Benjamin Harrison which condemned Russian anti-Jewish discrimination and British diplomatic silence with equal vehemence (7 (15 January 1892): 2). On the American diplomatic investigation into the Moscow expulsions, see Section 1.3, above.

<sup>168</sup> Szajkowski, ‘AIU in United States’, 390-91; Jacobs, ‘Damascus’, 121-5; Best, *To Free*, 28-29. American aspirations in terms of the international arena became explicit in the 1890s with the emergence of the perception that the United States was setting the diplomatic standard (or ‘bar’) for Europe. Previously the United States had preferred either to distance itself from European politics or to allow the Europeans to take the lead.



Jewish achievement in this respect was the diversion of some American relief funds to Jewish famine victims in 1892.<sup>169</sup>

*DR*, as an organ of the Anglo-Jewish establishment, portrays relief efforts in Europe in the early 1890s in an entirely positive light. These gradually evolved into more systematic and formal mechanisms, with non-Jews continuing to take a prominent role. The processing of refugees was deemed by *DR* to be both efficient and kind, however transmigration remained a persistent theme of its coverage. Frequent references were made to projects for the mass resettlement of Russian Jews in agricultural colonies in various countries, and to assisted transmigration to the United States.<sup>170</sup> This was indicative of the real intentions of the Anglo-Jewish establishment: in 1891, Britain's Russo-Jewish Committee granted its counterpart in Berlin a sum of twenty-five thousand pounds to ensure that migrants were assisted directly from Germany to the United States, without passing through England.<sup>171</sup> In order to counter negative popular stereotyping of Jewish immigrants who did manage to settle there, emphasis was placed on the great emotional toll that they had endured.<sup>172</sup> Positive qualities and attributes such as a dignified bearing, a 'pleasing' appearance, a sturdy physique and a 'favourable' demeanour were highlighted whenever possible. Refugees were frequently complimented on their eagerness to find work and re-establish themselves, and on the periodic refusal of charity through pride or concern for those less well-off.<sup>173</sup> Any individual accomplishment also received honorary citation.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 1; on the context for this decision, cf. *DR* 8 (12 February 1892): 5-6.

<sup>170</sup> In Berlin, for example, refugees were offered discounts and subsidies on tickets to New York (*DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 9). The following month *DR* reported, revealingly, that as many people as English relief agencies could or dared to send had been assisted onwards, although it went on to claim that even larger numbers had been supported in establishing themselves in the United Kingdom (*DR* 3 (21 September 1891), 7-8). On assisted transmigration, see also *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 5. Practically every issue promoted the concept of agricultural settlements and lauded the potential of Russian Jews for this type of venture.

<sup>171</sup> Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 45. Gartner notes that throughout the 1880s and 1890s, no western community agreed to accept more than a token number of immigrants.

<sup>172</sup> *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 9.

<sup>173</sup> *DR* 1 (15 July 1891): 2, 5; *DR* 9 (18 March 1892): 8; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 6. On the refusal of food or clothing that was offered by relief organisations, see *DR* 2 (14 August 1891): 10. It is possible that food offered by non-Jews was declined owing to the fear that it would not be kosher.

<sup>174</sup> *DR* 6 (18 December 1891): 7; *DR* 7 (15 January 1892): 6; *DR* 5 (13 November 1891): 4; *DR* 10 (15 April 1892): 3; *DR* 12 (30 June 1892): 6. Among the distinguished refugees were a professor of piano from the Moscow Conservatory, a lawyer, a well-known poet, an engineer and an inventor. Weber and Kempster remarked that much of this great Jewish potential was doomed to be wasted in the Pale due to the appalling social and economic conditions that had been brought about by the May Laws.

Collectively the new wave of immigrants arrived with more marketable skills than those of their predecessors, and this rapidly earned them a good reputation in the United States. This persuaded the American Jewish leadership to reconsider its stance on immigration and to challenge calls for the introduction of restrictions. The dispersal of newcomers throughout the United States was crucial to the case for unrestricted Jewish immigration. However, the difficulties that were experienced by smaller communities in absorbing newcomers led to resentments and tensions with their larger counterparts.<sup>175</sup> American anger at Europe, meanwhile, was finally mollified by the efforts of Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Hirsch was a French Jewish philanthropist who sought to solve Russia's 'Jewish Question' through the wholesale resettlement of Russian Jewry. Initially Hirsch provided financial support for an organised programme of dispersal and vocational training in the United States, before concluding that Argentina would be better suited to his plans. Both of these projects conveniently coincided with the agenda of the American Jewish establishment.<sup>176</sup>

As time went on and concerted Russian Jewish migration persisted, western sympathy became progressively circumscribed. Assistance was withheld from all but the victims of the most direct forms of persecution, and more general pleas of discrimination and economic pressure were increasingly rejected. Migrants who managed to defy communal controls and stay where they were not wanted were denounced as *schnorrers*, professional beggars who played the system. Although it must be acknowledged that western philanthropy and goodwill were by no means equal to the extent of the demands that were placed upon them, establishment

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<sup>175</sup> Szajkowski, 'Attitude of American Jews', 237-40.

<sup>176</sup> Hirsch was one of the first western notables to advocate mass resettlement as the solution to Russia's 'Jewish Question' and, to this end, he established the JCA in 1891. Hirsch is best remembered for his proposal to relocate up to five million Russian Jews in agricultural settlements in Argentina over a period of twenty-five years. Although Hirsch's actual achievements fell far short of his ambitions, he did succeed in resettling a few thousand Russian Jews in his Argentine colonies. For a brief overview of Jewish settlement in Argentina during the nineteenth century, see Bernard D. Ansel, 'Discord Among Western and Eastern European Jews in Argentina', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1970-June 1971): 151-58. On the evolution of Hirsch's attitude in favour of mass resettlement, see Szajkowski, 'Emigration', 177-88; on his efforts in this area, see Szajkowski, 'Attitude of American Jews', 220B-80. For (mixed) contemporary assessments of the Argentina scheme, see Dubnov, *History*, 413-16; Leo Shpall, 'David Feinberg's Historical Survey of the Colonization of the Russian Jews in Argentina, translated from the Russian with an Introduction by Leo Shpall', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 43, no. 1-4 (1953): 37-69 [Feinberg was Secretary-General of the JCA's St. Petersburg Committee]; *DR* 3 (21 September 1891): 1; *DR* 4 (16 October 1891): 1-2; *DR* 5 (13 November 1891): 1. *DR* 14 (1 June 1893): 7 reports very positively on the first Hirsch settlements. On the activities of the JCA in the Russian empire, see Rogger, *Policies*, 180-83; on its overall significance in terms of Jewish emigration, see Zimmerman, 'Jewish Emigration', 132-34; for an insight into Hirsch's legacy in Argentina, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 February 2013.

attitudes and actions were frequently questionable. For example, while the Jewish authorities in Britain and Germany wrangled over matters of procedure repatriates were simply dumped in Hamburg, where the local community continued to refuse them assistance. The circumstances of these unfortunates were never taken into account and desperation drove some to suicide. By the early twentieth century, repatriations had reached such a volume that the Anglo-Jewish authorities had been awarded a rebate by Prussian railways.<sup>177</sup>

The unstoppable onslaught of immigration was not the only crisis to be faced by the western Jewish authorities in the 1880s and 1890s. From the mid nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, central and eastern Europe saw a rash of ‘ritual murder’ accusations, although most of these made little impact on the west. This is reflected in the lack, on the one hand, of contemporary newspaper coverage and, on the other, of subsequent scholarly interest. Two cases which were particularly high-profile are, however, illustrative of the overall consequences of external constraints for western Jewish activism. These were the Tiszaeszlár (Hungary, 1882-1883) and Hilsner (Bohemia, 1899-1900) Affairs.<sup>178</sup> In both ‘affairs’, local Jewish leaders mobilised effectively against the ‘ritual murder’ allegations using modern means and methods. As a result of these efforts, the Tiszaeszlár case collapsed in court, and the ‘ritual murder’ charge against Leopold Hilsner was dropped although he was, nevertheless, convicted of murder. Hilsner escaped the death penalty but spent almost a decade in

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<sup>177</sup> Hochberg, ‘Repatriation’, 52.

<sup>178</sup> The Tiszaeszlár Affair concerned the disappearance of 14-year-old Esther Solymosi, whose probable remains were later found in the Tisza river, with drowning or suicide being the most likely cause of death. As Solymosi had passed by the town’s synagogue on her final journey, suspicions of ‘ritual murder’ were mooted. The Hilsner Affair refers to the murder and mutilation of 19-year-old Agnes Hruza, whose body was discovered on the outskirts of the Jewish quarter of Polna. Evidence that the crime had been sexually or sadistically motivated, and similarities to another murder in the locality were ignored by investigators, due to their exclusive focus on ‘ritual murder’. The only detailed, but far from comprehensive, study of Tiszaeszlár is Andrew Handler, *Blood Libel at Tiszaeszlár* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1980). Scholarship on the Hilsner Affair is also relatively scant and frequently concentrates on the ambivalent role of the Czech statesman Thomas Masaryk. See Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Introduction, chap. 8, 9; Kieval, ‘Representation and Knowledge in Medieval and Modern Accounts of Jewish Ritual Murder’, *Jewish Social Studies* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 52-72; Steven Beller, ‘The Hilsner Affair: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and the Individual in the Habsburg Monarchy at the Turn of the Century’, in *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937); Vol. 2: Thinker and Critic*, ed. Robert B. Pynsent (London: Macmillan, 1989), 52-76; František Červinka, ‘The Hilsner Affair’, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 13 (1968): 142-57; Michael Curtis, ‘The Hilsner Case and Ritual Murder’, *Human Rights Review* 5, no. 3 (Apr.-June 2004): 50-61; Michael A. Riff, ‘The Ambiguity of Masaryk’s Attitudes on the “Jewish Question”’, in *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937); Vol. 2: Thinker and Critic*, ed. Robert B. Pynsent (London: Macmillan, 1989), 77-87; Riff, ‘Czech Antisemitism and the Jewish Response Before 1914’, *Wiener Library Bulletin* 29, no. 39-40, (1976): 8-20. Both of these ‘affairs’ received extensive coverage in the *Jewish Chronicle*.

prison, and his name was not officially cleared until 2000. These cases raised searching questions relating to the integration of Jews into European society, particularly with respect to Hilsner, a seedy and disreputable individual with whom it was difficult for anyone to empathise. Hilsner outwardly conformed to many of the stereotypical negative qualities of the retrograde east European Jew (the so-called ‘*Ostjude*’) and, most notably, appeared to embody popular antisemitic notions of Jewish ‘criminality’.<sup>179</sup> Due to their own advanced level of acculturation, along with the social, cultural and economic difficulties that had been presented by east European immigration, western Jews shared to a degree the pejorative view of the ‘*Ostjude*’ that was common to wider European society.<sup>180</sup> Thus it was easy to distance themselves in their own minds from the charges that were levelled against Hilsner. Both the Tiszaeszlár and Hilsner Affairs were deemed by the Jewish establishment to have been successfully contained at a local level, and did not provoke any significant international Jewish response.<sup>181</sup>

The next predicament to be confronted by the western Jewish authorities was the Kishinev pogrom of 1903. This prompted a fresh tide of Russian Jewish emigration which the western Jewish authorities fruitlessly attempted to discourage. Although the pogrom provoked a strong wave of public sympathy, all western governments were reluctant to risk a diplomatic showdown with the Russian administration. The American president, Theodore Roosevelt, was eventually persuaded to forward to the Russian authorities a sizeable petition that had been compiled by the Jewish friendly society B’nai Brith, which had many influential signatories. Although the Russians refused to accept the petition, the incident represented an important moral victory for American Jewry and, equally significantly,

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<sup>179</sup> On the progressive development and linking of notions of race, ‘degeneration’ and inherent criminality and the projection of these theories onto the Jews, see Mosse, *Racism*.

<sup>180</sup> On the evolution of the negative stereotype of the ‘*Ostjude*’, see Aschheim, *Brothers*.

<sup>181</sup> Riff, ‘Czech Antisemitism’, 15; Cecil Roth, ed., *The Ritual Murder Libel and the Jew: The Report by Cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli (Pope Clement XIV)* (London: Woburn Press, 1935). Leopold de Rothschild, however, feared that the Hilsner conviction gave an aura of credibility to the ‘ritual murder’ accusation and approached prominent British Catholics to enlist their support in preventing the spread of the ‘blood libel’ to Britain. The British ambassador to Vienna agreed to request an official statement from the Vatican, which was refused, as the papal authorities felt that the official Roman Catholic view on the matter had already clearly been stated. While Rothschild’s act of traditional *shtadlanut* contrasts strongly with the more modern means that were employed by the Jewish authorities in Bohemia, it shows that Jewish diplomacy always employed a combination of traditional and modern methods.

an easy 'win' for the American administration in terms of public opinion.<sup>182</sup> Kishinev was decisive in embedding the pogrom narrative, with its belief in tsarist orchestrated anti-Jewish violence, in the popular western consciousness.

The Kishinev petition represented the final stage in the transfer of Jewish diplomatic initiative from Europe to the United States. Internal Jewish politics, as well as external political constraints, had contributed to this shift in Jewish leadership. The ineffectuality, petty tyranny and francophilia of the AIU had rapidly set it on a course of decline. Its weaknesses had allowed a host of petty rivalries to emerge along national and cultural lines, while the affinity between the Jewish establishments of Britain and the United States increased accordingly. In the ensuing vacuum the Americans steadily came to the fore in matters of international Jewish diplomacy. European Jewish solidarity, which had always been fragile, was unable to withstand the virulent chauvinism that was engendered by the First World War.<sup>183</sup>

The level of anti-Russian feeling that had been prompted by Kishinev allowed American Jewish leaders to mobilise the banking community in support of Japan during its war with Russia in 1904-1905. Access to international finance was a major factor in determining the outcome of the war.<sup>184</sup> The Russian defeat was followed by revolutionary unrest and the signing of the October Manifesto in 1905. This led to

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<sup>182</sup> For an outline of international reactions to Kishinev, see Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*, 84-102; Penkower, 'Kishinev', 187-225. On the response of the American Jewish establishment, see Best, *To Free*, 64-94; for a wider overview of American fundraising and protest activities, see Philip Ernest Schoenberg, 'The American Reaction to the Kishinev Pogrom of 1903', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1973-June 1974): 262-83.

<sup>183</sup> Despite its prestigious beginnings and high-flung aspirations, the AIU had rapidly lost its initial momentum. The dictatorial behaviour of its leaders had caused widespread tensions with its national affiliates, in particular those of Germany and Austria-Hungary. In addition, the AIU had left the representative bodies of the countries that were most affected to take the initiative in dealing with mass emigration. Finally, its quietist attitude was challenged by the increasing proactivity of the representative organisations of German Jewry, the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus (League to Combat Anti-Semitism, 1891) and the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, 1893). The AIU resented its rivals and its lack of influence on the processes of mass emigration. Although the AIU is still in existence, it is virtually unknown, among non-French-speaking Jews at least. Nowadays it focuses its energies on education, human rights and interreligious dialogue. On the intercommunal tensions that arose from the narrow outlook of the AIU, see Szajkowski, 'Conflicts', 29-50; on its early activity in the United States, see Szajkowski, 'AIU in United States', 389-443; on its current activities, see the organisation's website, <http://www.aiu.org> (accessed 23 March 2011).

<sup>184</sup> Aronsfeld, 'Bankers', 87-104; Gary Dean Best, 'Financing a Foreign War: Jacob H. Schiff and Japan, 1904-05', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1971-June 1972): 213-34; Best, *To Free*, 91-111; A. J. Sherman, 'German-Jewish Bankers in World Politics: The Financing of the Russo-Japanese War', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 28 (1983): 59-73. On the central role of Jacob H. Schiff (1847-1920) in American and international Jewish diplomacy, see Zosa Szajkowski, 'Paul Nathan, Lucien Wolf, Jacob H. Schiff and the Jewish Revolutionary Movements in Eastern Europe 1903-1917', *Jewish Social Studies* 29, no. 1 (Jan. 1967): 3-26.

brief optimism in the west that the ‘Jewish Question’ might be resolvable through a Russian transition to democracy. Hopes were soon dashed with the reactionary backlash that accompanied the October Manifesto, which resulted in further pogroms. Jewish leaders immediately set about organising relief, pressing for diplomatic intervention and systematically disseminating anti-Russian propaganda in the west. Moral and financial support was provided to Russia’s more moderate political factions, and efforts were made to influence public opinion.<sup>185</sup> Otherwise events followed a somewhat familiar pattern. Large protest rallies in London and New York were again willingly supported by the wider public and led by non-Jewish notables.<sup>186</sup> America’s National Committee for the Relief of Sufferers by the Russian Massacres quickly exceeded its financial goal of one million dollars, and the Jewish authorities continued on their new course of strenuously opposing restrictionist sentiment. Despite popular backing, attempts to persuade the British and American governments to intercede were largely unsuccessful. In the United States diplomatic intervention came increasingly to be regarded as futile not only by the government but also by Jewish leaders. This was as much due to Russia’s unstable political situation as to its government’s traditional contempt for foreign opinion.

Given the adverse political climate within the Russian empire, America’s Jewish leaders began to concentrate their efforts elsewhere. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) was formed in January 1906, to serve as a national framework for the politics of elite *shtadlanut*.<sup>187</sup> Its early activities reflect the growing confidence of

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<sup>185</sup> There is little information available regarding mainstream Jewish activism in this period. On America, see Best, *To Free*, 108-37; on the reaction of the English-speaking world in general, see Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 55-58; on the somewhat ambivalent western attempts to influence the Russian political scene, see Szajkowski, ‘Nathan, Wolf, Schiff’, 3-26; on the targeting of public opinion in Russia, see Best, *To Free*, 167-68.

<sup>186</sup> The South African War (1899-1902) popularised notions of Jewish conspiracy and media manipulation in English discourse, even in respectable political circles (see Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 153). This no doubt made the Anglo-Jewish establishment more anxious than ever to avoid the public spotlight.

<sup>187</sup> For a detailed but effusive account of the formation and early years of the AJC, see Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 3-80. The AJC was intended to provide effective mechanisms for the co-ordination of information, fact-finding, lobbying, relief and co-operation with European Jewish organisations. The Committee also aspired to contain what it regarded as radical Jewish elements within American society. This was to be achieved through a three-pronged approach: by assuming control of communal leadership, by presenting itself to non-Jewish society as the authoritative Jewish representative body, and by attempting to oversee all American Jewish activism on behalf of oppressed co-religionists abroad. In its early years, the AJC was run by a small, hand-picked executive that was formed from the existing established leadership, which continued to operate on a largely individualistic basis. The AJC’s narrow approach to diplomacy attracted much criticism and gave rise to regular tensions with other Jewish factions. This appears to have influenced evaluations of

the American Jewish leadership, particularly when it came to the so-called 'Passport Question' (1907-1912). This concerned the extension of anti-Jewish legislation to Jews of other nationalities who were on business or vacation in the Russian empire, a move that was particularly opposed by American Jews. The AJC eventually decided to spearhead a popular campaign for the suspension of commercial relations between the United States and Russia, which culminated in the abrogation of the 1832 commercial treaty. The European Jewish authorities, in contrast, declined to take any action on the Passport Question; in the lead-up to the First World War, European Jewish diplomacy was more hamstrung than ever by broader political concerns.<sup>188</sup> The Americans therefore remained at the forefront of Jewish efforts to address the crises that beset central and east European Jewry during and after the war. On the home front, they continued their battle against the introduction of anti-immigrant legislation in the face of mounting odds.<sup>189</sup>

The impact of international pre-war politics on Jewish diplomacy is well illustrated by Jewish reactions to the Beilis Affair (Kiev, 1911-1913).<sup>190</sup> Pro-Beilis

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its early operations by those hailing from a different cultural and political background. A classic example is Schiff's 'Galveston Movement' (1907-1914), which was long misrepresented as an attempt by the elite to reduce Russian Jewish immigration when it was, in fact, quite the opposite. The Galveston project was actually intended to facilitate largescale immigration by redirecting it to less populated regions of the United States via the Texan city of Galveston. On the Galveston movement, see Best, *To Free*, 141-63; Isaac M. Fein, 'Israel Zangwill and American Jewry: A Documentary Study', *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1-4 (Sept. 1970-June 1971): 24-36; Szajkowski, 'Nathan, Wolf, Schiff', 22-26; on the culture clashes that influenced subsequent evaluations of the AJC and its early activity, see Szajkowski, 'Yahudi', 13-44.

<sup>188</sup> As the United States did not wish to sever trade relations with the Russian empire altogether after abrogation, existing arrangements remained in place pending the negotiation of a new agreement. In the end, due to the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, this never happened. Thus, beyond a brief suspension of bilateral trade – which European countries were happy to profit from – nothing actually changed. Abrogation was a largely symbolic victory, but significant nonetheless. The campaign greatly enhanced the image of the AJC but failed to set any precedent for its future diplomacy. Szajkowski, in fact, credits the American branch of the AIU with mass mobilisation in favour of abrogation, and for having instigated the turnaround in establishment policy. For detailed discussions of the abrogation campaign, see Cohen, *Not Free*, 54-80; Best, *To Free*, 166-201. For an overview of the issue in its European context, see Szajkowski, 'Passport Question', 86-100.

<sup>189</sup> Best, *To Free*, 200-22.

<sup>190</sup> The Beilis Affair refers to the murder of twelve-year-old Andrei Iushchinskii by a criminal gang in Kiev. Iushchinskii's body was planted in a Jewish-owned brickworks and mutilated to give the appearance of a 'ritual murder'. Even though all the evidence pointed directly to the gang, local investigators doggedly pursued the 'ritual murder' line and arrested the manager of the brickworks, Mendel Beilis. Beilis was acquitted after two years in prison, however the jury upheld the 'ritual murder' allegations and Beilis's subsequent life was blighted by his ordeal. See Mendel Beilis, *Scapgoat on Trial: The Story of Mendel Beilis*, ed. Shari Schwartz (New York: CIS, 1992); Gruzenberg, *Memoirs*, chap. 13; Ezekiel Leikin, ed. and trans., *The Beilis Transcripts: The Anti-Semitic Trial that Shook the World* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993); Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank) 1894-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beiliss Case* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966); Alexander B. Tager, *The Decay of Czarism: The Beiliss Trial*

activism was led by the Jewish authorities in Germany and the United States. Their counterparts in Britain, France and Austria-Hungary were effectively silenced by the wish of their respective governments to remain on good terms with the Russian empire.<sup>191</sup> Everywhere besides Germany, non-Jewish organisations and notables took the lead in campaigning on behalf of Beilis. Because the ‘affair’ became such a media sensation Jewish authorities were keen to avoid accusations of press manipulation, and to see that refutations of the ‘blood libel’ had a universal thrust. In the autumn of 1913 two protest rallies were organised in London by Zionists and socialists, respectively, which the Anglo-Jewish authorities refused to endorse. While this was as much a reflection of the internal social, economic and cultural divisions that beset the community in this period, it was construed by immigrant leaders as a lack of solidarity with the grassroots.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, the best-remembered effort by the Anglo-Jewish establishment on behalf of Beilis was an act of traditional *shtadlanut*: the obtaining of a general condemnation from the Vatican of the ‘ritual murder’ charges.

Between 1890 and 1914, the emigration process was somewhat eased within the Russian empire by the increased availability of information and documentation.<sup>193</sup> Conditions en route, however, had deteriorated owing to the introduction of regular

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(Philadelphia: JPS, 1935); Frederick C. Giffin, ‘American Reactions to the Beilis Case’, *Social Science* 55 (1980): 89-93; Zosa Szajkowski, ‘The Impact of the Beilis Case on Central and Western Europe’, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 31 (1963): 197-218; John D. Klier, ‘Cry Bloody Murder’, *East European Jewish Affairs* 36, no. 2 (2006): 213-29; Rogger, *Policies*, chap. 3. For contemporary commentary, see *The American Jewish Year Book* (1914-1915), 19-89; *Jewish Chronicle*; *New York Times*; *Times of London*.

<sup>191</sup> See Szajkowski, ‘Impact’; Lindemann, *Jew Accused*, 180. In France in particular, despite some strong expressions of public protest at the ‘ritual murder’ charges, the Jewish authorities were constrained by a number of factors: the tradition of cordial diplomatic relations between Russia and France, popular suspicions of Jewish hostility towards Russia, and the aftershock of the Dreyfus Affair. The changing British attitude towards the Russian empire, due to the desire for a diplomatic rapprochement, is reflected in the apparent lack of British press interest in the Beilis Affair (compare the level of coverage in *The Times* of London with that of the *New York Times* in 1911-1913). For an overview of the American response, see Giffin, ‘Beilis’.

<sup>192</sup> Szajkowski notes a number of additional factors that discouraged other Jews from supporting left-wing pro-Beilis activity. These included sharp internal divisions within the Jewish Left itself, popular suspicions regarding Jewish revolutionary activity, and the close relationship between Jewish radical groups and the wider socialist movement, with its ambivalence towards Jews (‘Impact’, 213-14). The militant atheism of socialists was probably also a factor, even among immigrants whose Jewish observance was lax (Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 140).

<sup>193</sup> Rogger, *Policies*, 182; Nicholas Evans, ‘A Strike for Racial Justice? Transatlantic Shipping and the Jewish Diaspora, 1882-1939’, in *Jewish Journeys: From Philo to Hip Hop*, ed. James Jordan, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010), 25-44. By 1914 there were five hundred emigration bureaux throughout the Pale which offered information and advice on destinations, transport, official procedures and unscrupulous agents. Tickets, travel permits and kosher food were also more readily available to travellers.



and costly disinfections, and the increased vigilance of German and Austrian border police. Chaos and disorganisation remained the order of the day. Antin recalls scenes of overwhelming confusion, noise and congestion as she and her mother journeyed from Polotsk (Belarus) to New York in 1894. Antin remembers the disinfections as hasty and degrading, and so cumulatively expensive as to be redolent of deliberate extortion. In Hamburg the Antins were quarantined for two weeks in a prison-like barracks with barred windows, limited rations and twice-daily roll-calls.<sup>194</sup> While travelling from Moldova to New York in 1898, David Toback experienced hunger, damp, cold, sleep-deprivation and repeated dousings with kerosene. He then faced an indefinite and penurious wait in Antwerp for his ship to be filled to capacity, before the company would authorise its departure. Toback had to repeat the whole procedure a second time in order to gain admission to the United States.<sup>195</sup>

This section has set out the range of Jewish responses to crisis, as these evolved in the period 1840 to 1914. Close attention has been paid to the way in which broader diplomatic concerns determined and circumscribed the agenda of western Europe's Jewish establishment, limiting its capacity to deal effectively with sensitive situations involving their east European counterparts. The physical immediacy of a given incident, its potential for direct impact upon western Jewry and the possibilities for containing it remotely, have also been found to have had significant influence upon western establishment responses to Jewish crisis. From the very beginnings of modern Jewish diplomacy with the Damascus Affair of 1840, the behaviour of the western Jewish authorities was consistently motivated and determined by concerns and interests that related more to their own communities themselves than to their persecuted co-religionists. Those who had already undergone crisis and upheaval were, as a result, subject to further trauma through objectification, the removal of personal agency and having their welfare subordinated to the cultural politics of Jewish emancipation in the west.

High-level Jewish diplomacy in this period owed much to modern means and methods, and reflected a growing Jewish self-confidence. However newer methods were always supplemented, and sometimes superseded, by traditional, behind-scenes *shtadlanut*. The western Jewish authorities remained wary of testing the boundaries of public or political opinion, preferring to keep non-Jewish advocates at the forefront

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<sup>194</sup> Antin, *Promised*, 135-42.

<sup>195</sup> Carole Malkin, *The Journeys of David Toback* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 190-212.

of all efforts at popular mobilisation, activism and fundraising. Ironically the cautious nature of Jewish establishment diplomacy fuelled the very fantasies of conspiracy and media manipulation that it was intended to combat. Similarly Jewish public demonstrations, while manifesting increased confidence among the working and immigrant classes, served more as an outlet for their frustrations than as a vehicle for promoting communal solidarity or meaningful political change. The Jewish response to crisis in the period under consideration is therefore a direct reflection, on the one hand, of external pressures and, on the other, of internal tensions.

The efforts of western Jewish communities to contain and regulate Jewish immigration were intended to calm unfavourable public opinion, and to pre-empt the need for intervention by the secular authorities into communal affairs. When the tide of east European immigration was not so easily stemmed, the western establishment was reluctantly forced to confront it in other ways. Mechanisms were introduced to oversee the distribution of philanthropy, and the provision of vocational training and employment. The acculturation and dispersal of immigrants was also strongly advocated. In general solidarity, sincerity, kindness, compassion and empathy were sorely lacking in these enterprises. They were implemented instead with bad grace, enforced by coercion and concerned more with non-Jewish opinion than with the needs and sensibilities of the recipients. These broader trends will now be examined more closely, with relation to the specific context of Britain and the Anglo-Jewish response to east European immigration.

## **1.5 ANGLO-JEWRY: THE ‘CENTRE’ AND THE ‘PROVINCES’**

The London community has always treated the provinces in a manner suggestive of inferiority; no doubt the provincial congregations have not members of the importance and great wealth that are to be found in London, but far more religious enthusiasm and interest is shown in the affairs of provincial congregations by their members than is the case in the best London synagogues . . .<sup>196</sup>

The last section has outlined in a general manner the impact of mass emigration upon the established Jewries of western Europe and the United States. Acculturated Jews feared that their still tenuous foothold on non-Jewish society would be threatened by the rapid and largescale immigration of their poor east European co-

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<sup>196</sup> Ernest W. Harris, *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 November 1906.

religionists. The reflexive reaction of western leaders was to shift migrants ever onwards in the hope that they would ultimately become someone else's responsibility. Despite their best efforts to export the immigration problem the settlement of large numbers of poor east European Jews – temporary or permanent – among the major western Jewries was unavoidable. This section sets out the cultural and philanthropic strategies that were developed in order to confront the alarming new realities of mass immigration, within the specific social and cultural context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. In particular the influence of these policies and their underlying assumptions upon the relationship between the seat of Anglo-Jewish power in London and the so-called Provinces is investigated. 'The Provinces' is the collective term for the satellite communities that were either revitalised or established throughout Britain and Ireland as a result of the dispersal policy of the Anglo-Jewish establishment. As has been shown, this was aimed at preventing the creation of voluntary 'ghettos' in major cities.<sup>197</sup> This aspect of the establishment-immigrant relationship is particularly pertinent to this study. An understanding of the interactions that occurred between the central Anglo-Jewish leadership and its provincial communities has been vital for the evaluation, on the one hand, of the Irish dimension of this relationship and, on the other, the response of Ireland's established Jewish leadership to accelerated Jewish immigration (see Chapters Three and Four).

Scholars agree that between 1881 and 1914, the vast majority of immigrants passed through mainland Britain en route to other destinations, primarily the United States and South Africa.<sup>198</sup> Whether these migrants stayed in Britain for a matter of

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<sup>197</sup> An item in the *Jewish Chronicle* (28 April 1899) opines that dispersion, when accompanied by sufficient financial and moral support from the 'centre', would be vital to the successful solution of the 'East End' and 'Immigrant' questions. To this end, the Jewish Dispersion Committee was formed in London in 1903 to oversee the transfer of more anglicised immigrants to smaller cities that could provide employment opportunities and Jewish communal facilities (see Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 149). For references to Ireland in connection with the Committee, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 July 1903, 22 July 1904, and 1 April 1910.

<sup>198</sup> This assessment is based primarily on Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), chap. 3; David Cesarani, ed., *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, chap. 4; Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*; Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester c.1850-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Mordechai Rozin, *The Rich and the Poor: Jewish Philanthropy and Social Control in Nineteenth-Century London* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999); Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry 1740-1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976). Other sources on Anglo-Jewry and its relationship with the immigrant community include Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Stuart A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Israel Finestein, *Anglo-Jewry in Changing Times: Studies in Diversity 1840-1914* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1999); John A. Garrard, *The English Jew*

days, months or years was determined by their ability to access the financial resources that were required to complete their journey. Some never moved on, swelling the ranks of those who had come to Britain with the express intention of settling permanently. The situation would only be alleviated with the passing of the Aliens Act in 1905.<sup>199</sup> In spite of Anglo-Jewish dispersion policies, eighty per cent of these new arrivals ended up in just three cities: London, Manchester and Leeds.<sup>200</sup> Jewish settlement in the East End of London became so densely concentrated that it completely altered the demographics of some boroughs. Previous residents were displaced, and the character of local employment, commerce, schools and street life was radically altered. The Jewish East End became so expansive that immigrants could choose, should they wish, to conduct their lives entirely within its tough but familiar embrace.

The initially dismayed and subsequently embattled reaction of the Anglo-Jewish establishment towards mass east European emigration has been well documented over the last fifty years or so, since the first appearance of Lloyd Gartner's seminal work *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914*. As Britain had experienced a steady trickle of Jewish immigration since the first half of the nineteenth century, it took over a decade to convince the central leadership that mass immigration was a new fact of life. Previous immigrant settlement had occurred on a small scale that could comfortably be absorbed into the Anglo-Jewish mainstream. Containment of the new wave would require close and systematic attention. The response of the Anglo-Jewish elite to this realisation was, to a large extent, influenced by its obsessive caution and circumspection. In tandem with its dispersal policy, a programme of concerted anglicisation was adopted in order to reduce immigrant visibility and to hasten the absorption of east European Jews into British society, both Jewish and non-Jewish. As adults were believed to be largely beyond redemption, these efforts primarily targeted the younger generation through education and

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*and Immigration 1880-1910* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Daniel Gutwein, *The Divided Elite: Economics, Politics and Anglo-Jewry, 1882-1917* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Vivian D. Lipman, *A Century of Social Service* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1959); Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge, 1980).

<sup>199</sup> Scholars note that the restrictions that were introduced with the Aliens Act were mild, and acted as more of a psychological than a legal deterrent to immigration. The Aliens Act encouraged migrants to bypass Britain for the United States and the New World. See, e.g., Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 150-51.

<sup>200</sup> Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 129-30. Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow, which counted for a further six to seven per cent of Britain's Jewish population, were the next largest centres of immigrant settlement.

recreational activities. It was hoped that the acculturation of the youth would have some kind of retrospective ‘civilising’ influence on their elders.

One of the best-known vehicles of anglicisation was the Jewish Lads’ Brigade (JLB), founded in 1895, which was famously modelled on the quasi-militaristic Church Lads’ Brigade. The purpose of the JLB, according to its founder, Col. A. E. W. Goldsmid, was ‘ironing out the Ghetto bend’ in order ‘to instil into the rising generation all that is best in the English character, manly independence, honour, truth, cleanliness, love of active health-giving pursuits, &c.’<sup>201</sup> The Jews’ Free School (JFS), established in 1817, is described by Gartner as a ‘citadel of Anglicization’. Its long-serving headmaster, Moses Angel (1819-1898), regarded his clientèle as ‘the refuse population of the worst parts of Europe’ who needed to be ‘Anglicized or humanized’. This was to be achieved by cultivating the English language in place of Yiddish and by supplanting the traditional Jewish lifestyle with British culture and virtues. The JFS was complimented by the British government in 1894 for transforming its pupils so as to be ‘almost indistinguishable from English children’.<sup>202</sup> In reality, the efficacy of many of these anglicising institutions was negligible. Their unabashed cultural imperialism and pejorative perception of traditional Jewish life are clear from the comments that are quoted above. These systemic attitudes frequently had a negative impact on those who came into contact with them, engendering hostility and contempt for the Anglo-Jewish authorities and the values they represented.<sup>203</sup> More importantly, scholars have argued with the benefit of hindsight that acculturation was inevitable in the long term with or without coercion.<sup>204</sup> The

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<sup>201</sup> Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 174; Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 141. For a more detailed outline of the guiding principles of the JLB, cf. Kirk Hansen, ‘The Scottish Jewish Lads’ Brigade, 1904-1914’ (paper presented at the Symposium on Jewish Community, Identity and Memory: Perspectives from Belfast, Queen’s University Belfast, 11 September 2012).

<sup>202</sup> On the establishment and evolution of the Jews’ Free School and the controversial views of Moses Angel, which he was subsequently forced to justify, see Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 221ff. On the negative psychological impact of this style of education, see Rosalyn Livshin, ‘The Acculturation of the Children of Immigrant Jews in Manchester, 1890-1930’, in *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, ed. David Cesarani (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 79-96.

<sup>203</sup> This point is very effectively made in Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 347-49. Feldman argues that, notwithstanding the financial and moral backing of the metropolitan elite for anglicising institutions, the actual extent of their outreach within the immigrant community was relatively limited. He emphasises the ability of immigrants to make their own choices and openly to express their own views as to which aspects of British and Anglo-Jewish culture they were prepared to accept or reject.

<sup>204</sup> Endelman cites Leeds as an example of a city where the acculturation process followed that of other places, even though there were few ‘native’ Jews and no concerted anglicisation campaign (*Jews of Britain*, 179-80). See also Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 240. Feldman (*Englishmen and Jews*, chap. 14-15), on the other hand, dismisses models of ‘socialisation’ and Anglo-Jewish ‘social control’ as

Irish example corroborates this view, in demonstrating that acculturation could be a largely voluntary, if gradual, process requiring minimal establishment influence (see Chapter Three, below). Nevertheless it must be remembered that ‘anglicisation’ was a matter of perspective. The perceptions and expectations that accompanied this process, especially when it came to the pace at which acculturation occurred, differed greatly between genteel Anglo-Jewry and its immigrant brethren.<sup>205</sup>

Mordechai Rozin and Rainer Liedtke have demonstrated that the philosophy that underpinned Anglo-Jewish charity, and the forms that it adopted, were informed more by the conditions and *mores* of fashionable Victorian philanthropy than by traditional Jewish values.<sup>206</sup> The systematisation of relief mechanisms within the Anglo-Jewish community had already begun prior to mass immigration, with the formation of Jewish Boards of Guardians in London (1859) and in Manchester (1867). These acted, in effect, as a form of Jewish poor law union, which gave the occasional nod to Jewish charitable values in order to reinforce their claim to legitimacy and authority within the Jewish community. The tension between traditional and Victorian *mores* is exemplified by the Board’s ironic choice of cable name, *Rachmonem* (the Compassionate).<sup>207</sup> Rozin’s close study of the London Board sets out in detail the harsh and high-handed way in which applicants for relief were treated. Procedures were calculated to humiliate the lowly immigrant and to reinforce the hard-won hegemony of the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Benefits were granted in kind and maintained at well below subsistence levels. The Board’s approach to philanthropy was intended to promote the Victorian virtue of self-reliance, while conveying the message that London was not to be a cushy destination for the opportunistic. The overbearing attitude of the London Board was resented by immigrants, leading to the establishment of alternative, grassroots organisations for relief and mutual aid.

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unsophisticated and linear. Instead, he believes that the process of immigrant acculturation was underpinned by a complex range of factors: political, economic, social and cultural.

<sup>205</sup> Feldman (*Englishmen and Jews*, 335ff.) contends that in London contending perceptions of anglicisation and modernity led to a conflict between immigrant and ‘native’ parties as to the actual nature of these processes.

<sup>206</sup> For detailed accounts of Anglo-Jewish philanthropic thinking in this period, see Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, chap. 4, 5; Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare*, 98, 221-22, 242ff; Williams, *Manchester Jewry*, chap. 11. For a less harsh assessment of the London Board which emphasises its British, as opposed to its Jewish, cultural context, see Black, *Social Politics*; for a more laudatory account of the Board’s activities, see Lipman, *Century of Social Service*.

<sup>207</sup> Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 164.

There was little difference in Anglo-Jewish attitudes when it came to dealings with immigrants who were based further afield, in small and outlying provincial communities. Although some of these communities were represented on the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the most direct point of contact between the ‘centre’ and its provincial satellites was the Chief Rabbi’s pastoral visit. In 1871, the purpose of these visits was summed up as follows in the *Jewish Chronicle*: ‘[The Chief Rabbi] wisely advised and forcibly exhorted the provincial flocks; he healed dissensions, urged the formation of schools, and did not hesitate even to rebuke paternally where rebuke was needful’.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, the Chief Rabbi was regarded as a valuable personal link between London and the Provinces. On a number of occasions, the *Chronicle* stressed the interconnectedness of the affairs of British Jewry as a whole, and the importance of maintaining a close and friendly interest in provincial affairs.<sup>209</sup> In practice, this meant that provincial communities were expected to defer unquestioningly to the central authorities, especially when it came to the appointment of religious functionaries such as ministers, teachers and *shohtim* (slaughterers).

The general concerns of genteel Anglo-Jewry with respect to their east European brethren are well illustrated in a report of Hermann Adler’s pastoral visit to Cork in 1888, in his capacity as delegate Chief Rabbi. Adler wasted little time in urging the members of the Cork Hebrew Congregation (CHC) to live in amity and peace with local Christians, and to observe the strictest integrity in their business dealings.<sup>210</sup> In his Shabbat morning sermon, delivered partly in ‘Judeo-German’, Adler again exhorted his listeners to cultivate goodwill ‘by acquiring and using the English language’ and by dealing ‘honourably and considerately’ with their non-Jewish neighbours. Although he was satisfied with ‘the conduct of divine worship’ in Cork, Adler found that many of the community’s children were being instructed in an ‘unintelligent manner’. Reconciliation was deemed to have been the most challenging aspect of his visit due to the ‘petty internal squabbles’ that were rife within the community (see Chapter Three, below). To this end, Adler admonished that the respect of local non-Jews could only be earned ‘by living on terms of brotherly concord’. By the end of his pastoral visit, the CHC had agreed formally to register the

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<sup>208</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 September 1871.

<sup>209</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 April 1899; see also below.

<sup>210</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 August 1888; for other examples of Anglo-Jewish exhortations to the various Irish communities, see Section 3.1, below. Compare these with Adler’s admonitions to an audience in the Great Synagogue in London in 1893 to behave in such a way as ‘to evoke the good-will, the esteem and favour of your fellow-citizens’ (see *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 October 1893; Section 3.2, below).

synagogue and draw up a constitution, and to employ only a *shohet* who had been accredited by the Chief Rabbi. The congregation also undertook to attempt to raise a portion of the salary that would be required in order to employ a ‘competent’ teacher for Hebrew and religious studies. The writer concludes on an effusive note: ‘May the pastoral tour in fair Erin be fruitful in good results!’ This item illustrates what appears to have been a general willingness among provincial communities to acknowledge the leadership of the chief rabbinate.<sup>211</sup> Then again, allegiance to the Chief Rabbi cost provincial congregations little in terms of control over their day-to-day affairs while allowing them to benefit from the legitimacy that was conferred through his office, and to avail of whatever financial and moral support was forthcoming from the central Anglo-Jewish leadership.

It is clear from Adler’s comments above that any deficiencies in Jewish/non-Jewish relations were attributed by default to a lack of acculturation among immigrants. To this end any prejudice and negative stereotyping within the host community, such as clearly existed in Cork (see Section 2.3, below), were conveniently disregarded. In addition immigrant Jews, wherever they resided in the British Isles, were regarded as fractious, hot-tempered and indecorous in their worship. In 1879, the *Jewish Chronicle* remarked on an ‘excess of zeal’ among provincial Jews for congregational affairs which ‘did not add to the calmness and harmonious condition of the congregational meetings nor to the maintenance of due decorum in the synagogue’.<sup>212</sup> In 1901, the *Chronicle* discussed ‘one of those curiosities of our communal life that must excite surprise of anything but a pleasant nature’. This was the tendency of even small communities that possessed few collective resources to schism.<sup>213</sup> Dublin was later counted as one of the many provincial communities that had a surplus of synagogues and charitable organisations.<sup>214</sup> Aspersions were also cast upon the ability of immigrant Jews to run their manifold communal institutions according to efficient modern standards.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> On the differing perspectives of immigrant and ‘native’ regarding the authority of the chief rabbinate in this period, see Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, chap. 3; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, chap. 7.

<sup>212</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 September 1879.

<sup>213</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 September 1901.

<sup>214</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 March 1912.

<sup>215</sup> For example, one article (*Jewish Chronicle*, 5 September 1902) berated provincial organisations for their laxity in record-keeping. This elicited a strong response from the secretary of the Dublin *hevra kadisha* (Holy Burial Society), which is discussed in Section 3.1, below.



For all its bluster, however, Jewish middle England was rather less than forthcoming in providing any meaningful support for struggling provincial communities. Pastoral visits were rare and fleeting, and various schemes to re-organise British Jewry along more holistic and systematic lines met with little success. As early as 1883, an editorial in the *Jewish Chronicle* had called for the establishment of an Anglo-Jewish education board. Unless Anglo-Jewry supported the maintenance of appropriate instruction in the Provinces, it was argued, ‘Polish teachers will be engaged who, with the best possible intentions, cramp the minds of their pupils, and instil into English children views and mannerisms which belong to Poland and Russia, but which are harmful even there’. The writer believed that the Sir Moses Montefiore Centennial Fund would be far better employed in fostering the ‘practices and dogmas of Jewish belief’ in the Provinces, than in supporting projects in London or adding to the coffers of the already well-financed JCA.<sup>216</sup> This proposal clearly came to nothing as, a quarter of a century later, a conference was convened to discuss communal organisation. This put forward a comprehensive scheme for the organisation, supervision and formalisation of smaller communities. As well as education, the project was intended to encompass *shehita* (the slaughtering, preparation and sale of kosher meat), finances, the accreditation of paid officials and internal relations. Its success was to be ensured by means of regular pastoral visits and inspections.<sup>217</sup>

Any suggestions for improvements to the organisation of provincial affairs that emanated from the Provinces themselves appear to have met with a similar lack of enthusiasm. For example, in 1889 a free member of the Dublin Hebrew Congregation (DHC), Ernest Harris, had proposed the establishment of a central arbitration body under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi. Harris believed that the systematic handling of the disputes that routinely arose in provincial communities would greatly ‘elevate the tone of our communal life’.<sup>218</sup> In 1905, ‘Observer’ from Belfast wrote in to the *Jewish Chronicle* to bemoan what he regarded as the sorry condition of provincial ministers. He noted that many were themselves recent immigrants, with little knowledge of English language and customs. ‘Observer’ believed that the religious functionaries of small provincial congregations compared

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<sup>216</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 October 1883.

<sup>217</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 December 1909.

<sup>218</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 August 1889.

so unfavourably with their Christian counterparts as to be an embarrassment, and that this reflected poorly on the Anglo-Jewish 'centre'. He suggested that the situation could be remedied in a cost-effective manner were appropriately qualified ministers and *shohtim* to be engaged jointly by adjacent small communities, with central assistance.<sup>219</sup> As their overtures were greeted with disinterest, it was no wonder that provincial leaders consistently felt that there was little real understanding or concern in London for their communal needs.<sup>220</sup> Their position is neatly summed up in an ironic piece that appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* in February 1899. This describes a fictional cross-communal meeting, where provincial representatives 'took a back seat, by special invitation'.<sup>221</sup>

The Anglo-Jewish middle classes were particularly unenthusiastic when it came to the financial burden that was created by provincial communities. The Provincial Ministers' Fund supported the recruitment of 'men of recognised ability and clerical training' to serve in provincial communities, where their role was to impart a 'higher conception' of Judaism and to act as fitting ambassadors for the Jewish community.<sup>222</sup> In spite of repeated appeals to the self-interest of acculturated Anglo-Jewry, the Fund appears to have been chronically undersubscribed, threatening the Provinces with 'shame and the darkness of spiritual destitution'.<sup>223</sup> Upholding the 'social and moral' progress of provincial communities was regarded as crucial to the success of dispersal efforts. The *Jewish Chronicle* believed that the failure of this strategy would bring shame upon the 'centre'. Neglect of the provincial communities, it admonished, would cause injury to London.<sup>224</sup>

Many prosperous Anglo-Jews resented bankrolling their provincial co-religionists. It was widely felt that provincial communities made constant, sometimes unreasonable demands on central finances while failing to contribute their own fair share to the communal coffers. In 1902, the Anglo-Jewish Association reported that only around fifty per cent of provincial congregations contributed to the Chief Rabbi's Fund. Eleven of these, including the CHC, were 'hopelessly in arrear'. The contributions that were received were deplored as insignificant, even 'ludicrously

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<sup>219</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 February 1905.

<sup>220</sup> Minutes of the Dublin Hebrew Congregation, 12 November 1911, Irish Jewish Museum, Box m/s 23 (hereafter cited as DHC Minutes); *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1913.

<sup>221</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 February 1899.

<sup>222</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 March 1889; 31 January 1896.

<sup>223</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 March 1889.

<sup>224</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 April 1899.

small', such as a 'trifle' of two guineas from Belfast. Thus, while the United Synagogues (the federation of Anglo-Jewish congregations) underwrote most of the expense, provincial communities received a disproportionately large share of the Chief Rabbi's services. It was remarked that the Chief Rabbi himself devoted 'constant attention' to provincial interests.<sup>225</sup> The following year, an attempt by the CHC to bargain over its arrears was met with derision as 'eloquent testimony to the assimilative capacity of the race'.<sup>226</sup> This double negative stereotype implied that immigrants were far more ready and able to assimilate to the more primitive type of culture – in this case, Irish – to which they were already accustomed. It need hardly be added that this worldview paid little heed to the economic circumstances of the vast majority of provincial congregations. It may well account for the general reluctance of Anglo-Jewry to contribute towards fundraising appeals that were aimed at putting provincial communities on a sounder footing. (On the financial struggles of the Irish communities in this period, see Section 3.1, below.)

The provincial lack of support for central communal institutions was in part a consequence of London's lack of sincere regard for provincial welfare.<sup>227</sup> This is well illustrated by Harris's forthright letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1889:

I have long thought that the present system of ecclesiastical supervision as far as Ireland is concerned was absolutely and entirely valueless. Pastoral visits once in twenty years are worse than useless. What do the Spiritual Chiefs in London know about what is taking place in the communal affairs of Dublin, Belfast, Cork, or Limerick? Comparatively speaking nothing. I believe they have enough to do in looking after the interests of the community in London, and consequently they have no time to cast their eyes on the small outlying groups of their flocks.

Harris believed that Irish Jewry would benefit from the leadership of its own chief rabbi. As this was not practicable in the short term, and unlikely ever to have been authorised by the British chief rabbinate, Harris proposed the central arbitration body that is discussed above.<sup>228</sup> Ireland would not get its own chief rabbi – officially at least – until 1926, five years after the country achieved its independence from Britain.

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<sup>225</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 March 1902.

<sup>226</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 March 1903; for the background to this incident, see Section 3.1, below.

<sup>227</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1872.

<sup>228</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 August 1889; on the autocracy of the chief rabbinate as it evolved under the Adlers, see, e.g., Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, chap. 3; Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, chap. 4; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, chap. 7.

This section has examined the approach that was developed by the Anglo-Jewish leadership for meeting the demands of mass immigration, and the concerns and preconceptions upon which it was based. Particular attention has been given to the way in which Anglo-Jewish *mores* influenced the relationship between London and the so-called Provinces. Ever cautious and fearful of attracting negative publicity, the Anglo-Jewish establishment tackled largescale east European immigration through the twin strategies of dispersal and acculturation. This aimed – unsuccessfully – to redistribute immigrants more evenly throughout the British Isles, while attempting to accelerate their absorption into British society, Jewish and non-Jewish. This was to be achieved primarily through the concerted cultivation of the English language and British values in place of Yiddish language and culture, and traditional Jewish *mores*. The policies of dispersion and acculturation were accompanied by a minimalist approach to philanthropy which was intended, on the one hand, to encourage the Victorian virtue of self-reliance and, on the other, to deter further immigration. A host of negative assumptions underpinned Anglo-Jewish perceptions of the social, cultural and economic condition of their immigrant co-religionists, whose argumentativeness, disorganisation and moral backwardness were frequently bemoaned. These attitudes inevitably informed the dealings of genteel Anglo-Jewry with their foreign brethren, both metropolitan and provincial. It has already been observed that no western community was equal to the economic burden of mass emigration. Nevertheless provincial communities had been greatly expanded, and sometimes established from scratch, in order to alleviate the economic and social demands that mass immigration had placed on middle and upper class London Jews. These communities were then left to flounder economically, and sometimes spiritually, all under the watchful, critical and parsimonious eye of their metropolitan brethren. The central Jewish authorities were inattentive and unresponsive to provincial needs, and whatever support was forthcoming from London came with a large dose of prejudice, resentment and begrudgery. Little regard was shown, in particular, for the financial exigencies that were faced by small communities as they strove to establish themselves on a sounder and more permanent footing. The impact of these broader circumstances on Ireland’s small and struggling communities will be investigated in detail in Chapters Three and Four.

## **1.6 CONCLUSIONS: ‘ALL ISRAEL ARE RESPONSIBLE ONE FOR THE OTHER’: THE CHANGING FACE OF JEWISH SOLIDARITY (1840-1914)<sup>229</sup>**

Chapter One has charted the evolution of modern Jewish diplomacy from its beginnings with the Damascus Affair of 1840 to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, which marked the end of the mass emigration period. The chapter opened with a survey of Jewish life and the sometimes violent nature of the ‘Jewish Question’ in the Russian empire, with an emphasis on the complexities of Russian Jewish history and the social and cultural diversity of Russian Jewry. The way in which these elements have traditionally been misunderstood and relativised within western culture, both popular and academic, was highlighted throughout the first part of the chapter. This was contrasted with the findings of contemporary Russian Jewish scholarship, a field that has been transformed over recent decades to the detriment of many longstanding misperceptions and stereotypes.

Next came a brief overview of the western response to crisis from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The main focus was the phenomenon of mass emigration, and the enormous demands that this steady influx of mostly impoverished east European Jews placed upon their western counterparts. The western Jewish response to crisis was found, without exception, to have been determined by cultural and political concerns that related more to western Jewry than to the objects of its activism. As has been shown, the main aspiration was to safeguard the hard-won achievements of the acculturated west, that had gradually been gained during the emancipation process. This centred on justifying and rationalising the place of Jews and of Judaism itself within broader western society, issues which were as yet largely unresolved. This aim could only be accomplished by the containment of challenges whether moral in form, such as ‘ritual murder’ accusations, or physical, as embodied in hordes of visibly foreign co-religionists who drew unwanted attention on their more integrated counterparts and threatened to become a burden on civil society.

The acculturation of western Jewry was accompanied by the rise of Jewish representative bodies on both a domestic and an international scale. The defence of local Jewish interests and the anxiety to demonstrate loyalty to individual host communities posed an increasing challenge to international Jewish solidarity, which

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<sup>229</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Shavuot 39A, chosen as the motto of the AIU.

had always been fragile at best. European Jewish solidarity proved unable to withstand the political tensions that marked the lead-up to World War One, and utterly collapsed in the face of wartime jingoism. The growing vacuum in Jewish leadership in Europe allowed American Jewish representatives to come to the fore in international Jewish diplomatic efforts from the early twentieth century onwards, mirroring the ambitions of the American government with respect to broader international diplomacy. Particular attention was paid in this chapter to the activities of the Jewish leadership in the United States and Britain, as these were the principal destinations for east European migration. The final section concentrated upon Britain, as the primary context for the historiographical re-examination of Irish Jewry with which this thesis is concerned.

The policies that were adopted by the western Jewish authorities with the intention of containing mass immigration focused, across the board, on exporting the immigration problem elsewhere, preferably to another jurisdiction. In the United States and Britain, determined efforts were also made to disperse newcomers internally in order to prevent the formation of visible voluntary ghettos in major cities. In Britain, this was accompanied by a concerted programme of anglicisation, which was intended to hasten the absorption of Jewish immigrants into wider society, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Philanthropy was employed as a means of promoting and reinforcing establishment policy. To this end incentives were provided to encourage immigrants to relocate, to adopt more 'English' habits and customs, and to deter further immigration. As has been shown, the efficacy of these strategies was middling at best. Immigrants continued to settle in Britain at a steady pace, with the vast majority flocking to London and a handful of other industrial and commercial centres. This has led to a historiographical bias towards the immigrant experience in London which is only recently coming to be addressed. This dissertation, in recovering and reassessing the history of a small and outlying 'provincial' Jewry, represents a contribution to this broader endeavour.

Notwithstanding this historiographical imbalance, the attitudes of the Anglo-Jewish middle classes did not vary whether immigrants were based in London or further afield in the so-called Provinces. Settlement in provincial communities was encouraged largely for mercenary reasons, in order to benefit metropolitan Anglo-Jewry. Nevertheless, the prosperous and acculturated Jews of London were hypercritical of what they perceived to be the shortcomings of provincial immigrants

and loathe to provide the support that was needed to establish their frequently struggling communities on a sounder economic and spiritual basis. This lack of regard for provincial welfare did not go unremarked – or indeed unreciprocated – in the Provinces. These tensions between ‘native’ and immigrant communities were not, of course, unique to British Jewry but were replicated in many of the places in which immigrants chose to settle during this period.

We now turn to investigating the relevance of these broader trends for the Irish setting, and to examining the impact of Ireland’s international Jewish context upon existing understandings of Irish Jewish history and historiography.

