Stalin's Willing Executioners
Jews As a Hostile Elite in the USSR

The Jewish Century
Yuri Slezkine
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A persistent theme among critics of Jews—particularly those on the pre-World War II right—has been that the Bolshevik revolution was a Jewish revolution and that the Soviet Union was dominated by Jews. This theme appears in a wide range of writings, from Henry Ford's *International Jew*, to published statements by a long list of British, French, and American political figures in the 1920s (Winston Churchill, Woodrow Wilson, and David Lloyd George), and, in its most extreme form, by Adolf Hitler, who wrote:

> Now begins the last great revolution. By wresting political power for himself, the Jew casts off the few remaining shreds of disguise he still wears. The democratic plebeian Jew turns into the blood Jew and the tyrant of peoples. In a few years he will try to exterminate the national pillars of intelligence and, by robbing the peoples of their natural spiritual leadership, will make them ripe for the slavish lot of a permanent subjugation. The most terrible example of this is Russia.[1]

This long tradition stands in sharp contradiction to the official view, promulgated by Jewish organizations and almost all contemporary historians, that Jews played no special role in Bolshevism and indeed were specifically victimized by it. Yuri Slezkine's book provides a much needed resolution to these opposing perspectives. It is an intellectual tour de force, alternately muddled and brilliant, courageous and apologetic.

Apollonians and Mercurians

One of the muddled elements, apparent at the beginning and present throughout *The Jewish Century,* is Slezkine's claim that the peoples of the world can be classified into two groups. The successful peoples of the modern world,

termed Mercurians, are urban, mobile, literate, articulate, and intellectually sophisticated. Distinguished by their ability to manipulate symbols, they pursue "wealth for the sake of learning, learning for the sake of wealth, and both wealth and learning for their own sake" (p. 1). Since Slezkine sees Jews as the quintessential Mercurians, he regards modernization as essentially a process of everyone becoming Jewish. His second group, which he calls Apollonians, is rooted in the land and in traditional agrarian cultures, and prizes physical strength and warrior values.

Slezkine conceptualizes Mercurianism as a worldview, and therefore a matter of psychological choice, rather than as a set of psychological mechanisms, the most important of which is general intelligence.[2] As a result of this false premise, he exaggerates the similarity among Mercurians, underestimates the power of ethnocentrism as a unifying factor in Jewish history, and fails to understand the roots of Western social and economic institutions.

Slezkine views Judaism as one of many Mercurian cultures—peoples that dwell alone in Diasporas, living among strangers and often acting as economic middlemen: the Overseas Chinese, Indians, and Lebanese, and the Gypsies and Irish Travelers. Their common denominator, in Slezkine's view (and mine[3]), is their status as strangers to the people they live among—sojourners who, above all else, do not intermarry or socialize with the locals. Their interactions with the local Apollonians involve "mutual hostility, suspicion and contempt" (p. 20) and a sense of superiority. Moreover, a "common host stereotype of the Mercurians is that they are devious, acquisitive, greedy, crafty, pushy, and crude" (p. 23). The Mercurians possess greater kin solidarity and internal cohesion than the people they live among; they are characterized by extended families and patriarchal social organization.

So far, so good, although I would stress that the family organization of such groups derives more from the long-term adaptation to the culture areas they originate from than from an adaptation to the nomadic, middleman niche.[4] But Slezkine maintains that Mercurians are above all smarter than the people they live among: They are said to possess "cunning intelligence," but it is surely a mistake to consider such disparate groups as Jews (or the Overseas Chinese) and Gypsies (or the Irish Travelers) as having in common a particular set of intellectual traits. After all, the Jews, as Slezkine shows, have repeatedly become an academic, intellectual, cultural, and economic elite in Western societies, while Gypsies have tended toward illiteracy and are at best an economically marginal group.

Slezkine imagines that the Gypsies and literate middleman groups like the Jews or Overseas Chinese differ not in intelligence but only in whether they express their intelligence through literacy or an oral culture: "Businessmen, diplomats, doctors, and psychotherapists are literate peddlers, heralds, healers, and fortune-tellers" (p. 29)—a formulation that will not stand the test of current psychometric data. In fact, the general patterns of Gypsies are the

opposite of Jews: a low-investment, low-IQ reproductive style characterized by higher fertility, earlier onset of sexual behavior and reproduction, more unstable pair bonds, higher rate of single parenting, shorter interval of birth spacing, higher infant mortality rate, and higher rate of survival of low birth weight infants.[5] Intelligence, for Slezkine, is a lifestyle choice, rather than a set of brain processes underlying information processing and strongly influenced by genetic variation. As we shall see, this formulation is very useful to Slezkine as he constructs his argument later in the book.

In his attempt to paint with a very broad brush, Slezkine also ignores other real differences among the Mercurians, most notably, I would argue, the aggressiveness of the Jews compared to the relative passivity of the Overseas Chinese. Both the Jews and the Overseas Chinese are highly intelligent and entrepreneurial, but the Overseas Chinese have not formed a hostile cultural elite in Southeast Asian countries, where they have chiefly settled, and have not been concentrated in media ownership or in the construction of culture. We do not read of Chinese cultural movements disseminated in the major universities and media outlets that subject the traditional culture of Southeast Asians and anti-Chinese sentiment to radical critique, or of Chinese organizations campaigning for the removal of native cultural and religious symbols from public places.[6] Slezkine paints Jews as deeply involved in the construction of culture and in the politics of the host societies, but the role of the Chinese was quite different. The following passage describing the political attitudes of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand could never have applied to Jews in Western societies since the Enlightenment:

> But few seem to know or indeed to care about the restrictions on citizenship, nationality rights, and political activities in general, nor are these restrictions given much publicity in the Chinese press. This merely points up the fact, recognized by all observers, that the overseas Chinese are primarily concerned with making a living, or amassing a fortune, and thus take only a passive interest in the formal political life of the country in which they live.[7]

Moreover, Slezkine pictures the middlemen as specializing in "certain dangerous, marvelous, and distasteful" (p. 9), but nevertheless indispensable, pursuits (p. 36)—a formulation that carries a grain of truth, as in places where natives were prohibited from loaning money at interest. However, he ignores, or at least fails to spell out, the extent to which Jews have been willing agents of exploitative elites, not only in Western societies, but in the Muslim world as well.[8] This is the overarching generalization which one can make about Jewish economic behavior over the ages. Their role went far beyond performing tasks deemed inappropriate for the natives for religious reasons; rather they were often tasks at which natives would be relatively less ruthless in exploiting their fellows. This was especially the case in Eastern Europe, where economic

arrangements such as tax farming, estate management, and monopolies on retail liquor distribution lasted far longer than in the West:

> In this way, the Jewish arendator became the master of life and death over the population of entire districts, and having nothing but a short-term and purely financial interest in the relationship, was faced with the irresistible temptation to pare his temporary subjects to the bone. On the noble estates he tended to put his relatives and co-religionists in charge of the flour-mill, the brewery, and in particular of the lord's taverns where by custom the peasants were obliged to drink. On the church estates, he became the collector of all ecclesiastical dues, standing by the church door for his payment from tithe-payers, baptized infants, newly-weds, and mourners. On the [royal] estates…, he became in effect the Crown Agent, farming out the tolls, taxes, and courts, and adorning his oppressions with all the dignity of royal authority.[9]

Jewish involvement in the Communist elite of the USSR can be seen as a variation on an ancient theme in Jewish culture rather than a new one sprung from the special circumstances of the Bolshevik Revolution. Rather than being the willing agents of exploitative non-Jewish elites who were clearly separated from both the Jews and the people they ruled, Jews became an entrenched part of an exploitative and oppressive elite in which group boundaries were blurred. This blurring of boundaries was aided by four processes, all covered by Slezkine: shedding overt Jewish identities in favor of a veneer of international socialism in which Jewish identity and ethnic networking were relatively invisible; seeking lower-profile positions in order to de-emphasize Jewish preeminence (e.g., Trotsky); adopting Slavic names; and engaging in a limited amount of intermarriage with non-Jewish elites.[10] Indeed, the "plethora of Jewish wives" among non-Jewish leaders[11] doubtless heightened the Jewish atmosphere of the top levels of the Soviet government, given that everyone, especially Stalin, appears to have been quite conscious of ethnicity.[12] For their part, anti-Semites have accused Jews of having "*implanted those of their own category as wives and husbands for influential figures and officials.*"[13]

By emphasizing the necessity and distastefulness of traditional Jewish occupations, Slezkine also ignores the extent to which Jewish competition suppressed the formation of a native middle class in Eastern Europe. (This has also occurred throughout Southeast Asia, because of competition from the Overseas Chinese.) Instead, Slezkine sees Eastern Europeans, through stereotypic lenses, as quintessential Apollonians, some of whom became Mercurian modernists when forced to by circumstances, rather than as containing elements that would have naturally aspired to and competently performed the economic and cultural functions that instead came to be performed by Jews because of their ability to create ethnic monopolies in goods and services. When Jews won the economic competition in early modern Poland, the result was that the great majority of Poles were reduced to the status of agricultural laborers supervised by Jewish estate managers in

an economy in which trade, manufacturing, and artisanry were in large part controlled by Jews.[14] On the other hand, in most of Western Europe Jews had been expelled in the Middle Ages. As a result, when modernization occurred, it was accomplished with an indigenous middle class. If, as in Eastern Europe, Jews had won the economic competition in most of these professions, there would not have been a non-Jewish middle class in England. Whatever one imagines might have been the fortunes and character of England with predominantly Jewish artisans, merchants, and manufacturers, it seems reasonable to suppose that the Christian taxpayers of England made a good investment in their own future when they agreed to pay King Edward I a massive tax of £116,346 in return for expelling two thousand Jews in 1290.[15]

While Slezkine's treatment overemphasizes middlemen as a societal necessity rather than as ethnic outsiders competing for scarce resources, he does note that the rise of the Jews in the USSR came at the expense of the Germans as a Mercurian minority in Russia prior to the Revolution. (Jews were excluded from traditional Russia apart from the Pale of Settlement, which included Ukraine, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Crimea, and part of Poland.) Germans manned the imperial bureaucracy, formed a large percentage of professionals, entrepreneurs, and artisans, were more literate than the Russians, and had a sense of cultural superiority and ethnic solidarity:

> And so they were, mutatis mutandis, head to the Russian heart, mind to the Russian soul, consciousness to Russian spontaneity. They stood for calculation, efficiency, and discipline; cleanliness, fastidiousness, and sobriety; pushiness, tactlessness, and energy; sentimentality, love of family, and unmanliness (or absurdly exaggerated manliness)…. Perhaps paradoxically, in light of what would happen in the twentieth century, Germans were, occupationally and conceptually, the Jews of ethnic Russia (as well as much of Eastern Europe). Or rather, the Russian Germans were to Russia what the German Jews were to Germany—only much more so. So fundamental were the German Mercurians to Russia's view of itself that both their existence and their complete and abrupt disappearance have been routinely taken for granted (pp. 113–114).

Although the replacement of Germans by Jews was well under way by the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, a key consequence of the Revolution was the substitution of one Mercurian group, the Germans, by another, the Jews. The difference between the Jews and the Germans was that the Jews had a longstanding visceral antipathy, out of past historical grievances, both real and imagined, toward the people and culture they came to administer. Indeed, Russians on the nationalist right admired the Germans, at least up to World War I. For example, a statute of one nationalist organization, Michael the Archangel Russian People's Union, expressed "particular trust in the German population of the Empire,"[16] while its leader, Vladimir Purishkevich, accused the Jews of "irreconcilable hatred of Russia and everything Russian."[17] Jews disliked the Christian religion of the vast majority of Russians because

of the antagonistic relationship between Judaism and Christianity over the ages; Jews distrusted the peasants, who "fell from grace" (p. 140) with the intelligentsia after the numerous anti-Jewish pogroms, especially after 1880; and Jews blamed the tsar for not doing enough to keep the peasants in check and for imposing the various quotas on Jewish advancement that went into place, also beginning in the 1880s—quotas that slowed down but by no means halted Jewish overrepresentation in the universities and the professions. In this respect, the Germans were far more like the Overseas Chinese, in that they became an elite without having an aggressively hostile attitude toward the people and culture they administered and dominated economically. Thus when Jews achieved power in Russia, it was as a hostile elite with a deep sense of historic grievance. As a result, they became willing executioners of both the people and cultures they came to rule, including the Germans.

After the Revolution, not only were the Germans replaced, but there was active suppression of any remnants of the older order and their descendants. Jews have always shown a tendency to rise because their natural proclivities (e.g., high intelligence) and powerful ethnic networking, but here they also benefited from "antibourgeois" quotas in educational institutions and other forms of discrimination against the middle class and aristocratic elements of the old regime that would have provided more competition with Jews. In a letter intercepted by the secret police, the father of a student wrote that his son and their friends were about to be purged from the university because of their class origins. "It is clear that only the Jerusalem academics and the Communist Party members generally are going to stay" (p. 243). The bourgeois elements from the previous regime, including the ethnic Germans, would have no future. Thus the mass murder of peasants and nationalists was combined with the systematic exclusion of the previously existing non-Jewish middle class. The wife of a Leningrad University professor noted, "in all the institutions, only workers and Israelites are admitted; the life of the intelligentsia is very hard" (p. 243). Even at the end of the 1930s, prior to the Russification that accompanied World War II, "the Russian Federation…was still doing penance for its imperial past while also serving as an example of an ethnicity-free society" (p. 276). While all other nationalities, including Jews, were allowed and encouraged to keep their ethnic identities, the revolution remained an anti-majoritarian movement.

Slezkine is aware of the biological reality of kinship and ethnicity, but he steadfastly pursues a cultural determinist model. He argues that biological models of ethnic nepotism are inappropriate because some nomadic groups are not kin groups but rather "quasi-families" like the Sicilian mafia (p. 35). But this is a distinction without a difference: Why are "natural" kinship groups significantly different from groups composed of families that band together? Each is characterized by internal cohesion and external strangeness, the traits Slezkine deems essential, but there are also kinship connections and a genetic

divide between themselves and surrounding peoples. Cultural badges of group membership and a culturally generated ideology of kin-group membership are age-old ways of cementing kinship groups and setting up barriers that mark real biological differences—the evolved psychology described by modern research in social identity theory.[18] And in any case, the demonstrable genetic differences between Slezkine's prototypical Mercurians—the Jews, Gypsies, and Overseas Chinese—and the surrounding peoples cry out for a biological analysis.

Moreover, Slezkine underestimates the power of ethnocentrism as a unifying factor in Jewish history. This is most apparent in his discussion of Israel, which he describes as a radical departure from the Jewish tradition, because Israel is a quintessentially Apollonian society. Long after Western societies had rejected ethnic nationalism:

> Israel continued to live in the European 1930s: only Israel still belonged to the eternally young, worshiped athleticism and inarticulateness, celebrated combat and secret police, promoted hiking and scouting, despised doubt and introspection, embodied the seamless unity of the chosen, and rejected most traits traditionally associated with Jewishness…. After two thousand years of living as Mercurians among Apollonians, Jews turned into the only Apollonians in a world of Mercurians (or rather, the only civilized Apollonians in a world of Mercurians and barbarians)" (pp. 327, 328).

But Israelis certainly did not reject traditional Jewish ethnocentrism and sense of peoplehood. Slezkine portrays Israelis as simply choosing to be ethnocentric nationalists, but ethnocentrism (like intelligence) is a biological system, not a lifestyle choice, and traditional Diaspora Jews were certainly deeply and intensely ethnocentric above all else.[19] There can be little question that Israel and Zionism have been and are promoted and spearheaded by the most ethnocentric elements of the Jewish community.[20]

For Slezkine, as for so many Jews, the moral debt owed to Jews by Western societies justifies the most extreme expressions of Jewish racialism: "The rhetoric of ethnic homogeneity and ethnic deportations, tabooed elsewhere in the West, is a routine element of Israeli political life…. It is true that no other European nation is in a condition of permanent war; it is also true that no other European state can have as strong a claim on the West's moral imagination" (pp. 364–365). Slezkine sees the moral taboo on European ethnocentrism, the creation of Nazism as the epitome of absolute evil, and the consecration of Jews as "the Chosen people of the postwar Western world" (p. 366) as simply the inevitable results of the events of World War II (pp. 365–366). In fact, however, the creation and maintenance of the culture of the Holocaust and the special moral claims of Jews and Israel are the result of Jewish ethnic activism. These claims have a specific historical trajectory, they are fueled by specific key events, and they are sustained by specific forces.[21] For example, the Holocaust was not emphasized as a cultural icon until the late 1960s and

early 1970s, when images of the Holocaust were deployed on a large scale in popular culture by Jewish activists specifically to rally support for Israel in the context of its wars of 1967 and 1973.

Similarly, Slezkine sees the United States as a Jewish promised land precisely because it is not defined tribally and "has no state-bearing natives" (p. 369). But the recasting of the United States as a "proposition nation" was importantly influenced by the triumph of several Jewish intellectual and political movements more than it was a natural and inevitable culmination of American history.[22] These movements collectively delegitimized cultural currents of the early twentieth century whereby many Americans thought of themselves as members of a very successful ethnic group. For example, the immigration restrictionists of the 1920s unabashedly asserted the right of European-derived peoples to the land they had conquered and settled. Americans of northern European descent in the United States thought of themselves as part of a cultural and ethnic heritage extending backward in time to the founding of the country, and writers like Madison Grant (*The Passing of the Great Race*) and Lothrop Stoddard (*The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy*) had a large public following. At that time both academia and mainstream culture believed in the reality of race; that there were important differences between the races, including in intelligence and moral character; and that races naturally competed for land and other resources.[23]

Jewish Superiority

The assertion that Israel is the only civilized Apollonian society, despite its acknowledged racialism and open discussion of ethnic deportations, reveals Slezkine's belief in Jewish moral and intellectual superiority. Indeed, Slezkine regards both European individualism and the European nation-state as imitations of preexisting Jewish accomplishments: "Europeans imitated Jews not only in being modern [by becoming individualists interacting with strangers], but also in being ancient" [i.e., by developing ethnically based nation-states] (p. 44). So we read condescending passages such as "among the most successful [of the European Mercurians] were Max Weber's Protestants, who discovered a humorless, dignified way to be Jewish" (p. 41). This act of intellectual gymnastics depends on the following analogy: Jews act as an ethnically based tribe within societies, seeing non-Jews as strangers; Europeans establish tribal nation-states while behaving as individualists within their societies (seeing other Europeans as strangers). The sweeping conclusion: Jews are the progenitors therefore of both aspects of modernity: economic individualism and the ethnically based nation-state. The Holocaust then occurred because the European nation-state, although an imitation of Judaism, failed somehow to be sufficiently Jewish: "In the hands of heavily armed, thoroughly bureaucratized, and imperfectly Judaized Apollonians, Mercurian exclusivity and fastidiousness became relentlessly expansive. In the hands of messianically inclined Apollonians,

it turned lethal—especially to the Mercurians. The Holocaust had as much to do with tradition as it did with modernity" (p. 46).

But it is a huge stretch to argue from an analogy—and a loose one at that—to actual imitation and influence. (And one just doesn't know what to say about his claim that Europeans perpetrated the Holocaust because they had become imperfect Jews.) Slezkine fails to provide any evidence that there is anything but a hazy and forced logical connection between European individualism and the Jewish role as a Diaspora people living among strangers. The reality is that by becoming individualists, Western Europeans returned to distinctive roots buried in their primeval past,[24] whereas Judaism, because of its deep-seated tribalism, was widely regarded by Enlightenment intellectuals as an outmoded relic. Indeed, several Jewish commentators have noted that the post-Enlightenment forms of Judaism have essentially been responses to the corrosive effects of European civilization, with its emphasis on individualism and ethnic assimilation, on Judaism as an ethnically based collectivist group—what early Zionist Arthur Ruppin described as "the destructive influence of European civilization" on Judaism because of its tendency to break down group barriers and lead eventually to assimilation and intermarriage.[25] Moreover, as Slezkine notes, Jews are not really individualists at all. Even in the modern world, the tribal approach of the Jews in economic enterprises employs ethnic kinship as a central component, whereas the individualistic approach of the Europeans sees this as illegitimate (p. 43). The bottom line is that it is ridiculous to claim that Jews are individualists because they treat outsiders as individuals while acknowledging that they retain a powerful ingroup consciousness and are masters of ethnic networking.

It is no stretch at all, however, to show that Jews have achieved a preeminent position in Europe and America, and Slezkine provides us with statistics of Jewish domination only dimly hinted at in the following examples from Europe in the late nineteenth century to the rise of National Socialism. Austria: All but one bank in fin de siècle Vienna was administered by Jews, and Jews constituted 70% of the stock exchange council; Hungary: between 50 and 90 percent of all industry was controlled by Jewish banking families, and 71% of the most wealthy taxpayers were Jews; Germany: Jews were overrepresented among the economic elite by a factor of 33. Similar massive overrepresentation was also to be found in educational attainment and among professionals (e.g., Jews constituted 62% of the lawyers in Vienna in 1900, 25% in Prussia in 1925, 34% in Poland, and 51% in Hungary). Indeed, "the universities, 'free' professions, salons, coffeehouses, concert halls, and art galleries in Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest became so heavily Jewish that liberalism and Jewishness became almost indistinguishable" (p. 63).

Slezkine documents the well-known fact that, as Moritz Goldstein famously noted in 1912, "We Jews administer the spiritual possessions of Germany." However, he regards Jewish cultural dominance, not only in Germany but throughout Eastern Europe and Austria, as completely benign: "The secular

Jews' love of Goethe, Schiller, and the other Pushkins—as well as the various northern forests they represented—was sincere and tender" (p. 68). Their only sin was that their love of cultural icons transcended national and ethnic boundaries in an age of popular nationalism—for example, their promotion of German culture among the Czechs, Latvians, and Romanians. But this is far from the whole story. Jews were not simply lovers of Pushkin and Goethe. A major theme of anti-Jewish attitudes was that Jews were deeply involved in creating a "culture of critique"—that Jewish cultural influence was entirely negative and shattered the social bonds of the peoples they lived among. Slezkine cites Heinrich Heine as a prime example of a Jewish intellectual with sincere and tender love for German culture, but the Germans, from Wagner to von Treitschke to Chamberlain and Hitler, didn't see it that way. For example, Heinrich von Treitschke, a prominent nineteenth-century German intellectual, complained of Heine's "mocking German humiliation and disgrace following the Napoleonic wars" and Heine's having "no sense of shame, loyalty, truthfulness, or reverence."[26] Nor does he mention von Treitschke's comment that "what Jewish journalists write in mockery and satirical remarks against Christianity is downright revolting"; "about the shortcomings of the Germans [or] French, everybody could freely say the worst things; but if somebody dared to speak in just and moderate terms about some undeniable weakness of the Jewish character, he was immediately branded as a barbarian and religious persecutor by nearly all of the newspapers."[27] Such attitudes were prominent among anti-Jewish writers and activists, reaching a crescendo with the National Socialists in Germany.

Yet for Slezkine, if Jews did battle against various national cultures—and in the end, he acknowledges that they did—it was only because they realized that their Mercurian worldview was superior: "Did they really want to transform themselves into thick-skulled peasants now that the actual peasants had, for all practical purposes, admitted the error of their ways?" (p. 74). Jews were not recognized as legitimate curators of the national culture, but their lack of acceptance means only that they are truly modern: "Deprived of the comforts of their tribe and not allowed into the new ones created by their Apollonian neighbors, they became the only true moderns" (p. 75)—a statement that accepts at face value the idea that the secular Jews who had become the custodians and main producers of culture had ceased to have a Jewish identification. Slezkine fails to provide any evidence at all for this claim, and in fact there is overwhelming evidence that it is false.[28]

The main weapons Jews used against national cultures were two quintessentially modern ideologies, Marxism and Freudianism, "both [of which] countered nationalism's quaint tribalism with a modern (scientific) path to wholeness" (p. 80). Slezkine correctly views both of these as Jewish ideologies functioning as organized religions, with sacred texts promising deliverance from earthly travail. While most of his book recounts the emergence of a

Jewish elite under the banner of Marxism in the Soviet Union, his comments on psychoanalysis bear mentioning. Psychoanalysis "moved to the United States to reinforce democratic citizenship with a much-needed new prop…. In America, where nationwide tribal metaphors could not rely on theories of biological descent, Freudianism came in very handy indeed" by erecting the "Explicitly Therapeutic State" (pp. 79–80). The establishment of the Explicitly Therapeutic State was much aided by yet another Jewish intellectual movement, the Frankfurt School, which combined psychoanalysis and Marxism. The result was a culture of critique which fundamentally aimed not only at de-legitimizing the older American culture, but even attempted to alter or obliterate human nature itself: "The statistical connection between 'the Jewish question' and the hope for a new species of mankind seems fairly strong" (p. 90).

And when people don't cooperate in becoming a new species, there's always murder. Slezkine describes Walter Benjamin, an icon of the Frankfurt School and darling of the current crop of postmodern intellectuals, "with glasses on his nose, autumn in his soul and vicarious murder in his heart" (p. 216), a comment that illustrates the fine line between murder and cultural criticism, especially when engaged in by ethnic outsiders. Indeed, on another occasion, Benjamin stated, "Hatred and [the] spirit of sacrifice…are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren."[29] Although Slezkine downplays this aspect of Jewish motivation, Jews' lachrymose perceptions of their history—their images of enslaved ancestors—were potent motivators of the hatred unleashed by the upheavals of the twentieth century.

Slezkine is entirely correct that Marxism, psychoanalysis, and the Frankfurt School were fundamentally Jewish intellectual movements. However, he fails to provide anything like a detailed account of how these ideologies served specifically Jewish interests, most generally in combating anti-Semitism and subverting ethnic identification among Europeans.[30] Indeed, a major premise of his treatment is that Jewish radicals were not Jews at all.

Were Jewish Radicals Jews?

Slezkine recounts the vast overrepresentation of Jews in the radical left in Europe and America. His attempts to explain this cover some familiar ground: Jewish intellectual opposition to the status quo resulting from their marginal social status (Thorsten Veblen); Jewish leftism as a secular, universalized form of traditional Jewish messianism and rationalism in which Jewish leftists are descendents of the Old Testament prophets calling for social justice (Lev Shternberg, dean of Soviet anthropologists); Jewish Communists as recreating traditional Jewish culture forms—especially scriptural interpretation and intense teacher-student relationships—in a Communist setting (historian Jaff Schatz). Slezkine's own contribution is to argue that Jewish radicals were in revolt against their families, "rejecting the world of their fathers because it seemed to embody the connection between Judaism and antisocialism

(understood as commercialism, tribalism, and patriarchy)…the real reason for their common revulsion was the feeling that capitalism and Jewishness were one and the same thing" (pp. 96, 98). "Most Jewish rebels did not fight the state in order to become free Jews; they fought the state in order to become free of Jewishness—and thus Free" (p. 152).

This is a very useful theory, of course—useful because it denies that Jewish radicals were Jews at all, that in fact they were anti-Jews (if not anti-Semites—and there's the rub). When Slezkine then goes on to recount the Jewish role as an elite in the most murderous regime in European history, we are led to believe that the only connection of those Jews with Jewishness is genealogical: Russian Jewish radicals, lovers of Pushkin and Tolstoy (as their counterparts in Poland, Hungary, and Germany loved Adam Mickiewicz, Sandór Petőfi, and Goethe), idealistically and selflessly set out to fashion a secular utopia of social justice by overcoming Apollonian backwardness even as they rejected their Jewish origins and all things Jewish.

His evidence for this is rather thin, but even in the examples Slezkine uses to illustrate his point it is clear that these Jewish radicals hated everything about their national cultures except for one or two literary figures. The rest would have to go. As Exhibit A, Slezkine presents Georg Lukács, the son of a prominent Jewish capitalist, who describes his profound discontent with his father's way of life. But Lukács also expresses his hatred for "the whole of official Hungary"—how he extended his unhappiness with his father to "cover the whole of Magyar life, Magyar history, and Magyar literature indiscriminately (save for Petőfi)" (p. 97). Ah, yes. Save for Petőfi. All else—the people and the culture—would have to go, by mass murder if necessary. (Lazar Kaganovich, the most prolific Jewish mass murderer of the Stalinist era, is pictured at the end of his life reading Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Turgenev [pp. 97–98].) But rather than see this as an aspect of traditional Jewish hatred for non-Jews and their culture, souped up and rationalized with a veneer of Marxism, Slezkine explains these radicals as enlightened Mercurians who wished to destroy the old culture except for a few classics of modern literature. We may give thanks to know that Shakespeare would have survived the revolution.

Another of Slezkine's examples is Lev Kopelev, a Soviet writer who witnessed and rationalized the Ukrainian famine as "historical necessity" (p. 230). Slezkine states categorically that Kopelev did not identify as a Jew, but his own material indicates the complexity of the matter. Kopelev identified himself on Soviet documents as "Jewish" but claimed that was only because he did not want to be seen as a "'cowardly apostate,' and—after World War II—because he did not want to renounce those who had been murdered for being Jewish" (p. 241). To the external world, Kopelev is a proud Jew, but to his close associates—in his "heart of hearts"— he is only a Communist and Soviet patriot. But of course many of his close associates were ethnic Jews, and he shed no tears for the Ukrainian and Russian peasants and nationalists who

were murdered in the name of international socialism even as he mourned the loss of Jews murdered because they were Jews. By World War II he had become a "leading ideologue of Russian patriotism" (p. 279), developing "an acute sense of hurt and injustice on behalf of Russia, Russian history, and the Russian word" (p. 280) as he attempted to rally the Russians to do battle with the Germans. Russian patriotism had suddenly become useful—much as, I would argue, harnessing the patriotism and high regard for military service among Americans has been useful for Jewish neoconservatives eager to rearrange the politics of the Middle East in the interests of Israel. Ideology is a wonderfully effective instrument in the service of self-deception (or deception).

Probably more typical of the Jewish identity of the Bolsheviks is the account of Vitaly Rubin, a prominent philosopher and an ethnic Jew, who recounted his career at a top Moscow school in the 1930s where over half the students were Jewish:

> Understandably, the Jewish question did not arise there. Not only did it not arise in the form of anti-Semitism, it did not arise at all. All the Jews knew themselves to be Jews but considered everything to do with Jewishness a thing of the past. I remember thinking of my father's stories about his childhood, heder [Jewish elementary school], and traditional Jewish upbringing as something consigned to oblivion. None of that had anything to do with me. There was no active desire to renounce one's Jewishness. The problem simply did not exist (pp. 253–254).

These Jews clearly have a Jewish identity but they have been removed from traditional Jewish religious cultural forms. In such a predominantly Jewish milieu, there was no need to renounce their Jewish identity and no need to push aggressively for Jewish interests because they had achieved elite status. And yet, just prior to World War II, as Russians started replacing Jews among the political elite and Nazism emerged as an officially anti-Jewish ideology, overt Jewish identity reemerged. Following World War II, Israel began exerting its gravitational pull on Jews, much to the chagrin of a suspicious Stalin. The visit of Golda Meir in 1948 and the outpouring of Jewish support for Zionism that it aroused was a watershed event for Soviet Jewry. Stalin reacted to it by initiating a campaign against public Jews and Yiddish culture.

It is interesting in this regard that the leading Soviet spokesmen on anti-Semitism were both ethnic Jews with non-Jewish sounding names, Emilian Yaroslavsky (Gubelman) and Yuri Larin (Lurie). Both refer to Jews in the third person (p. 245), as if they themselves were not Jews. But when Larin tried to explain the embarrassing fact that Jews were "preeminent, overabundant, dominant, and so on" (p. 251) among the elite in the Soviet Union, he mentioned the "unusually strong sense of solidarity and a predisposition toward mutual help and support" (p. 252)—ethnic networking by any other name.

Obviously, "mutual help and support" require that Jews recognize each other as Jews. Jewish identity may not have been much discussed, but it operated nonetheless, even if subconsciously, in the rarefied circles at the top of Soviet

society. An example not presented by Slezkine is recounted in a report of 1950 to the central committee on Jewish activities at an aircraft production facility:

> In a number of extremely important departments of the Central Aero-Hydrodynamic Institute there are workers due to be substituted for political reasons. They gather around themselves people of the same nationality, impose the habit of praising one another (while making others erroneously believe that they are indispensable), and force their protégés through to high posts.[31]

Indeed, there is no other way to explain the extraordinary percentages of Jews throughout elite institutions, which became apparent when the purges began in the late 1940s (see below). High IQ and achievement motivation can only go so far, and cannot explain why, for example, in the late 1940s Jews made up 80% of the Soviet Academy of Science Institute of Literature (Pushkin House) (p. 302), 42% of the directors of Moscow theaters, over half of Soviet circus directors (p. 301), or eight of the top ten directors of the Bolshoi Theater.[32] In the case of Pushkin House, the opponents of the dominant clique stated that it had been forged "by long-lasting relationships of families and friends, mutual protection, homogeneous (Jewish) national composition, and anti-patriotic (anti-Russian) tendencies."[33]

The reality is that Jewish identity always becomes more salient when Jews feel threatened or feel that their interests as Jews are at stake, but Jewish identity becomes submerged when Jewish interests coincide with other interests and identities.[34] (This is a human universal and presumably accounts for the fact that the American Founding Fathers felt no need to carefully define the cultural and ethnic parameters of their creation; they assumed the racial and cultural homogeneity of the Republic[35] and perceived no threat to its control by themselves and their descendants.) The relative submergence of Jewish identity within the Jewish milieu in elite circles of the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s is a poor indicator of whether or not these people identified as Jews or would do so when in later years Jewish and Soviet identities began to diverge, when National Socialism reemphasized Jewish identity, or when Israel emerged as a beacon for Jewish identity and loyalty. A similar stance may be observed among present-day Jewish neoconservatives, who argue that the United States has a deep interest in democratizing the Middle East. The confluence of their interests as Jews in promoting the policies of the Israeli right wing and their construction of American interests allows them to submerge or even deny the relevance of their Jewish identity while posing as American patriots.[36] But if Israeli and American policy began to diverge significantly, Jewish interests would almost certainly control their attitudes and behavior. Indeed, since neoconservative Zionism of the Likud Party variety is well known for promoting a confrontation between the U.S. and the entire Muslim world, their policy recommendations best fit a pattern of loyalty to their ethnic group, not to America.[37]

In a previous work I advanced several reasons for supposing that Jews continued to identify as Jews in the USSR, none of which is challenged by Slezkine's treatment: (1) Persons were classified as Jews depending on their ethnic background, at least partly because of residual anti-Jewish attitudes; this would tend to impose a Jewish identity on these individuals and make it difficult to assume an exclusive identity as a member of a larger, more inclusive political group. (2) Many Jewish Bolsheviks, such as those in Evsektsiya (the Jewish section of the Communist Party) and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, aggressively sought to establish a secular Jewish subculture; these phenomena are virtually ignored by Slezkine. (3) Very few Jews on the left envisioned a postrevolutionary society without a continuation of Judaism as a group; indeed, the predominant ideology among Jewish leftists was that postrevolutionary society would end anti-Semitism because it would end class conflict and the peculiar Jewish occupational profile. (4) The behavior of American Communists shows that Jewish identity and the primacy of Jewish interests over Communist interests were commonplace among individuals who were ethnically Jewish Communists. (5) The existence of Jewish crypsis in other times and places was combined with the possibility that self-deception, identificatory flexibility, and identificatory ambivalence are important components of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy.[38]

And in the end, despite the rationalizations of many Soviet Jews and Slezkine on Jewish identity, it was blood that mattered. By the time of World War II, most Jews

> knew that they were, in some sense, Jews. They may never have been to a synagogue, seen a menorah, heard Yiddish or Hebrew, tasted gefilte fish or indeed met their grandparents. But they knew they were Jews in the Soviet sense, which was also—in essence—the Nazi sense. They were Jews by blood (p. 286).

They reemerged as Jews to fight the Nazis and to solicit the support of American Jews to pressure their government to enter the war and provide aid to the Soviet Union. Jewish spokesmen visited New York proclaiming that "the Jewish people—'ethnic' or religious, Communist, Zionist, or traditionalist—were one family" (p. 290).

Moreover, Slezkine leaves out an enormous amount of evidence that conflicts with his Jewish radicalism-as-patricide thesis, evidence indicating that in general Jewish radicals did identify as Jews and acted to promote specific Jewish interests. Certainly Jewish radicals often rejected their fathers' religion and their way of life, but all the evidence points to their identifying in different ways as Jews, not losing their Jewish identity to become de-ethnicized moral crusaders against capitalism. Slezkine uses Franz Boas to illustrate his patricide theory, because Boas was a radical Jew who recognized "the shackles of tradition" (p. 98). But he fails to note that Boas was hardly in rebellion against his own family. Boas was reared in a "Jewish-liberal" family in which the revolutionary ideals of

1848 remained influential,[39] and there is ample evidence of his strong Jewish identification and concern with anti-Semitism.[40]

Besides a few individual cases like Lukács and Boas, the only general evidence that Slezkine provides for the patricide thesis comes from Jaff Schatz's study of the generation of Jewish Communists who dominated the Communist movement in Poland beginning in the 1930s. But he provides a mangled account of Schatz's work.[41] These Jews did indeed reject their parents' religion, but the result of their Yiddish upbringing was "a deep core of their identity, values, norms, and attitudes with which they entered the rebellious period of their youth and adulthood. This core was to be transformed in the processes of acculturation, secularization, and radicalization sometimes even to the point of explicit denial. However, it was through this deep layer that all later perceptions were filtered."[42] Most of these individuals spoke Yiddish in their daily lives and had only a poor command of Polish even after joining the party. They socialized entirely with other Jews whom they met in the Jewish world of work, neighborhood, and Jewish social and political organizations. After they became Communists, they dated and married among themselves, and their social gatherings were conducted in Yiddish. Their mentors and principal influences were other ethnic Jews, including especially Luxemburg and Trotsky, and when they recalled personal heroes, they were mostly Jews whose exploits achieved semimythical proportions.

In general, Jews who joined the Communist movement did not first reject their ethnic identity, and there were many who "cherished Jewish culture…[and] dreamed of a society in which Jews would be equal as Jews."[43] It was common for individuals to combine a strong Jewish identity with Marxism as well as various combinations of Zionism and Bundism (a movement of Jewish socialists). Moreover, the attraction of Polish Jews to Communism was greatly facilitated by their knowledge that Jews had attained high-level positions of power and influence in the Soviet Union and that the Soviet government had established a system of Jewish education and culture. In both the Soviet Union and Poland, Communism was seen as opposing anti-Semitism. In marked contrast, during the 1930s the Polish government enacted policies which excluded Jews from public-sector employment, established quotas on Jewish representation in universities and the professions, and organized boycotts of Jewish businesses and artisans.[44] Clearly, Jews perceived Communism as good for Jews, and indeed a major contribution of Slezkine's book is to document that Communism *was* good for Jews: It was a movement that never threatened Jewish group continuity, and it held the promise of Jewish power and influence and the end of state-sponsored anti-Semitism. And when this group achieved power in Poland after World War II, they liquidated the Polish nationalist movement, outlawed anti-Semitism, and established Jewish cultural and economic institutions.

Slezkine also fails to note that in the United States a strong Jewish identification was typical of Jewish radicals and that Jewish support for the left typically waxed and waned depending on specifically Jewish issues, particularly those related to anti-Semitism and support for Israel.[45] The Jewish Old Left was a recognized part of the Jewish community, and American Jewish leftists during the 1960s were the only leftists who didn't reject their parents—they really were "red diaper babies."

It is also remarkable that the revolutionary movement in tsarist Russia ceased being anti-Jewish when Jews attained highly visible and prominent positions in the movement, even though workers and peasants participated in anti-Jewish pogroms from 1880 to 1905 and continued to harbor anti-Jewish attitudes. As Slezkine himself notes, Jews were the only group that was not criticized by the revolutionary movement (p. 157), even though most Russians, and especially the lower classes whose cause they were supposedly championing, had very negative attitudes toward Jews.[46] When, in 1915, Maxim Gorky, a strong philosemite, published a survey of Russian attitudes toward Jews, the most common response was typified by the comment that "the congenital, cruel, and consistent egoism of the Jews is everywhere victorious over the good-natured, uncultured, trusting Russian peasant or merchant" (p. 159). There were concerns that all of Russia would pass into Jewish hands and that Russians would become slaves of the Jews. In the end, as Slezkine shows, as a result of the Revolution this prediction was not far off the mark. But in any case, one would think that if radical Jews had ceased being Jews, they would have been severely critical of the Jewish role in the pre-Soviet economy.

The other huge lacuna in Slezkine's presentation is that he portrays Jewish radicals as typically the offspring of successful Jewish capitalists—like Georg Lukács—who scorn their fathers and wish for nothing more than to destroy Judaism in order to achieve personal freedom and make the world safe for humanity: "Marxism attributed [Jewish patricide] to the proletariat and urged the killing (more or less metaphorical) of the bad fathers, so as to emancipate the world from Judaism and make sure that no sons would have to kill their fathers ever again" (p. 100). Because he wishes to portray Jews as quintessentially modern Mercurians, Slezkine repeatedly shows how Jews dominated the economy, the universities, and the culture of Eastern Europe—indeed, his book is probably the best, most up-to-date account of Jewish economic and cultural preeminence in Europe (and America) that we have. But that is far from the whole story. A prime force resulting in Jewish radicalism was the grinding poverty of most Jews in Eastern Europe. Jews had overshot their economic niche: The economy was unable to support the burgeoning Jewish population in the sorts of positions that Jews had traditionally filled, with the result that a large percentage of the Jewish population became mired in poverty (along with much higher percentages of the non-Jewish population). The result was a cauldron of ethnic hostility, with

governmental restrictions on Jewish economic activity and representation in educational institutions, rampant anti-Jewish attitudes, and increasing Jewish desperation.[47]

The main Jewish response to this situation was an upsurge of fundamentalist extremism that coalesced in the Hasidic movement and, later in the nineteenth century, in political radicalism and Zionism as solutions to Jewish problems. Slezkine devotes one line to the fact that Jewish populations in Eastern Europe had the highest rate of natural increase of any European population in the nineteenth century (p. 115), but this was an extremely important part of Eastern Europe's "Jewish problem." Anti-Semitism and the exploding Jewish population, combined with economic adversity, were of critical importance for producing the great numbers of disaffected Jews who dreamed of deliverance in various messianic movements—the ethnocentric mysticism of the Kabbala and Hasidism, Zionism, or the dream of a Marxist political revolution. Jews emigrated in droves from Eastern Europe but the problems remained. And in the case of the Marxists, the main deliverance was to be achieved not by killing Judaism, as Slezkine suggests, but by the destruction of the traditional societies of Eastern Europe as a panacea for Jewish poverty and for anti-Semitism.

In fact, the vast majority of Jews in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were hardly the modern Mercurians that Slezkine portrays them as being. Slezkine does note that well into the twentieth century the vast majority of Eastern European Jews could not speak the languages of the non-Jews living around them, and he does a good job of showing their intense ingroup feeling and their attitudes that non-Jews were less than human.[48] But he ignores their medieval outlook on life, their obsession with the Kabbala (the writings of Jewish mystics), their superstition and anti-rationalism, and their belief in "magical remedies, amulets, exorcisms, demonic possession (dybbuks), ghosts, devils, and teasing, mischievous genies."[49] These supposedly modern Mercurians had an attitude of absolute faith in the person of the *tsadik*, their rebbe, who was a charismatic figure seen by his followers literally as the personification of God in the world. (Attraction to charismatic leaders is a fundamental feature of Jewish social organization—apparent as much among religious fundamentalists as among Jewish political radicals or elite Jewish intellectuals.)[50]

Bolshevism As a Jewish Revolution

Slezkine's main contribution is to summarize previously available data and to extend our understanding of Jewish dominance of the revolutionary movements before 1917, and of Soviet society thereafter. (Oddly, he makes only a passing reference to Albert Lindemann's important *Esau's Tears,* which makes many of the same points.) Not only were Jews vastly overrepresented among revolutionaries, they "were particularly well represented at the top, among theoreticians, journalists, and leaders" (p. 155). Radical Jews, like other

Jews, were very talented, highly intelligent, hardworking, and in addition dedicated to creating effective ethnic networks.[51] These traits propelled them to the top of radical organizations and made the organizations themselves more effective.

But if Jews dominated radical and revolutionary organizations, they were immeasurably aided by philosemites like Gorky who, in Albert Lindemann's term, were "jewified non-Jews"—"a term, freed of its ugly connotations, [that] might be used to underline an often overlooked point: Even in Russia there were some non-Jews, whether Bolsheviks or not, who respected Jews, praised them abundantly, imitated them, cared about their welfare, and established intimate friendships or romantic liaisons with them."[52] (As noted above, many of the non-Jewish elite in the USSR had Jewish wives.) What united the Jews and philosemites was their hatred for what Lenin (who had a Jewish grandfather) called "the thick-skulled, boorish, inert, and bearishly savage Russian or Ukrainian peasant"—the same peasant Gorky described as "savage, somnolent, and glued to his pile of manure" (p. 163). It was attitudes like these that created the climate that justified the slaughter of many millions of peasants under the new regime. Philosemites continued to be common among the non-Jewish elite in the USSR, even in the 1950s, when Jews began to be targeted as Jews. One such philosemite was Pavel Sudoplatov, a Slav married to a Jew and with many Jewish friends, who was a high-ranking secret police official with a great deal of blood on his hands. The only murder he unequivocally condemned in his memoirs was that of Paul Mikhoels, a Jewish ethnic activist associated with the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee.

Figures like Gorky and Sudoplatov were critical to the success of Jews in the Soviet Union. This is a general principle of Jewish political activity in a Diaspora situation: Because Jews tend to constitute a tiny percentage of a society, they need to make alliances with non-Jews whose perceived interests dovetail with theirs. Non-Jews have a variety of reasons for being associated with Jewish interests, including career advancement, close personal relationships or admiration for individual Jews, and deeply held personal convictions.[53]

Gorky's love for the Jews—what Slezkine terms "the bitter, ardent, and hopeless love of self-described Apollonians for beautiful Mercurians" (p. 165)—was boundless. Gorky saw Jews as possessors of "heroic" idealism, "all-probing, all-scrutinizing"; "this idealism, which expresses itself in their tireless striving to remake the world according to new principles of equality and justice, is the main, and possibly the only, reason for the hostility toward Jews" (quoted on p. 164).

Despite the important role of Jews among the Bolsheviks, most Jews were not Bolsheviks before the revolution. However, Jews were prominent among the Bolsheviks, and once the revolution was under way, the vast majority of Russian Jews became sympathizers and active participants. Jews were particularly visible in the cities and as leaders in the army and in the revolutionary councils

and committees. For example, there were 23 Jews among the 62 Bolsheviks in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee elected at the Second Congress of Soviets in October, 1917. Jews were the leaders of the movement, and to a great extent they were its public face. Slezkine quotes historian Mikhail Beizer who notes, commenting on the situation in Leningrad, that "Jewish names were constantly popping up in newspapers. Jews spoke relatively more often than others at rallies, conferences, and meetings of all kinds."[54] In general, Jews were deployed in supervisory positions rather than positions that placed them in physical danger. In a Politburo meeting of April 18, 1919, Trotsky urged that Jews be redeployed because there were relatively few Jews in frontline combat units, while Jews constituted a "vast percentage" of the Cheka at the front and in the Executive Committees at the front and at the rear. This pattern had caused "chauvinist agitation" in the Red Army (p. 187).

Jewish representation at the top levels of the Cheka and OGPU (the acronyms by which the secret police was known in different periods) has often been the focus of those stressing Jewish involvement in the revolution and its aftermath. Slezkine provides statistics on Jewish overrepresentation in these organizations, especially in supervisory roles, and agrees with Leonard Schapiro's comment that "anyone who had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Cheka stood a very good chance of finding himself confronted with and possibly shot by a Jewish investigator" (p. 177). During the 1930s the secret police, then known as the NKVD, "was one of the most Jewish of all Soviet institutions" (p. 254), with 42 of its 111 top officials being Jewish. At this time 12 of the 20 NKVD directorates were headed by ethnic Jews, including those in charge of state security, police, labor camps, and resettlement (i.e., deportation). The Gulag was headed by ethnic Jews from its beginning in 1930 until the end of 1938, a period that encompasses the worst excesses of the Great Terror. They were, in Slezkine's words, "Stalin's willing executioners" (p. 103).

The Bolsheviks continued to apologize for Jewish overrepresentation until the topic became taboo in the 1930s. And it was not until the late 1930s that there was a rise in visibility and assertiveness of "anti-Semites, ethnic nationalists, and advocates of proportional representation" (p. 188). By this time the worst of the slaughters in the Gulag, the purges, and the contrived famines had been completed.

The prominence of Jews in the Revolution and its aftermath was not lost on participants on both sides, including influential figures such as Winston Churchill, who wrote that the role of Jews in the revolution "is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others."[55] Slezkine highlights similar comments in a book published in 1927 by V. V. Shulgin, a Russian nationalist, who experienced firsthand the murderous acts of the Bolsheviks in his native Kiev in 1919: "We do not like the fact that this whole terrible thing was done *on the Russian back* and that it has cost us unutterable losses. We do not like the fact that you, Jews, a relatively small group within the Russian population,

participated in this vile deed *out of all proportion to your numbers*" (p. 181; italics in original). Slezkine does not disagree with this assessment, but argues that Jews were hardly the only revolutionaries (p. 180). This is certainly true, but does not affect my argument that Jewish involvement was a necessary condition, not merely a sufficient condition, for the success of the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath.[56] Slezkine's argument clearly supports the Jews-as-necessary-condition claim, especially because of his emphasis on the leadership role of Jews.

However, the claim that Jewish involvement was a necessary condition is itself an understatement because, as Shulgin noted, the effectiveness of Jewish revolutionaries was far out of proportion to the number of Jews. A claim that a group constituting a large proportion of the population was necessary to the success of a movement would be unexceptional. But the critical importance of Jews occurred even though Jews constituted less than 5% of the Russian population around the time of the Revolution, and they were much less represented in the major urban areas of Moscow and Leningrad prior to the Revolution because they were prevented from living there by the Pale of Settlement laws.[57] Slezkine is correct that Jews were not the only revolutionaries, but his point only underscores the importance of philosemitism and other alliances Jews typically must make in Diaspora situations in order to advance their perceived interests.

In 1923, several Jewish intellectuals published a collection of essays admitting the "bitter sin" of Jewish complicity in the crimes of the Revolution. In the words of a contributor, I. L. Bikerman, "it goes without saying that not all Jews are Bolsheviks and not all Bolsheviks are Jews, but what is equally obvious is that disproportionate and immeasurably fervent Jewish participation in the torment of half-dead Russia by the Bolsheviks" (p. 183). Many of the commentators on Jewish Bolsheviks noted the "transformation" of Jews: In the words of another Jewish commentator, G. A. Landau, "cruelty, sadism, and violence had seemed alien to a nation so far removed from physical activity." And another Jewish commentator, Ia. A Bromberg, noted that:

> the formerly oppressed lover of liberty had turned into a tyrant of "unheard-of-despotic arbitrariness"…. The convinced and unconditional opponent of the death penalty not just for political crimes but for the most heinous offenses, who could not, as it were, watch a chicken being killed, has been transformed outwardly into a leather-clad person with a revolver and, in fact, lost all human likeness (pp. 183–184).

This psychological "transformation" of Russian Jews was probably not all that surprising to the Russians themselves, given Gorky's finding that Russians prior to the Revolution saw Jews as possessed of "cruel egoism" and that they were concerned about becoming slaves of the Jews. Gorky himself remained a philosemite to the end, despite the prominent Jewish role in the murder of approximately twenty million of his ethnic kin,[58] but after the Revolution he commented that "*the reason for the current anti-Semitism*

in Russia is the tactlessness of the Jewish Bolsheviks. The Jewish Bolsheviks, not all of them but some irresponsible boys, are taking part in the defiling of the holy sites of the Russian people. They have turned churches into movie theaters and reading rooms without considering the feelings of the Russian people." However, Gorky did not blame the Jews for this: "The fact that the Bolsheviks sent the Jews, the helpless and irresponsible Jewish youths, to do these things, does smack of provocation, of course. But the Jews should have refrained" (p. 186).

Those who carried out the mass murder and dispossession of the Russian peasants saw themselves, at least in their public pronouncements, as doing what was necessary in pursuit of the greater good. This was the official view not only of the Soviet Union, where Jews formed a dominant elite, but also was the "more or less official view" among Jewish intellectuals in the United States (p. 215) and elsewhere. (It is still far more common for leftist intellectuals to bemoan McCarthyism than the horrors of the USSR.[59])

> It is for the sake of creating a perfect human being—Apollonian in body and Mercurian in mind—that Levinson steels himself for doing what is "necessary," including the requisitioning of a weeping farmer's last pig and the killing of a wounded comrade too weak to be evacuated…. [T]he greater the personal responsibility for acts ordinarily considered evil, the more visible the signs of election and the inner strength they bespoke. Demonic as well as Promethean, Bolshevik commissars 'carried within them' the pain of historical necessity" (p. 194).

Levinson, a character in A. Fedeev's *The Rout* (1926), a prominent example of socialist realism in the early Soviet period, is not ideologically Jewish, "but there is little doubt that for reasons of both aesthetic and sociological verisimilitude, canonical Jewishness seemed an appropriate expression of the Bolshevik vision of disembodied consciousness triumphing over [peasant] inertia" (p. 193). So it is not surprising that Gorky's mild rebuke of Jewish anti-Christian zealotry was too much for Esther Frumkina, a leader of the Party's Jewish section. Frumkina accused Gorky of attacking "Jewish Communists for their selfless struggle against darkness and fanaticism" (p. 187). In their self-perceptions, Jews are selflessly altruistic even when acting out ancient hatreds.

The Three Great Jewish Migrations of the Twentieth Century

Slezkine's last and longest chapter describes the three great Jewish migrations of the twentieth century—to Israel, to America, and to the urban centers of the Soviet Union. Slezkine perceives all three through the lens of heroic Jewish self-perception. He sees the United States as a Jewish utopia precisely because it had only a "vestigial establishment tribalism" (p. 209) that could not long inhibit Jewish ascendancy: "The United States stood for unabashed Mercurianism, nontribal statehood, and the supreme sovereignty of capitalism and professionalism. It was—rhetorically—a collection if *homines*

rationalistici artificiales, a nation of strangers held together by a common celebration of separateness (individualism) and rootlessness (immigration)" (p. 207). It was the only modern state…in which a Jew could be an equal citizen and a Jew at the same time. 'America' offered full membership without complete assimilation. Indeed, it seemed to require an affiliation with a subnational community as a condition of full membership in the political nation" (p. 207).

Slezkine sees post-World War II America as a Jewish utopia but seems only dimly aware that Jews to a great extent created their own utopia in the U.S. by undermining nativist sentiments that were common at least until after World War II. Slezkine emphasizes the Jewish role in institutionalizing the therapeutic state, but sees it as completely benign, rather than an aspect of the "culture of critique" that undermined the ethnic identities of white Americans: "By bringing Freudianism to America and by adopting it, briefly, as a salvation religion, [Jews] made themselves more American while making America more therapeutic" (p. 319). There is little discussion of the main anti-nativist intellectual movements, all of which were dominated by ethnically conscious Jews: Boasian anthropology, Horace Kallen and the development of the theory of America as a "proposition nation," and the Frankfurt School which combined psychoanalysis and Marxism into a devastating weapon against the ethnic consciousness of white Americans. Nor does he discuss the role of Jewish activist organizations in altering the ethnic balance of the United States by promoting large-scale immigration from around the world.

Slezkine also views the Jewish migration to Israel as heroic: "In both Jewish Palestine (the Yishuv) and Soviet Russia, brotherhood stood for the full identity of all true believers (always the few against the many) and their complete identification with the cause (ardently desired and genuinely felt by most young Jews in both places). Eventually, both revolutions evolved in the direction of greater hierarchy, institutionalized militarism, intense anxiety about aliens, and the cult of generals, boy soldiers, and elite forces, but between 1917 and the mid-1930s they were overflowing with youthful energy and the spirit of fraternal effort, and self-sacrifice" (p. 212).

The passage is remarkable both for its pinpointing the ingroup/outgroup nature of the psychology of traditional Jewish groups, freed now of the Torah and the synagogue, and for its description of the ingroup psychology of mass murder (in the USSR) and ethnic cleansing (in the Middle East) as involving valiant self-sacrifice and pride in accomplishment.

But Slezkine spends most of his energy by far in providing a fascinating chronicle of the Jewish rise to elite status in all areas of Soviet society—culture, the universities, professional occupations, the media, and government. In all cases, Jewish overrepresentation was most apparent at the pinnacles of success and influence. To take just the area of culture, Jews were highly visible as avant-garde artists, formalist theorists, polemicists, moviemakers, and poets.

They were "among the most exuberant crusaders against 'bourgeois' habits during the Great Transformation; the most disciplined advocates of socialist realism during the 'Great Retreat' (from revolutionary internationalism); and the most passionate prophets of faith, hope, and combat during the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis" (p. 225). And, as their critics noticed, Jews were involved in anti-Christian propaganda. Mikhail Bulgakov, a Russian writer, noticed that the publishers of *Godless* magazine were Jews; he was "stunned" to find that Christ was portrayed as "a scoundrel and a cheat. It is not hard to see whose work it is. This crime is immeasurable" (p. 244).

Some of the juxtapositions are striking and seemingly intentional. On p. 230, Lev Kopelev is quoted on the need for firmness in confiscating the property of the Ukrainian peasants. Kopelev, who witnessed the famine that killed seven to ten million peasants, stated, "You mustn't give in to debilitating pity. We are the agents of historical necessity. We are fulfilling our revolutionary duty. We are procuring grain for our socialist Fatherland. For the Five-Year Plan." On the next page, Slezkine describes the life of the largely Jewish elite in Moscow and Leningrad, where they attended the theater, sent their children to the best schools, had peasant women for nannies, spent weekends at pleasant dachas, and vacationed at the Black Sea.

Slezkine describes the NKVD as "one of the most Jewish of all Soviet institutions" and recounts the Jewish leadership of the Great Terror of the 1930s (pp. 254 and 255). On p. 256, he writes that in 1937 the prototypical Jew who moved from the Pale of Settlement to Moscow to man elite positions in the Soviet state "probably would have been living in elite housing in downtown Moscow…with access to special stores, a house in the country (dacha), and a live-in peasant nanny or maid.…At least once a year, she would have traveled to a Black Sea sanatorium or a mineral spa in the Caucasus" (p. 256). Slezkine writes long and lovingly detailed sketches of life at the dachas of the elite—the "open verandas overlooking small gardens enclosed by picket fences or wildly overgrown yards" (p. 256), but the reader is left to his own imagination to visualize the horrors of the Ukrainian famine and the liquidation of the Kulaks.

As Slezkine notes, most of the Soviet elite were not Jews, but Jews were far overrepresented among the elite (and Russians far underrepresented as a percentage of the population). Moreover, the Jews formed a far more cohesive core than the rest of the elite because of their common social and cultural background (p. 236). The common understanding that the new elite had a very large Jewish representation resulted in pervasive anti-Jewish attitudes. In 1926, an Agitprop report noted "The sense that the Soviet regime patronizes the Jews, that it is 'the Jewish government,' that the Jews cause unemployment, housing shortages, college admissions problems, price rises, and commercial speculation—this sense is instilled in the workers by all the hostile elements.… If it does not encounter resistance, the wave of anti-Semitism threatens to become, in the

very near future, a serious political question" (p. 244). Such widespread public perceptions about the role of Jews in the new government led to aggressive surveillance and repression of anti-Jewish attitudes and behavior, including the execution of Russian nationalists who expressed anti-Jewish attitudes. These public perceptions also motivated Jews to adopt a lower profile in the regime, as with Trotsky, who refused the post of commissar of internal affairs because it might lend further ammunition to the anti-Jewish arguments. From 1927 to 1932 Stalin established an ambitious public campaign to combat anti-Semitism that included fifty-six books published by the government and an onslaught of speeches, mass rallies, newspaper articles, and show trials "aimed at eradicating the evil" (p. 249).

The Decline of the Jews in the Soviet Union

Jews were able to maintain themselves as an elite until the end of the Soviet regime in 1991—this despite an official push for affirmative action–style programs to open up opportunities for the children of peasants and workers in the 1930s and to blunt the anti-Jewish feelings simmering at the lower levels of Soviet society. Jewish elite status persisted despite the Great Terror of the late 1930s, which disproportionately affected the political elite. On the whole, Jews were underrepresented as victims of the Great Terror. And although the Jewish percentage of the political elite did decline after the purges of the late 1930s and the promotion of former peasants and working class Russians, this did not affect Jewish predominance as a professional, cultural, and managerial elite. Jews also retained their elite status despite Stalin's campaign in the late 1940s against Jewish ethnic and cultural institutions and their spokesmen.

Jewish elite status remained even after the purge was expanded to all sectors of the Soviet elite, due at least partly to "the widespread sense [among Russians] that the great victory [in World War II] entitled them to a greater role in decision making" (p. 306). Slezkine shows the very high percentages of Jews in various institutions in the late 1940s, including the universities, the media, the foreign service, and the secret police. For example, the deans of philosophers, historians, and legal scholars were ethnic Jews, and, as already noted, Jews constituted 80% of the Soviet Academy of Science Institute of Literature. As for the Jewish role as "vanguard of the working class," Jews still made up 23% of the staff at the Trade Union Council's publication *Trud* even after a purge that cut their numbers in half.

The campaign against the Jews began only after the apogee of mass murder and deportations in the USSR, and was much less lethal than those mounted against a long list of other ethnic groups, whose typical fate was deportation under the most brutal of circumstances (Cossacks, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, Moldavians, Kalmyks, Karachai, Balkars, Ingush, Greeks, Bulgars, Crimean Armenians, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and Khemshins). The campaign against the Jews was also much less consistent and effective

than the Soviet campaigns against the children of the former elite—the factory owners, the Cossack officers, and the middle classes and intelligentsia—had been (p. 308).

Unlike the purges of the 1930s that sometimes targeted Jews as member of the elite (albeit at far less than their percentage of the elite), the anti-Jewish actions of the late 1940s and early 1950s were targeted at Jews because of their ethnicity. Similar purges were performed throughout Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe (pp. 313–314). "All three regimes [Poland, Romania, Hungary] resembled the Soviet Union of the 1920s insofar as they combined the ruling core of the old Communist underground, which was heavily Jewish, with a large pool of upwardly mobile Jewish professionals, who were, on average, the most trustworthy among the educated and the most educated among the trustworthy" (p. 314). Speaking of the situation in Poland, Khrushchev supported the anti-Jewish purge with his remark that "you have already too many Abramoviches."[60]

Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s children of the pillars of the old order were discriminated against, now Jews were not only being purged because of their vast overrepresentation among the elite, but were being discriminated against in university admissions. Jews, the formerly loyal members of the elite and willing executioners of the bloodiest regime in history, now "found themselves among the aliens" (p. 310). Rather than rationalize their persecution as resulting from the iron laws of history, some Jews began to feel guilt for their former role. A Jewish woman writes that after her husband was arrested, her maid told her, "You are crying now, but you did not mind when my father was being dekulakized, martyred for no reason at all, and my whole family thrown out in the street" (p. 311).

And so began the exodus of Jews. Stalin died and the anti-Jewish campaign fizzled, but the Jewish trajectory was definitely downhill. Jews retained their elite status and occupational profile until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but "the special relationship between the Jews and the Soviet state had come to an end—or rather, the unique symbiosis in pursuit of world revolution had given way to a unique antagonism over two competing and incommensurate nationalisms" (p. 330). A response of the Russians was "massive affirmative action" (p. 333) aimed at giving greater representation to underrepresented ethnic groups. Jews were targets of suspicion because of their ethnic status, barred from some elite institutions, and limited in their opportunities for advancement.

The Russians were taking back their country, and it wasn't long before Jews became leaders of the dissident movement and began to seek to emigrate in droves to the United States, Western Europe, and Israel. Despite still possessing elite social status and far fewer disabilities than many groups (e.g., the overwhelming majority of the Soviet population was not allowed to live in cities and some Christian sects were banned), Jews perceived their

situation as "unrelieved humiliation" (p. 339). Overt anti-Semitism was encouraged by the more covert official variety apparent in the limits on Jewish advancement. Under these circumstances, Jews became "in many ways, the core of the antiregime intelligentsia" (p. 340). Jewish dissidents whose parents had run the Gulags, the deportations, and the state-sponsored famines, now led the "urgent call for social justice" (p. 342). Jewish academics with "cult followings" (p. 342)—a familiar Jewish pattern[61]—and close ties to Western Jewish intellectuals became the intellectual vanguard and iconoclasts of the new culture of critique in the Soviet Union.

Applications to leave the USSR increased dramatically after Israel's Six-Day War of 1967, which, as in the United States and Eastern Europe, resulted in an upsurge of Jewish identification and ethnic pride. The floodgates were eventually opened by Gorbachev in the late 1980s, and by 1994, 1.2 million Soviet Jews had emigrated—43% of the total. By 2002, there were only 230,000 Jews left in the Russian Federation, 0.16% of the population. These remaining Jews nevertheless exhibit the typical Ashkenazi pattern of high achievement and overrepresentation among the elite, including six of the seven oligarchs who emerged in control of the Soviet economy and media in the period of de-nationalization (p. 362).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this dénouement did not result in any sense of collective guilt among Soviet Jews (p. 345) or among their American apologists. Indeed, American Jewish media figures who were blacklisted because of Communist affiliations in the 1940s are now heroes, honored by the film industry, praised in newspapers, their work exhibited in museums.[62] At the same time, the cause of Soviet Jews and their ability to emigrate became a critical rallying point for American Jewish activist organizations and a defining feature of neoconservatism as a Jewish intellectual and political movement. (For example, Richard Perle, a key neoconservative, was Senator Henry Jackson's most important security advisor from 1969 to 1979 and organized Congressional support for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment linking U.S.-Soviet trade to the ability of Jews to emigrate from the Soviet Union. The bill was passed over strenuous opposition from the Nixon administration.) Jewish activist organizations and many Jewish historians portray the Soviet Jewish experience as a sojourn in the land of the "Red Pharaohs" (p. 360). The historical legacy is that Jews were the passive, uncomprehending victims of the White armies, the Nazis, the Ukrainian nationalists, and the postwar Soviet state, nothing more.

The Issue of Jewish Culpability

Alexander Solzhenitsyn calls on Jews to accept moral responsibility for the Jews who "took part in the iron Bolshevik leadership and, even more so, in the ideological guidance of a huge country down a false path.…[and for the Jewish role in the] Cheka executions, the drowning of the barges with the condemned in the White and Caspian Seas, collectivization, the Ukrainian famine—in all the vile acts of the Soviet regime" (quoted on p. 360). But according to Slezkine, there

can be no collective guilt because Soviet violence, unlike the Nazi persecution of the Jews, was not tribal violence. Violence of the Soviet sort has "no legitimate heirs—for either the victims or the perpetrators" (p. 345). Slezkine acknowledges that Jews were "the most enthusiastic ethnically defined supporters of the Soviet state" but he essentially argues that Jews were not really Jews when they were Communists, at least until World War II caused them to be conscious of their Jewish identities. After all, the legacy of Communism "was almost as strongly committed to cosmopolitanism as it was to mass violence" (p. 346).

Again we see the importance of Slezkine's claims that Jewish Communists lacked a Jewish identity. However, as demonstrated above, there can be little doubt that Soviet Jews thought of themselves as Jews (although they certainly were not religious Jews) and that they worked together on the basis of shared Jewish ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the critical issue for collective guilt is whether the Jewish enthusiasm for the Soviet state and the enthusiastic participation of Jews in the violence against what Slezkine terms "rural backwardness and religion" (p. 346) had something to do with their Jewish identity.

This is a more difficult claim to establish, but the outlines of the argument are quite clear. Even granting the possibility that the revolutionary vanguard composed of Jews like Trotsky that spearheaded the Bolshevik Revolution was far more influenced by a universalist utopian vision than by their upbringing in traditional Judaism, it does not follow that this was the case for the millions of Jews who left the shtetl towns of the Pale of Settlement to migrate to Moscow and the urban centers of the new state. The migration of the Jews to the urban centers of the USSR is a critical aspect of Slezkine's presentation, but it strains credulity to suppose that these migrants threw off, completely and immediately, all remnants of the Eastern European shtetl culture which, Slezkine acknowledges, had a deep sense of estrangement from non-Jewish culture, and in particular a fear and hatred of peasants resulting from the traditional economic relations between Jews and peasants and exacerbated by the long and recent history of anti-Jewish pogroms carried out by peasants. Traditional Jewish shtetl culture also had a very negative attitude toward Christianity, not only as the central cultural icon of the outgroup but as associated in their minds with a long history of anti-Jewish persecution. The same situation doubtless occurred in Poland, where the efforts of even the most "de-ethnicized" Jewish Communists to recruit Poles were inhibited by traditional Jewish attitudes of superiority toward and estrangement from traditional Polish culture.[63]

In other words, the war against "rural backwardness and religion" was exactly the sort of war that a traditional Jew would have supported wholeheartedly, because it was a war against everything they hated and thought of as oppressing them. Of course traditional shtetl Jews also hated the tsar and his government due to restrictions on Jews and because they did not think that the government did enough to rein in anti-Jewish violence. There can be little doubt that Lenin's

contempt for "the thick-skulled, boorish, inert, and bearishly savage Russian or Ukrainian peasant" was shared by the vast majority of shtetl Jews prior to the Revolution and after it. Those Jews who defiled the holy places of traditional Russian culture and published anti-Christian periodicals doubtless reveled in their tasks for entirely Jewish reasons, and, as Gorky worried, their activities not unreasonably stoked the anti-Semitism of the period. Given the anti-Christian attitudes of traditional shtetl Jews, it is very difficult to believe that the Jews engaged in campaigns against Christianity did not have a sense of revenge against the old culture that they held in such contempt.

Indeed, Slezkine reviews some of the works of early Soviet Jewish writers that illustrate the revenge theme. The amorous advances of the Jewish protagonist of Eduard Bagritsky's poem "February" are rebuffed by a Russian girl, but their positions are changed after the Revolution when he becomes a deputy commissar. Seeing the girl in a brothel, he has sex with her without taking off his boots, his gun, or his trench coat—an act of aggression and revenge:

> I am taking you because so timid
> Have I always been, and to take vengeance
> For the shame of my exiled forefathers
> And the twitter of an unknown fledgling!
> I am taking you to wreak my vengeance
> On the world I could not get away from!

Slezkine seems comfortable with revenge as a Jewish motive, but he does not consider traditional Jewish culture itself to be a contributor to Jewish attitudes toward traditional Russia, even though he notes that a very traditional part of Jewish culture was to despise the Russians and their culture. (Even the Jewish literati despised all of traditional Russian culture, apart from Pushkin and a few literary icons.) Indeed, one wonders what would motivate the Jewish commissars to revenge apart from motives related to their Jewish identity. Traditional hostility toward non-Jews and their culture forms a central theme in the writings of Israel Shahak and many mainstream Jewish historians, including Slezkine, and I have presented summaries of this material elsewhere.[64] An important aspect of Slezkine's general theoretical approach is that relationships between Mercurians and Apollonians involve mutual hostility, suspicion and contempt, and a sense of superiority (p. 20). These traditional attitudes were exacerbated by the increase in tensions between Jews and non-Jews beginning with the pogroms of 1881 and extending, with fits and starts, into the period of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Slezkine's argument that Jews were critically involved in destroying traditional Russian institutions, liquidating Russian nationalists, murdering the tsar and his family, dispossessing and murdering the kulaks, and destroying the Orthodox Church has been made by many other writers over the years, including Igor Shafarevich, a mathematician and member of the prestigious U. S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Shafarevich's review of Jewish

literary works during the Soviet and post-Soviet period agrees with Slezkine in showing Jewish hatred mixed with a powerful desire for revenge toward pre-revolutionary Russia and its culture.[65] But Shafarevich also suggests that the Jewish "Russophobia" that prompted the mass murder is not a unique phenomenon, but results from traditional Jewish hostility toward the non-Jewish world, considered *tref* (unclean), and toward non-Jews themselves, considered sub-human and as worthy of destruction. Both Shafarevich and Slezkine review the traditional animosity of Jews toward Russia, but Slezkine attempts to get his readers to believe that shtetl Jews were magically transformed in the instant of Revolution; although they did carry out the destruction of traditional Russia and approximately twenty million of its people, they did so only out of the highest humanitarian motives and the dream of utopian socialism, only to return to an overt Jewish identity because of the pressures of World War II, the rise of Israel as a source of Jewish identity and pride, and anti-Jewish policies and attitudes in the USSR. This is simply not plausible.

The situation prompts reflection on what might have happened in the United States had American Communists and their sympathizers assumed power. The "red diaper babies" came from Jewish families which "around the breakfast table, day after day, in Scarsdale, Newton, Great Neck, and Beverly Hills have discussed what an awful, corrupt, immoral, undemocratic, racist society the United States is."[66] Indeed, hatred toward the peoples and cultures of non-Jews and the image of enslaved ancestors as victims of anti-Semitism have been the Jewish norm throughout history—much commented on, from Tacitus to the present.[67]

It is easy to imagine which sectors of American society would have been deemed overly backward and religious and therefore worthy of mass murder by the American counterparts of the Jewish elite in the Soviet Union—the ones who journeyed to Ellis Island instead of Moscow. The descendants of these overly backward and religious people now loom large among the "red state" voters who have been so important in recent national elections. Jewish animosity toward the Christian culture that is so deeply ingrained in much of America is legendary. As Joel Kotkin points out, "for generations, [American] Jews have viewed religious conservatives with a combination of fear and disdain."[68] And as Elliott Abrams notes, the American Jewish community "clings to what is at bottom a dark vision of America, as a land permeated with anti-Semitism and always on the verge of anti-Semitic outbursts."[69] These attitudes are well captured in Steven Steinlight's charge that the Americans who approved the immigration restriction legislation of the 1920s—the vast majority of the population—were a "thoughtless mob" and that the legislation itself was "evil, xenophobic, anti-Semitic," "vilely discriminatory," a "vast moral failure," a "monstrous policy."[70] In the end, the dark view of traditional Slavs and their culture that facilitated the participation of so many Eastern European shtetl Jews in becoming willing executioners in the name of international socialism is not

very different from the views of contemporary American Jews about a majority of their fellow countrymen.

There is a certain enormity in all this. The twentieth century was indeed the Jewish century because Jews and Jewish organizations were intimately and decisively involved in its most important events. Slezkine's greatest accomplishment is to set the historical record straight on the importance of Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath, but he doesn't focus on the huge repercussions of the Revolution, repercussions that continue to shape the world of the twenty-first century. In fact, for long after the Revolution, conservatives throughout Europe and the United States believed that Jews were responsible for Communism and for the Bolshevik Revolution.[71] The Jewish role in leftist political movements was a common source of anti-Jewish attitudes among a great many intellectuals and political figures. In Germany, the identification of Jews and Bolshevism was widespread in the middle classes and was a critical part of the National Socialist view of the world. As historian Ernst Nolte has noted, for middle-class Germans, "the experience of the Bolshevik revolution in Germany was so immediate, so close to home, and so disquieting, and statistics seemed to prove the overwhelming participation of Jewish ringleaders so irrefutably," that even many liberals believed in Jewish responsibility.[72] Jewish involvement in the horrors of Communism was also an important sentiment in Hitler's desire to destroy the USSR and in the anti-Jewish actions of the German National Socialist government. Jews and Jewish organizations were also important forces in inducing the Western democracies to side with Stalin rather than Hitler in World War II.

The victory over National Socialism set the stage for the tremendous increase in Jewish power in the post-World War II Western world, in the end more than compensating for the decline of Jews in the Soviet Union. As Slezkine shows, the children of Jewish immigrants assumed an elite position in the United States, just as they had in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe and Germany prior to World War II. This new-found power facilitated the establishment of Israel, the transformation of the United States and other Western nations in the direction of multiracial, multicultural societies via large-scale non-white immigration, and the consequent decline in European demographic and cultural preeminence. [73] The critical Jewish role in Communism has been sanitized, while Jewish victimization by the Nazis has achieved the status of a moral touchstone and is a prime weapon in the push for massive non-European immigration, multiculturalism, and advancing other Jewish causes.

The Jewish involvement in Bolshevism has therefore had an enormous effect on recent European and American history. It is certainly true that Jews would have attained elite status in the United States with or without their prominence in the Soviet Union. However, without the Soviet Union as a shining beacon of a land freed of official anti-Semitism where Jews had attained elite status in a

stunningly short period, the history of the United States would have been very different. The persistence of Jewish radicalism influenced the general political sensibility of the Jewish community and had a destabilizing effect on American society, ranging from the paranoia of the McCarthy era, to the triumph of the 1960s countercultural revolution, to the conflicts over immigration and multiculturalism that are so much a part of the contemporary political landscape.[74]

It is Slezkine's chief contention that the history of the twentieth century was a history of the rise of the Jews in the West, in the Middle East, and in Russia, and ultimately their decline in Russia. I think he is absolutely right about this. If there is any lesson to be learned, it is that Jews not only became an elite in all these areas, they became a hostile elite—hostile to traditional peoples and cultures of all three areas they came to dominate. Until now, the greatest human tragedies have occurred in the Soviet Union, but Israel's record as an oppressive and expansive occupying power in the Middle East has made it a pariah among the vast majority of the governments of the world. And Jewish hostility toward the European-derived people and culture of the United States has been a consistent feature of Jewish political behavior and attitudes throughout the twentieth century. In the present, this normative Jewish hostility toward the traditional population and culture of the United States remains a potent motivator of Jewish involvement in the transformation of the U.S. into a non-European society.[75]

Given this record of Jews as a hostile but very successful elite, I doubt that the continued demographic and cultural dominance of Western European peoples will be retained either in Europe or the United States and other Western societies without a decline in Jewish influence. (Perhaps more obviously, the same might be said vis-à-vis the Palestinians and other Arab peoples in the Middle East.) The lesson of the Soviet Union (and Spain from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries) is that Jewish influence does wax and wane. Unlike the attitudes of the utopian ideologies of the twentieth century, there is no end to history.

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Endnotes

1. In Nolte 1965, 406. See Kellogg (2005) for an account of the interactions and influence of White Russian émigrés on the National Socialist Movement in Germany.

2. See MacDonald 2004, 9–37, for a review of Jewish psychological traits related to ethnic activism.

3. MacDonald 1994/2002, 1998/2004.

4. See MacDonald 1994/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
5. Bereczkei 1993; Cvorovic 2004.
6. See discussion in MacDonald 1994/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
7. Coughlin 1960, 169.
8. MacDonald 1994/2002.
9. Davies 1981, 444; see also Subtelny 1988, 124.
10. This was also noted by Lindemann 1997.
11. Vaksberg 1994, 49.
12. See discussion in MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 3.
13. In Kostyrchenko 1995, 272; italics in text.
14. MacDonald 1994/2002, Ch. 5; 1998/2004, Introduction to the first paperback edition.
15. Mundill 1998, 249ff.
16. In Kellogg 2005, 41.
17. In Kellogg 2005, 37.
18. MacDonald 1998/2004.
19. MacDonald 1994/2002; 1998/2004.
20. MacDonald 2004, 39–64.
21. Novick 1999; see summary in MacDonald 1998/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
22. MacDonald 1998/2002.
23. See Bendersky 2000.
24. MacDonald 2002.
25. Ruppin 1973, 339.
26. Mosse 1970, 52–53.
27. In Lindemann 1997, 138–139. Similar complaints were common in Austria (op cit., 193).
28. MacDonald 1998/2002, passim.
29. Benjamin 1968, 262.
30. See MacDonald 1998/2002 for discussion of these issues.
31. In Kostyrchenko 1995, 237.
32. The composition of the board of the Bolshoi is given in Kostyrchenko 1995, 15.
33. In Kostyrchenko 1995, 171
34. MacDonald 1998/2004, ch. 9; 1998/2002, ch. 3.
35. Weyl and Marina 1971. For example, "The American Negro was deemed [by a national consensus of opinion from George Washington to the end of World War I] an alien presence in American society who could not be assimilated without destroying or largely impairing the homogeneity and national cohesion of the Republic" (377).
36. See MacDonald 2004, 65–127 for a discussion of the ethnic identity of Jewish neoconservatives.
37. See MacDonald 2004, 65–127.
38. MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 3.
39. Stocking 1968, 149.
40. MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 2.
41. See MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 3.

42. Schatz 1991, 37–38.
43. Schatz 1991, 48.
44. Hagen 1996.
45. MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 3.
46. See also MacDonald 1998/2004, ch. 2, note 23.
47. MacDonald 2004, ch. 2.
48. See also Vital 1975, 46.
49. Mahler 1985, 16.
50. MacDonald 1998/2002.
51. See MacDonald 2004, 9–37; 1998/2002, chs. 1 and 3.
52. Lindemann 1997, 433.
53. See MacDonald 2004, 65–127.
54. Mikhail Beizer, quoted in Slezkine, 176.
55. Churchill 1920.
56. MacDonald 1998/2002, preface to the first paperback edition and ch. 3.
57. The *Jewish Encyclopedia (http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/table.jsp?table_id=427&volid=11&title=STATISTICS:)* estimates that Jews constituted 3.29% of the population of the Russian Empire circa 1900, and Slezkine (p. 217) provides data on the Jewish population of Soviet cities before and after the Revolution. Ediev (2001, 294) estimates the population of Russia at around 90 million around the time of the Bolshevik Revolution.
58. The estimate of the number of deaths caused by Communism in the USSR is from Cortois (1999, 4).
59. MacDonald 1998/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
60. In Schatz 1991, 272.
61. MacDonald 1998/2002.
62. See discussion in MacDonald 1998/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
63. Schatz 1991, 119
64. Mahler 1985; Shahak 1994; Shahak and Mezvinsky 1999.
65. Shafarevich 1989. The NAS asked Shafarevich to resign his position in the academy but he refused (see *Science* 257 [1992]: 743).
66. Lipset 1988, 393.
67. MacDonald 1998/2004, Ch. 2; MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 1 and preface to the first paperback edition; MacDonald 2004, 9–37; Soloveichik 2003.
68. Kotkin 2002.
69. Abrams 1997, 188.
70. Steinlight 2001.
71. Bendersky 2000; Mayer 1988; Nolte 1965; Szajkowski 1974.
72. Nolte 1965, 331
73. The detailed version of this argument is in MacDonald 1998/2002, preface to the first paperback edition.
74. MacDonald 1998/2002.
75. MacDonald 1998/2002; 2004, 9–37.