

5 Government, Jews, Peasants and Land after the Liberation of the Serfs

I

In the summer of 1915, in the midst of a bitter struggle that threatened the country's very survival, Imperial Russia's Council of Ministers spent much of its time discussing what to do with hundreds of thousands of Jews whom the army had driven out of the zone of war as spies or collaborators. No provisions had been made for transporting or feeding them, and, like a flood, this mass of humanity poured eastward to become the charge and concern of the reluctant civilian authorities, both local and central.

The latter could no longer close their ears to complaints of crowding and rising tensions between old residents and the destitute refugees, nor their eyes to the fact that the Pale of Settlement, to which the bulk of the Jews had been confined for over a century, had at last been breached and the core provinces of the empire opened to them. With many misgivings, all but one of the ministers finally agreed that the presence of Jews in the Russian interior had to be recognized and regularized. Bypassing the Duma, where they expected opposition, they adopted an emergency measure that allowed the admission of Jews expelled from the theatre of military operations to localities outside the Pale. The emperor did not object, and thus fell the staunchly defended bulwark that had fenced off most of the Russian Empire from all but a handful of privileged Jews.¹

In one respect, however, the ministers remained true to the legacy of the past: the villages and Cossack territories, along with the two capitals and the imperial residences, remained closed to the Jews. Not until the end of the regime that had erected them did all the legal barriers disappear that were designed to keep the Jews out of the countryside, to

reduce their numbers there or to keep them away from the land and from its occupants.²

No compelling reasons were offered why the rural districts should remain off-limits. The President of the Council spoke of the 'duty to protect them from Jewish invasion' as if that were a self-evident necessity. The Minister of Agriculture said that the villages had to be guarded in every way from the Jews who had no interest in settling there anyway. The Minister of the Interior gave it as his view that it was impossible to shield the Jews from the people's cudgels in the countryside, and there, his colleague of agriculture added, 'we do not wish to guard them', for this would be against the national and economic interests of the Russian people.

How did this notion arise? Why did the ban over the villages, in spite of evidence that it was ineffective or counterproductive, come to be regarded in the government as an essential element of its Jewish policy? Why was it clung to more stubbornly than most of the other harshly discriminatory measures whose ostensible purpose was to make the Jews harmless or useful to state and society, and why did it in time acquire the force of a tabu?

It is possible, even likely, that in 1915 Russia's chief bureaucrats were simply repeating and doing what their predecessors had said and done ever since the partitions of Poland, and that they were acting out of the same mixture of prejudice, fear, ignorance and want of moral courage that had always defeated decisive departures from Russia's anti-Jewish policies. That mixture, whether one calls it Judeophobia or anti-Semitism, was indeed at the root of official conduct, but Jew-hatred or inherited fears cannot alone explain the persistence of prohibitions on rural residence and ownership or leasing of land. After all, traditional religious or economic hostility to the Jews, which was not unique to Russia, had in Poland led to their being driven out of many of the cities in which the Russians tried to confine them.³ A prejudice maintained so long and with such focussed intensity must have been reinforced by considerations which, even if their rationality was flawed, won the assent of basically rational or even moderate men to irrational and ultimately self-defeating policies. It is the interaction of bias and calculation, the nexus of policy and prejudice that the present study wishes to trace and, perhaps, to disentangle, for in the way Russia's rulers dealt with the problem of the Jews in relation to peasants and to land there may be contained valuable clues to the larger question why the universal phenomenon of anti-Semitism was particularly virulent and durable at a particular time and place.

That is the question which is of paramount interest to the student of Russian government and society and which makes him turn for the answer to an examination of specific legislative and administrative actions and of the circumstances in which they were taken. Only in the context of official conduct and concerns is it possible to discern the modalities of Russia's Jewish policy, to arrive at a more differentiated picture of motives and, above all, to learn why the Jewish problem for so long maintained its hold over the minds of the men who made and carried out policy. The post-liberation period was chosen for investigation both because the years from the partitions of Poland to 1861 have received a great deal of attention,⁴ and because the end of serfdom, as well as other reforms in the social, economic and political sphere reveal with special clarity what was thought to be unique or peculiar in the Jewish situation, to require special treatment, and to make inapplicable to the relationship of Jews, peasants and land the loosening of restrictions and controls in other areas. A brief survey of the pre-emancipation background is, however, indispensable.

When Austria, Prussia and Russia in 1772, 1793 and 1795 dismembered Poland, a government that had never known or tolerated more than a few hundred Jews on Russian soil was suddenly brought face to face with hundreds of thousands of people who were alien in almost every way: in faith, in speech, in dress, in occupational and social structure. More than an ordinary religious minority, they were a self-contained 'nation-caste' which had lived on the fringes of Polish society under the uncertain protection of crown or nobles and regulated its affairs without recourse to the general laws or administration.⁵ In the provinces that were later to form the bulk of the Pale of Permanent Jewish Settlement, the Russians found large numbers of Jews – from a quarter to a half of the total and in some provinces more than that – living as traders and middlemen in the countryside,⁶ playing a part in nearly every transaction that peasant and lord had with the outside world and with each other. Only 30 per cent of Polish Jews were engaged primarily in trade or commerce, but nearly all retail trade was in their hands, as was the buying-up of grain and the sale of liquor in the countryside. They were the nobles' agents and sometimes the managers of their estates; and so frequently did landowners lease or farm out to them the subsidiary branches of the manorial economy – fisheries and mills, distilleries and breweries, taverns and inns, dairies and orchards, forests and ferries, the sale of salt, spirits, and other gentry prerogatives – that the word leaseholder, *arendator*, was virtually synonymous with Jew.⁷

From the beginning of Russian rule, most local officials, influenced by the arguments of Polish nobles, saw the Jews as the chief source of peasant poverty, drunkenness and turbulence. Although in some instances the self-serving character of these arguments was recognized, the three evils would become inextricably linked in the official Russian mind with the Jews. There was the additional fact that Jewish traders and townsmen who were living in the villages were doing so illegally and thereby escaping the controls and tax obligations to which they were liable as members of urban corporations. It was, in fact, the law that all subjects who were registered in towns should live in them, and the Empress Catherine's wish in particular that they should do so to contribute to urban growth and commerce. When that law was applied to Belorussia in 1783, local officials were thereby given the means to remove the Jews from the countryside.

The orders of the central government had made no reference to Jews as such and spoke only of merchants (*kuptsy*) and townsmen (*meshchane*), who were primarily artisans, shopkeepers, petty traders and laborers. Nor did the provincial governors at first discriminate when they began to carry out their instructions from St Petersburg. The Jews, nonetheless, became the nearly exclusive target of their efforts, because in the rural districts of White Russia, and even more so in the later acquisitions, there were few Christians whom the law affected. Since all the Jews on the basis of Catherine's laws and instructions were to be inscribed with equal rights in the two urban estates as merchants or townsmen and many of them lived outside the towns of their inscription, all of the latter were subject to removal from the villages.⁸ Instead of aiding the development of the towns, it was charged, they contributed to the destitution of the rural population and helped to fuel peasant unrest when, for example, as distillers and exporters, they diverted grain from local markets in times of shortage and famine or when, as publicans, they caused debt and drinking.⁹

Attempts to force Jewish (and indeed Christian) townsmen back into the cities began as early as 1783. Concern for the development of the city economy was soon overshadowed by expressions of solicitude for the peasants' welfare. Although this was most often spurious or an avoidance of more basic problems – notably serfdom and tensions between serfs and their masters – it was widespread among officials who would not or could not see that the Jew was as much victim as cause of a situation that his removal could not cure and would probably worsen. This much was recognized: that mass expulsions from the villages were impracticable, that they would mean a loss of income for many landlords and the

treasury, deprive peasants of employment and services while adding to congestion and misery in overcrowded towns. As often as the relocation of Jews was proposed or begun, as in 1783, 1795, 1801, and again by the Jewish Statute of 1804, it was slowed or stopped, only to be brought up again in times of crisis as the only way to rescue the simple rural folk from the Jews, from hunger and from their own vices.¹⁰

Mass expulsions of Jews from the villages on the basis of general law stopped in 1835, but selective restrictions, sometimes for whole provinces, on rural residence or the liquor trade, did not.¹¹ The number driven out of the villages is estimated to have reached 200 000 by the 1840s.¹² Restrictions were imposed without consistency and evaded often, for state, landlords and peasants derived benefits from the very activities which restrictive regulations were designed to check. 'Such an obvious disregard the orders of the government' wrote an official historian, 'is convincing proof of the advantages which the Christian inhabitants of the villages found in their close relations with the Jews.' Yet he also believed that it was masters rather than serfs who were the prime beneficiaries of the Jewish presence, whereas the 'simple people' were ruined by Jewish money-lenders, tavern-keepers and grain dealers.¹³

During serfdom, there were other than economic reasons for keeping Jews away from land and peasants. In 1784, non-Christians were forbidden to own Christian serfs, and until 1800, members of urban estates could not own land. In that year, merchants and townsmen were allowed to buy 'unsettled properties', that is, properties without serfs, but the Senate made clear that this implied no toleration of Jews leasing entire estates and thus becoming the direct employers or managers of serf labor. Nobles were not to entrust their peasants and villages to Jews; under no circumstances were Jews to own or to have charge of Christian villages and souls. Enactments of 1818, 1819 and 1820 forbade Christian debtors to discharge their debts to Jews by working for them; the use of peasant labor and services by Jews was inhibited or (before 1804) entirely proscribed, as was their employment of Christian domestics. Motivated by religious considerations or by an unconscious fear of racial contamination, these measures raised further obstacles to Jews engaging in rural occupations – the very ones that were expected to wean them away from their evil pursuits.¹⁴

Like earlier legislation, the Jewish Statute of 1835 and other enactments of Nicholas I did not resolve the conflict between the state's solicitude for the well-being of the rural masses, its own fiscal concerns and the economic interests of the landlords. The statute did, however, bring to the Jews living and working in the countryside a measure of

relief and a modicum of stability. Instructed by earlier failures, the emperor and his advisers hoped that new approaches to the problem would be more fruitful. Conscription into the army, baptism into the Orthodox Church by force or favors, prescribed reforms in education, language and dress, the abolition of Jewish communal autonomy, incentives for agricultural colonists, and the repression of individuals who were engaged in illegal or 'useless' occupations (petty and itinerant trade; the liquor traffic; money-lending) – these were the ways through which the Jews were to be turned to productive labor and to be weakened in their attachment to a benighted faith, to be enlightened and secularized, perhaps to be converted.¹⁵

If it was indeed Nicholas's purpose to put an end to the particularism and stubborn isolation of his Jewish subjects, to make them more like their Christian neighbors and more acceptable to them, it was defeated by the cruelty of his methods. With respect to Jewish landownership, leaseholding and colonization, however, his policy was, for a time at least, more consistent with the aims pursued and somewhat more generous than what had previously been done. The Pale, it is true, as finally fixed by the Statute of 1835, was reduced in scope, and permanent departures from it made more difficult; but where inside its boundaries the right of domicile was recognized, it was accompanied by the right to buy, work or lease land, to live or to erect factories on it. The basic right to 'acquire real property' was, to be sure, qualified in a number of important ways. Tied as it was to the right of residence, it did not extend to the cities of Kiev, Nikolaev and Sevastopol, to villages in the provinces (*gubernii*) of Mogilev and Vitebsk, or to crown and Cossack settlements in Chernigov and Poltava. Villages within 33 miles of the western border were closed to newcomers, and as before, an exception was made for 'settled estates', gentry properties on which Christian serfs lived and worked.¹⁶

That restriction was also applied to the leasing of arable, pasture and forests. The Statute specifically allowed Jews to exploit such other parts of the manorial economy as mills, posting inns and taverns without first having to enter the legal category of 'agriculturalists', but not where it was a question of leasing entire estates or where Jews, as managers or administrators for the owners, would be in direct charge of their peasants. For the same reason, a law of 1840 provided that landlords could not make over to Jews the quit-rent or other dues owed by their peasants. The wish to protect the latter from exploitation or control also led to the rules of 15 August 1845 which forbade Jews to distill and sell spirits or live in taverns and inns outside towns or townlets.¹⁷

Decrees issued in February and June of 1853 permitted Jewish leasing

of quit-rent-bearing properties that formed part of an estate only on the basis of a formal contract which specified that the leaseholder was not to engage in the sale of vodka, not to have commercial dealings with the peasants and not to take up permanent residence in a manorial village.¹⁸ These decrees marked a clear retreat from the Statute of 1835 and were widely interpreted as a renewed general prohibition for Jews to live in the villages and as an authorization to resume expulsions.¹⁹ Before these were once again stopped two years later,²⁰ the Senate determined that parcels of land outside of towns could be held or acquired by Jewish agriculturalists,²¹ but in 1855, members of that category, along with all others Jews, were barred from acquiring land in the provinces of Chernigov and Poltava.²²

As opportunities to engage in agriculture, in related pursuits or in trade with the rural population were diminished, the government's efforts to keep Jews out of idleness, vagabondage and illicit occupations once again shifted to colonization in the less-densely settled areas of the Pale or beyond. The Statute of 1835 encouraged Jews to enter the class (*sostoianie*) of free agriculturalists (*evrei-zemledel'tsy*) which had been established in 1804 by promising forgiveness of tax arrears and authorizing their settlement on public and, in the Pale, on private lands as well – as long as they remained at a minimum distance and administratively separate from non-Jewish peasants and colonists. Scarcity and legal restrictions had virtually removed private lands as objects of Jewish colonization, and the first assignment of state lands since the founding of the New Russian colonies in the early reign of Alexander I was made in Siberia in 1835.²³

Fifteen thousand *desiatinas* (40 500 acres) were set aside in the *guberniia* of Tobol'sk and the district of Omsk, and another 13 000 in 1837. In the first year some 1300 individuals set out for the distant lands. When the numbers of those who prepared to follow them grew steadily larger, the government took fright. In a sudden turnabout, which left one group of migrants stranded in mid-passage, it put an end to all further Jewish colonization in Siberia in 1837.²⁴ The Emperor Nicholas himself had remarked on the incongruity of introducing Jews to a part of the country from which the law excluded them, and it was he also who feared that in view of the sparseness of Russians in the area, the Jews there 'might in time become just as harmful as in the western parts of the Empire – if not to all, at least to the lower orders of the inhabitants'.²⁵

There were additional reasons for the slowing of the colonization effort and for its final cessation in the reign of Alexander II. Lack of money was one. After 1812, no state funds were made available and the money

derived from the tax on kosher meat or raised directly by Jewish communities and philanthropists was totally inadequate. To resettle even a small proportion of the more than half million 'townsmen without definite occupation',²⁶ who caused such great concern to a government that was in large measure responsible for their marginal existence and their none too discriminating search for a livelihood, required determination and resources that both the state and the Jews lacked. Their incapacity and distaste for the honest labor of the soil were often blamed for the failure of the experiment.²⁷ A better explanation of the waning official commitment to the expansion of Jewish colonies is the extraordinary fertility of the peasantry and the growing shortage of land. Mikhail Speranskii had been the first to point out that state peasants in European Russia might soon be short of land and suggested that they be allowed to take up farming in Siberia. In the reign of Nicholas I, land-hungry state peasants were, in fact, resettled in the southern and eastern borderlands.²⁸ With the peasants' needs and claims becoming an ever more pressing matter for the regime and Alexander II deciding in 1856 that serf emancipation had at last to be faced, it became even less likely that scarce land would be given to Jewish colonists. At the end of the century there were no more than 63 000 of these in about 300 settlements.²⁹

II

Changing the status of the peasants was bound to have far-reaching implications for the Jews, but what they would be was far from clear in the first years of the new reign. It was still an open question whether the government would loosen their bonds too or whether it would continue to look upon Jews, as it had done for nearly a century, as a dangerous element to be restrained, reformed and controlled – especially in its contacts and dealings with the rural folk. And would the latter, who had been the object of the state's paternal concern even while they were under the supposedly benevolent tutelage of their masters, now be left to conduct their own affairs, no longer tied to their calling, their places of residence, their obligations to pay and serve?

If emancipation from ascribed status meant an equality of rights and burdens for the lower classes of country and town, logic and fairness required that the Jews too should be emancipated. But as had been shown in 1762, when the nobles had been relieved of their service obligations while the peasants were not, logic and equity did not prevail

when interest did. What was demanded by the interest of the state or by that of the landlord class with which the state had still to reckon once the serfs were freed; whether the relationships of Jews and peasants should continue to be regulated as before – these were not questions to which Russian policy-makers had ready or uniform answers. Some of them thought that the condition of the Jews, like all Russian life and law, should be renewed, improved, liberalized, that the heavy hand of the state should be lifted somewhat. There was no unanimity, however, as to how this was to be accomplished or whether it was, in fact, desirable or necessary.

Although Alexander had on his accession held out to all his subjects the promise of education, equal justice, tolerance and humanity, neither he nor his chief advisers viewed the alleviation of the condition of the Jews as a matter of first importance or urgency. The emperor himself was, and remained, adamantly opposed to their full emancipation and from the very start of his reign indicated that he favored the retention of the prime source and symbol of Jewish inferiority and misery, the Pale of Settlement. This stringent limitation on the scope of Jewish reform turned out to be a permanent one. Yet Alexander was more flexible and pragmatic than his father had been where partial relief was concerned and his willingness to entertain liberalizing and reforming ideas, to look afresh at old and stubborn problems, extended also to the question of the Jews when it was brought to his attention.³⁰

This happened early in 1856 when Count Kiselev, head of the committee set up in 1840 to reorder Jewish life, pointed out to the emperor that the many disabilities imposed on the Jews by law and administrative practice clashed with the general laws and frequently with one another and defeated the purpose of integrating the Jews with the rest of the nation's population. Kiselev's report caused Alexander to order a revision of all existing Jewish legislation so that it might be brought into conformity with the goal of integration 'insofar as the moral condition of the Jews may allow it'.³¹ There was foreshadowed in that phrase the likelihood that the vicious circle would be closed again, that granting Jewish rights would, as before, be made conditional upon proof of good behavior as defined by the government. Nevertheless for a time there was a readiness to try new approaches and ministers in St Petersburg as well as several provincial administrators felt emboldened by the new spirit to put forward the most generous proposals that had yet been made in Russia.

The Governor-General of New Russia and Bessarabia, Count A. G. Stroganov, pronounced in 1858 in favor of the immediate and complete

equality of civil rights for Jews and for allowing them freedom of residence and choice of occupation. He urged such a step as being in accord with the commands of justice and Christian teaching, as beneficial to the national economy and as the most effective way of weakening the religious fanaticism of the Jews. The Minister of the Interior, Count S. S. Lanskoi, supported Stroganov's views before the Jewish Committee and declared the discriminatory treatment of the Jews to be the main reason for their pitiful state and for the failure of official efforts to end their withdrawal into isolation.³²

The committee, chaired from June 1856 by Count D. N. Bludov, was quite unprepared to go so far. Emancipation had to come about by degrees; it had to be the end result, not the beginning, of a process in which the Jews acquired rights gradually, reformed their communal life, became truly educated, and entered useful occupations – which, in effect, meant for most of them abandoning the only ones in which they could engage. The emperor approved the committee's position and thereby put off indefinitely a radically new treatment which would have tried to solve the problem of the Jews by making them full-fledged citizens. Only individuals who possessed special skills or met certain criteria of educational achievement, economic utility and wealth could escape the confinement of the Pale and the disabilities from which their co-religionists continued to suffer. Even then, the few favored ones were given not rights but privileges, and these proved to be revocable.³³

The modesty of the measures adopted in the years after 1858 suggests that it was fear of the mass influx of poor Jews into the Russian interior, and especially its rural regions, that had contributed to the rejection of full and early emancipation. The selective admission of certain groups – merchants of the first guild (1859); holders of advanced degrees (1861); all university graduates (1879); mechanics and craftsmen (1865) – was deemed possible not only because the individuals belonging to them were few in number and were expected to contribute to the nation's prosperity, but also because they had little desire or opportunity to engage in rural occupations and thus to come in contact or conflict with the peasantry.³⁴ Fear that this might happen must have been intensified when the serfs were liberated in 1861 and in the following three months showed themselves to be more unruly than in any comparable period since the days of Pugachev.³⁵

A year later, Count P. E. Kotzebue, an advocate of gradual Jewish emancipation, suggested that it begin by letting Jews live, buy real estate and engage in commerce, manufactures and crafts on the same basis as did other Russian subjects, *except in the countryside*. There they would be

in direct touch with the agricultural population 'which in its present material and moral state is more likely to become the victim of the speculative activity of the Jews than to profit from close association with them'.³⁶ Stroganov also retreated from his earlier stand and now asked merely that they be allowed to reside and do business in the cities of the empire. That too had come to be regarded as an extreme position by the emperor, the Council of State and the Jewish Committee. The latter, in 1861, rejected the proposal of Lanskoï and the Minister of Education, E. V. Putiatin, that cities beyond the Pale be opened not only to first-guild merchants but to those of the second and third guilds as well and to all who had finished a course of secondary or higher education together with their families and servants.³⁷

Reports from the Pale had convinced the two ministers that if the Jews were sunk in poverty and prejudice and given to sharp or shady practices, this was because of factors over which they had little control. The chief barrier to their ethical and economic regeneration, which the government had so far pursued in vain, was that the number of traders among them was abnormally large in relation to the number of peasants in whose midst the Jews had to gain their livelihood. With the Christian peasant as destitute as the Jewish trader, it was unavoidable that the latter victimized the former, the more so since intense competition among the Jews made it nearly impossible for them to remain within the bounds of legality and survive. Ultimately, the material and moral degradation of the Jews was caused by the limits put on their freedom of work and movement; only if these limits were loosened could they make an honest living, seek an education that would end their clannishness and raise their standards of conduct. To make their moral improvement the prior condition for attaining the rights enjoyed by comparable groups in the general population would mean condemning them to their present state for centuries, to their own misfortune and that of the other inhabitants of the Pale. The Governor-General of Kiev, Podolia and Volynia, Prince I. I. Vasil'chikov, and Minister of Finance M. Kh. Reutern, made similar appeals. They too went unheeded, although the Jewish Committee, in its journal, recorded agreement with the arguments on which they were based.³⁸

Since the possibility of escape from the Pale was offered to only a few individuals, any betterment of the Jewish condition that was not to be postponed to a distant future had to be sought and found where the majority of Jews would continue to live and where the Jewish problem had its origin. There, meaningful reform had to reconcile what the government of the tsars had so far found irreconcilable: subsistence for

several hundred thousand Jews lacking in skills, capital or regular employment; the well-being of several million peasants; the interests of their Polish and Russian landlords and those of the exchequer. Even the best and best-intentioned regime, free of religious or national prejudices and fears, unhampered by financial constraints and assisted by a large and efficient civil service might have displayed a lack of resolution when confronted by a task of such magnitude. The Russia of Alexander II, having ruled out a *laissez-faire* approach, its resources already strained by the monumental work of modernization in other areas, had none to spare for dealing with a question which was not considered to be of the highest priority.

Within the Pale too, therefore, reform remained a piecemeal affair of small and cautious steps. There was, for example, no explicit or general repeal of the various impediments to rural residence and landholding, but the State Council in 1857 abolished the requirement of 1853 that rural parcels of land could be acquired only by Jewish cultivators or manufacturers.³⁹ In 1858, owners of real estate were allowed to return to the frontier zone from which all Jews had been ordered expelled in 1843 in order to combat smuggling.⁴⁰ And in 1859 another prohibition of 1853 was lifted: Jews could now lease, as well as settle on, mortgaged estates where there was a servile population, provided such land did not pass into Jewish ownership. This departure from a long-standing policy of keeping Jews from 'lording' it over Christian peasants was not, in the first instance, designed to expand economic opportunities for Jews but to assist indebted landlords and their creditors.⁴¹

When serfdom was ended by the law of 19 February 1861, its provisions continued to make possible Jewish leasing of gentry properties, except for the peasants' homesteads and other holdings allotted to them in perpetual use.⁴² Ownership, however, of any portion of an estate – whether or not the portion formed part of the peasant allotment or remained in the hands of the landlord – was specifically denied to Jews, and to Jews alone, by the emancipation edict. This was a retreat from earlier legislation which had allowed Jews, in places where they had the right of residence, to acquire all but 'settled' land. Although after emancipation only those estates could be considered 'settled' where the peasants remained 'temporarily obligated' to their former masters – that is, where their money and labor dues had not yet been replaced by a land settlement and the beginning of redemption payments – the law did not exempt from its prohibition even those estates on which the relationship between serfs and owner had been finally dissolved, the period of 'temporary obligations' had ended, and the land remaining to the lord after division could no longer be considered as 'settled'.⁴³

The conflict between the emancipation edict and the Statutes of 1804 and 1835 was soon brought to the attention of the Jewish Committee. There the Governor-General of Kiev and the Minister of the Interior pointed out that noble landowners, much reduced in property and income, were further damaged by the reluctance of Jewish capitalists in the south-west to advance loans for which land could not be pledged as security. It was also illogical to try to keep out of Jewish hands gentry properties which could be alienated to members of other classes and which, once they had ceased to be gentry property, could pass into Jewish possession without legal hindrance. The wish to prevent Jewish ownership of Russian soil and to preserve it for the most Russian of Russia's estates, peasants and nobles, was almost quixotic since many of the latter were Poles. In April 1862, therefore, the Jewish Committee decided that Jews in the Pale could acquire, in full ownership, noble (*pomestie*) lands on which the obligatory relations between peasants and owners had been terminated.⁴⁴

Yet in less than two years older attitudes reasserted themselves powerfully and were helped to prevail by apprehensions revived by the outbreak of the Polish Rebellion in January 1863. After its suppression it was decided to make the nine so-called Polish provinces of the west more secure by strengthening Russian landownership in the region. At least one local administrator, Prince Vasil'chikov, thought it possible to weaken the Polish element by favoring the Jews as long as there were proper safeguards to keep them from acquiring peasant allotments or driving up land prices by speculative buying; but St Petersburg regarded Jews as unreliable allies.⁴⁵ Consequently, they were specifically barred, along with 'persons of Polish origin', from taking advantage of the tax exemptions and financial assistance which the government on 5 March 1864 offered to Russian purchasers of land in the nine provinces. Nor could properties acquired on these preferential terms be leased, managed, bought or inherited by persons of Polish origin or Jews, although the latter might operate distilleries and public houses located on them. Fiscal requirements once more took precedence over the welfare of the rural population.⁴⁶

The Governor-General of Kiev, however, felt that the morals and well-being of the peasants in his region were as much threatened by the growing number of Jewish landowners as was the government's plan for Russification. His request that obstacles be put in the way of Jewish purchases of 'settled' agricultural real property was taken up by the newly formed Western Committee where it received a sympathetic hearing. Determined to increase the number and holdings of ethnic Russians in the west and to ease the burdens of the Orthodox peasants in order to

make them a counterweight to Polish nobles, the committee had been responsible for the law of 5 March 1864 and for the decision to compel landlords (*pomeshchiki*) in the nine provinces to terminate the obligations of their former serfs and agree to the redemption of their allotments. Achievement of these goals would be considerably hindered if Jews were allowed to buy gentry or peasant land. The committee noted that since the Jews disposed of significant amounts of capital and were also creditors of most of the local gentry, they were in a position to outbid prospective Russian buyers of estates put up for sale, while the peasants, but recently freed from the oppressive dominance of their masters and in need of earnings, would become dependent on Jewish landowners who were financially powerful besides being politically unreliable. The committee resolved on 10 July 1864 'to forbid all Jews, without exception, to acquire land from landlords or peasants'.⁴⁷

That this policy was not merely part of the Russification drive initiated in the wake of the Polish rebellion became clear in the years that followed. In December 1867 the Committee of Ministers relaxed the prohibitions on leaseholding because Russian estate owners found Jewish experience and capital as indispensable for the running of mills, distilleries, sugar-beet refineries and other works as had their Polish predecessors; yet it also reaffirmed that neither estates as a whole nor any parts thereof devoted to strictly agricultural pursuits were exempt from the provisions of the law of 5 March 1864.⁴⁸ In 1869 Kotzebue recommended to the emperor that in his district of New Russia – which was quite unaffected by Polish dissidence or nationalism – Jewish land purchases be no longer tolerated. Alexander agreed, but legislation was postponed at the insistence of the Minister of the Interior until the Jewish question could be examined in its entirety.⁴⁹

Whether they did so openly as purchasers or indirectly as bailiffs (in Bessarabia) and leaseholders (in the south-west) Jews were, in fact, moving into the agricultural sector in growing numbers as employers of rural labor, as factual and less often as legal possessors of estates. It was a movement to which the lack of Jewish capital would soon have put natural limits, but such figures as were reported for 1868 – 701 out of 5143 gentry estates leased to Jews in Kiev, Volynia and Podolia – gave rise to alarm and calls for remedial measures on behalf of a landowning class which had been deprived of the cheap labor of its serfs and was finding it difficult to survive in the post-emancipation money economy. Behind the Jewish capitalists there stood the specter of the large mass of their impoverished brethren who were expected to descend on the countryside in their wake.⁵⁰

In early 1870, the Governor-General of Kiev, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, requested that the regulation forbidding Jews to lease or otherwise take over estates acquired with government assistance be extended to all gentry properties in the three provinces under his authority. He called also for the renewal of restrictions, which had been relaxed in 1863 and 1865, on Jews trading in spirits in the rural districts of the Pale. A year later the Governor of Chernigov, in his annual report, expressed the view that the simplest way of preventing the exploitation of peasants by Jews was to allow the latter to live anywhere in the empire. The tsar stopped further discussion of that idea by indicating his disagreement, but by his favorable comments on the proposal of Dondukov-Korsakov encouraged its author to repeat it when no action was taken on it by St Petersburg. On 26 October 1872 the prince submitted to Alexander a lengthy 'Memorandum Concerning the Most Important Questions in the Administration of the South-West Region' which the Jewish Committee took up only six weeks later.⁵¹

The memorandum represents something of a novelty in official discussions of the Jewish question, for it addressed not only the relationship of Jews to the land and to the people who lived on and by it; it viewed in a new and largely negative light Jewish industrialists and manufacturers, the producers of goods who were being favored for their role in economic development. Their very successes now appeared to be as great a threat as 'unproductive' tradesmen, money-lenders and brokers, a threat from which the country as a whole, not merely backward peasants, had to be protected. For Dondukov-Korsakov the Jewish role in the rural economy remained the most troublesome aspect of the Jewish problem – which he characterized as nearly the most important confronting the government and the provincial authorities in the southwest – but the problem's difficulties and dangers had in his eyes been enhanced by the growing power of Jews in every branch of the economy.

The prince cited statistics in support of his charge. In the three provinces of the south-west – Kiev, Volynia and Podolia – there were 721 000 Jews, or one per seven Christians. In the towns they made up 32 per cent of the inhabitants, in the townlets 53 per cent, and in rural settlements 14 per cent. Jews rented 819 estates on the basis of formal and legal contracts and many more on the basis of informal or camouflaged arrangements 'so that it can be said that one-sixth of all estates are in their hands'. They owned 27 of 108 sugar refineries, 500 of 564 distilleries, 199 of 148 breweries, 5700 of 6353 mills, 527 other manufacturing establishments, 15 000 shops and 190 000 public houses, inns and taverns. They

dominated the trade in lumber and grain, the export business in these and other commodities, contracting for government supplies and much else.

However, Jewish solidarity and influence, Dondukov-Korsakov warned, reached beyond the south-west. They penetrated all Russian public life, including the governmental sphere, and the economy and finances of nearly the entire world. 'The cause of every last Jew is also the cause of the world-wide Jewish *kahal* . . . that powerful yet elusive association.' It had shown its power in 1847 and 1869 when its agents Sir Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux, had intervened in St Petersburg to rescue some of their brethren from the action of Russian law in a ritual murder case and from charges of evading military service. Control of railroads and big banks made the influence of the Jews still stronger and still more elusive, delaying the speedy solution of the Jewish question which was the urgent need and wish of the people of Russia, especially in the south-west. The Odessa pogrom of 1871 had been the instinctive protest of the masses against the government's failure to end the special status and privileges of the Jews which rested as a heavy burden on the trusting but little-developed lower classes. In the south-west the police and the peasantry's dependence on the Jews had so far prevented similar outbursts. It was nonetheless impossible to ignore the general exasperation against the Jews who evaded the state obligations borne by the other taxable estates and exploited the people among whom they live.

The Jewish problem would not, the prince said, end with the grant of equal rights. The numerous partisans of the Jews who argued otherwise did so on abstract, theoretical grounds, from legalistic or humanitarian principles, but they forgot that rights go with obligations and that only the educated part of Jewry would be prepared to fulfill these. The coarse and superstitious majority would continue to be an ungovernable element of corruption and disruption. The prince dismissed as equally abstract the proposition that it was unnatural to inhibit the free play of Jewish business talent for the sake of a native population which was less developed, less capable and less experienced in commerce and trade. In spite of the prevalence of free-trade theories, even the most advanced states had adopted protective tariffs to enable their infant industries to grow and to compete with their more developed rivals. The same argument was valid when applied to the economy of the south-west, especially to its agriculture, and it was given added weight by political considerations.

On the other hand, the opponents of the Jews, Dondukov-Korsakov wrote, blindly followed their fanatical and one-sided views, falling into

the opposite extreme of wanting to lock them up in certain localities and thinking to make them harmless by still greater restrictions and disabilities. Such a course would only strengthen Jewish power in the border provinces where, crowded and impoverished, they would create more trouble and commit more transgressions of the law which no amount of regulation could stop. Ultimately, the Jews must be allowed to settle in other parts of the empire; only their dispersal could end the physical concentration and tribal solidarity that had so many evil consequences. Living among non-Jews, they would necessarily follow a different way of life and accept the values and ideas of their environment – to the point of eventual absorption and loss of national identity. In the provinces of the interior, keen-witted Russian *kulaks*, capable merchants and enterprising peasants, made more self-reliable by the recent reforms, were not likely to become the victims of the Jews. It was the latter, rather, who would find themselves losers in such a contest.

Before that could happen, the prince suggested, a number of steps had to be taken of which those bearing on the immediate problems of his region were the most urgent. Above all, any change in the law prohibiting Jewish land purchases would be dangerous and harmful, at best premature. As for the leasing of land, he urged again that it be forbidden altogether. He did not deny that there was benefit to be derived from Jews running or owning factories and other enterprises requiring capital and technical knowledge, but there was none in letting them monopolize agricultural as well as non-agricultural production, for then the former would become fully dependent on the latter, in contravention of all the laws of political economy. Only if the two were in balance and competition could the peasants avoid the subjugation of their lands and labor by Jewish capital and their early material and moral destruction. Having freed the peasants from the yoke of their Polish lords, the Russian state should not, because of adherence to general principles, turn them over to be ruined by the Jews and, after solving the Polish problem, exacerbate the Jewish one.

The Jewish Committee decisively rejected the key points of Dondukov-Korsakov's memorandum.⁵² The laws and rules prohibiting the leasing of estates acquired with government help or on preferential terms could not be extended to properties that were not so acquired. Russian purchasers who obtained land under the provisions of the law of 5 March 1864 had done so in full awareness and voluntary acceptance of the conditions of sale, of which not renting to Jews was one. To limit the right of others (most of them, in the south-west, Poles) to dispose of their property would be a dangerous violation of the law and politically unwise as well.

As for the Jews, they were entitled under existing law to become leaseholders of estates, with the exception only of those acquired by Russian owners with the aid of the government.

In opposing further restrictions the committee did not invoke only the sanctity of private property. It took issue also with specific points made by Dondukov-Korsakov and found that Jewish leaseholders were not, by and large, bad managers or reckless exploiters of the land. Their interests and goals, their methods of cultivation and use of hired labor were identical with those of other owners or tenants, especially when they held large properties on long-term contracts. If there was damage, it came from poor Jews (*evrei-proletarii*) who, either as tenants, sub-tenants or agents for wealthy employers, lived off the labor and substance of the rural people. That was equally the case, however, on lands held by the local gentry who had not, so far, been able to dispense with the services of Jews in all kinds of agricultural and commercial operations. That was a fact of economic life which neither legislation nor administrative compulsion could change. Only the ready availability of cheap credit and state economic and financial assistance could diminish the Jewish hold over the agriculture of the region.

Nor was the committee alarmed by the political danger which the Jews posed. They were, admittedly, a closed and solid mass whose strength and solidarity were nourished by fanaticism, ignorance and prejudice. Yet there was another side to the presence of such a force in Russia's western borderlands where there were large numbers of Poles on whose loyalty it was at the moment impossible to rely. If the government now further restrained and restricted the Jews as the Kiev Governor-General wished, it would embitter them and increase the number of Russia's enemies in precisely those areas where quiet and order were most essential. The problems created by Jewish landholding could not, in any case, be treated only in the south-west or separated from the general question of the Jews which faced the country as a whole. It was for the purpose of dealing with that question that the Jewish Committee had been established. It would make every effort to discharge its task and propose an early resolution of the matter put before it as part of its general review of Jewish legislation. These views were shared by the Committee of Ministers and approved by the emperor on 13 April 1873.

Continuing concern over the Jews as a cause of peasants drinking, expressed by Dondukov-Korsakov in 1870, was reflected in a modification of regulations which had allowed them in 1813 and 1856 to sell spirits wherever they had the right of residence, including the rural districts of the Pale.⁵³ The law of 14 May 1874 required that Jews own the

premises on which they kept taverns or liquor shops. Although it did not specify that the land on which such premises were located be Jewish property as well, the law could be, and was, read that way. On either reading it had the effect and probably the purpose of reducing the number of such establishments in villages where Jewish land purchases had been sharply restricted by the law of 1864. The Senate upheld the narrower interpretation in 1882, demonstrating that policy and the assumptions governing it had changed little since the eighteenth century.⁵⁴

There is other evidence to show that the reign of Alexander II marked neither an unequivocal break with past practices nor an absolute contrast with those followed by the administration of Alexander III. In 1865, the total ban on rural residence in Mogilev and Vitebsk had been lifted to allow Jews to live and trade in the villages as 'temporary' residents on the basis of special permits, and even to buy or lease lands for farming if these were at least two miles distant from any peasant settlement. But an 1877 Senate decision again made it impossible for Jews to acquire real estate in the two provinces and barred them from membership in village communities.⁵⁵ In May 1880 the Don Cossack Territory was closed to Jews (except doctors, university graduates, and a few others) who were also forbidden to buy or lease landed property. The steps leading up to that decision, the reasons given for it, the fact of its advocacy by Dmitrii Miliutin, Minister of War and one of the most staunchly liberal of Alexander's advisers, may, for all the specific features of the case, be regarded as a catalog of official Russia's traditional attitudes and of the new fears that had been generated by the social and economic changes which serf emancipation, the spread of capitalism and the growth of industry had set in motion.⁵⁶

As early as 1874, the territorial administration had called to the attention of the commander (*ataman*) of the Don Cossack Army that the taking over of a local railroad by the Jewish concessionaire Samuil Poliakov had brought large numbers of Jews to the area as contractors, suppliers, agents for various kinds of enterprises, as craftsmen and in other capacities. They had come to play an active and important role in trade and commerce, in the coal industry and in all kinds of transactions with the Cossack peasantry. This was deemed detrimental to the promising growth of manufactures, trade and crafts among the inhabitants, for which reason the authorities in St Petersburg were asked whether Jewish merchants of the first guild were entitled to acquire real estate in the territory. When the Interior Minister replied in the affirmative in January 1875, local officials returned to the charge by

pointing out that the Don and its people were unique and therefore entitled to special consideration. Each and every Cossack being obliged to render military service, all had to be assured of a secure livelihood. The most certain way of giving that assurance would be to keep Jews out of the Don and from acquiring land there, to protect from them its fledgling economy as a whole and Cossack agriculture in particular.

In the capital, the War Council agreed and supplied further justification for the action requested. The feverish exploitation of the territory's resources and the rapid growth of its industries were undesirable, for they would be accompanied by an extreme inequality of wealth, the quick enrichment of some and the impoverishment of others. But Cossacks had to be kept from destitution and maintained at a level of solid competence to enable them to discharge their military service with their own horses and equipment. The development of industry and commerce in their midst had to proceed slowly, since Cossacks were unable to hold their own in dealing with such shrewd and experienced traders as the Jews. It was also worrisome that since the end of serfdom the local gentry were in straitened circumstances, giving the Jews an opportunity to obtain their land. Thus, the Cossack peasantry was being 'squeezed by the concerted efforts of Jewish landowners from above and of Jewish manufacturers and tradesmen from below'.

The remedy was clear: forbid Jews to buy or lease land or to come into the territory as permanent residents. This time, the Minister of the Interior agreed, as did his colleague at the Ministry of Finance. When it was suggested that the contemplated measure be carried out by a temporary and local suspension of existing law (with which it was in conflict) Miliutin successfully insisted on an explicit prohibition to remain in force as long as there should be a special Cossack military class and force. In 1892 the prohibition was extended to the Cossack territories of the Kuban and Terek.⁵⁷ An official summary of Jewish legislation prepared for the Council of Ministers in 1906 described what was done as 'designed to guard the Cossacks . . . from Jewish exploitation through the illegal sale of liquor and the lending of grain and money at usurious rates'.⁵⁸

Even were there could be no question of undermining the fighting ability of the country's mounted peasant warriors, relations between Jews and peasants worried officialdom. In April 1880, the Ministry of Interior requested confidential information on the extent of Jewish leasing of peasant land in Mogilev, and possibly in other provinces. The figures for Mogilev, supplied by the police, were such as to confirm fear and suspicion. Out of 428 leaseholders, only six were themselves engaged in

working the land; the remainder did so with hired hands. For the majority, moreover, leasing – whether of land, windmills or peasant cottages (by Jewish craftsmen) – was but a pretext for insinuating themselves into the peasant milieu and plundering the villagers in the usual ways: through money-lending; the open and illicit sale of drink on credit or for produce; the resale, in the spring, to the peasants of grain bought from them at vastly lower prices in the fall; the use of faulty weights and measures. The provincial office of peasant affairs, agreeing with the police, called for an absolute prohibition on Jewish leasing of peasant land and for a ban on extended stays by Jews in the villages. The governor, transmitting all this material to the ministry, agreed as well and added that keeping Jews away from peasants would help to reduce the incidence of horse- and cattle-stealing. In April 1880 and May 1881 the office of peasant affairs in Vilna *guberniia* gave similar reasons for asking that Jewish leasing of peasant land be stopped.⁵⁹

What they regarded as the baneful Jewish presence in the countryside obviously concerned officials in the provinces and the capital long before the pogroms of 1881 moved it to the center of discussion.⁶⁰ The nearly uniform interpretation of the anti-Jewish disturbances of that and the following year as being largely the spontaneous response to Jewish depredations by simple Christians in town and country could not otherwise have become the conventional wisdom with such speed and ease.

III

If St Petersburg was at first disposed to see in the excesses of the South Russian mobs the sinister hand of revolution, that view soon gave way to one that was more familiar and comforting and which became more readily acceptable as the conspiracy which had killed Alexander II on 1 March 1881 was revealed to be not nearly as far-flung and well-organized as had been feared. True, some of the reports coming in from the affected localities spoke of the distress and confusion that news of the assassination had sowed in the public mind, how that mood had been utilized by revolutionary agitators and had contributed to the outbreak and spread of pogroms. But their fundamental cause, the government was told by its representatives in the provinces, was what would soon be called the ‘abnormal’ economic relationships between Jews and the lower classes of the Christian population, especially the peasants. As Major General P. I. Kutaisov, special emissary for the investigation of the disorders, concluded: not the religious question, nor hostility for the followers of the

law of Moses, but the heavy weight of their pitiless economic oppression, felt chiefly by the rural classes, had provoked the popular movement against the Jews.⁶¹ After a century of complaints against the village Jews and a century of efforts to neutralize or remove them, such an explanation found a ready hearing, the more so since it was echoed by other trusted and highly-placed functionaries.

Prince D. I. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, a hero of the Russo-Turkish War and Governor-General of Khar'kov at the time of the pogroms, not only ascribed the outburst of mass violence to the feeling of ignorant men that they were helpless in the face of Jewish exploitation and that the government had abandoned them; he also gave voice to the belief, which had been gaining ground among critics of the Great Reforms, that the end of serfdom, the removal of the landlords' patriarchal authority and protection, had left the peasants all the more vulnerable to Jewish machination. When they turned to the courts to extricate themselves from the dishonest deals in which the Jews had ensnared them, simple folk who had no understanding of legal intricacies and little appreciation of the binding force of contracts they considered unfair, were bound to be further disappointed, to feel that there was no relying on the law or its agents. Nor were the *meshchane*, living in or near the semi-rural townlets, *mestechki*, better off. They too had suffered since emancipation, losing rural customers and employment, hard-pressed at every step by Jewish competitors in their role as small producers, traders or shopkeepers, and in their farming (for most of them a subsidiary or even main activity) even worse off than the peasants who were at least assured of a plot of land. 'In a word, in all spheres of public life, the Jews are a sinister force directed against the Russian people and the existing order of things, a force against which, in the eyes of the people, neither individual citizens nor the state can prevail. This may be the root of the conviction which has taken hold in the public mind, that the authorities, unable to deal with them in other ways, have permitted the despoiling of the Jews.'⁶²

From Odessa, where he was now civil and military governor, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov wrote much the same thing, feeling no doubt that his prediction had come true. The exploitation, by Jews who had grasped all branches of commerce in town and country, of the local people, their inability to use or counter the predatory methods of the Jews, explained the constant and extreme antagonism of the rural and lower classes. It was this deep-seated antipathy, heightened by the Jews' latest economic triumphs and intensified by a crisis in business and agriculture, that the tragedy of 1 March had caused to explode in a burst of violence which, in its later phases, revolutionary agitation had helped to spread. A. R.

Drenteln, the Governor-General of Kiev, dismissed as unfounded the rumor that radical propagandists had had a hand in preparing the pogroms or guiding their course. Religious enmity might have played a part, but the underlying cause, he agreed with his colleagues, was the 'deep hatred of the common folk (*narod*), Great Russian and even more Little Russian, for the ruthless and deceptive business practices of the Jews who victimize a trusting people, seek easy gain, and evade their taxes and public duties'. In Kiev, as in Chernigov and Bessarabia, Kutaisov noted, it was particularly the villagers who were ill-used by Jewish money-lenders and tavern-keepers, a point also made by several *zemstvo* assemblies. His assessment of the disturbances diverged from that made by other officials only in one respect; he criticized the lack of decisiveness and determination the police and army had shown in a number of instances.⁶³

That important fact was largely ignored in the reactions of the highest organs of the central administration to the communications they received. Secret instructions issued to district police officers to protect simple-minded peasants from wily Jews indicate that St Petersburg was losing sight of other factors that had been mentioned as playing at least a subsidiary role.⁶⁴ When the Minister of Interior, Count N. P. Ignat'ev, gave Alexander III his views on the origin of the riots (21 August 1881) one issue had come to dominate all others:

Having recognized how harmful to the Christian population of the country is the economic activity of the Jews, their tribal seclusion and religious fanaticism, the government for the past twenty years strove by a whole series of measures to promote their assimilation and almost equalized their rights with those of the native inhabitants. In the meantime, the anti-Jewish movement which began this year in the south . . . has proved irrefutably that in spite of all the government's efforts, the abnormal relations between the Jews and the indigenous inhabitants continue as before . . . The main reason for behavior so uncharacteristic of Russians lies in circumstances of an exclusively economic kind. In the last twenty years the Jews, little by little, have taken over not only trade and production but through rent or purchase significant amounts of landed property. Because of their clannishness and solidarity, all but a few of them have bent every effort not to increase the productive forces of the country but to exploit the native inhabitants, and primarily the poorer classes. This provoked the protest of the latter, finding such deplorable expression in acts of violence . . . Having energetically put down the disorders and stopped

the people from taking the law into their own hands in order to safeguard the Jews from violence, an even-handed government must immediately take no less energetic steps to remove the abnormal conditions which now exist between Jews and natives and protect the latter from that pernicious activity which, according to the local authorities, was responsible for the disturbances.⁶⁵

How that was to be done, Ignat'ev proposed to leave to the commissions composed of representatives of the nobility, peasantry, local governments and Jews which would meet in the fifteen Russian provinces of the Pale and Khar'kov to discuss the questions put to them by the minister: what aspect of the Jewish role in the economy was particularly harmful; what practical obstacles there were to the enforcement of the laws on leasing and buying land, on lending money and selling spirits; what legislative and administrative remedies were required to end Jewish evasion of the laws and to neutralize Jewish influence over those branches of the economy which the commissions should find to be threatened?

Ignat'ev's report, proposal and questions were approved by the emperor in short order (22 August), communicated to the governors (whose biases must have been reinforced by the echo they found in the capital) and through them to the commissions which they convened and chaired. If the purpose of Ignat'ev's enterprise was more than window-dressing in order to calm critics at home and abroad by an ostensible consultation of informed members of the public – a method he followed in other questions; if he intended to do more than impress his master by a show of action and initiative; if, in short, the commissions were truly to assist him by supplying reliable information and wise counsel, Ignat'ev made this difficult, if not impossible, by the way in which he formulated his questions. They turned the commission's deliberations to the discovery of the most effective means for curing the Jewish affliction without asking how real or how grave it was.

That Ignat'ev was impatient to do something drastic and dramatic about the Jewish problem and that he was indifferent to the opinion of those who knew it at first hand, became obvious when on 19 October he set up another Committee on the Jews, the existing one having been allowed to expire. The new body, chaired by his deputy, D. V. Gotovtsev, was presented at its very first meeting with a comprehensive scheme for the 'discussion of the Jewish question in its totality' long before it could have received any but the most sketchy materials or recommendations from the provincial commissions. The fourteen points of the Ignat'ev-Gotovtsev project aimed at a radical reversal of the policy initiated in the previous reign. They would have ended the opportunities which a few

categories of Jews had been given for the improvement of their civil and economic status, with the most painful effects for the large number whose livelihood was in some way derived from the rural areas of the Pale and their inhabitants. There were at the time about 550 000 Jews in the villages, but the number of those – whether they lived in towns or townlets – whose work or business lay wholly or in part outside their boundaries was considerably greater.⁶⁶

The ultimate direction in which Gotovtsev and his chief wished to move was indicated by their recommendations to suspend further admissions to the interior 'until the definitive solution of the Jewish question', to return to the Pale artisans who did not follow their trades, to introduce a *numerus clausus* in education as well as in town and county councils and assemblies. Most of their points had more immediate goals. They called for the removal of Jews from villages at the request of the commune (by simple majority in the case of money-lenders); forbade Jews to engage in the liquor trade in the countryside while restricting it in the towns, or to conduct business on Sundays and Orthodox holy days. Jews would no longer be allowed to sell in villages goods they had not made themselves; their buying and selling of foodstuffs was to be closely supervised; suits brought by Jews against peasants for non-payment of debt could be stopped on a number of grounds if contested by defendants; no Jews, with the exception of licensed advocates, were to represent anyone but themselves before Justices of the Peace or peasant courts and, finally, Jews were no longer to lease or buy land.

What contemporaries called the *muzhikophilism* of Ignat'ev's administration became still more pronounced in the deliberations of the Gotovtsev Committee. In February 1882 they produced a set of four emergency measures whose immediate adoption was urged in order to forestall the renewal of mob violence in the coming spring. Although the excesses of the mob had originated in the towns, the peasants had become so much the focus of the committee's attention that it was felt necessary, as one member said, to 'give them a visible demonstration of the government's concern for their protection from Jewish exploitation'. Fundamental legislative remedies could be devised at a later date; temporary preventive steps for the villages should be taken without delay. Outside towns and townlets Jews should be forbidden to live; to build, buy or rent houses; to own, lease, use or manage land; or to sell liquor. The removal of Jews from their midst, and the right to petition for their exclusion from landlords' estates, the committee proposed to entrust to the peasants themselves by simple majority of the village meeting, as opposed to the two-thirds vote required normally.

Not surprisingly Ignat'ev embraced the project which so closely

reflected his own thinking and inspiration, merely adding two refinements. Those Jewish mechanics and artisans who had the right of universal residence were to be admitted only to the towns of the interior, and out of respect for the religious feelings of Russians, Jews should be enjoined from doing business on Sundays and feast days. Anticipating difficulties in the Council of State, whose senior members were apt to make haste slowly or even to display a measure of independence when they were asked to abrogate or circumvent existing laws, Ignat'ev presented the joint product of his own and the Gotovtsev Committee's labors to the Committee of Ministers on 4 March 1882, hoping that there it would be promulgated quickly as a ministerial order and then be approved by the emperor.

Ignat'ev was only partially successful with his colleagues. That he did not fail entirely was due almost exclusively to the pro-peasant bias of his project and to the insistence of the Jewish Committee that action was demanded in the interests not only of the peasants but of the Jews themselves whom the government was in no position to defend from attack in each of the hundreds of villages in which they lived. It was a plea which some of the ministers, in view of its source, met with skepticism but none would risk not doing at least something that might conceivably be of use in maintaining law and order. Nor could the ministers be at all certain that what they had been told about the pogroms was not deliberately or unconsciously distorted or based on inadequate and incorrect information supplied by local authorities who wished to show that they were blameless or helpless. They had made no independent inquiries, had no reliable data on the disturbances themselves, on the degree of peasant participation nor, indeed, on the character or consequences of Jewish economic activity in the affected towns and villages. As official and non-official studies subsequently pointed out, it was not in the villages that the violence had originated, yet neither the countryside nor its inhabitants had remained immune.

Besides, it was impossible to make rigorous administrative or social distinctions between town and country. In the larger cities, where urban laborers, many of them recent arrivals from Great Russian provinces, made up the rampaging mobs, one might perhaps dismiss peasant distress or anger as a direct cause of pogroms, but even there, and much more so in the smaller country towns, many city-dwellers retained economic, personal and legal links with the surrounding countryside. This was even more true in the townlets, the *mestechki*, which had in 1875 been given self-governing institutions much like those of the towns, but which were frequently as small as villages and populated by large numbers of

peasants. The census of 1897 showed that at that late date fully half of the 14.3 million non-Jews living in Russia's cities belonged to the peasant estate, and a Jewish author, writing in 1877, noted that in several provinces of the Pale – including Kiev, Volynia and Podolia – the greater part of the Christian townsmen was no different from the country people and engaged mainly in agricultural occupations. In Ukrainian towns, he added, Jewish keepers of taverns and shops were all involved in the grain trade with peasants, although well-to-do peasants were the main purchasers. If a most sober and careful student of the reign of Alexander III could write as recently as 1964 that the pogroms had as their special target the small and middle Jewish rural bourgeoisie, it should cause little surprise that even those of Ignat'ev's colleagues who wished to do so were in a poor position to challenge his version of events which they wanted at all costs to keep from happening again.⁶⁷

Ignat'ev, moreover, could cite the findings of the provincial commissions that had become available by the early part of 1882 in support of his program. The record of their discussions and resolutions shows that although the minister had tried to predetermine the conclusions, which were predominantly hostile to the Jews, they were far from endorsing his long-range plans or even giving unqualified or unanimous approval to his temporary measures. The commissions, however, did address at length the problem-complex Jews-peasants-land and enough of them favored the course set in the capital, either in whole or in part, to allow Ignat'ev to claim that it was demanded or endorsed by public opinion. It was in two areas in particular that the commissions echoed the initiative of the Ministry of the Interior – the sale of liquor to peasants (which twelve of their number wanted stopped and the rest rigorously controlled) and land acquisition.⁶⁸

As its motive for wanting to restrict the latter, the Gotovtsev Committee had given the Jews' distaste for agriculture, the poor showing they had made in the colonies, the rights they would acquire as landowners and the land-hunger of the peasantry. One might question Jewish incapacity or dislike for tilling the soil; wonder just what special rights their ownership of land would have conferred; and speculate that emotion as much as pragmatic reasons, unconscious as much as conscious factors, determined the wish to keep Jews off the soil and out of the agrarian estate in order to deny them the values and dignity associated with owning and working the land. But one could not ignore the growing land-shortage among the peasantry or the migration of needy villagers into the towns of Ukraine, where the influx of Jewish capital had been most sudden and the extent of Jewish leaseholding

greatest.⁶⁹ Awareness of these facts, along with bureaucratic guidance and anti-Jewish prejudices, must have influenced the work of the commissions. At least thirteen of these – the record is not always clear or complete – declared for some sort of inhibition on Jewish land purchases in rural districts, most often for the stated purpose of aiding the peasants.

In degree of severity, the new legislation proposed covered a wide range. Four commissions were for an absolute prohibition on Jews purchasing real estate in the villages (Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, Volynia, Mogilev); three (Vilna, Khar'kov, Chernigov) were prepared to make exceptions for guild merchants who needed land mainly for manufacturing enterprises. Vitebsk, Minsk and Kiev demanded that no peasant land pass into Jewish possession, and Taurida wished to control such transfers. Bessarabia wanted to prevent purchase of properties of fewer than 1350 acres (presumably to attract only buyers with enough capital for commercial farming and to avoid driving up prices for small parcels of land) while Grodno, denying Jews the right to hold mortgages on land since they were barred from owning it, also proposed that to reduce their numbers in the Pale they be allowed to acquire land for agricultural colonies outside its borders.

On the issue of land-leasing the pattern of views expressed was roughly similar, with a somewhat greater degree of uncertainty and division due, perhaps, to a reluctance to deprive gentry owners of a steady source of income. Four commissions favored an end to all Jewish leaseholding in the countryside; five wished to see it prohibited for peasant land alone; another four advocated certain lesser restrictions and conditions. For some commissions the question of Jews renting or owning land in the villages was overshadowed by the larger one of their presence there which three opposed altogether and eleven wished to see limited or subjected to control by the village meeting. Ten commissions pronounced in favor of a variety of restrictions on Jewish petty traders and produce-dealers in the villages.

A sampling of the opinions voiced illustrates the recurrence of familiar themes and fears whose strength and persistence it is difficult to explain simply as the results of ministerial machinations. Kherson deplored both Jewish owning and leasing of land, the latter being thought the most harmful. Even ownership, although it amounted to only 6.5 per cent of the total area, was considered dangerous since it was by way of becoming dominant, making the Jews a landed as well as a moneyed aristocracy. They were already too powerful competitors of the peasants for leases of crown land and therefore had to be kept from bidding for it. Rental of private lands unfortunately could not be stopped without hurting its

owners more than the Jews.⁷⁰ Vitebsk, besides limiting purchase and rental to a maximum of 135 acres of gentry land – each exception to require the permission of the governor – was absolutely opposed to the sale of entire estates to Jews and their leasing of peasant allotments.⁷¹ The Mogilev commission found it unthinkable that Jews should be allowed to acquire landed property or even to live outside towns or townlets. They were an economic and moral threat from which the authority of the landlord could no longer shield the peasants, and a political one as well, as their conduct had shown during the French invasion and the Polish Rebellions of 1831 and 1863.⁷²

In Vilna too it was the decline of the gentry and its desperate need for ready money that was said since 1861 to have caused an influx of Jews into the countryside as lessees of estates, dealers in lumber and grain, brewers, distillers and sellers of spirits. After the relatively well-to-do Jews came a flood of others as their stewards, clerks, agents and domestics, all of whom engaged in side occupations at the expense of the peasants and settled in their midst. Incomplete figures (the total was implied to be much higher) were cited to show that in 1881 alone there had been up to 1700 cases of peasants letting out part of their allotments to Jews who were less interested in agriculture than in living among and off the rural population. There were, moreover, the Jews who lived on the lands of the gentry or other classes as leaseholders of inns, mills, ferries and other privileges as well as those who were settled on a homestead (*usad'ba*) in or near the small country towns.

Altogether, the number of Jews who lived dispersed among the Christian people of the countryside without adopting their character or customs exceeded 100 000. Their presence was destroying the peasant way of life and causing an increase in crime and vice. Jewish economic activity admittedly brought certain benefits. This was particularly true of the big firms in the cities which traded in grain, flax, hemp and other crops, but dependence on them, and even less on the many poor Jews who followed in their wake, was not a natural condition to which for all time the local population need be condemned. It was beginning to be aware of the consequences of Jewish domination and exploitation and to show signs of that dissatisfaction which had led to the outbreaks in the south.⁷³

The Grodno Commission was disturbed alike by Jews leasing from nobles and peasants and by their intrusion into the villages not to work the land but for 'mercantile' goals – to sell vodka, deal in stolen goods, lend money and solicit legal business. The members of the commission unanimously declared the leasing of peasant land by Jews to be

undesirable and asked that it be forbidden by law. The gentry could be expected to look after its own interests which, it was understood, did not include restrictions on the right to free disposition of its property. The governor of the province added his recommendation that only craftsmen be allowed in the villages where the overall number of Jews had to be quickly reduced while it was still relatively small and before it was too late to guard the peasants and avoid disorders.⁷⁴

In many commissions the Jews were defended, and vigorously so, by men who pointed out that imposing further disabilities would hardly end their isolation and fanaticism or put an end to that selfishness and sharp dealing to which poverty and discrimination had driven them. A minority of the Chernigov commission took this position; it nonetheless asked that Jews be removed from taverns and distilleries and denied the right to buy land in rural districts.⁷⁵ Similarly, Count A. K. Sievers, Governor of Khar'kov, declared that the only way to avoid Jewish violations of the law was the widest possible extension of rights. But this was to be done gradually and with great caution, especially where it meant close contacts with a rural people that was undeveloped and incapable of looking after its own interests. Since an owner always took the greatest care of his property, Jews should be allowed to acquire land, but leasing, because its purpose was exploitation and quick profits, must remain forbidden.⁷⁶ Even when there was a readiness to abolish the Pale of Settlement – and only four commissions recorded on that issue endorsed its removal without reservations – it was often motivated by the need to thin out the Jewish population and to relieve pressure on the land. Five other commissions were willing to see the Pale breached: Grodno for Jewish agricultural colonies anywhere in the empire; Mogilev in places set aside exclusively for Jewish settlements; Podolia for migration to Asiatic Russia, 'provided there were no political obstacles'; Kherson, Ekaterinoslav and a minority of Volynia for residence in Russia itself, except in villages.

It is not known whether the Committee of Ministers was at all influenced by the deliberations of the provincial commissions or saw the records of their meetings. The ministers, in any case, resisted Ignat'ev's pleas for urgency and adoption of his 'temporary rules' on formal as well as substantive grounds. Measures of such scope as he and Gotovtsev requested should not be promulgated outside the normal legislative process in the Council of State; they would cause untold suffering not only among hundreds of thousands of uprooted Jews but would also hurt the many Christians who were linked with them in a web of innumerable commercial relationships; they would aggravate crowding in the cities

and heighten the potential for disturbances; in the villages, too, tensions would rise because the authority given to their assemblies to expel would lead to bribery and abuses of power.⁷⁷

Among Ignat'ev's sharpest critics were M. Kh. Reutern, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and former Minister of Finance, and the incumbent of that office, N. Kh. Bunge. They saw administrative arbitrariness and pogroms alike as undermining property rights, the nation's credit and good name, its hopes for economic stability and growth. The State Comptroller, D. M. Sol'skii, seconded them. Today they are harassing the Jews, he warned, tomorrow it will be the turn of the so-called *kulaks*, then of merchants and landowners. 'In a word, if the authorities stand by passively, we can expect the development in the near future of the most terrible socialism.'⁷⁸

The Minister of the Interior responded by stressing once again that the urban population was very much more capable than the rural folk of defending itself from the economic depredations of the Jews, a fact which Russian legislation had long recognized, and that an added reason for concentrating Jews in a smaller number of towns was the greater ease of ensuring their safety and public order than if they were scattered throughout the countryside. Having weakened the strength of his argument by admitting that most of the pogroms had arisen in cities and towns, Ignat'ev fell back on a second position. If the Jews now living in the villages were not to be expelled, others must at the very least be kept henceforth from coming into them. On that basis he was prepared to drop the request for closing villages outside the Pale to Jewish artisans, but he did not retreat from another of his demands; that the Jews be forbidden to sell drink in the villages; it was near their taverns, he said, that the disorders had begun and might begin again.

For all their suspicions of what they considered to be his reckless, demagogic approach and his lack of sound conservative principles, Ignat'ev's colleagues accepted a milder version of his interpretation of the events of 1881. The official résumé of their debates concluded that there was an adequate explanation for the fury with which native Christians had turned upon the Jews: it was extensive indebtedness and dependence on them in nearly every sphere of life and labor. That situation was caused by the low level of literacy and education in town and country, as well as by the special traits of the Jewish race, its aggressiveness and resourcefulness in business. With such a combination of factors it was all too easy for elements who were ever present and ready, to stir resentment into riot, especially, the ministers pointedly remarked, when the authorities failed to display the necessary determination and firmness.

Whatever the root causes of violence might have been, it was the first duty of government to prevent it and to make entirely clear to all that the persons and property of the Jews enjoyed the full protection of the laws; neither their violation by mobs nor their slack enforcement by officials would be tolerated.⁷⁹

Then, after turning down both the original fourteen points of the Gotovtsev Committee and the scaled-down emergency program presented by Ignat'ev, the ministers voted, 'in the interests of the local population', to yield to his urging on three points. Jews not already living there were forbidden to take up residence in the villages (this might help to forestall trouble), to acquire rural real estate through lease, purchase or any other device, or to conduct business on Orthodox holy days. The prohibition which Ignat'ev and most of the provincial commissions wished to see put on the liquor traffic was rejected, either for fiscal or humanitarian reasons, although some restrictions were authorized. Alexander III gave his assent to the 'Temporary Rules of 3 May 1881', the so-called May Laws. This legacy of Ignat'ev's year-long ministry survived until 1917, as did its underlying premises. His colleagues had not refuted them and they continued to loom large in the bureaucratic mind. Twenty-three years later, to the day, the Committee of Ministers expressed the opinion that the deplorable outbreaks of 1881 had demonstrated the abnormal relations between Jews and other Russian subjects and that the source of that abnormality was the 'economic oppression of the rural population by the Jews. This basic thought informs the legislation issued in the reign of the Emperor Alexander III'.⁸⁰

A more important reason for the concessions his colleagues made to Ignat'ev than their wish to help prevent a renewal of pogroms was their belief that the rules agreed to were a purely partial and temporary treatment of a problem requiring careful study and a comprehensive solution. Since Gotovtsev's Jewish Committee had failed in that regard, they asked the emperor to appoint a High Commission which would not only examine the projects developed by its predecessor but the entire body of laws and regulations bearing on the Jews. Its recommendations would then be presented to the Council of State for discussion, imperial approval, and enactment. Ignat'ev's successor, Dmitrii Tolstoi, made this idea his own. Having taken firm steps to prevent a recurrence of pogroms, he convinced the emperor in February 1883 that for their lasting prevention the High Commission should immediately begin its task and appointed as its chairman a former Minister of the Interior, L. S. Makov, who died shortly thereafter and was replaced by Count K. I. Pahlen, a member of the Council of State and Minister of Justice from

1867 to 1878. Usually known by the name of its second chairman, the High Commission included representatives of the chief state agencies concerned with Jewish matters. In five years of collecting and sifting materials and discussing the conclusions to be drawn from them, they did not shy away from questioning the presuppositions that had governed past policy and which they knew to be held and respected in high places.⁸¹

It was the majority of the Pahlen Commission that laid bare and disposed of many of the grounds on which existing laws and disabilities were based. In the process it made the most informed, systematic, extensive and dispassionate assessment ever to be made by an official body of the part played by the Jews in Russian life. Here at last was the thoroughgoing examination of Ignat'ev's charges which the lack of information or time, caution or tactical considerations, had kept the Committee of Ministers from making in 1882. Regarding the reports of the provincial governors and commissions as tainted or ill-founded, and aware of the almost total lack of reliable statistics on nearly every aspect of Jewish life, the High Commission itself collected, or caused to be compiled by outside experts, the data on which alone informed decisions could be based.

To begin with, the commission addressed itself in the volume which summarized its findings and recommendations to the question of Jewish numbers which were usually inflated by enemies who saw them multiplying at a frightening rate and hiding from the tax collector and recruiting officer.⁸² There were, in 1881, just over 4 million Jews in the Russian Empire, or 4 per cent of its population; their natural increase was no greater and possibly smaller than that of other groups. One million lived in the Kingdom of Poland where they made up 13 per cent of the inhabitants; 2.9 million, or 12.5 per cent of their total population, lived in the fifteen Russian provinces of the Pale of Settlement, with the heaviest concentration in the nine former Polish *gubernii*s. Of that number, 1.19 million were to be found in the cities; 1.13 million in the townlets; 580 000 in the villages. The 164 000 Jews outside the Pale were distributed as follows: 66 000 in the three Baltic provinces (3 per cent of the total, with 13 000 in the villages); 54 000 in thirty-two Great Russian provinces (0.10 per cent of the total, with 13 000 in the villages); 29 000 in the Caucasus; 12 000 in Siberia, and 3000 in Central Asia.

These figures might not quiet irrational terrors of a Jewish flood engulfing the geographical heart of Russia and especially its villages, but unless they were simply dismissed as false, it would be difficult to represent the threat as both real and imminent. Even in the Pale itself there could hardly be talk of a disproportionate number of Jews in the

villages. In only one of the 151 rural districts studied did the percentage of Jews go as high as 15.7; in the villages of the remaining districts the percentages ranged from 5 to 10 (twenty-seven districts) and 1 to 5 (106 districts). In seventeen districts, located for the most part in Poltava, Taurida and Ekaterinoslav, the number of Jews in the villages fell below 1 per cent of the inhabitants. In view of the fact that 'at the present time, over the whole extent of the territory which the law has marked out for the permanent residence of the Jews, only the towns and townlets are open to their settlement and migration', the picture was not likely to change much, if at all.⁸³

Although the absolute number of Jews in the country districts of the Pale grew, largely by natural increase, by 22.8 per cent between 1881 and 1897 (the year of the first general census), they were a declining proportion of the Jewish population, down from 20 to 16 per cent. Finally, the figures given for Jewish landowning and leasing – 1.4 and 3.9 per cent respectively in the twelve *gubernii*s for which there were reliable data – together with the listing of legal restrictions on further acquisitions, should have served to put the Jewish danger in this area into perspective as well, even if in three provinces from 8.4 to 10.6 per cent of land was in Jewish hands and from 5.3 to 7 per cent in five other provinces. Here too the May Laws would do their work. By 1900 the area of land owned by Jews had declined by almost 50 per cent and leased land by 85.1 per cent. Nor did police or court records support contentions of significantly higher rates of criminality among Jews.⁸⁴

The pogroms, the Pahlen Commission concluded, had 'without doubt' been triggered by Jewish exploitation of the *narod*; but this was not why habitual, minor clashes had turned into major riots. In the north-west, for example, where both the soil and the people were poorer and Jewish exploitation worse than in the south, all had remained quiet, thanks to the precautions taken by Governor-General E. I. Tottleben. It was the weakness or ineptness of the police and military that had in the majority of cases made possible the escalation of the disturbances in a region where the memory of past popular movements against the Jews was still alive and where the people had come to believe that their renewal would be ignored or go unpunished by the authorities. This was as true in the countryside as in the towns, although the troubles had always spread from the latter to the former. People in the more remote villages, however, who dealt neither directly nor constantly with Jews in the towns, had remained largely immune to the infection. They continued to live in harmony with the few Jews among them although they could have settled accounts with them with impunity. A distinction, therefore, had to

be made between immediate and deeper causes of pogroms, and since the latter could only be removed over a long period of time, it was the government's first task to maintain law and order and protect Jews from violence.⁸⁵

This was the commission's answer to those who saw improved economic relationships between Jews and *narod* as the only way of pacifying outraged popular feeling. True, such feeling was justified and the charges against the Jews were supported by men who had an intimate knowledge of provincial life, but in the picture which the commission presented of Jewish economic activity benefits balanced liabilities, and more often than not the latter were ascribed to the peculiar conditions imposed by law and custom. If the Jews, for example, were over-represented in trade, this was so because other spheres were closed to them; moreover, they had introduced advanced business methods and a more 'European' organization which had carried trade in the Pale to a much higher stage than its still largely primitive state in the interior. The commissioners found to their surprise that in petty retail trade the Jews were not as numerous as was generally believed – in the Pale as a whole they accounted for less than half – but the number of Jewish shops in towns and townlets was great and growing, with most of them dealing in items that were essential for the rural population. In addition, the Jews played a large and useful role in local fairs and markets.

Whatever the nature of their business, it was characterized by the quick turnover of capital, the wide availability of credit, fierce competition and, as a result, moderate costs and low profits, benefitting consumers and sellers. None of these advantages, however, had made Jewish businesses, large or small, any more resistant to the prevailing economic crisis than their Christian competitors. On the contrary, together with the May Laws it had increased business risk and the rivalry among them, as well as competition from Armenians and Greeks in the south, Germans in the west, and Old Believers in the interior. In the lumber trade, there was growth of competition from Russians, in Ukraine from landlords who had begun to market their own grain, and everywhere there were more Christian shops. For the Jews, the end result was a falling rate of profit and for the already marginal small retailers an existence not much above beggary. For those who dealt with the Jews it meant a better selection of goods, better prices and a wider choice of outlets.⁸⁶

The Jews were undeniably guilty of many abuses, especially as producers and sellers of liquor and lenders of money. The traffic in spirits in the Pale was largely in their hands, and almost entirely so in the villages and smaller towns. Much of it was illegal, though carried on with the help

and connivance of peasants and others for whom it was a convenience, a necessity or a source of profit. Far from enjoying economic power, many rural Jewish tavern-keepers were unable even to pay for their licenses out of their earnings and operated without them. If so many Jews nonetheless turned to this business, it was because each tavern had a bit of garden and land attached to it and – on a manor – the possibility of keeping a cow to help feed their families. When the sale of vodka yielded enough to pay for license and rent, the tavern-keeper might consider himself lucky; otherwise he had to seek side-earnings as a craftsman, peddler or, most often, money-lender in which capacity, needless to say, he was not always perfectly honest.⁸⁷

Yet if Jewish taverns, money-lending and usury were widespread in the Pale, so was the ready availability of credit, and there was no conclusive evidence to show that either the incidence of drunkenness or interest rates were higher than in the rest of the country. Jews did evade paying their taxes and license fees, used false weights and measures and adulterated the products they sold, but they were driven to do so in part by extreme poverty. Such abuses were not unique to Jewish trade. They would begin to disappear with a general raising of standards in Russian commerce; with the education of the Jewish masses and their absorption in productive work other than trade; with the gradual removal of the exceptional legislation which had made them outcasts and outlaws and had helped to perpetuate and strengthen the racial passion for gain at the expense of others.⁸⁸

The most common accusation against the Jews – that they exploited their Christian neighbors – was not without foundation, whatever extenuating circumstances might be found in poverty, ignorance, insecurity and oppression. For that reason, the state could not stand by passively when peasants were defrauded or borrowed money at ruinous interest. But given the need, the free agreement of both sides and observance of the law, the state neither could nor should forbid the Jews to traffic in liquor, lend money, live in the villages or take up farming. Repression and regulation had not worked in the past, would not do so in the future and were bound to be counter-productive. Since the issuance of the May Laws, for example, the number of Jews living in the countryside had increased and the prohibition on leaseholding had not prevented the conclusion of verbal agreements or contracts through Christian intermediaries. There was neither point nor humanity, therefore, in continuing the system of legal coercion.⁸⁹

Instead, the state must do all it could to achieve what should be the two broad aims of Jewish policy – to weaken Jewish particularism and

exploitation by a balanced, organic and liberal approach. Pursued consistently, cautiously and gradually such a middle course between repression and non-intervention would in time unite the Jews with other Russian subjects under the rule and shelter of common laws. It would be wrong, however, the commission warned, to hope that gradual emancipation would lead eventually to assimilation. It had never yet been achieved anywhere and was made impossible by the too sharply pronounced characteristics of the Semitic race. Nor was assimilation necessary. The interests of the state required no more than that the nationalities which formed part of the empire should serve its welfare and greatness with sincerity and devotion, without having to abandon either their identity or their active membership in the national community.⁹⁰

The commission's advice that the government exercise its tutelary and protective role only when there were flagrant transgressions of the law derived from the belief that it was both self-defeating and illogical for society to enlist the state in its battle against the Jews. Were Russian merchants and landlords really incapable of holding their own against them; were they really as inexperienced and defenseless as their endless appeals and complaints suggested? What prevented them from shunning the Jews if they truly feared them? What kept them from forming their own professional or class organizations for mutual aid, credit and trade if it was not the unhealthy habit, acquired over a century, of looking to the authorities for help? Self-help, self-reliance, self-defense, hard work and sobriety – these were the weapons that would alone paralyze the economic power of the Jews, and they would not be forged and used unless the state withdrew from the contest. This was as true of peasants as it was of the upper and middle classes, despite the fact that ever since 1861 the former serfs had been treated like wards of the state who required special care and protection. In the indictment of the Jews it was always the peasants who figured as the hapless victims, peasant ignorance and impotence that necessitated and justified anti-Jewish measures. Those who clamored for them did more than exaggerate the peasants' plight and the Jews' power. They betrayed a contempt for the common people of rural Russia and a lack of faith in their native endowment.⁹¹

There were not a few well-to-do peasants in the Pale, the commissioners pointed out, who would not deal with Jews and owed their well-being, in part, to that fact. Others, it was true, were often forced to turn to the Jews to borrow money, especially after emancipation, because of new taxes and redemption payments, and for this the Jews were not to blame. Nor were they responsible for the peasants' need and passion for vodka and all the evil consequences. If the liquor business was exclusively

in Jewish hands it was the result of circumstances which had prevailed for centuries; and if it went together with money-lending, usury and exploitation, the source was peasant drunkenness. It was really too much to expect that the Jews should to their own detriment become the people's moral guides and preceptors in sobriety, the more so since the advantage was not invariably theirs. Frequently it was peasants who swindled Jewish employers or tenants and, in the extreme case, settled scores with them in pogroms in villages near cities or townlets. Peasants too must at last stand on their own feet and carry on their own shoulders the burden of resistance to Jewish exploitation. If they did not, even the best of laws would not prevent the ever-deeper penetration of the countryside by Jewish economic power, by poverty and drunkenness. Old-Believer peasants in the Western provinces had shown that sturdy, shrewd, hard-working Russian folk were quite capable of holding their own against the Jews:

To shift the center of gravity of the struggle against the harmful influence of the Jews from the government to society itself, to all its strata, does not, however, mean that the government would become the silent onlooker of the conflict and adhere to a policy of non-intervention. At the same time it cannot yield, at one point, to popular dislike of the Jews, insist at another that all its subjects be treated alike, and then invoke considerations of equal economic opportunity. It must combine all these approaches, pursue them simultaneously, yet leave the economic struggle to follow its own course without allowing it to go too far.⁹²

For all the contradictions, hesitations and cautions of the commission's recommendations – it held, for example, that peasant land should continue to be denied to Jewish tenants⁹³ – its majority spoke clearly in favor of gradual emancipation and against the proposition that peasants were in greater need of the sheltering hand of the state than any other segment of society. It may well have been the fear of putting that proposition to the test that contributed materially to the rejection of its work. To a regime convinced of its duty and ability to guide the nation's development it was little reassurance to be told that its past instructions had failed of their purpose and were constantly evaded. It could be, and was, taken as a call to renew and redouble efforts at control. As the government's actions would show, when the tranquility of the countryside or the putative welfare of its people was at stake, it refused

adamantly to dismantle the legal barriers that were to keep Jews separated from peasants and the land.

It was a policy which enjoyed a considerable measure of public sympathy, not all of it from the right wing of the political spectrum. The belief that an inexperienced and simple people should not be left to fend for itself in an increasingly competitive market economy was not necessarily an unqualified endorsement of government policies nor held only by anti-Semites. Yet even those who regarded the Jews as only a symptom rather than the cause of the general phenomenon of capitalist exploitation unwittingly strengthened the hand of administrators who sought, by proceeding against the Jews, to diminish the unsettling impact of commercial and industrial change and the dangers it posed to social stability and the docility of the masses.⁹⁴

Aside from the May Laws, the most painful of the new disabilities which the government of Alexander III imposed on the Jews did not come in the area of rural residence and occupation. More ominous for their prospects of relief were the restrictions of access to higher and secondary education, to the legal and medical professions, the brutal expulsions from Moscow and other cities, the total or partial exclusion from local government, public service, corporate management and stock exchanges. If Pobedonostsev and others truly dreaded the Jews as the advance guard of the forces of decay and dissolution that were invading Russia together with factories and foreign capital, they made their stand and concentrated their effort in the right places. Yet for all the evidence that was becoming available that the peasants benefitted from the proximity of the Jews or that the latter were losing their economic power and importance in the villages as the century drew to its close, there was no relaxation of vigilance against the small Jewish trader in foodstuffs or manufactured goods, the middle-man and tavern-keeper. Official opposition to them was more determined, in fact, than that which was being made to the Jewish industrialist or banker, large-scale grain merchant or exporter of lumber. Either the enemy was being attacked where he was thought to be weakest and to have the fewest defenders, or where the Jews were still believed to be as numerous and dangerous – perhaps because of their own poverty and despair – as they had always been.

The impressions of an American traveller in the Pale, recorded in 1892 or 1893, may stand as a summary both of what he heard about the Jews locally and of what was echoed by newspapers and officials throughout the country. The Russian peasant, he was told by officers, officials and acquaintances had a traditional hatred of Jews with whom he was only too eager to get even as the author of his ills. Very little that the

government had done in the years after 1863 to settle and strengthen Russian peasants in the western provinces had borne fruit:

You begin to inquire, and you find that the Jew not only owns the tavern, but trades in all the articles which peasants have to buy. You learn also that the Jew is creditor to nearly every peasant for miles around, and has a lien upon everything which that peasant may grow upon his land. You find that the peasant cultivates his land not only for himself, but for the Jew, and that all his reward is the privilege of bare existence. There are many patriotic and humane Russians who have given it to me as their deliberate opinion that the Russian peasant would be better off today had he never been emancipated.

The condition of the Russian peasant reminded the American of that in which the Negro slave had found himself after being freed, and he shared the widespread belief that the Jewish question in Russia had not become serious until after 1861 when the serf's owner was no longer able to shield him from the consequences of his improvidence. With emancipation the gulf between peasant and lord had become as wide as that separating the black slave from his former master; and between these two classes there had entered an army of Jews who alone profited from the edicts of 1861, victimizing the peasants through their love of drink and the landlords through their need of money and ignorance of management:

I am informed on good authority that, in spite of laws to the contrary, a very large proportion of the land within the pale is practically in Jewish hands, to say nothing of the peasants who work upon it. To how great an extent this is the case is as difficult to find out as to give the exact number of Jews in Russia, for they have a direct interest in deceiving the government in regard to both of these matters, and have, so far, succeeded very well.⁹⁵

That view had been held in the bureaucracy for over a century and had been changed neither by the findings of the Pahlen Commission nor by the May Laws. These were as ineffectively enforced, the Governor-General of Vilna observed in 1884, as if they had been suspended. Late that year, new regulations were issued for nine provinces of the Pale nullifying all contracts concluded in contravention of the laws of 1864 and 1865 and authorizing governors to proceed against Jews and Poles who had leased or bought land through such illegal contracts. The May Laws and their increasingly strict interpretation by the Senate made

purchases of non-urban real estate impossible for all but the very few Jews who had the right of universal residence. The prohibition on leasing was from the start applied more rigorously by local officials who extended it to all forms of real property, including even the rental of living quarters in villages. In this instance the Senate held that the law had intended to bar Jews only from leasing agricultural land for agricultural purposes, but that leasing other real property, whether for commercial, industrial or residential use was permissible without, however, conferring the right of residence on tenants who had not lived in a rural locality before 3 May 1882.⁹⁶

If it was true that the provisions of the May Laws on land purchases had at first been laxly enforced, the same could not be said of the article which closed the villages to Jewish newcomers. While it was understood in some districts to allow Jews who had resided in one village on 3 May 1882 to move to another one, the Ministry of the Interior considered such removals as taking up a new residence and therefore prohibited. The matter reached the Senate and the Council of State where twenty-three members agreed with the ministry and twenty-four held that changing domicile from one rural district to another was not in violation of the Temporary Rules of 1882. The emperor sided with the minority, tying the right of Jews to live in the countryside to the village in which they had made their home before 3 May 1882; even temporary departure jeopardized that right. The risk of losing it increased considerably when in 1892 the job of deciding who was or was not a legal resident was shifted from the courts to the police who carried it out with the customary arbitrariness and on the basis of records they had themselves compiled. The only recourse against their decisions was to the Senate which, pending an appeal, might or might not order a stay of execution. In many instances it came too late, and expulsions were numerous.⁹⁷

In 1892 the American Minister to St Petersburg recorded signs that for some months the May Laws were being more stringently executed.⁹⁸ It is impossible to tell whether his comment that they had theretofore 'been so loosely and lightly observed as to have been practically inoperative' reflected the true state of affairs or the unhappiness of informants who were congenital pessimists when it came to the adequacy and effectiveness of anti-Jewish measures. It is certain that there were men in the government who thought that even the strictest enforcement of the May Laws would not stop the growth of Jewish numbers and power. Viacheslav Pleve, then Assistant Minister of Interior and head of the conference which had been charged with the work of the Pahlen Commission after its dissolution, was one of them.

In 1890 he began to circulate a program of Jewish legislation in the bureaucracy that went in some respects beyond the original Ignat'ev-Gotovtsev proposals. The Pleve project, of which no first-hand evidence has survived, is thought to have envisioned the establishment of ghettos in a number of large cities, the reduction of Jewish commerce and the return to the Pale of the privileged Jews who had left it. Those whom the Rules of 1882 had allowed to remain in the villages were gradually to be cleared from them. Young people would have to leave rural localities, even their birthplaces, once they came of age; anyone who had temporarily absented himself from his village of registry was not to be readmitted. Rental agreements concluded in violation of the May Laws were to be treated as crimes, and to inhibit contacts between peasants and Jews, things would be made still more difficult for Jewish money-lenders, tavern-keepers, traders and artisans.⁹⁹

Pleve's drastic plan never became law. When Minister of Finance Vyshnegradskii learned of it he intervened with Minister of the Interior I. N. Durnovo to delay its submission to the Council of State. It never reached that body, possibly because Vyshnegradskii, after the Moscow expulsions of 1891 and the protests to which they had given rise abroad, warned the emperor of the still-greater damage which continued persecution of the Jews would do to Russia's credit abroad and her economy at home. He and his successor, Sergei Witte, were less successful, however, in pleading the country's economic advantage and financial needs against a series of controls and conditions which were placed in the years 1892 and 1894 on mining and oil companies with Jewish or foreign shareholders or directors.¹⁰⁰

That foreigners as well as Jews were affected by these new laws made it more difficult to counter the patriotic argument that Russia's most valuable and strategic resources had to be controlled by Russians. The same point was made with reference to land. Once it was made more difficult or impossible (1887-92) for foreigners to buy or lease it in Poland, nine western and two Baltic provinces, as well as in Turkestan and five other districts of Central Asia (where the prohibition extended to all non-native non-Christians) it became improbable that Jews would be exempted from laws inspired by nationalism, concern for Russian peasants and for the security of the borderlands.¹⁰¹ On the contrary, from the mid-1880s the Committee of Ministers allowed the acquisition of rural real estate by joint stock companies and partnerships only if their articles of incorporation or by-laws specified that a majority of officers or board members should be non-Jews and that company land should not be managed, held or otherwise put at the disposal of Jewish officers and shareholders.¹⁰²

The rationale in this case was conformity with the May Laws and although it was on more than one occasion recognized that these regulations hampered business and industry as much as the Jews, they were only modified after 1906 but never abandoned. The advantages, as described officially in 1913, outweighed the drawbacks, 'The introduction of these conditions minimized the undesirable effects the Jewish element might have on the inhabitants of rural districts without, at the same time, entirely precluding Jewish participation in joint-stock enterprises'.¹⁰³ In other words, Jewish capital was welcome as long as its owners could be kept away from places from which it had been thought necessary to exclude them.

As Minister of Finance from 1892 to 1903 and chief proponent of Russia's industrialization with the help of foreign loans and investments, Sergei Witte stressed in his recollections how much opposed he had been while in office to the whole system of persecution and discrimination as irrational and subversive of the goals of economic growth and social peace. He had, it is true, deplored the anti-Jewish biases of the tsars and their ministers, called for a relaxation of oppressive laws, for moderate extensions of Jewish rights and even, on one occasion, for the gradual abolition of their disabilities. But Witte's commitment to Jewish emancipation had always been marked by caution and his attitude to the Jews, like that of other Ministers of Finance, was informed primarily by calculations of utility rather than by firm principles. Thus, while he opposed massive expulsions from the villages of the Pale which several governors had suggested, he nonetheless cited the Jewish presence there to support the introduction of the state liquor monopoly in the western provinces.¹⁰⁴

In a memorandum Alexander III approved on 11 July 1894, Witte referred to the reports of the provincial commissions of 1881 to show that the liquor traffic had given the Jews a powerful means for the exploitation of the local population and that this trade was almost always connected with lending money, the favorite occupation of the Jewish tribe. The Jewish village tavern was everywhere the source of peasant ruin and depravity and none of the laws passed or proposed were capable of putting an end to this in view of the peasants' hankering for vodka. The forcible removal of millions of Jews might indeed have the desired effect, but Witte dismissed it as impracticable and as a violation of the property rights and economic interests of Jews and non-Jews. In an apparent reference to Pleve's project, Witte declared that closing the villages to males who had come of age and to women who had married outside them could lead, if consistently applied, to the eventual disappearance of Jews from the countryside. Yet this was a remedy for the distant future.

In the meantime, provoked by chronic persecution and expulsions, the Jews would grow even more rapacious and become a worse affliction for the towns and townlets.

To solve the Jewish question, Witte wrote in language reminiscent of that used by the Pahlen Commission, priority should be given not to repressive but to organic measures which would protect the native population, raise the moral level of the Jews and weaken their racial exclusiveness and religious separatism. His ideas on that score he would communicate in a separate memorandum. For the moment he wished only to address the urgent question of the Jewish liquor traffic and to submit that the best means of removing its baneful consequences and solving the pressing political difficulties created by the alien Jewish nationality was to introduce in the Pale the state sale of alcoholic beverages without waiting for the results of its experimental introduction in Samara, Perm, Ufa and Orenburg.

There is no reason to believe that Witte ever submitted a project for the solution of the Jewish question. Perhaps the emperor's assent to his immediate request made the matter less urgent, while the accession of Nicholas II in October 1894 was bound to cause a temporary cessation of governmental initiatives as the new ruler and his father's ministers took each others' measure. For the Jews the change of rulers brought no change of status or prospects. In the course of 1896-98 most of the privately-owned taverns in the Pale were replaced by state liquor stores. Some 200 000 Jews were deprived of the scanty livelihood they had derived from them and increased by half the number who were described in official statistics as being 'without definite occupation'.¹⁰⁵

5 JEWS AFTER THE LIBERATION OF THE SERFS

1. On the war-time lifting of the Pale, see pp. 101–4, ch. 4.
2. R. P. Browder and A. F. Kerensky (eds) *The Russian Provisional Government* (Stanford: 1961) 1, p. 211.
3. Weinryb, *Neueste Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Breslau: 1934) p. 128; Gessen, *Zakon*, p. 32; Rest, *Die russische Judengesetzgebung*, pp. 16–25.
4. For the earlier period, in addition to Rest, see: Dubnov, *History*, vol. 1; Gradovskii, *Otnoshenie*, part 1; Gessen, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda*, vol. 1; I. Levitats, *The Jewish Community in Russia, 1772–1844* (New York: 1943); I. G. Orshanskii, *Evrei v Rossii* (St Petersburg: 1872); idem, *Russkoe zakonodatel'stvo o evreiakh* (St Petersburg: 1877); Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I*.
5. Pipes, 'Catherine II', p. 7; Golczewski, *Polnisch-Jüdische Beziehungen*, p. 19.
6. On the Pale and the size of its Jewish population, see Chapter 1, notes 14 and 16. As Russian officials repeatedly complained and Jewish sources admit, it was the tendency of Jewish communities to underestimate their numbers in order to reduce the payment of taxes or the levies of recruits. Levitats, for example, writes (*The Jewish Community*, p. 18) that because the Jews refused to supply correct figures, the numbers usually given for White Russia in 1772 (25 016) or for all Russia in 1803 (350 000) must be considered suspect. In Podolia, in 1818, only 17 816 were reported, but two years later, under pressure, the count was raised to 66 015. For the second half of the nineteenth century, official and Jewish estimates do not diverge widely, although the belief persists in the bureaucracy that the real number of Jews in the empire was very much larger, perhaps twice as large, as suggested by the statistics. This 'demographic fear' is a constant in anti-Semitic literature.
7. Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge: 1970) pp. 2–3; Weinryb, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 26–7. The occupational distribution of the Jewish population in the annexed territories around 1800 was: innkeepers and leaseholders, 30 per cent; traders and brokers, 30 per cent; craftsmen 15 per cent; farmers, 1 per cent; no fixed occupation, 21 per cent; religious officials, 3 per cent, *EJ*, 14, p. 435.
8. According to laws which were still in force in 1914, merchants and *meshchane* were obliged to be registered in their respective corporations in towns, even if they lived in villages or townlets. (Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 49; Rest, *Die russische Judengesetzgebung*, p. 97.) I am using townlet as the closest equivalent for *mestechko*, *miasteczko*, or *shtetl*. The townlet was a hybrid between village and town, had its origin on private lands of the Polish nobility and could have fewer than 1000 or more than 20 000 inhabitants. 'In many of such private towns the Jews soon formed a preponderant majority . . . Their occupation in *arenda* led many Jews to settle in the villages. Hence both the economy as well as the style of living in such towns had close links with the villages', *EJ*, 14, pp. 1470–1.

9. Gessen, *Zakon*, pp. 31–8; idem, *Evrei v Rossii* (St Petersburg: 1906) pp. 337–9; *EE*, 3, p. 78. Even Catherine was concerned that peasants should be protected from traders but did not single out Jewish traders.
10. N. D. Gradovskii, *Torgovye i drugie prava evreev v Rossii* (St Petersburg: 1886) pp. 187, 192; Dubnov, *History*, 1, pp. 319, 322–6, 343; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 5; Orshanskii, *Zakonodatel'stvo*, pp. 205–13; N. V. Varadinov, *Istoriia ministerstva vnutrennikh del* (St Petersburg: 1858–62), 2, pt. 2, pp. 574–5; *EE*, 5, p. 858; Gessen, *Evrei*, pp. 125–6; idem, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda*, 2, pp. 37–9. When, for example, the governor of Belorussia began to carry out an imperial decree of September 1795 to resettle Jews in the towns, many of the nobility protested that the depopulation of townlets located on their lands would spell economic ruin. The administration decided, therefore, to leave the Jews in the townlets and to expel them only from villages and roadside taverns. It was at this time that townlets began to be considered as urban communities for purposes of Jewish residence. Gessen, *Istoriia*, 1, p. 125.
11. Thus, the villages of Vitebsk and Mogilev provinces were ordered cleared in 1823. Gessen (*Istoriia*, 1, pp. 206–7) writes that about 200 000 individuals were expelled from the Belorussian countryside in that year and that in the following eight years up to 40 000 roamed the roads in whole families. In July 1830, Nicholas I ordered Jews to be cleared from the villages of Kiev guberniia, *VPSZ* 5, no. 3778/Levanda, pp. 269–70; cf. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 107, 388–9.
12. Weinryb, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 147. n. 4. According to Jewish communal leaders who pleaded in St Petersburg that they be stopped, the expulsions had affected 200 000 individuals as early as 1807–9. (V. N. Nikitin, *Evrei zemledeľtsy* [St Petersburg: 1887] p. 103.) The number of families subject to expulsion on the basis of the Statute of 1804 is given as 60 000 in *EE*, 5, p. 858.
13. Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 3, pt. 2, p. 136.
14. Ibid., 2, pt. 2, pp. 38–43; *EE*, 3, p. 81, 7, pp. 732–3, 11, pp. 493–4; Gradovskii, *Prava*, pp. 272, 280, 286. The prohibition against employing Christian domestics remained in force until 1887, when it was replaced by a penalty for hindering Christian servants, employees or apprentices from observing their religious holidays or duties. (Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 537.) The 1835 Statute permitted the hiring of Christians in agriculture, manufacturing and certain commercial activities as well as of female cooks and laundresses, provided they did not live under the same roof as their Jewish employers (*VPSZ* 10, no. 8054/Levanda, p. 362.) The holding of Christian slaves by Jews was first forbidden in the Roman Empire in 398 AD.
15. See pp. 10–, ch. 1.
16. *VPSZ* 10, no. 8054/Levanda, p. 361; Ia. I. Gimpel'son (comp.) *Zakony o evreiaikh* (St Petersburg: 1914–15) 1, pp. 371–2.
17. *VPSZ* 15, no. 13 547 and 20, no. 19 289/Levanda, pp. 497–8 and 629–34; *EE*, 3, p. 82; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 3, pt. 4, p. 70. Stanislawski (Tsar Nicholas, pp. 172–3) makes the point that the 1845 rules also allowed Jewish guild merchants to engage in the sale of vodka anywhere they chose (actually, only through Christian agents in state villages) whereas Jewish *meshchane* were allowed to lease only enterprises that had no connection with liquor. The reason for this, he believes, was less the state's concern for the peasantry than its need for revenue by replacing the:

many small-scale liquor traders with large-scale commercial distillers and distributors [that is, the guild merchants]. In accord with this decision, gradual restrictions on the participation of Jews in the distilling and sale of vodka in the countryside were reintroduced, while at the same time Jewish businessmen were encouraged to enter the ranks of large-scale *otkupshchiki*, or leasers, even controlling areas in which they were not permitted to live.

Since the number of Jewish guild merchants, especially those in the first two guilds who were most likely to have enough capital to become *otkupshchiki*, was much smaller than the number of *meshchane*, the 1845 regulation, whatever its ultimate motive or purpose, had the effect of reducing the Jewish presence in the countryside. Out of a total of 27 469 Jewish guild merchants in 1851, 466 were enrolled in the first and 754 in the second guilds. Stanislawski notes that despite the rise in liquor production, the number of distilleries decreased from 2489 in 1801 to 723 in 1860, with large-scale commercial enterprises overtaking the local stills on estates. 'Nicholas's government had, therefore, succeeded where his brother Alexander's had failed: Jewish *meshchane* [that is, most Jews] were gradually driven out of the vodka industry and the countryside in general, while the state's revenues from liquor continued to mount.'

18. VPSZ 28, nos. 27 050 and 27 322/Levanda, pp. 799–800 and 806.
19. Gessen, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda*, 2, p. 40.
20. Ibid, VPSZ 30, no. 29 902/Levanda, p. 852.
21. VPSZ 28, no. 27 322/Levanda, pp. 804–7.
22. VPSZ 30, no. 29 277/Levanda, pp. 839–41; Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 3, pt. 4, p. 195.
23. On Jewish colonization see Nikitin, *Evrei zemledeľtsy*; Orshanskii, *Evrei*, pp. 110–33; J. Elk, *Die Juedischen Kolonien in Russland* (Frankfurt: 1886); S. Ia. Borovoi, *Evreiskaia zemledeľcheskaia kolonizatsiia* (Moscow: 1928); Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 406–18.
24. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 305; VPSZ 12, no. 9843/Levanda, pp. 400–1; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, 1, p. 45.
25. Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 3, pt. 2, pp. 306–7. Nicholas II, in 1911, reiterated his ancestor's sentiments and affirmed a decision of the Council of Ministers which barred Jews from trading at Siberian fairs by stating: 'Everything must be done to keep the Jews from overrunning Siberia'. Sovet Ministrov, *Spravka*, p. 54–5.
26. Varadinov (*Istoriia*, 3, pt. 2, p. 556) gives the number of *meschchane* without definite occupation in 1833 as 310 000 males and 245 000 females in a total Jewish population of 650 000.
27. Varadinov, *Istoriia*, 2, pt. 1, p. 84; 2, pt. 2, p. 575; Komitet Ministrov, *Zhurnaly* (St Petersburg: 1905) p. 444.
28. M. Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822* (Seattle: 1956) p. 349; S. Monas, 'Bureaucracy in Russia under Nicholas I', in M. Cherniavsky (ed.) *The Structure of Russian History* (New York: 1970) p. 278.
29. EKO, *Sbornik*, 1, p. 4; Weinryb, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 215–18; EE, 7, pp. 756–9. For legislative inhibitions on the colonies see Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 354, 408; Orshanskii, *Zakonodatel'stvo*, p. 326; Levanda, *Sbornik*, pp. 839–41, 921, 1059, 174, 1090.
30. EE, 1, pp. 808–15; Dubnov, *History*, 2, pp. 154–8.
31. Gessen, *Istoriia evreev v Rossii* (St Petersburg: 1914) p. 273.
32. Ibid, pp. 274–7; Dubnov, *History*, 2, p. 169; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, 1, p. 89. Count P. A. Shuvalov, later Chief of Gendarmes and Governor-General of the Baltic provinces from 1864 to 1866, also favored unrestricted residence rights throughout the empire. His views, and those of Stroganov, are recorded in VPSZ 40, no. 42 264/Levanda, pp. 1036–8.
33. Gessen, *Zakon*, p. 111; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, 1, p. 89.
34. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 164; Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia*, 1, p. 75; Dubnov, *History*, 2, pp. 161–72.
35. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government* (Urbana, Illinois: 1973) p. 188. Even more important may have been the memory of peasant disorders in several Pale provinces in the 1840s. S. Monas, *The Third Section* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1961) pp. 275–6.
36. Gessen, *Zakon*, p. 128.

37. Ibid, p. 118; Greenberg, *The Jews In Russia*, 2, p. 90; *EE*, 1, pp. 813–15.
38. Gessen, *Zakon*, p. 124; idem, *Istoriia evreev*, pp. 284–7.
39. *VPSZ* 32, no. 31 400/Levanda, p. 857
40. *VPSZ* 33, no. 33 659/Levanda, pp. 901–3.
41. *VPSZ* 43, no. 35 016/Levanda, pp. 925–6.
42. Peasant allotments (*nadely*) or allotment lands (*nadelnye zemli*) were assigned at the emancipation not to individuals or households but to peasant communities. These had the right to distribute and redistribute them among members but not to sell or mortgage them. Although the government realized the disadvantages of making peasant allotments inalienable – unable to mortgage them, their owners could not raise credit – it took additional steps in 1893 to ‘prevent alienation of peasant allotment lands’ and intensifying their clamor for more. Even when it was recommended in 1903, by a conference chaired by Witte, that the peasants’ legal separateness be ended as quickly as possible, it was nonetheless thought necessary to retain prohibitions on the sale and mortgaging of allotment lands to non-peasants. This was to change only in 1906. See Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize*, pp. 175, 203, 254–5.
43. *VPSZ* 36, nos 36 659 and 36 674/Levanda, pp. 945–6; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 348–9.
44. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 350; *VPSZ* 37, no. 38 214/Levanda, pp. 980–1.
45. Sliozberg, *Dela*, 2, pp. 154–5.
46. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 354–5, 371; *VPSZ* 39, no. 40 656/Levanda, pp. 1013–14.
47. *VPSZ* 39, no. 41 039/Levanda, p. 1016; ‘Otnoshenie ministra vnutrennikh del . . . ot 12 iul'ia 1864 g.’, in *Materialy komissii po ustroistvu byta evreev* (hereafter *Materialy*) (St Petersburg: 1872) 1, pp. 1–2.
48. *Materialy* 1, pp. 4–5; *VPSZ* 42, no. 45 257/Levanda, pp. 1092–3.
49. *Materialy*, 1, p. 7.
50. Ibid, 1, pp. 1–2; Orshanskii, *Evrei*, pp. 123–5; Weinryb, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 56–61, 217–18.
51. ‘Vypiska iz vsepoddanneishei zapiski o bolee vazhnykh voprosakh po upravleniiu iugo-zapadnym kraem 1872 g.’, in *Materialy*, 1, p. 12 (separate pagination).
52. *Materialy*, 1, pp. 1–7.
53. *VPSZ* 38, no. 39 368/Levanda, p. 999 and *VPSZ* 40, no. 47 774/Levanda, p. 1026; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 117, 389.
54. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 390, 393–5; *EE*, 5, pp. 613–14; *Trudy gubenskikh komissii po evreiskomu voprosu*, 2 vols (St Petersburg: 1884). Subsequent citations, since pagination is not consecutive, will be to *Trudy*, the name of the province, to volume and page; in this case, *Trudy*, Kovno, 1, p. 5.
55. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 108; Gimpel'son, *Zakony*, p. 308; *EE*, 5, p. 643; 11, p. 149.
56. The following account is drawn from Gessen, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda*, 2, p. 211; idem, *Zakon*, pp. 151–2; idem, *Istoriia evreev*, pp. 323–4; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 295–7.
57. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 301.
58. Sovet ministrov, *Osobyi zhurnal*, 1906, no. 157, p. 7.
59. *Trudy*, Vilna, 1, pp. 65–70; Mogilev, 1, pp. 68–70.
60. The 1873 report of the Valuev Commission, which had been appointed for the ‘investigation of the present state of agricultural and rural productivity in Russia’, must have reinforced the concerns voiced by Dondukov-Korsakov and contributed to the measures taken in 1874 and subsequent years. According to Yaney (*The Urge to Mobilize*, p. 42) the malign influence of the Jews was an almost universal theme in the reports from the western provinces.

It seems that the Jews ran many of the landed estates, either as stewards or as tenants. Moreover, they operated most of the taverns and monopolized the buying and selling of grain. According to all reports that mentioned Jews, they did only

harm. They reaped their profits heedless of consequences, while gentry, peasantry and soil all went to ruin. As substantive information such reports were of doubtful validity, to say the least, but they were informative. Apart from their value as a reflection of anti-Semitic sentiment, they indicated clearly the ineptitude and irresponsibility of the Polish gentry in the western guberniias.

61. *Obshchaia zapiska*, pp. 86–91.
62. *Ibid*, pp. 82–4.
63. *ibid*, pp. 80–2; V. Iu. Skalon, *Po zemskim voprosam* (St Petersburg: 1905) 1, pp. 338–52.
64. M. Goldberg, *Die Jahre 1881–1882* (Berlin: 1934) p. 45.
65. Gessen, 'Ignat'ev', no. 30, p. 1632.
66. Dubnov, 'Anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie', pp. 268–74.
67. Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis*, p. 379; Aronson, 'Geographical and Socioeconomic Factors'; Dubnov, *Materialy*, 2, pp. 529–41. It deserves to be mentioned that General E. I. Totleben, whose determined action had forestalled pogroms in the north-west, agreed with Ignat'ev – with whom he agreed on little else – that Jews should be forbidden to settle in the villages. Dubnov, *History*, 2, p. 276.
68. In summarizing the conclusions of the provincial commissions, I have used, besides their *Trudy*, the *Obshchaia zapiska* of the Pahlen Commission, pp. 97–206, 212–17, 228–39 and Dubnov, 'Anti-evreiskoe dvizhenie', pp. 88–109.
69. Gessen, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda*, 2, pp. 219–20.
70. *Trudy*, Kherson, 2, pp. 1091–3, 1105; *Obshchaia zapiska*, p. 213.
71. *Trudy*, Vitebsk, 1, pp. 25, 35.
72. *Ibid*, Mogilev, 1, pp. 9–10, 23, 29; *Obshchaia zapiska*, p. 212.
73. *Trudy*, Vilna, 1, pp. 60–76; *Obshchaia zapiska*, pp. 228–9.
74. *Trudy*, Grodno, 1, pp. 4–5, 9–10, 21; *Obshchaia zapiska*, pp. 212, 229.
75. Khizhniakov, *Vospominaniia*, pp. 109–14.
76. *Trudy*, Khar'kov, 2, p. 27; cf. Vilna, 1, pp. 88–113, 119–23, 178 and M. E. Mandel'shtam, 'Ignat'evskaia komissii v Kieve', *Perezhitoe*, 4 (1913) p. 56.
77. Gessen, 'Ignat'ev', no. 31, pp. 1678–85.
78. See Chapter 4 n. 10.
79. Gessen, 'Ignat'ev', no. 31, p. 1682; Komitet Ministrov, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 4, p. 183.
80. Komitet Ministrov, *Zhurnaly . . . po ispolneniiu ukaza 12-ogo dekabria 1904 goda* (St Petersburg: 1905) p. 444. For other examples of the acceptance of Ignat'ev's explanation of pogroms and of his proposed remedies, see *Ministerstvo iustitsii za sto let* (St Petersburg: 1902) pp. 213–14; *Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Spravka ob ogranicheniiakh v . . . pravakh evreev* (St Petersburg: 1906) p. 5; 'Reshenie obshchago sobraniia Senata, 1888 g., no. 25', *Pravo*, no. 17 (1905) p. 1365.
81. Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie*, pp. 131–2; *EE*, 1, p. 832; Dubnov, *History*, 2, pp. 309–12.
82. *Obshchaia zapiska*, pp. 2–24. Cf. n. 51, Ch. 1.
83. *Ibid*, pp. 5–6.
84. *Ibid*, p. 58; I. M. Bikerman, *Cherta evreiskoi osedlosti* (St Petersburg: 1911) pp. 44–5; *EE*, 3, pp. 86–7; *EKO*, *Sbornik*, 1, pp. xxvi–xxviii, 171, 178–81. According to the 1897 census, 48.84 per cent of all Russia's Jews, including those in Poland, lived in towns, 33.05 per cent in townlets and 18.11 per cent in villages.
85. *Obshchaia zapiska*, pp. 93–5.
86. *Ibid*, pp. 110–30.
87. *Ibid*, pp. 102–3, 132, 147.
88. *Ibid*, pp. 150–3.
89. *Ibid*, pp. 271–2, 290.
90. *Ibid*, p. 286.
91. *Ibid*, pp. 289, 293.

92. Ibid, p. 294.
93. *EE*, 3, p. 85.
94. Ettinger, 'The Image of the Jews in Russian Public Opinion', in *Modern Anti-Semitism* (in Hebrew) (Tel-Aviv: 1978) pp. 145-67; V. V. Bervi, 'Vospominaniia', *Golos minuvshago*, no. 5/6 (1916) p. 267; W. G. Moss, 'Vladimir Soloviev and the Jews', *RR*, 29, no. 2 (1970) p. 186; S. N. Iuzhakov, 'Evreiskii vopros', *Otechestvennye zapiski*, no. 5 (1882) pp. 5-6, 9, 13, 25; A. M. Pushchin, *Ocherk poslednikh itogov razrabotki evreiskago voprosa* (St Petersburg 82) pp. 18-21.
95. P. Bigelow, *The Borderland of Czar and Kaiser* (New York: 1894) pp. 107-8, 113; cf. the remarks of Foreign Minister N. K. Girs to US Minister C. E. Smith, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1890-1891* (Washington: 1892) p. 735.
96. Taylor, 'Tolstoy', p. 48; Komitet Ministrov, *Osobyi zhurnal*, 1906, no. 157, pp. 11-12; *EE*, 7, p. 734; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 151-2; Sliozberg, *Dela*, 2, pp. 4-5.
97. Polovtsov, *Dnevnik*, 2, pp. 59, 473.
98. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, p. 741.
99. Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie*, p. 135; Sliozberg, *Dela*, 2, pp. 165-8; Dubnov, 'Furor judophobicus', pp. 27-59.
100. Polovtsov, *Dnevnik*, 2, pp. 59, 314; Lamzdorf, *Dnevnik*, pp. 52-3, 72; H. O. Klibanski, *Handbuch des gesamten russischen Zivilrechts* (Berlin: 1911-17) 1, p. 434; 2, 469; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 384-5; L. Wolf, *The Legal Sufferings of the Jews* (London: 1912) pp. 2.
101. K. Korol'kov, *Zhizn' i tsarstvovanie Aleksandra III* (Kiev: 1901) pp. 176-7; Lamzdorf, *Dnevnik*, p. 386; Sliozberg, *Dela*, 2, p. 82; Komitet Ministrov, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 4, pp. 165-82, 5, pp. 27-8; Von Laue, *Witte*, pp. 185, 189; Gimpel'son, *Zakony*, pp. 392-5; Sovet Ministrov, *Spravka*, pp. 119-20.
102. Komitet Ministrov, *Istoricheskii obzor*, 5, pp. 123-4; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 397. E. B. Levin (ed.) *Sbornik ogranichitel'nykh zakonov i postanovlenii o evreiax* (St Petersburg: 1902) contains a list of companies whose articles of incorporation or by-laws included restrictions on Jews.
103. Von Laue, *Witte*, p. 124; Sovet Ministrov, *Spravka*, pp. 131-61. L. E. Shepelev, *Aksionernye kompanii v Rossii* (Leningrad: 1973) p. 122, writes that the substantial changes in government regulation of joint stock companies introduced in the 1870s and 1880s were designed, as the Ministry of Finance declared, for 'the protection of agriculture in certain localities and of several branches of industry from the intrusion of undesirable elements', by which, Shepelev notes, were meant foreigners, Jews and Poles. These regulations were modified in 1905 and 1907. See Chapter 4, n. 34.
104. Vitte, 'Vsepoddanneishi i doklad', *ES*, 8 (1915) pp. 405-10. On Witte, see pp. 84-9. Chapter 4.
105. Dubnov, *History*, 3, pp. 22-3; *EE*, 5, p. 614 gives the number of those displaced from the trade in spirits by the state monopoly as 100 000. There was, in addition, a substantial reduction in the number of Jewish distilleries and breweries and, consequently, of the hands employed by them. The Governor-General of Khar'kov estimated in 1882, that there were 150 000 Jews in the drink trade.
106. Bunge, *Zapiska*, pp. 31, 37-9; Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, p. 49, points out that Jews were also removed from the jurisdiction of the land captains.
107. Brutskus, 'Ekonomicheskoe' polozhenie, pp. 28, 41-2; D. Drutskoi-Sokol'ninskii, 'Antisemitizm', *VE*, no. 7 (1900) pp. 96-118; Dubnov, *History*, 3, p. 339; Baron, *The Russian Jew*, p. 64; L. Errera, *Die russischen Juden* (Leipzig: 1903) pp. 103-4; Frederic, *The New Exodus*, pp. 102-3.
108. Komitet Ministrov, *Osobyi zhurnal*, 1906, no. 157, p. 1.
109. *Svod vysochaishikh otmetok . . . za 1895 g.* (St Petersburg: 1897) pp. 29-31; *Svod . . . za 1897 g.* (St Petersburg: 1899) p. 42; *Svod . . . za 1898 g.* (St Petersburg: 1901) p. 127.
110. Gessen, *Zakon*, p. 171; *EE*, 3, pp. 85-6, 5, p. 821.
111. Mysh, *Rukovodstvo*, pp. 120-3, 346, 354; Gessen, *Zakon*, pp. 172-3.