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REPORT ON CONDUCTED  
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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**“THE ISSUE OF ANTISEMITISM AS  
PERCEIVED BY THE JEWS AND OTHER  
RUSSIAN URBAN POPULATION  
GROUPS”**

MOSCOW  
2018

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## INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

This report mainly describes the results of the qualitative research conducted in 2018. This was the second wave of focus groups and interviews, largely building on and furthering the first wave research of 2015 described in a respective Report. The details of the scope and geography of conducted focus groups are provided in Appendix 1.

Alongside with this, this qualitative research is aiming to supplement and support the wide-scale quantitative research simultaneously conducted by the Levada Center in the same cities (and in some others).

The focus groups and interviews described below were conducted by moderators of the Levada Center A. Levinson and S. Koroleva.

Jewish respondents were invited through local Jewish organizations. Such organizations were contacted through the employees of the Russian Jewish Congress, to whom we are expressing our gratitude. Other respondents were invited by local marketing and sociological agencies working together with the Levada Center.

The sample for the 2018 qualitative research was designed in such a way as to hold in each of the four cities meetings with the local Jewry and representatives of the groups providing the context (or part of the context) for the existence of the Jews. Therefore, in such cities as Derbent and Kazan, focus groups were conducted with representatives of the Muslim majority, and in Tomsk and Kaliningrad – with representatives of the Russian population.

Researchers considered it necessary to verify the hypothesis that religiousness, i.e., inclusion into the life of a religious community and in a respective religious doctrine, affects the perception of the antisemitism issue. Therefore, it was planned to conduct focus groups with both, religious Jews and with those who do not categorize themselves as religious Jews. Same distinctions were to be made in the Russian groups (respondents who categorize themselves as Orthodox Christians and those who do not), and in the Muslim groups who were divided into “practicing Muslims” (in Derbent) and “ethnic Muslims” (in Kazan). We did not mean to address the “devotees” within these three confessions, as they constitute relatively narrow groups among the “believers” / “practicing believers”/and “religious people”. The hypothesis was only partially proven. Among the Jews, this status did not affect their ideas of the presence/absence of antisemitism. Among the “practicing” Muslims and Orthodox Christians, a special type of grudge was observed against the Jews and/or religious Jews, not seen among those who do not categorize themselves as believers. The grudge was that the Jews consider themselves to be superior to us – Muslims or Orthodox Christians. In other respects, the positions of the more or less religiously involved people did not differ as regards the matters being discussed.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The research has confirmed the previously obtained results and general conclusions of the quantitative research.

The polled representatives of the contemporary Russian Jewry have stated that are not experiencing antisemitism as a problem for their residence in Russia at the moment. In their opinion, this does not mean that antisemitism is non-existent in Russia. It is present in its weakened forms, in “dormant” and latent forms. (We define this by saying that there is no active antisemitism, while passive antisemitism persists).

In this environment, an opinion has been offered that antisemitism exists in such suppressed forms due to the fact that the country’s top leadership is demonstratively pursuing a policy of friendliness towards the Jews and Israel.

However, the polled believe that if there is a turnaround towards antisemitism at the state level, this will instantly bring about a local upswing in antisemitism (passive antisemitism will turn into active antisemitism)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The research was completed before the emergence of reports that the employees of the Center for Combating Extremism of the Internal Affairs Directorate for the Central Administrative District of the Moscow Department of the Russian Ministry of the Interior have conducted a search at the office of the Moscow Religious Jewish Community (Inspection to check the performance of activities under Article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code).  
See <http://tass.ru/proisshestiya/5447402>

## SECTION 1

### 1.1. ANTISEMITISM AS A SUBJECT

The experience of conducting qualitative research on the subject of antisemitism provides grounds for making some conclusions as regards the status of this subject in the public mind of the polled categories of the Russian population.

Almost in each of the focus groups – however different they were – there was a part of the respondents denying, in one way or another, the very existence of the subject of antisemitism.

Such denial could take any of the three forms described below.

1. In the first case, the respondents were not aware of such a word, and thought they had never even met a Jew in their whole life, and therefore, had no reason for maintaining any attitude towards the Jews, including negative.
  - *How weird, I have not seen any such Jews here, nor ever come across them. I have a feeling that I've never come across them on my way, and I believe they don't exist*
  - *I think I kinda haven't met them either, I basically never see or hear them* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)

Therefore, there is no antisemitism:

Question: “And what is your situation with antisemitism?”

- *What? We don't have it, I can't even tell what this means.* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)
2. Frequently, reference was made to the fact that the “Jews no longer existed”
    - *I have a feeling that they have all left already*
    - *The Jews have become less numerous. And so... Well, when the remaining number is vanishingly small, it doesn't really have any influence anymore.* (older Jews, Tomsk)
    - *Jews? Never met any.*
    - *Me neither.* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)
    - *But what attitude to them can you have when there are none here?*
    - *They are not even to be seen here, as far as I'm concerned. Do they even live here? Or do they live in Israel?* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)
    - *We are not present here, well, we say, we do not live here* (Jews, Derbent)
    - *No, there are no Jews here. Well, we do have a Katzman here... only* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)

An opinion we have come across:

- *Why is the (antisemitic) sentiment declining? I believe this is because there are now fewer Jews.*

The above statement was contradicted by:

*The Jews are not becoming less numerous, they are becoming more numerous (older Jews, Tomsk)*

In some instances, people say that they haven't met the Jews personally, but can see some evidence of their presence:

- *The only thing I know about these people is that they do have a synagogue here, it is very beautiful and has been restored. They've recently opened a Jewish school... There is no Orthodox Christian school in Tomsk, but a Jewish one has been opened. This is all I know about the Jews.* (Russian non-believers, Tomsk)
- *Two years ago, I've started noticing they've been having some parties, they've been more open about celebrating recently... Although I'm a native of Tomsk, same as three generations of my ancestors before me, I think my ancestors did not get to see much of the Jews here either back then...* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)
- *A synagogue is being built, this means we do have Jews here.* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)

3. In some instances, they are not talking about the absence of the Jews but are saying that it is impossible to detect their presence, i.e., they are so well assimilated (or are hiding their Jewishness so well) that it is impossible to tell them apart from Russians:

- *Many Russians can't tell them apart... by appearance. I myself have seen it happen many times, when you see that a person is, as I think ... a Jew but the person next to me is like "C'mon, are you kidding me?"*
- *I haven't met them either... Or perhaps, I have, but didn't realize. No, I haven't met them* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)
- *Well, we do have them here but... oh Jeez, how do I say it right? It's not like they walk around wearing an "I am a Jew plate". And they are very few...* (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)
- *A usual nation, I think, there are no any traits directly linked to being Jewish* (Muslims, Kazan)

The opinion of the Derbent Jews that they have been historically very little different from other peoples of the region stands alone:

- *We, the mountain Jews, also have the mountain mentality. Mentality of the people we've lived among. Thus, we have adopted many customs. And much of our practical wisdom... and, let's say, the rules... Practically same attitude to the guests, to the elder, in the family and all other things...*

It may be believed that the statement that there is no antisemitism due to the absence of the Jews is a sort of a marginal option; however, it is also helpful to have it in mind when conducting an assessment of the level of antisemitism in the country.

It is appropriate to recall here that there is a phenomenon of "antisemitism in the absence of the Jews"<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Lendvai: Antisemitism without Jews. Doubleday, Garden City 1971

Seems like it is not present in the polled segments of the Russian society.

The Jews also denied in the research the existence of antisemitism in the present-day Russia. The level and persistence of such denial could vary, but on the whole, this was the Jews’ prevalent standpoint. Young Jewish respondents simply reported that they had not experienced any manifestations of antisemitism, and the elderly and older Jews reminisced that such manifestations (towards them personally or “generally”) had existed in the past, but were non-existent at the moment. Migrants from other countries (e.g., from Ukraine) reported *having seen a lot of it there, but none of it here*.

There have been opinions that antisemitism is non-existent now, but can make a comeback any time.

It should be mentioned that such above-stated position of the Jews is affected by the understanding of antisemitism established in this environment as the actions aimed to cause damage to the Jews or oust them from some positions or places, or barring them from somewhere. Besides, the polled segments of the Russian Jewry show agreement as to the extent or levels of certain manifestations allowing classification of such as antisemitism. Therefore, even being aware of the existence of prejudice against the Jews in representatives of ethnic majority or neighboring minorities – if such prejudice does not take the form of action aimed against the Jews, our respondents classify the situation as the absence of antisemitism. **Naturally, we do have some antisemites, but no antisemitism as such**, as this situation is characterized by our respondents (approaching such circumstances methodologically, we further propose making a distinction between active and passive antisemitism).

Therefore, comparison of these positions with the positions underlying the international questionnaire used for putting together a survey form for the quantitative research shows that the level of susceptibility to manifestation and attention to details of such manifestations towards the Jews we have detected is way lower than in this document. This might explain, among other things, the fact that the respondents of the quantitative research (Jews) receiving such detailed questions, eventually more frequently gave positive answers to the question of whether antisemitism existed in Russia than the respondents of the focus groups, basing themselves on their habitual understanding of what should be considered as antisemitism.

Furthermore, the difference in the situation, in which the answers were obtained, is also significant. Individual nature of interviews in a wide-scale survey could prompt a respondent Jew to “complain” more, while a group discussion can rather stimulate the expression of optimism and using group “mantras” to “charm” the situation. Don’t trouble trouble until trouble troubles you, as said during a group discussion with the Jews.

The third form of denying antisemitism occurs in the ethnic majority environment or among the “neighboring” ethnic groups.



The mindset to avoid any inter-ethnic conflicts, differences, including conflicts with the Jews, is very strong.

- *I've never seen us have any conflict with the Russians or the Jews.* (Muslims, Derbent)
- *There have been no conflicts as such. I've been living in this city since 1958. I haven't called Derbent a wise city for nothing. So, we've always been friends with the Jews.* (Muslims, Derbent)
- *I've never seen this personally.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)
- *When they find out I'm a Jew, they (the Tatars) are treating me better than the Russians.* (Jews, Kazan)

It needs to be understood that the wording used in the described strata to find out about this issue was very near to the question "do you feel/show any enmity to the Jews?". Taking into account the previously existent "internationalism" and the current "tolerance" mentality and the norms of the Russian intelligentsia code prohibiting racial discrimination – the question is actually worded as: "Do you violate such normative standards?"

As regards such normative standards as such, it may be noted that they have been considerably eroded in the last decade. Expressing dislike towards other ethnicities (migrants from the Middle Asia or the North Caucasus) is almost no longer regarded as indecency and bad manners. It is rather interesting that due to this, the normative standards protecting the Jews from various manifestations of enmity and aggression have not weakened and have perhaps grown stronger.

Research in the environments surrounding the Jews in the Russian cities and towns indicates that in actual fact, there are no manifestations of antisemitism towards the Jews, and they are rather unlikely. The Jews are no longer perceived as current enemies. There are few reasons given – there are no Jews, or: the Jews are present but undetectable, etc. A positive attitude to the Jews is also shown, and their merits recognized.

Alongside this, some antisemitic manifestations have been detected in this environment. They consist in telling the so-called Jewish-themed jokes, giving each other jocular and ironic Jewish names, and accusing each other of behaving like a Jew. A Jew/Jews in this case means a semantic complex, a totality of personal traits, behaviors and other anthropological characteristic declared as alien and negated rather than being negative (although sometimes marked positive). This set of meanings is used for socializing, in day-to-day communications as a means of pointing to or resolving conflicts, etc. This type of communication has nothing to do with the Jews as such.

Denial of antisemitism we are discussing here does not signify its absence. As in the case of respondent Jews, respondents from other ethnic groups discussing antisemitism use the term to mean the actions causing damage to the Jews. Those who feel antipathy towards the Jews do not consider it to be antisemitism, as this does not translate in their case into any negative actions towards the Jews, nor are they expressing any antipathy towards the Jews. And it is this very common understanding of antisemitism that we consider to be another reason for drawing a methodological distinction between active and passive antisemitism.



Denial of antisemitism in this environment can have, as we have mentioned, a protective nature – protecting oneself and one’s family and friends from accusations of objectionable behavior. But it may also have, in a way, an offensive and effectively antisemitic nature. The question of whether antisemitism is existent or non-existent in Russia is treated by such category of respondents as “a question from the Jews” (which is actually the case) and as the question meaning that antisemitism does exist in Russia and Russia can be accused of this in terms of the universal human norms. This whole concept belongs on the whole to a system of views which is triggered by the “sieged fortress” situation – the adversity between Russia and the West sharply aggravated after the accession of Crimea. As regards this position, interestingly, it is being emphasized that there is no antisemitism in Russia (accused by the West), while it exists in Ukraine (protected by the West). In this context, negation of antisemitism in Russia turns out to be part of the “patriotic” position, which is a sort of novelty for this paradigm.

## 1.2. JUDEOPHILIA

Russia’s present-day “Jewish issue” situation is characterized by the presence of Judeophilic statements, rather than antisemitic ones. In other words, when asked about their attitude to the Jews, people from other ethno-cultural groups are in a hurry to claim their positive attitude. This may be viewed as a response to the abolition of the previously existent antisemitic normative standard. The standard has been discredited, abolished or made obsolete. This “gap” engenders by way of response a contrary construct, which appears to be judeophilia.

– *It is becoming obsolete, antisemitism, as being a Jew is currently trendy* (young religious Jews, Tomsk)

It may be imagined that such an attitude would be interpreted as “perverted antisemitism”, but in our opinion, such demonstrative judeophilia rather indicates that one is trying to secure himself against being suspected of the “unseemly” antisemitism, and this does not reflect one’s attitude to the Jews. It may be also said that ascribing positive traits to the Jews not registered by the respondents in their “own people” is a form of alienating the Jews but based on a positive feature.

One way or the other, a considerable amount of positive statements has been gathered regarding the Jews. The Jews are predominantly regarded as “smart”. It is indicated by both, the semantic attribution test (see Appendix 4) and the statements made by the respondents.

– *Here’s what I want to say – they’re very smart people, the Jews... this is the only positive thing I can mention about the Jews. I don’t know what else...* (Muslims, Derbent)

– *Life will be boring without the Jews.* (Muslims, Kazan)

– *They are kinda wise.* (Muslims, Kazan)

– *Actually, one can learn a lot from them.* (Muslims, Kazan)

– *They have a sense of humor.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)

– *I believe they are decent people and usually well-to-do.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)

### 1.3. “PEOPLES’ FRIENDSHIP”

As soon as the respondents within the focus groups realized that the discussion was going to be centered on the relations between various national groups, first thing they did was saying that national differences do not matter, they are not minded, or, on the contrary, that people from various national groups maintain and preserve their identity, but they live together in peace and agreement with each other – and this is a positive feature of this urban community.

- *You know, we don’t have with the Orthodox Christians ... well, not that a friendship but ... no such thing. And we have the Protestants... they like us, so to speak. They like us and we like them back, we share matzah and juice with them. And sometimes they help us. They have this kind of Sunday thing... We have a cemetery here.. an old cemetery. It is in a completely decrepit condition, but still, once a year they come over and help us ...* (Jews, Tomsk)
- *I’ve recently visited their celebration .. what do you call it, Nowruz... it was kind of a thing where all confessions were brought together, and so, it was a celebration... We invite them here... mostly, it is the autonomies that show up. Well, the German autonomy, the Kirgiz autonomy... Armenians, and so on. It is these autonomies that make up a large bulk of our contacts. Because religious people are more like ... close-minded, right?* (Jews, Tomsk)
- *With Russians, Jews – I’ve never seen them have any conflicts.* (Muslims, Derbent)
- *There have been no conflicts as such. I was born in a village myself. So, we’ve been friends with the Jews.*
- *We don’t take up such positions here, let’s say, we don’t pursue any policies that would have been in the way or could disturb anyone.* (Muslims, Derbent)

To conclude this section, let us present a conclusion drawn based on the results of the semantic attribution test conducted during focus groups (for more details see Appendix 4). The Jews as a separate ethno-cultural community in Russia exist in an environment of friendliness and sympathy (with occasional displays of jealousy) displayed by the Muslim minority, with a condescending and critical attitude of the Russian majority. The Jews, in their turn, seem to be strongly conditioned to recognize the leading role of the Russian majority, adopting some of its social and anthropological features, while also maintaining their individuality and identity. There is no serious discrimination of the Jews, but at the very same time, there is no complete assimilation either.

## 1.4. RECOGNIZING ANTISEMITISM

In some instances, the respondents expressed the viewpoint that antisemitism as such exists (even where there is none in this particular city or community). And then some of the reasons were given:

- *Well, this is a time proven tradition, why drop it?* (Jews, Kazan)
- *I think this is just being envious of the people who can organize themselves, and moreover, are raising their kids the right way.* (Jews, Kazan)
- *Well, I think this is lack of proper education...* (Jews, Kazan)

Some Jews (not Orthodox Christians!) have reported the church as a source of antisemitic sentiment.

- *While the Catholics have already offered their apologies about the former persecutions, so far, the Orthodox Christians have not.* (Jews, Tomsk)
- *Antisemitism is a disease. Sure it is. This is a mental condition. And do you know why antisemitism – you know there are different types of antisemitism – domestic, state-supported, some other types... economic. And the worst is that the church is inseminating this domestic type of antisemitism.* (Jews, Tomsk)

The trademark argument of antisemites that the Jews themselves are the source of antisemitism also deserves a mention:

- *there is an expression, I don't really like it but some believe that the Jews are the ones to blame for antisemitism ... Well, you can agree or disagree.* (Jews, Kazan)

## SECTION 2

### 2.1. ANTISEMITISM, ACTIVE AND PASSIVE

Discussions on the subject of “antisemitism” have been ongoing for a long time now. A huge number of considerations have been voiced. We would like to add to this body of considerations the one, prompted by the opinions expressed by our respondents during the group discussions conducted.

It is doubtless for all of the participants of these discussions that actions aimed against the Jews should be referred to as antisemitism (occasionally, this term is objected to, as instead of the Jews, it refers as the target to the Semites, which includes the Arabs). By way of specification, let us say that what this term refers to is the actions planned or performed in order to remove the Jews from a place or a position, or eliminate them altogether, any calls to engage in such actions, and actions or calls to action aiming to harm or cause damage to the Jews. And rationalizing such actions or intentions by blaming the Jews/ making the Jews liable for the damage or harm caused to other peoples. Sociologically speaking, this may be referred to as actions to exclude or undermine the status of the Jews. Psychologically speaking, this means the actions or verbal aggression aimed at the Jews as a target.

This definition of antisemitism embraces a broad range of actions and events from domestic to state level, from mocking to physical extermination.

All of the above forms share a common feature – they are directly targeting, physically or symbolically, the Jews.

Our first-wave and second-wave research (in 2015 and 2018, respectively) has convincingly demonstrated that such phenomena are, indeed, rare or vanishingly infrequent in the present-day Russia reality.

Due to this, the conclusion “There is no (more) antisemitism in Russia” has been frequently declared.

Along with this, both, research and day-to-day experience have produced evidence that negative attitude to the Jews in the Russian and Muslim environment has not disappeared, it persists and is expressed in daily life as widespread abusive, ironic and negative clichés, paroemias and figures of speech.

Anti-Jewish texts on the Internet hold a special place. They are plentiful and do not show a trend for reduction. Rather, they are getting more numerous.

However, in this second case, anti-Jewish statements are made in communications taking place within the Russian or Muslim environment. They are not targeting the Jews as such and Jews are not the “internal addressee” of such texts.

They are used to serve the needs of communication, socialization, institutionalization of conflicts and for other types of self-regulation within these groups and Russian population categories. Exaggerated portrayal of the Jews as the “aliens” or the negative traits ascribed to the Jews serve as the negative imagery and help build the image of “your own kind”. Even some nominally positive traits are used as negative elements of the Russians’ self-perception (“smart” implying “smart as a Jew”, the antithesis of “simplicity”).

Let us reiterate that in all these instances, we are talking about communication within the Russian community in situations classified as informal (“domestic”), including “our own kind” only. Certain normative standards prohibit using the aforementioned semantic elements and constructions in public and official domains, in an area where you make contact with the “strangers”. Specifically, they prohibit using such words that are derogatory for the Jews, comparisons, jokes, etc, towards the Jews or at least, in their presence.

But if we consider these phenomena to be a form of antisemitism, the conclusion we should draw is that antisemitism still persists in Russia.

When considering the conflicting opinions as to the existence/non-existence of antisemitism in Russia, it is helpful to have a look at the opinions of the Russian Jews. It is clear that with their minds tasked with processing day-to-day routine operations, they cannot be bothered with distinctions and differentiating definitions. However, if we analyze their comments on the subject, it may be noted that they consider as “real antisemitism” actions and other manifestations we have mentioned in the first paragraph. Actions and manifestations described in the second paragraph are largely unknown to them. Antisemitic speeches on the Internet are a somewhat more complicated matter, but in this area, antisemitic pronouncements may only “reach” the Jews if the latter enter themselves the areas used for such manifestations.

It may therefore be concluded that there is a considerable difference between the phenomena described in paragraphs 1 and 2, and specifically – the first ones are intentional and constitute a form of aggression targeting the Jews, while the second ones are conventional in the non-Jewish environment and are not targeting the Jews. So, we suggest naming the phenomena of the first kind “active antisemitism”, and the phenomena of the second kind – “passive antisemitism”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The suggestion to differentiate between active and passive forms of negative attitude of members of a community to any groups and categories of people may be found not only in the example of the attitude to the Jewry. For instance, the attitude of the Russians to the US or Europe on the whole may be active (and may include campaigns up to military), or passive. In this case, we are talking about using the imaginary “West” or imaginary “USA” as a cause of internal difficulties, an entity having alien principles, foreign sentiments, etc. But such pronouncements are not addressed to the West as such, being rather addressed to our citizens.

Studying the experts' opinions allows making an important addition. **Passive antisemitism has a potential for turning into active antisemitism.** The culturally inherent dislike of the Jews may evolve into outright aggression (verbal and actual) subject to the condition referred to by the experts and ordinary respondents. This condition is a signal from the instances identified as related to the government. State-supported antisemitism paves the way for domestic antisemitism. After this signal, the normative standards currently protecting the Jews from the manifestations of dislike, enmity, etc, will no longer be valid.

- *This is after all a public policy pursued since 1917th. (Jews, Kazan)*
- *I believe that antisemitism is the public policy that is deeply ... let's say rejecting the Jews as the people of equal worth... in this country. And so, they are prejudiced, and not accepted somewhere... When I was entering the institute, many couldn't enter based on Section 5... this was the state policy. (Jews, Kaliningrad)*

Many have reported that currently, there is no state-supported antisemitism:

- *There's no political support of antisemitism. (Jews, Kazan)*
- *Something like 10 years ago, they were writing all kinds of bad things right here, nowadays, there is nothing like that... No, this is all waning because the person.. how do you say it... understands that it doesn't exist at the state level, you see? (Jews, Tomsk)*
- *There have to be some pre-requisites for antisemitism – worsening living conditions, global situation, perhaps, some statements made by some oligarchs... among ours, which people don't like. All this contributes to the overall sentiment, and can burst into flames one day (Jews, Tomsk)*
- *On the one hand, there is prejudice, and on the other hand, active people are always needed, and if there are any, they are taken onboard, so to speak, because the work needs to be done. And the result is the most important thing. That is, it is both, the money and the job. And so, you come to our city administration and meet deputy mayor who is a Jew .... (Jews, Tomsk)*

The behavior of the country's top leader is highly important.

- *Our president is not an antisemite. He's surrounded by Jews only. So, I'm thinking the Jews are having a good life in our country (Jews, Kaliningrad)*
- *Look at this, this is indeed .... If it weren't for this, our president wouldn't be surrounded by this one in a turban, another one with sidelocks, the third one with a cross. It means they are okay with each other. All of them. (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)*
- *Putin is feeling okay about the Jews, well, at least he gets to meet with Lazar. The people are seeing this and thinking: "If Putin is seeing Lazar, it means the Jews can't be so bad". This is happening at the top level. It means it could happen at the lowest level, too. (Jews, Tomsk)*

At the same time, there are some instances of unequal treatment of the Jews by local authorities.

- *Well, sometimes we get invited to some celebrations in the administration, and they normally have Jews seated there... Orthodox Christians usually sit near the top brass, and Jews – somewhat farther. (Jews, Tomsk)*



- *We were trying here for something like a year to get to meet Zh., our governor. But he wouldn't meet us. It could be that he is busy. But I think, he wasn't too willing, either. (Jews, Tomsk)*
- *Azeri population was prevalent in Derbent back then, and the Azeri were a little bit ... they were happy or something that the Jews were leaving town and they would... But, this backfired. And today they're crying. Because today they've been let down the same. And they have come to... (Jews, Derbent).*

The same was indicated in a report of the editor-in-chief of a Jewish newspaper, saying that officially, there was no oppression of the newspaper. But it was difficult for him to get an appointment for a meeting at the city administration regarding the premises for the editorial office, while the editor of another newspaper gets an appointment easily. The same goes for a meeting with Deputy Governor.

## 2.2. ACTIVE ANTISEMITISM

The conducted qualitative research allows saying that the presence of active antisemitism (i.e., actions targeting the Jews) has not been reported by either the Jews, or the representatives of other national and cultural groups.

- *It's hard to say about Russia, but we haven't experienced any in Tomsk (religious Jews in Tomsk)*

In some instances, representatives of other national groups acknowledged the existence of antisemitism, but always pointed out to the fact that it is very weak

- *Well, I think, it (antisemitism) is currently at its lowest.*
- *I think so, too.*
- *I.e., we've already risen from our knees.*
- *Yes, think so, too...*
- *Yes, we have. (Jews, Kazan)*
- *It (antisemitism in Tatarstan) is weaker than among the local Russian population. It is stronger in the local Russian population because there's no other opposing ethnicity, strata. (Jews, Kazan)*

The Jews remember having faced manifestations of antisemitism, but not here and now:

- *You know, there is none here, but it does exist in Ukraine.*
- *Let me tell you. 1968-1969th.*
- *And we don't have it here. None. (Jews, Kaliningrad)*
- *It is of the domestic kind, but it does emerge sometimes. I myself came across it at my workplace a year ago, a very strong variety. (Jews, Kazan)*



## 2.3. GRUDGES AGAINST THE JEWS

Common grudges against the Jews/religious Jews include treating badly other nationalities or religions

- *My assumption is that they (the Jews) are specifically very negative about the believers ... people who believe in Jesus Christ, the Christians. (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*
- *I believe that in the 21st century, if we are good people, we are to treat respectfully all religions, but they (the Jews) don't treat us this way. They (the Jews) consider us to be below them. (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad).*
- *I believe the upbringing should be such that everyone should have his guilt. To the other. The Jews to the Muslims and the Muslims to the Jews. It should be. If we approach it from a humane standpoint... The Jews dislike the Tatars, as far as I know. (Muslims, Kazan)*
- *In Orthodox Christianity, they have their own religion, I don't think it says "you must hate this or that person"... And the Jews, I think, have something of the kind. (Russian non-believers, Kaliningrad)*
- *Well, they (the Jews) consider that they are right, and Muslims and Christians are wrong. And waiting for the Messiah ... or rather continuing to wait. And it will be the Antichrist who arrives. (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*

Certain instances of discriminatory attitude by the Jews are reported. This means begrudging the Jews violation of universal human norms, such claims must be made against the representatives of any national or any other group giving preferential treatment to "their own kind" in violation of the general rules. The only question is whether such claims are brought against the Russians when they are promoting "their own kind", or whether this is only done for minorities.

- *Well, I can tell for Tomsk. A research supervisor was promoting his postgraduate student, as he was his own kind; he put him forward, sent him to conferences and supported him in all sorts of ways... (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*

It is typical that the example given by the respondent relates to the events that took place at least twenty years ago. However, this episode was remembered by the respondent in lots of detail and nuances.

- *I know an example. This happened rather a long time ago, but in my presence. A person was summoned by the boss, this happened back in the Soviet times (underlined by the authors) ... and was asked to write an application to resign. The question "why?" was answered that there was a person, well, a Jew, and the boss who summoned ... well, it was a woman... well, he was a Jew, too.. and he told her in no uncertain terms: "You were occupying this position while this guy was in prison, but this position is being kept for him. He's now out of prison and you need to vacate...". When she asked ... well, it was a complicated and scandalous situation... And he told her directly: "Well, he's one of us, and you aren't, unfortunately.". This person who was asked to resign was Russian. And the boss was a Jew and he said he was keeping this position until that other guy was set free, he's one of us, he's also a Jew...". It was a case of national solidarity here. (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*

## 2.4. PASSIVE ANTISEMITISM

This variety of antisemitism was manifested in the research as recognizing certain negative features of the Jewry.

They were mostly stereotypes accusing the Jews of greediness and being sly.

- *Perhaps, they are greedy.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)
- *Well, for me the Jews are Judaists. Well, perhaps, a greedy nation.* (Muslims, Kazan)
- *Sly.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)
- *He said: "We're more straightforward". As if he read my thoughts*
- *They have this hypocrisy towards us Russians* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)

There are social grudges, rather than psychological

- *They are quite numerous among the intelligentsia, and among the so-called ... common folks or craftsmen – naturally, there are none.*
- *Well, I know that the Jews are loan sharks, as far as I know, they are descendants of the loan sharks.* (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)

The material collected in focus groups does not constitute manifestations of antisemitism, but rather evidences that manifestations do exist.

People tried to soften their negative attitude in focus groups.

Attitude to the Jews is often complicated. People don't want to accuse the Jews directly. They comment on their positive traits, on the traits that are (believed to be) lacking in their own people. That is, this is an indirect way to point to the fact that the Jews are aliens, but this is presented as a sort of praise.

- *Jews... they are very purpose-oriented people, at least those I know. They reach their objectives, in their own ways. In their own way – meaning that they have a principle for not hurting anyone and getting their thing done. One can learn a lot from them, by the way.*
- *They are very talented, these Jews, and very hard-working. Frankly, I don't know any alcoholics among the Jews. They are sly but work hard and are talented people*
- *Well, they are one of the driving forces in history, the Jews. All of our gods are Jews. Karl Marx was a Jew, and Jesus Christ... And so many scientists.*
- *They are a driving force, very active, and workaholics.*
- *If we consider the music, the Jews must be the most talented ones.* (Muslims, Kazan)
- *Naturally, there is envy: most Jews are better off, drink alcohol less... fight less... Well, normally, they have a better life.* (Russians in Tomsk)
- *First, they are workaholics.* (Muslims, Kazan)
- *perhaps, he (the Jew) is more gifted...* (Muslims, Kazan)

## 2.5. ANTISEMITISM AS FOLKLORE

Very often, Russian respondents who have not met the Jews, reported having learnt about the existence of the Jews from “conversations and jokes”. The significance of the “Jewish joke” in the structure of passive antisemitism is very high. This is a very concentrated expression of criticized and repressed human traits, labelling such traits as alien and foreign to this community.

- *I’ve only come to know about them from the jokes.*
- *Me too... From jokes only, only heard about them from the “Uralskie Pelmeni” (translator’s comment – a Russian stand-up comedy group)*
- *This is what is said about them in the jokes... It’s like a cliché about them (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*
- *Well, previously, there have been jokes about the Jews... Now, there are fewer such jokes.*
- *Well, now, there is no such thing as... There are more jokes about the khokhols (Ukrainians – translator’s comment) already now... (Muslim, Kazan)*
- *Well, there is this anecdote. An old Tatar dies and says: “Take good care of the Jews. Take good care of the Jews, they will finish them off and start beating us”. (Jews, Kazan)*
- *I’ve heard it personally from a Jew I know that only Jews can tell Jewish jokes. It is embarrassing for the non-Jews. (Russian Orthodox Christians, Tomsk)*

In this meaning, the Jews are the characters of cultural constructs existing according to the laws of folklore.

Some of these constructs are often called “myths”<sup>4</sup>, accentuating the meaning of the word “myth” pointing to its inconsistency with actual facts, substitution of truth with make-belief, sometimes lopsided. We would like to stress, along with this meaning, another meaning of the word, frequently used in folklore studies and mythology. The thing is that a myth does not need to be proven with real facts, it operates differently. What a myth needs from the realm of reality is first, being repeated and reproducible, and second, being accompanied by an appropriate ritual. The ritual accompanying the myth about the Jews is the pogrom (massacre). We are aware of historical implementations of this rule in central Russia and in Ukraine in late 19th-early 20th centuries. Due to various circumstances, its full-blown form no longer exists. The pogrom ritual has been suppressed. Our research has found its weakened traces first in Dagestan (2015) and then in Siberia (in 2018). Specific nature of the existence of this “Jewish myth” made obsolete due to lack of its accompanying ritual is that this is a myth about a ritual, about a bloody ritual ascribed to the Jews (the so-called “blood accusation”). Here are its traces:

<sup>4</sup>V.A. Shnirelman. Three Conspiracy Myths: Antisemitic Propaganda in Present-Day Russia. – M.: Moscow Human Rights Bureau, Academia, 2017.

- in Kemerovo ... there was a thing on the Internet, a young guy... what do you call them... I don't know, patriot something or what... And he said that this is ... well, he started making a list, including this fire – this sacrifice of the Jews before Passover. And there are some individual. But, naturally, I believe all of these things have a ... latent nature. (Jews, Tomsk)<sup>5</sup>
- A while ago, do you remember...some 5-7 years ago, children went missing in Krasnoyarsk? Kids went missing... it's like they were found later, I don't really remember... But ... The people who were investigating this, they said that the Jews ... they were small boys and girls... the Jews killed these kids so that to add their blood to the matzah. Although the Torah repeats several times that "thou shalt not eat the blood" and "thou shalt pour the blood out". And they say the Jews are ... adding the blood. (Jews, Tomsk).

Along with this, within the body of folklore antisemitic subjects, there exists the subject of the global Jewish conspiracy or behind-the-scenes Jewish government, ruling the world on the whole and Russia in particular. Such stories were reported in the 2015 research. Obsolete nature of such myths (their passive form) was expressed in the fact that they were being narrated without any emotions, specifically, without any negative emotions. It looked like the fact that the Jews are ruling the world and Russia is a commonplace fact that is common knowledge, not requiring any action or opposition from those mentioning it.

## 2.6. THE ISRAEL ISSUE

In antisemitism research, attitude to Israel is an indicator of the attitude to the Jews. Based on the deliverables of qualitative research, it may be said that these two attitudes do not necessarily correlate. An example (from the 2015 research) is the attitude to Israel of older generation Jews from the city of Birobidzhan (this is narrated in the research report). Their attitude is clearly positive, some of their kids have moved there. But in terms of being valued as "the No.1 Jewish place", Israel pales in comparison to Birobidzhan. According to them, the "real Jews" are the ones living in Birobidzhan.

However exaggerated, this approach points to an important subject, and sometimes, a problem.

A part of it – internal Jewish, so to speak – is a certain conflict of two Jewish cultures, which some of the Russian Jewry representatives feel concerned about:

- Well, I would also touch upon the issue of the Israeli culture impact on the Jews, for example. I believe that the Yiddish culture is becoming a thing of the past, and Israeli culture is taking over. (Kazan, Jews)

The second part of the problem has to do with the relations of the Jews with their surroundings. It is common knowledge that the main message of Israel to all the Jews around the world is that Israel is their motherland and home. However, the process of the Jews assimilation in Russia consisted

<sup>5</sup> See in relation to this <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/bb6dbeca6a8eba1604dbc5c62/files/f8198558-f0de-44c3-ae31-d9775e850f4f/>  
Отчет\_об\_уровне\_антисемитизма\_в\_первом\_полугодии\_2018\_год с.5

specifically in the Jew acquiring the Russian identity through recognizing Russia as their motherland, which was an answer of some sorts to the main message, on the other hand: the strongest wave of state-supported antisemitism was based on the grudges against the Jews as "rootless cosmopolitans". The debate between the Russian Jewry and their antisemitic opponents revolved around the subject of motherland/Israel. The Jews were denied the right to consider Russia home (the kikes have sold out Russia), and were being forced to recognize Israel as their homeland (go away to your Israel!). If the Jews did not respond by actually moving to Israel or another country), the necessary response developed along the lines of recognizing Russia as their motherland. This recognition could be internal or could be expressed in public statements, could have the form of ascription traditional for the Russian culture (you don't choose your motherland) or a more modern form (double citizenship, multiple identity), but the subject of Russia as motherland remained for the Russian Jews a highly important subject over the last few decades.

*– I understand it this way: motherland is where you were born. This is right after all. There may be a historical motherland, and there is a motherland that ... (Derbent, Jews)*

Let us add an observation made during the 2015 wave: irrespective of the attitude to Israel of the Jews themselves, for many Russians, the possibility in principle to move to Israel implied an irreversible difference between them and the Jews living next to them. Should anything happen, you have a place you can go to, and where can we go from Russia? Obviously, this kind of reasoning is a sort of an epic narrative. The fact that the number of Russians emigrating from Russia is now higher than the number of the leaving Jews is not being considered in such narrative. Symmetrically, the epic statement that thousands of Jews have sacrificed their lives for Russia as homeland will not be accepted by those who object to it by presenting a "practical" argument – this only happened because they knew that if the Germans had taken over, they would have exterminated them. Let us reiterate that the subject of Israel is related to basic (currently non-active) distrust of the Jews, denying them the opportunity of being feeling patriotic about Russia.

Another side of this issue is known – responsibility of the Russian Jews for the actions taken by Israel. This issue was, in a half-concealed way, one of the major ones in the state-supported "anti-Zionist" campaign during the late Soviet period.

Therefore, the existence of Israel as a motherland for the Jews living in Russia may cause problems for them, too. However, our research of 2018 only detected weak forms of shifting responsibility for (alleged) war acts of Israel against the Arabs onto the Russian Jews. Specifically, according to a Jewish respondent, Muslim activists in Derbent were running campaigns to condemn Israel

*– There were even several campaigns here, they had banners and stuff... when the war was ongoing.*

It caused concerns for the local Jews, they saw themselves as targets of such campaigns. However, it became clear that

*– They (protesting Muslims) do not actually consider us... to be connected to Israel,*



Probably, as a matter of fact, Mountain Jews in Dagestan were considered "locals" in Dagestan, different from the Jews associated with Israel.

According to some Jews, in another region, Tomsk, in the eyes of Russian surroundings, the connection between the Russian Jewry and Israel was observed but appeared to be ambivalent

*– Actually, Israel is somehow associated with the Jews. But on the one hand, there is propaganda that they kill Arabs there, on the other hand, they see that the country is developing, is actually becoming very... how do you say it... comfortable for living. They live on this patch of land... doing so many things... hi-tech stuff... This also affects the people (Jews, Tomsk)*

Even the existence of two motherlands for the Jews, which is unusual for the peoples of Russia, is accepted as a fact

*– Many have left... Those who have left for Israel, for their motherland, many of them come back, they still have the citizenship. They come to Derbent, stay here for three months, have some rest, then leave, those who work there. (Derbent, Muslims)*

*– Well, they live in Israel. But they rent their apartments here, they don't sell them. From the start, they don't destroy their roots here. Even their parents stay here, they come to see them once a year. Wherever they go, they still come back (Kalinigrad, Russians)*

Israel is certainly seen by many as a country of the Jews, the motherland of the Jews, a place they go to from Russia

*– Jews? Leave? Of course, they leave.*

*M.: Where?*

*– Mostly, Israel. (Kazan, Muslims)*

*– If someone travels to Israel, it is clear that he is a Jew (Tomsk, Jews)*

The motivations for the Jews to leave for Israel, as seen by their neighbors in Russian, cities were of three types:

First, the motives of the so-called Zionist nature, i.e. meaning this is repatriation

*– They went to Israel, their motherland*

Second, those could be confessional motives,

*– They left for religious reasons. Because this is the Holy Land, everyone tries to be closer to the sacred place. (Derbent, Muslims)*

Third, those could be the motives shared with other people, motives that have no national specifics.

- *They lived here and then moved to Israel. I guess after the factories were shut down. There were so many factories here – and all of them have shut down.*
- *But not only the Jews. Almost all Russians have left. Half of the people here were Russians. Because all of the factories have shut down, there's no place to work, nowhere to teach children...* (Derbent, Muslims)

The Jews themselves admit that some of the motives for leaving for Israel had nothing to do with Zionism.

- *Well, maybe not for Jewish motives, simply bearing Israel in mind as their last chance if the country becomes totalitarian.* (Kazan, Jews)
- *Well, Israel is Israel. Here we were the Jews, there we are the Russians.* (laughing) (Kalinigrad, Jews)



## CONCLUSION

The research has validated earlier findings and general conclusions of the quantitative research.

The contemporary Russian Jewry believes that at this point, there is no antisemitism as a problem for their life in Russia.

It does not mean, they believe, that antisemitism in Russia does not exist. It is present in its weak forms, in "dormant" and latent forms. (We define this as absence of active antisemitism while passive antisemitism exists).

Respondents in the Jewish environment have voiced an opinion that antisemitism exists in a suppressed form because top government officials demonstratively pursue the policy of friendly attitudes towards the Jews and Israel. But they believe that if a return to antisemitism occurs at the government level, it will immediately give rise to its emergence locally (passive will become active).

Representatives of Muslims, Orthodox Christians and non-religious population in surveyed cities have demonstrated rather insignificant interest toward the "Jewish question". All the more so, antisemitism is not an "issue" for them. One of the reasons mentioned was a decrease in the number of the Jews in Russia or (as some believed) their complete disappearance from those cities. Full assimilation of the Jews, loss of their external differences from the Russians were additionally mentioned. (However, the Jews continue to preserve their inner nature). The main (normative) reaction was to declare one's neutral or positive attitude toward the Jews.

A negative assessment of certain traits of the Jews and opinions that the Jews are power-seeking, etc. continue to exist in this environment, but at this time, they are not thrown at the Jews either in real terms or symbolically.

Therefore, passive antisemitism exists, whereas no active antisemitism is observed.

## APPENDIX 1

### EXTENT AND COVERAGE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (TWO WAVES)

#### (first wave, 2015)

- RUSSIAN AND MIXED URBAN ENVIRONMENT
  - core city population – Moscow (2 fg), Khabarovsk, Kazan
- MUSLIM URBAN ENVIRONMENT
  - Muslims having a weak identity – Makhachkala
  - Muslims having a strong identity (“traditional Islam”) – Makhachkala, Kazan
- JEWISH URBAN ENVIRONMENT
  - “common” Jews – Birobidzhan
  - “eminent” Jews – Birobidzhan
  - “young” Jews – Moscow
  - “elderly Jews” (liberal intelligentsia) – Moscow

Moreover, expert interviews were conducted in Khabarovsk, Birobidzhan, Kazan and Makhachkala.

#### (second wave, 2018)

- Religious Jews
- Non-religious Jews
- Religious Russians (Orthodox Christian)
- Non-religious Russians
- Religious Muslims (“practicing”)
- Non-religious Muslims (ethnic)

Group and expert interviews were conducted in Derbent with representatives of the Jewish community, and a focus group with representatives of the Muslim community

Two focus groups and an expert interview were conducted in Tomsk with representatives of the Jewish community, and a focus group with representatives of the Orthodox Christian community

A focus group was conducted with representatives of the Jewish community, and a focus group with representatives of the Muslim community was held in Kazan.

Two focus groups were held in Kaliningrad: with elderly non-religious Jews and non-religious Russians

## APPENDIX 2

### SPECIFICS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS (brief summary)

Methodologically, a quantitative research represents a series of personal interviews conducted as per standard questionnaires whereas a qualitative research involves a series of focused group interviews, or focus groups, conducted as per questionnaires which are different depending on the group's participants. Furthermore, the focus group technique implies a free discussion of proposed questions. Focus groups represented group discussion sessions with 8 participants. A group discussion is guided (according to the scenario) by a moderator.

Just like the mass poll, the focus group method implies identification of the contents of the public consciousness i.e. the set of values, norms, concepts, etc. that control the behavior of a given community as a whole. (In this case, such a community was the Jewry in Russian cities and in the qualitative research –other categories of the urban population as well). Individual opinions are not limited to the collective, and the collective is not limited to the sum of individuals but it is not possible to find out an opinion other than from individuals. Therefore, both in mass polls and in the focus group process, special measures (different in technique but common in their goals) must be taken in order to establish the common public opinion based on individual responses. The picture of public opinion or opinions of different strata of urban population obtained through the qualitative research described herein is different from the picture obtained through a mass survey with detalization and nuancing of specific topics, specifying how different parts of the Russian Jewry and different strata of urban population perceive the Jews and antisemitism.

## APPENDIX 3

### BRIEF RESULTS BY FOCUS GROUPS IN FOUR CITIES AMONG THE JEWS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER GROUPS

#### **Brief conclusions by focus groups and interviews among the Jews in four cities**

1. Rank-and-file city residents, Jews, are feeling quite well in all polled cities. They do not feel any threat to their safety and peace on the part of the ethnic majority, other minorities or the authorities. They say that there is no antisemitism in their cities and in Russia in general.
2. Adults and elderly people everywhere compare their current situation to the Soviet times and 1990s and find that the situation of the Jews has greatly improved. However, there are fewer Jews now. In the opinion of many, this is one of the reasons or even the major reason why there are no anti-Jewish manifestations.
3. They note expressions of xenophobia but only vis-a-vis “newcomers” (Uzbeks, Tajiks, earlier – natives of the North Caucasus). But the Jews in all of the polled cities have the status of the “locals”, in Derbent they even claim to be called an “indigenous” ethnic group (along with the Azeri and the Russians).
4. However, the Jewish mass consciousness keeps the memories that other nations, in particular, the “titular” ethnic group, still preserve a set of trite antisemitic clichés. But since they are not currently used as insults against the Jews, they take on the form of a joke that the Jews are ready to repeat.
5. Those who hold any positions or posts in Jewish communities report soft but symbolically significant discrimination of various sorts from local authorities against Jewish organizations and institutions. According to them, the authorities are less courteous with official representatives of the Jews/religious Jews than with representatives of the Orthodox and Muslim confessions. The contact between government authorities and Jewish communities and their leadership is primarily maintained by correspondence.
6. Rank-and-file community members do not notice this, they think that local authorities treat the Jews “with respect”, send their greetings for Jewish holidays. They think federal authorities (the President) pursue the policy of tolerance toward the Jews.
7. Experts and many rank-and-file respondents link the absence of domestic antisemitism to the abolishment of the state-supported antisemitism.

#### **By focus groups among Muslims in Derbent and Kazan**

1. At the level of the day-to-day culture and “casual conversations”, traditional clichés vis-a-vis the Jews, both positive (“intelligent”) and negative (“greedy”, etc.), are preserved.
2. No accusations of ritual killings have been found.
3. Doctrinal grounds in Islam for negative attitudes toward the Jews are denied.
4. The Jews are considered to be “locals” but are not seen as “patriots”.

### **By focus groups among Orthodox Christians in Tomsk**

1. They deny doctrinal grounds for anti-Jewish sentiment. They recognize that the “Jews crucified Jesus”, but this is not a reason for begrudging this to modern Jews living here.
2. It is always emphasized that Tomsk Jews are few and assimilated. They also claim that they are “almost non-existent” and also that they are “many” in certain walks of life – medicine, science, etc.
3. They recognize some of the Jews’ accomplishments and abilities (in the areas of culture, education)
4. Clichés vis-a-vis the Jews, including negative ones, still persist in the day-to-day culture.

### **By focus groups among non-religious Russians in Kaliningrad**

1. They also deny any anti-Jewish points in the Orthodox Christian doctrine.
2. To the question as to who crucified Jesus, they respond “the Romans”.
3. They believe that very few Jews are left or that there are none and therefore, they note with some surprise that a big synagogue is being built downtown.

## APPENDIX 4

### SEMANTIC ATTRIBUTION TEST RESULTS (SEMAT)

Exercises (tests) among other things were conducted during group discussions (as part of projective techniques). The Semantic Attribution Test (SEMAT) was designed by the Levada Center to identify public consciousness attitudes in various categories of focus group respondents. It is a modification of Osgood C.'s semantic differential<sup>6</sup> and also utilizes predicate-antonyms rows (high-low, strong-weak, etc.). The procedure was that respondents would attribute predicates on cards distributed to them as definitions to various ethnicities but they would do that secretly from each other. Then resulting sets of definitions were discussed by participants. Just like the focus group method in general, this projective technique allows to obtain the effect of collective consciousness through respondents' individual actions, which represents a model of public consciousness (or public opinion) in a particular approximation for a given target audience.

As a result, we can compare cliché images of various ethno-confessional groups. The test is designed to minimize the external social control and use respondents' spontaneous reactions. Through this we obtain the most common images of contacting ethnic groups in each other's eyes and their common self-images in their authentic form.

The overall picture of stereotypes obtained through the testing technique is as follows. The picture is mostly made up of what qualities "Russians" and "Jews" as nominal ethno-cultural communities attribute to themselves and to others. Due to the structure of the sample data, we have collected the largest number of tests for these communities. Additional features follow from the data on what qualities are attributed by Russians, Jews, Tatars, Avars to various other minorities (Uzbeks, Poles, Chuvash, etc.), for which less representative data is available.

All surveyed communities are similar in that they attribute about twice as many positive qualities to themselves as negative ones. But it is significant for characterizing their attitude toward another ethnicity that the Jews attribute positive features to Russians several times more frequently than negative ones while Russians do just the opposite. As more positive than negative traits are attributed by Tatars in Kazan to both Russians and "their own" Tatars (and the other way around for the Jews and other minorities), one may conclude that this reflects the position of the Russians as the dominant ethnicity as recognized by other communities, in particular, the Jews. The dominant ethnicity affirms its position by saying mostly good things about itself and mostly bad things about minorities. Naturally, minorities say mostly good things about themselves and also about the Russian majority while more frequently bad things than good about the other minorities, just like the Russians.

<sup>6</sup> Osgood C. E., Suci G., and P. Tannenbaum, *The Measurement of Meaning*. University of Illinois Press, 1957. ISBN 0-252-74539-6.

Tests allow to identify the qualities that we will call constitutive for the ethnic stereotype (we mark them\*), other predicates supplement the image. First, let us consider what positive qualities are seen in the Jews by their neighbors. It appears especially important to note the quality "smart"\*. It belongs to the category of constitutive both in the Jews' self-image and in common concepts about the Jews in the Russians, Tatars and Avars. We also note that none of these communities attribute the "smart" quality to themselves. Again, the Jews regard themselves almost primarily as "smart". It appears that being "smart" is not just a trait of the Jews, not only their recognized advantage but also a function of the Jews among other ethno-cultural groups.

It is clear that there is a very fine line separating praise from envy and condemnation. Therefore, another test result is not surprising: attributing this chosenness of sorts to the Jews, neighboring nations call the Jews "arrogant", and the Jews themselves note this trait in themselves. (In other words, this is the concern to maintain their status distance among "the others"). It is more difficult to explain why the Jews are seen by both their neighbours and the Jews themselves as "power-seeking". The psychological meaning of the word is hardly referred to here. Rather, it reflects a common concept that the Jews while being few in the Russian (and even worldwide) society are relatively numerous in ruling circles. This was repeatedly mentioned by representatives of other nations in focus groups. In their turn, the Jews note the same fact as a quality/evidence of the absence of state-supported antisemitism in contemporary Russia.

Neighbors say about the Jews and the Jews say about themselves that they are "kind". This word may mean their willingness to build good neighborly relations with others in their daily urban life. (This was noted by respondents. No one called the Jews "bad neighbors" as opposed to those who arrived from Asia and the Caucasus). Another meaning is that they are kind in their relations with loved ones. Focus groups also noted kindness to children and loved ones in the Jewish men and women.

As stated above, there are few positive traits in the image of the Jews created by Russian respondents, representatives of the majority. ("Industriousness" was also noted along with "being smart" and "kindness"). It is curious that representatives of the nations who are, just like the Jews, a minority were willing to ascribe to the Jews, apart from "being smart", the quality of "rationality", which the Jews clearly value in themselves, and "piety toward the elders". This attribute makes peoples with a strong orientation toward traditional values (Avars, for example) "related" to the Jews who also ascribe this trait to themselves as an important one.

The image of the Russians existing in the consciousness of the Jews is also of interest. It is of interest to us as evidence of the Jews' stance toward the dominant ethnicity. The ratio of positive and negative traits ascribed by the Jews to the Russians is 4:1. It is essential that among a dozen of positive traits practically all have been "guessed" right in the sense that the Russians attribute them to themselves. The discrepancy is as follows: the Jews attribute to the Russians the following definitions: hospitable, peaceful, industrious, advanced while the Russians themselves do not find such traits in themselves in



this research. But if we take materials from a similar test conducted by us among the Russian population of the South Urals, all of these traits are present in the self-characterization of the Russians. It should be specifically noted that the few negative traits attributed by the Russian to the Jews are recognized by the Russians as such in their own self-characterizations.

The following fact helps evaluate the limits of assimilation of the Jews into the Russian ethnicity. Among the attributes ascribed by the Jews to the Russians, the Jews do not attribute to themselves the most important and most frequently mentioned one – "open". And conversely, they do not attribute to the Russians the traits noted in their self-image: "civilized", "smart", "well-bred".

In other words, the Jews have quite a clear understanding about the people with whom they have "lived together for 200 years", demonstrating their positive attitude toward such a people, understanding of its national specifics valued by them as well. The Jews note many of the traits characteristic of the Russians in themselves (or the other way around, if you will). However, they maintain an understanding of their differences from the Russians along several lines. The Russians themselves and the Jews as well primarily value in the Russians their "inborn" qualities and being "warm-hearted". In their own ethnicity, the Jews value as inborn qualities their intelligence followed by cultural rather than inborn qualities. (The "civilized" attribute points to this in the first place).

Conclusions. The semantic attribution test has shown the following.

The Jews as a special ethno-cultural community in Russia experience friendly and sympathetic but partly jealous attitudes from the Muslim minority and condescendingly critical attitudes from the Russian majority. However, the Jews have a strong mindset to recognize the leading role of the Russian majority, they accept some of its social and anthropological features but they preserve an awareness of their specialness and identity. No serious discrimination of the Jews is observed, but no full assimilation is observed, either.



**Russian  
Jewish  
Congress**

**WE WOULD BE HAPPY  
TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS:**

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