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Structure of feeling and radical identity among working-class Jewish youth during the 1905 revolution

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Structure of feeling and radical identity among working-class Jewish youth during the 1905 revolution

by

Inna Shtakser, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

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For my late parents, Bella and Vladimir Shtakser

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The dates that I use in this dissertation are the ones used in the documents. This is important because many of the documents refer to the Julian calendar—abandoned by the Bolsheviks in 1918—rather than the Gregorian calendar used in the rest of Europe. Before 1900, a Julian-calendar date was twelve days before its corresponding Gregorian-calendar date. Beginning in 1900, a Julian date was thirteen days before its corresponding Gregorian date.

I use the Russian names of cities and villages because most of my documents are in Russian. Using several names for each place would make the text unreadable, and as all the nationalities in question are currently politically independent, I feel that the previously prevalent fears of Russian linguistic imperialism are no longer justified.

All of the translations in this work are mine. My transliterations drop the Library of Congress system's soft and hard signs to better meet the contemporary reader's expectations.

Structure of feeling and radical identity among working-class Jewish youth during the 1905 revolution

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This dissertation "'Structure of Feeling' and Radical Identity among Working-Class Jewish Youth during the 1905 Revolution" examines the emotional aspects of revolutionary experience during a critical turning point in both Russian and Jewish history. Most studies of radicalization construe the process as an intellectual or analytical one. I argue that radicalization involved an emotional transformation, which enabled many young revolutionaries to develop a new 'structure of feeling', defined by Raymond Williams as an intangible awareness that allows us to recognize someone belonging to our cultural group, as opposed to a well-versed stranger. The key elements of this new structure of feeling were an activist attitude towards reality and a prioritization of feelings demanding action over others. Uncovering the links between feeling, idea, and activism holds a special significance in the context of modern Jewish history. When pogroms swept through Jewish communities during 1905-6, young Jews who had fled years earlier, often after bitter conflicts with their families and a difficult rejection of traditions, returned to protect their communities. Never expecting to return or be accepted back, they arrived with new identities forged in radical study circles and revolutionary experience as activist, self-assertive Jews. The self-assertion that led them away earlier proved them more effective leaders than traditional Jewish communal authorities. Their intellectual and emotional experiences in self-education, secularization, and political

activism meant creating a new social status within the Jewish community legitimating a new Jewish identity as working-class Jewish revolutionary.

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Introduction

This work focuses on the Jewish working-class revolutionary youth who rebelled against both class- and ethnicity-based discrimination during the 1905 revolution. When pogroms swept through Pale of Settlement towns and shtetls in 1905-6, starting immediately after the Manifesto was published, young Jews who had earlier left the Jewish community, often after bitter conflicts with their families, returned to protect their homes. They returned with new identities, forged in radical study circles and revolutionary experience, as activist, self-assertive Jews. This dissertation seeks to explain their journey.

The 1905 Revolution was the first mass upheaval against the regime in which people from multiple classes and ethnic groups participated. Different population groups joined together to express their specific grievances against the political establishment. Liberals demanded civil rights and parliamentary representation, non-Russian national organizations demanded equality for their languages and cultures, peasants demanded land and the workers demanded better working conditions and a right for representation both by labor unions and by their representatives in parliament. The tsar, frightened and confused by the unexpected popular outburst, agreed in his October 1905 Manifesto to parliamentary representation and a wide variety of civil rights including partial legalization of labor unions. But then, after satisfying the more moderate parts of the revolutionary movement, he began an onslaught against the revolutionaries who were not

satisfied with the Manifesto. Since most of the army proved willing to obey the government, the revolution was defeated. From the bloody repression of the workers' uprising in Moscow in December 1905 to the June the 3rd 1907 dismantling of the allegedly too radical parliament (duma) by the tsar, so the 1905 revolution was gradually defeated. But it provided the empire's population with some political experience and an enhanced sense of power and dignity.

Although the 1905 revolution was a turning point in the lives of many workers,[1] radically changing their views of themselves and of their environment, I do not focus on the external events of this revolution or even on revolutionary politics as such. My work deal with the emotional aspect of the revolutionary experience. I treat emotions as constructed and learned reactions such as moral outrage, joy, and pride in asserting a newly emerging personal and communal dignity. While emotions have both biological and social aspects, many emotions as well as the legitimate expressions of emotion are socially constructed in each society. I discuss emotions as socially constructed within the newly evolved working-class revolutionary milieu. These emotions (for example, anger at an employer's exploitation rather than at hurting one's foot) and their expressions are directly relevant for research of social movements.

As Randall Collins argues we have to examine the emotional rewards a social movement offers to understand its popular success or failure.[2] In many cases participation in a movement provides people with enhanced emotional support and with enhanced prestige within their community. Another important contribution of the study of emotional change within social movements is a better understanding of how such change

affected the emotional regime prevalent in the movement, that is how tolerant the movement was towards expression of 'incorrect' emotions. The emotional changes involve changes in the way people interact and perceive their interactions. In social movements these changes often involve different moral reactions to the prevalent conditions and people gaining cultural capital through their highly emotional reactions of moral outrage. In this work emotional changes included the evolution of personal and collective dignity. While most studies of radicalization among Jews in Late Imperial Russia explain the process as an intellectual or analytical response to economic and social changes, the personal documents used in my study– letters and autobiographical statements – show that to a large extent, radicalization and the particular revolutionary identity adopted by the young Jewish radicals of the Pale were based on an emotional transformation just as important as the intellectual one. This work is based on a large collection of autobiographies from the 1920s and contemporary letters from the political police's files. These letters provided answers to precisely the question I ask: what were the cultural, intellectual, social, and emotional meanings of radicalism for these young people? These documents demonstrate the importance of ethnicity in shaping radicalism in this group. It was different for Jews who resided outside of the Pale and who necessarily had much more social interaction with their non-Jewish peers (though only about 5 percent of the Jews in the empire resided outside the Pale). As for my particular interest in the young, I believe that, at least for a while, a youth culture developed in the Pale of Settlement, with its own particular emotional attitudes, styles of behavior, ideas,

and social frameworks. This culture, more than just revolutionary ideas,[3] was a key factor in the radicalism so widespread in this milieu.

This study investigates how the revolutionary environment was instrumental in introducing an emotional change or, in other words, changing what William Reddy calls an emotional regime and Raymond Williams calls the "structure of feeling" defined by Williams as "this almost intangible something that allows us to recognize someone belonging to our cultural group, as opposed to a well-versed stranger."[4] I researched the new ways in which people interpreted their emotions as well as the nature of the new emotional mutual affinity that characterized the working-class revolutionary youth. The change from the old to the new structure of feeling had a tremendous significance for revolutionary politics as well as for the social life within the country, since people began to interpret their emotions in a way that encouraged self-assertion and activism. William Reddy claims that a change in the way people interpret and make use of their emotions comes as a result of a contradiction between old attitudes toward emotions and changing life conditions.[5] These changes differentiated young working-class revolutionaries from their older, more affluent, or nonrevolutionary counterparts. I investigate who was or was not included in their mutual emotional kinship group in order to understand the experience of the working-class Jewish youth during the revolution, and the change in structure of feeling that this experience entailed. This understanding will shed light on the political and personal decisions of my subjects. Even more importantly, it will shed light on what it meant to be a working-class Jew long after the events I describe in this work.

In *Russia's Revolutionary Experience, 1905-1917*, Leopold Haimson argues that the Bolsheviks' enhanced emotional appeal explains their popularity over the Mensheviks during 1917 among the young urban workers. He analyzes the emotional paradox present in the ambition to be recognized as part of society and the recognition that this is only possible through self-exclusion from the society and emphasis on difference and identity as a worker. This is a similar approach to what I use in this work, though unlike Haimson I am interested in the revolutionary ideologies as instrumental in creating emotional change rather than the opposite. I see the emotional change as even more influential in the long run than the political one. The traces of emotional changes remain and influence people long after they are considered politically irrelevant.[6]

I claim that a change in the structure of feeling of the young revolutionaries was an important component in their success in changing their social status. The economic and social instability of contemporary Jewish life created emotional pressure for personal change among many Jews, but primarily among these who were both young and poor. They searched for an ideological and social framework that could provide them with emotional support, which socialism and anarchism provided. Radical ideologies provided the poor not only with intellectual and political support for their rebellious emotions, but also with an enhanced social status and peer support. These frameworks entailed an emotional change, since both frames of reference saw their young supporters as fighters in a battle for a better future rather than simply young people passively accepting their fate at the bottom of the Jewish community's social ladder. The radicalized youth enhanced their self-image as active people: self-respecting, angry, and protective of

others. Their newly adopted militant structure of feeling was highly proactive. They also considered themselves educated and modern, since the revolutionary theories they adopted encouraged study. The traditional Jewish community, confused and constantly attacked by both the state and the political right, allowed them to create a new and more respectable notion of the working-class Jew's place within the community.

As Yoav Peled argues, the specific legal impediments that Jews suffered in late-imperial Russia adversely affected their experience of industrialization, leaving them economically and socially hopeless.[7] In addition, the Jewish Enlightenment and its acceptance of contemporary non-Jewish European cultures led more and more people to believe they were entitled to equal rights due to their acculturation. But they found themselves pushed back by the Russian government into what they saw as the hopelessly obsolete existence of the Jewish community. John Klier depicts this process and its effect on the secularly educated Jewish elite as a cultural misunderstanding. He suggests that educated Jews accepted the Russian government's stance that legal discrimination against Jews derived from the ways Jews differed culturally from the majority of the population. They did not realize that this stance reflected a wish of the government and social elites to emphasize their cultural superiority rather than a willingness to give civil rights to the acculturated Jews. In fact, anti-Jewish sentiments had nothing to do with real-life Jewish differences, as the enlightened Jews who adopted the lifestyle of the Russian intelligentsia soon found out. According to Klier, this misunderstanding ended with a major disappointment for secularly educated Jews, who began to consider the government as their enemy. But they at the same time did not give up their newly

acquired values. In fact, they made use of those very same values to struggle against the government and its educated Russian supporters.[8]

In the present work I ask similar questions about a different kind of Jewish enlightenment – the one of the working class. During the 1905 revolution there was a political upheaval in Jewish society as a whole during which Jews demanded an end to anti-Semitic discrimination. But it was the working-class youth, affected by both anti-Jewish discrimination and economic difficulties, who organized en masse around socialist or anarchist ideas. It was the working-class youth who put up a fight against inequality, whether based on ethnicity or on class. As with the enlightened Jews described by Klier, the working-class youth based their ideas on an openness to the world and on a secular education, ideas already familiar inside the Jewish community. They also, in their own way, first left the Jewish community and subsequently returned to it, enraged by anti-Semitism and empowered by their newly acquired socialist (and, on occasion, nationalist) ideas. This work deals with the ways the working-class, uneducated young Jews of the Pale used philosophies of social equality and cultural openness in order to change themselves and thus to change their status both inside and outside the Jewish community.

The reason I choose to concentrate on working-class Jews is that the change in their identity during the mass politicization of the 1905 revolution had an important effect not only on the history of the Russian empire in general, but also on the social structure of the Jewish community and on the notion of what being Jewish meant. Jews who protested during the revolution did something revolutionary within the Jewish

community. Their rebellion was not simply against their social and economic status as workers, but also against their inferior status as Jews within the Russian empire. It was also a rebellion against their low status within the Jewish community. Since this rebellion took place within a close-knit Jewish community accustomed to demanding a conformity of attitudes and behaviors from its members, it was an extremely difficult emotional experience that pushed people to adopt extremely radical behavior and a radically different identity.

Jews in Russia did not suffer from any exceptional level of discrimination until the reign of Alexander III.[9] Jews came to Russia, or more precisely, Russia came to them, with the partitions of Poland during the reign of Catherine the Great. Catherine assigned them the status of *meshchane* (townspeople), considering their prevalence in cities and in city-based occupations. Catherine's court legislated that Jews had to reside in their previous areas of residence. None of this was considered especially discriminatory at the time. Being attached to a certain estate and a certain place was a normal situation for most of the population in Russia. Socially mobile Jews could however move into the merchant estate and, if their merchant category (and therefore their taxes) were high enough, could expect flexibility in residency permits. This issue of wealth as the ticket to legal rights applied to the entire Russian non-noble, free population in Russia.

As with other non-Orthodox peoples in the multinational Russian empire, there were occasional attempts to lure or force some Jews to convert. These efforts culminated in an attempt under Nicholas I to conscript Jews as children, pressuring them into conforming to general modes of behavior, and eventually into converting by allowing

them no further contact with the Jewish community. Still, as Petrovsky-Shtern has pointed out, this practice was not applied only to Jews,[10] and this effort of cultural unification eventually came to an end without gaining its objectives. In later periods, Jewish soldiers had the right to celebrate Jewish holidays, if possible with the Jewish community at their place of service. The memoirs of soldiers seem to indicate that the officers did not usually create difficulties in that respect. Of course, observing regulations of the Jewish religion, especially dietary and Sabbath rituals, was impossible during army service, but there was no conscious attempt to isolate the young Jews from others of their faith. In other words, attempts to make Jews convert did occur, but they were as sporadic and ineffectual as similar attempts with other religious groups.

In fact, it appears that the government wanted Jews to stay as they were. We can see this from the abrupt cancellation of an initially popular attempt by Nicholas I to turn some Jews into peasants and settle them first in Siberia and then in Ukraine. Likewise, the regime stopped free Jewish access to institutions of secular education when this attempt at cultural unification also became too popular among Jews. The Russian government was reluctant to deal with problems arising from the cultural peculiarities of its non-Russian subjects including Jews. It would not force them to become culturally Russian. The empire's policy was, as Theodore Weeks and others point out, conservative. It had stability, rather than cultural unification, as its main goal.[11]

During the rule of Alexander II, even the existing regulations against Jews were ignored. It seemed that the general liberalization of Russian society would include Jews, but his son Alexander III decided on a more hard-line stance. This stemmed from the

notion prevalent among the Russian elite that Jews were to blame for exploiting and impoverishing the peasantry and thus needed to be contained. In fact, Jews had an important role in the economic contacts between the countryside and the city, and were often blamed for the shortcomings of the local nobility, who indeed exploited the peasantry and used Jews as go-betweens. These Jews were often as poor and as exploited as the peasants. Alexander III nonetheless required the isolation of Jews from the non-Jewish population, enforcing the observance of the Pale of Settlement regulations and forbidding Jews to reside in the countryside, even within the limits of the Pale. In addition, the government established a quota on the number of Jewish students in educational institutions and, with rare exceptions, forbade employment of Jews in state service. All of these policies gravely affected the ability of Jews to compete economically with their neighbors, unfavorably changing Jewish life in the Russian empire. At this point Jews were worse off legally than any other ethnic or religious group in the Empire.

Legal discrimination was not the only factor affecting the economic status of Jews in the Russian Empire during the second half of the nineteenth century. Other factors included a demographic explosion among the Jewish population; industrialization; and the liberation of the serfs, which immediately created mass competition for Jewish artisans. While initially the size of the Pale did not limit Jews' economic activities, during the nineteenth century the Jewish population rapidly increased. While in 1820 there were 1,600,000 Jews in Russia, in 1880 there were about four million.[12] Many Jews were forced to move from countryside to the cities of the Pale and enlarge their already overcrowded population, though this regulation was never totally implemented, and some

Jews remained in the countryside. The railroads, however, meant that the Jewish traditional occupation as go-betweens between peasants and the cities became obsolete since peasants could easily and swiftly sell their produce in cities by themselves, and the Jews had to move in any case. Jewish families tended to have many children, hence a large percentage of Jews were young people who could not find employment in the largely agricultural areas of the Pale. By the late nineteenth century Jews became an almost exclusively urban population, making up much of the urban population in the Pale.

The state did all it could to prevent Jews from taking advantage of the new opportunities for social advancement that came with industrialization. The opportunity for Jewish youth to improve their social status through education was curtailed by a quota of no more than 3 to 5 percent in all state-funded educational institutions outside of the Pale, and 10 percent within the Pale. The poor among them were justifiably certain that the richer Jews would bribe local officials to get their children into schools as part of the quota. Their only way to get an education was to either exploit a rare opening in an official school, wherever in the Pale it might be, or be accepted into a private commercial school where they had to pay tuition. An additional route was to study without the aid of textbooks and try to pass the exams of the state gymnasium without any professional assistance. These options often resulted in a young student residing independently in a strange city with very little financial support, which weakened the contacts of these young people with their families and communities. On the other hand, relationships

among the young, who could count on only their peers for emotional, social, and often financial support, became stronger.

Youth who were not inclined to study, or without the means to gain an education, often learned a craft. Numerous autobiographies show that the local Jewish communities made a real effort to ensure that every poor child would study not only Judaism, but also some craft to fall back on, even if the financing of this undertaking fell entirely on the community. Still, considering that many families had five or six children, in cases of the illness or death of one of the parents these children found themselves in very difficult circumstances. In these cases, since the community and the relatives could not financially sustain the support of all the children, they did all they could to arrange for an apprenticeship for a child, as early as possible, without necessarily considering the working conditions.

Apprenticeship working conditions, for the most part, were abominable. Even though some employers treated their apprentices decently and actually taught them a craft, many others abused them and used them as unpaid domestic help, without any attempt to teach them a skill.[13] The older workers habitually took part in the abuse. The children often ran away, but were forced to enter another apprenticeship that was often similar to the one they had left. Sadly, it seems that abuse of children by adults was habitual and prevalent in Jewish society (no less so than in the rest of contemporary Europe), both in the workplace and in the Jewish schools, which were often recalled with horror. Jewish society was much more violent than commonly believed, but because the violence was directed almost exclusively toward other Jews it was rarely observed

outside the Jewish community.[14] Almost all of the apprentices who later wrote autobiographies remembered their apprenticeship years with dread.

While they could expect some improvement with the end of their apprenticeship, these Jews could not ignore the general economic deterioration of the Jewish artisans in the Pale. They knew that they would not have the same opportunities as previous generations, and had no hope for improvement under the current political and economic regime. Many of these young people, including those whose families had known better times, were relegated to the status of artisans, and increasingly as employees rather than as independent producers. While previously a large number of Jews made a living through trade, and artisans were looked down on as the least successful members of the community, these developments forced the occupational structure of the Jewish community to change. The owners of the large factories preferred to employ newcomers from the villages, forcing the Jewish laborers to work in the small workshops, which fought a hopeless battle against the factories.

These economic conditions put a great deal of pressure on the Jewish youth. Small workshops could offer only the worst of working conditions, and the young Jewish artisans felt they had no future. They could either decide to emigrate, as many did, or struggle against the forces standing against them. Since the workers were also highly mobile in their search for better working conditions, and often did not reside with their families, a community of peers was an important source of social support. When they opted to protest their conditions, it was together with their peers, the other young, poor Jews of the Pale. In 1905 it seemed that struggle was feasible, since many others in

Russia felt the same as the young Jewish workers about exploitation and the lack of equality. This hope that the fight against the regime was winnable ended in disappointment, but in the meantime many young Jews acquired political experience, as well as some general and political education.

While class differentiation among Jews became more solidified in the early twentieth century and the options for social and economic mobility lessened, artisans still tried to open small shops and work independently, and women often engaged in trade. Often the same person moved back and forth between being employed in a small workshop and being an owner of one. Also, many small workshop owners worked for one store only, and therefore there was no real difference between them and the workers.

My research suggests that the workshop owners were seen as adversaries by their employees, although the owners did not always view themselves in this way. In any case, when their economic situation changed, they themselves could easily become workers again. The prevalent definition of class at this time, and not just among Jews, involved accepting that the same person sometimes *did* and sometimes *did not* belong to the working class. This flexibility was especially pronounced among Jews due to their different economic options. Arthur Liebman claims that this instability of class identity caused instability in the political commitment of Jewish working-class revolutionaries. I will argue that, on the contrary, the initial inclusiveness of the concept of "working class," when some white-collar employees, like shop assistants or pharmacists, as well as some self-employed artisans were considered working class, contributed to the positive attitude many Jews had toward socialism or anarchism. I will also claim that a later

contemporary effort to stabilize the notion of what a working-class person and therefore an "ideal" revolutionary should be like, under conditions of occupational fluidity, adversely affected the loyalty of the Jewish population to revolutionary ideas in the long run.

Oleg Budnitsky notes that the Jewish revolutionaries, however dedicated, could not possibly affect the outcome of the Russian revolutions because of their concentration in the Pale. Only miniscule numbers of Jews lived in St Petersburg and Moscow, the places where the fates of the revolutions would ultimately be decided.[15] It seems sensible to assume that Jews, not unlike other oppressed nationalities of the empire, were just one group among many engaging in revolutionary activities, and not the most important one at that. Their story becomes much more important, however, if we consider it in the context of the history of Jews in Russia, as well as in the context of non-Russian nationalities of the empire. Jews may not have been very important to the 1905 revolution, but the 1905 revolution was very important to Jews, both as a group with specific problems and as one of the more maligned non-Russian nationalities of the empire.[16]

During the period of the first Russian revolution the Jewish population of the Pale was highly politicized. The better educated and more wealthy tended toward one of the liberal, Kadet-affiliated Jewish parties or the general Zionists. The poor, those I focus on, gravitated toward the Social Democratic groups, especially the Bund, or toward the newly established Socialist-Zionist organizations.[17] The Bund seems to have been particularly strong, while the Socialist-Zionists of all persuasions are important because

of their political challenge to the Bund in a period when pogroms made many Jews doubt their future in Russia. Accepting a socialist ideological framework included striving to achieve the status of a modern and cosmopolitan individual, and the young working-class Jews for the most part felt ready to become part of the international socialist community. The problem was that this internationalist self-image contradicted the need, inherent in their newly adopted activist structure of feeling, to be actively protective of others in their national identity group. The vast majority still lived within a Jewish community, which at the time was being violently attacked by pogromists. Even worse, many of those attackers were themselves working-class, which put the socialist allegiance of the young Jews into doubt. The reaction of many working-class young Jews was a combination of enhancing their emotional allegiance to the Jewish community and enhancing their emotional allegiance to the working class. Their allegiance to the Jewish community meant that to a certain extent they had to abandon the notion of becoming cosmopolitan, modern individuals and return in force to protect the Jewish community through participation in self-defense units. They did so as a new kind of person, as a result of their experiences with both socialism and the youth community – as Jewish working-class socialists. They retained their previous emotional affinities, but shared the notion that these affinities belonged to a new kind of Jewish, rather than generic, revolutionary identity, thus creating a cultural model for many young Jews in the years to come.

The uncompromisingly internationalist theories of socialism presented a problem however. Jewish working-class socialists dealt with this problem by enhancing their status as model revolutionaries – both politically active and working-class--by cutting off

emotionally all who did not belong to either category, even if they belonged to the same community or the same political organization. They would claim, much like the Russian revolutionary workers described by Mark Steinberg, or the French revolutionaries described by William Reddy, that those excluded were insincere in their emotional commitment to the revolutionary movement.[18] Reddy describes a process in the context of the French revolution that created a “strict emotional regime”[19]; similarly, this emotional distancing eventually resulted in the evaporation of the Jewish revolutionary movement, which was not emotionally open to any but “perfect” revolutionaries.

The Jewish youth wanted not only to be young revolutionaries, but *to be seen as* such. Some of this had to do with the distinct lifestyle of a militant. They were highly mobile, and in many cases preferred postponing marriage and living modestly. These traits, which eventually came to characterize the image of a militant, were necessary for illegal political work among the poor Jews of the Pale. Other lifestyle choices were detrimental to conspiratorial activity, but were important for their self-definition and for the social recognition of militants. The militants openly rejected religious norms, actively supported gender equality, treated the local middle class with contempt, organized trade unions and study circles, and openly propagated their ideas. For propaganda purposes they used the most convenient spaces in the Jewish community– the synagogue, wedding celebrations, the theater, and the birzha, a street where local artisans traditionally gathered to wait for prospective employers. All of these spaces were suitable since appearing there did not automatically designate a person as a militant and made arrest less likely. The birzhas in particular also attracted people who were curious but unwilling

to participate in openly illegal action. In fact, during the 1905 revolution, the birzhas became well known in many cities as places where members of a particular revolutionary party gathered regularly. Since the parties commonly assembled at the same time and very close to each other, people often intermingled. Thus the birzha was an excellent place to hear news, discuss political issues, or request help from comrades. It was also a good place to be introduced to new political ideas. For workers it provided a safe space where they felt comfortable discussing their problems. In that sense the birzha was a culmination of a revolutionary culture's struggle to win a communal space.

It was more dangerous, and therefore more of a commitment, to participate in revolutionary activities in spaces specifically designated for these purposes – apartments where study circles met, mass gatherings organized by revolutionaries in a designated (and usually isolated) place, and so forth. Taking part in strikes was dangerous as well. To protect themselves, workers often asked the revolutionaries to "force" them to leave work, providing an appropriate excuse for the police and the employer.

In any case, the revolutionary culture created spaces of its own within the community, both geographically and socially. The worker-revolutionaries wanted to designate for themselves a previously nonexistent social space as a different kind of worker within the community. They sought a dominant presence within the communal public space, as a unique type of individual who deserved respect and consideration. Their presence widened the cultural space for Jews as a whole. An uneducated, poor Jewish youth could, for the first time, choose the respected secular identity of a

revolutionary. Within this identity, unlike within any other Jewish identity, being poor and uneducated was not an impediment to respect.

The major difference between the young Jews I discuss and their non-Jewish counterparts was not their basic aspiration for social standing and human dignity. The distinguishing factor hinged on the fact that the Russian workers experienced oppression directly from the employer (and only by extension the state, through its support for the employer). For Jews, the situation was different. Since many of their economic and social difficulties derived from the discriminatory policies of the state rather than from being workers, their main enemy was a combination of the state and the employers — particularly the state. The employers of the vast majority of the Jewish workers, unlike the employers of the vast majority of Russian workers, were themselves poor Jewish workshop owners who in all likelihood faced the possibility of going bankrupt and becoming a worker again. There was no real cultural difference and a very small economic and social difference between the worker and the small-scale employer on the Jewish street. Therefore, the workers had to enhance this difference in order to organize through revolutionary rhetoric. Another issue that seems to differentiate the Jewish and the non-Jewish workers was the fact that Jews had to struggle against the Jewish communities' values to adopt a secular lifestyle. This struggle enhanced the importance of secular education, which was a key to a newly respectable status within the Jewish community, due to the traditional respect for education and to the struggles of the Jewish enlightenment adherents of previous generations. While all revolutionary workers took part in self-education circles, for non-Jewish workers this seems to have been a part of

their revolutionary experience, like adopting urban dress and behavior codes as an expression of self-respect, rather than the main focus of it. The Jewish revolutionaries, on the other hand, were focused on educational opportunities to a much larger extent. Due to the quota policy, lack of educational opportunities became for them a symbol of the oppression that they were fighting against, and acquiring education within revolutionary self-education circles became, more than anything else, a symbol of their newly respectable status within the Jewish community. Thus while all revolutionaries changed their behavior patterns in search of a new and respectable social status, the Russian revolutionaries imitated the notions of respectable behavior of the urban middle classes, while the Jewish revolutionaries, who did not experience a similar cultural and behavioral differentiation between the classes in their own society, adopted what was the key to respectability within their own community – education.

For young, working-class Jews, joining the revolutionaries had the same meaning that it had for the Russian workers discussed by Heather Hogan, Mark Steinberg, or Gerald Surh.[20] Like these workers, young Jews insisted on their dignity and treated the revolutionary theories as a political organizational tool for gaining human rights. Like these Gentile workers, they also came to define themselves as working-class according to the prevalent social-democratic discourse, even though in fact some of them, especially those working as independent artisans, would not necessarily be accepted as working-class by social-democratic intellectuals. As Reginald Zelnik has pointed out, being working-class had a cultural connotation for contemporary workers not necessarily similar to the Marxist theoretical notion of their place in relation to the means of

production.[21] Even the organization of their lives around study circles, strikes, protest meetings, demonstrations, membership in revolutionary organizations, and so on was fairly similar to the parallel experiences of non-Jews .

For the Jewish working-class revolutionaries, ethnicity-based and class-based solidarity were equally important, even if they would not admit it for ideological reasons. In fact, their youth and striving for modernity were also important bases for solidarity in their bitter struggle against the Jewish community for a right to adopt a more secular lifestyle. They remained both young workers and young Jews, both for political effectiveness and for the social and economic support that they found only within the Jewish community. But due to their generation-based solidarity, and their striving toward modernity expressed in new ideas and in the activist structure of feelings, they had to become different workers as well as different Jews. They had to create a new identity as working-class Jewish revolutionaries, an identity sufficient to deal with the new circumstances of economic hardship and external violence that the Jewish community now faced. They had to negotiate identity in such a way that their nonconformism would not make them pariahs, but instead create a new place within the Jewish community, a place with considerable social status. This status could be achieved because of the confusion of the traditional Jewish authorities and the Jewish community at large in the face of new circumstances. They also achieved it by portraying and positioning themselves as sufficiently close to the Jewish community, but also well versed and active in the new reality. In this way they seemed to provide a more feasible answer to the problems of Jews in the Russian Empire than anyone else, at least for a while. The

cultural and emotional change they went through when they became revolutionaries assisted them in creating a new social position within the Jewish community.

This change is important in understanding not only the revolutionaries themselves, but also the changes that took place in the community as a whole. The young revolutionaries created a new option -- that of being a secular Jew. As Mikhail Krutikov points out, the change they brought with them was fairly similar to the change that came with the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskala) movement[22]. While the Haskala offered a secular Jewish identity to the educated elite, the revolutionaries opened a similar option to the poor, uneducated Jewish masses.

Krutikov also points out that the cultural change that the working-class Jewish youth initiated was not just behavioral but also a change in the structure of feeling, which involved a "strong rejection of the old values in favor of the new collective identity and a new proactive attitude towards life."[23] This, of course, was true not only for the Jewish revolutionaries, but also for the contemporary revolutionaries as a whole. In this work I will assume, along with Craig Calhoon,[24] that this emotional change was always a shifting process, always inconsistent, and could never be reduced merely to the strategic modes of behavior of the time. I show how specific emotional difficulties were created for the young Jewish revolutionaries by their need for, and their need to reject, the Jewish community. I also present the emotional ambivalence created by their need to believe in popular revolution in the future, and by their having to fight in the present against the same working-class people they envisioned as future fellow-revolutionaries, when supposed class-allies attacked the Jewish community in pogroms.

The young Jews had hoped that their adherence to revolutionary ideas would assist them in creating solidarity with the non-Jewish poor in a struggle against *all* kinds of oppression in society. However, this worked only for a short time, during the peak of the revolution. The pogroms, in which the non-Jewish poor and the army collaborated, made many Jewish revolutionaries doubt the idea of proletarian solidarity, and required the revolutionary to explain why Jews were being murdered, raped, and robbed by the very people for whose rights the revolution was being waged. The Jewish youth thus had to find ways to remain revolutionaries, but also prioritize the problems of the Jewish community in their struggle. The first was a widespread self-defense movement against the pogroms. It was intended to save Jews, but also to revise the image of a Jewish community into one that could not be attacked with impunity. In the eyes of self-defense members, who primarily came from adherents of the revolutionary parties, people had to prove that they would defend their rights in order to deserve these rights. Hence the self-defense units, when they had to fight not against civilians but against regular army units, often operated under suicidal conditions.

After the revolution many of the young revolutionaries either emigrated or retreated into private life. Still, they did leave behind a new structure of feelings and a new self-image that reimagined what a Jew could be. This social attitude affected both revolutionary and nonrevolutionary Jews in Russia, as well as in the countries to which some of the revolutionaries emigrated. The sense of pride created by this activist image applied particularly to the poor, and opened another venue for Jewish nonreligious

identity. In that sense, the 1905 revolution was an important period in modern Jewish history.

The question of how people become revolutionaries is important, but it is perhaps even more important to examine people's experiences while they were in the process of becoming revolutionaries, and how this affected their personalities and self-image. For a period like the 1905 revolution, when a mass of people experienced personal change and personal change became a mass movement, this question is crucial for understanding both the change and its aftermath. In the context of a multinational empire, however, this cultural change cannot be identical for everyone. People of different ethnicities (or different genders or different positions in the labor market) experienced the revolution differently. Their different experiences affected each other.

Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Jews lived together in the same area, all with different degrees of involvement with both nationalism and labor radicalism. Most of the Russians and the Lithuanians were new to trade unionism and to radical politics. The Poles had the longest trade-union tradition in the empire and resented their national subjugation. The Ukrainians had just recently begun developing a modern national identity, while Jews were still in the process of developing a secular national identity of their own. Because of their proximity, these groups were dependent on one another during strikes and demonstrations.[25] On the other hand, the social separation between people of different nationalities (especially, though not exclusively, of Jews from non-Jewish workers) meant that each group had to develop some idea of what the other was like. These ideas influenced their perceptions of the revolutionary struggle.[26] It

is thus impossible to understand the development of workers' political consciousness without seeing it in a complex, multiethnic context.

Some research has been done, especially under the influence of works by Alan Wildman and Reginald Zelnik, on working-class revolutionaries and the changes in their identity as a result of their revolutionary involvement;[27] some of this deals with the effect of ethnicity on class identity. The works by Wynn, Friedgut, and Kuromiya on the Donbass and Weinberg on Odessa,[28] and works dealing with urban history such as the work of Hamm on Kiev, and Corrsin on Warsaw[29] all deal extensively with ethnic tension as a cause of political and social tension. However, the emotional aspects of the identity changes inspired by political militancy and their effect on politics have not been examined.

I, on the other hand, begin a discussion of the radicalization of non-Russian workers as an emotional phenomenon influenced by both class and ethnic discriminations. While my research concentrates on Jews of the Pale and the Kingdom of Poland, where about 95 percent of Jews of the empire resided, my intent is to initiate a discussion of the evolution of lower-class radicalization that could be relevant to other multiethnic contexts. This discussion takes an interest in how several mutually influencing emotional conceptions of revolutionary politics evolved in the same area. Since these conceptions reappeared throughout the area's subsequent history, this inquiry is important for understanding the future events of a tumultuous region.

An important part of my contribution to the scholarship on the working class in the Russian empire is an exploration of how the non-Russian poor created a revolutionary

identity amid ethnic tension. My interest here is in a mass phenomenon that influenced Jewish society as a whole. Because of this, individuals involved with the movement as nonprofessional revolutionaries were much more important to me than the relatively small political and intellectual leadership elite. As Bonnell, Steinberg, and many others have noted, the 1905 revolution was a transformative experience for many workers, not in terms of their life conditions but in terms of their self-image and their place in the world.[30] This work will explain how such a transformative experience took place for one critical and previously unexamined group of revolutionaries.

While there is a general recognition that the 1905 revolution was one of the most important events in Jewish history, the scholarship on the Jewish experience of 1905 is surprisingly slim. Though all the relevant works mention that the Jewish workers experienced an important identity and attitude change during the revolution and acquired a new pride, none of these works goes into the details of what constituted this change. Most of these works concentrated on intellectual development of Jewish revolutionary leadership and on the political history of Jewish revolutionary organizations. Jonathan Frankel and Nora Levin's studies of the Jewish labor and Zionist movements deal at length with the contemporary Jewish revolutionary leadership and organizations, and their reactions to the revolution of 1905.[31] Henry Tobias and, more recently, Jack Jacobs wrote specifically about the politics of the Bund.[32] Joshua Zimmerman recently published a political history of the relationship between the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), examining the politics of the Bund in newly comparative perspective.[33] Labor history works dealing with working-class Jews during the revolution concentrated on

questions of workers' organization. The excellent though somewhat dated social histories of the Jewish labor movement by N.A. Bukhbinder[34] provided a detailed description of workers' organization during the revolution. More recent labor history works of Robert Weinberg and Charters Wynn on the events of 1905, while not concentrating on Jews, offer much information on contemporary local Jewish working-class politics and on interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the revolutionary milieu of 1905.[35] While Erich Haberer's social history of Jewish revolutionaries deals with an earlier period and considerably more affluent activists its insights on the revolutionary milieu as the only comfortable political space for Jewish activists were valid for 1905 Jewish workers.[36] Ezra Mendelsohn's classic book on Jewish workers of the Pale, while dealing with an earlier period, provided an invaluable social background on Jewish workers' labor conditions and early political organization.[37] Yoav Peled's economic history of Pale of the Settlement Jews elucidated the economic crisis experienced by the contemporary Jewish community.[38] The analysis of contemporary anti-Jewish violence in a volume edited by John Klier and Shlomo Lambrosa as well as recent work on contemporary Jewish criminality by Ilya Gerasimov provide a necessary background to some of the events described in this work.[39]

While all of these works mentioned that Jewish workers experienced a change of identity during their politicization, none of them attempted to focus on and analyze this change. In fact the only work dealing with the change in structure of feeling experienced by the contemporary Jews is a study of Yiddish literature by Mikhail Krutikov[40]. While Krutikov's work is based on contemporary literary sources and is dealing with a change

in structure of feeling among middle-class contemporary Jewish youth, this work is based on previously largely untapped collections of texts produced by working-class Jewish revolutionaries. I am using these sources to analyze contemporary changes in identity and structure of feeling among young working-class Jews.

In order to understand how these changes occurred, I examined the personal documents of those contemporaries who became involved with the revolutionary movement precisely when doing so became attractive to the masses, rather than just to those who were especially zealous. These mutually corroborating documents, which are my primary source for this work, include about 800 private letters written around the time of the 1905 revolution, and 430 autobiographies composed between 1924 and 1934 and submitted as part of a membership application to Society of Ex-Political Prisoners and Exiles. Since many of my protagonists are anonymous I will not introduce them in the standard academic way and will provide only the scanty personal data in my possession. The absence of biographical information does not affect my argument because I am using these texts as representative of a broad body of evidence, rather than as a source of information about specific individuals.

While analyzing the texts, I studied what the writers tried to convey to their correspondents – the way they represented themselves and the way they portrayed the role of revolutionary politics in their lives. I did this textual analysis under the assumption that the authors approached their writing with a certain self-consciousness, that when writing about themselves they attempted to fit themselves into a certain cultural pattern or expectation. I assumed that one's personal story is constructed in

communication with others; rather than trying to see some authentic story behind the texts, I tried to see what in these texts could inform us about the intellectual, cultural, and emotional reality of these people as a group.

These two types of sources, letters and autobiographies, complemented each other well for my purposes. The private letters provided a contemporary perspective on the political events and their place in the lives of regular people. The letters were copied by the political police for their own needs and retained in their archives. They were apparently composed by those suspected of belonging to the revolutionary milieu. While some of the letters were sent to or by known political activists whose correspondence was specifically targeted for perlustration,[41] many others were written by regular people who may have been active for only a short while -- or even nonactivists who expressed political opinions. A considerable number of the letters retained by the secret police were by people with distinctly Jewish names. The letters provided both a wealth of information and a useful means of control since the autobiographies were affected by later developments and by the political expectations of early Soviet period.

The autobiographies complement the letters by providing coherent life stories, where people explained issues they would not feel the need to explain in a private letter. Close reading of these autobiographies provided me with an understanding of how people constituted their stories as revolutionaries. Comparison of contemporary letters and later autobiographies for tone and experiences allowed me to recognize the parts of the autobiographies that were an answer to the official expectations during the Soviet 1920s, and were therefore irrelevant to my questions concerning the revolutionary period of

1905-1907. Both types of sources were intended for communication – the autobiographies with society members, who apparently went through the same life experiences as the applicants; and the letters primarily with friends or siblings. This was useful for my purposes, since I was interested in the kind of collective culture that developed among the young, poor Jews of the Pale.

Since the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners provided its members and their families with health, employment, educational, and other benefits, many (including the least ideologically sophisticated) who were arrested during the upheaval of the first revolution, applied for membership and wrote the required autobiography.[42] There are, in fact, two kinds of autobiographies in the files of the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners: those submitted as part of a membership application and those presented orally in society meetings (in dialogue with other members of the society who were active in the same location, knew the same people, and so on.). The second type has long been open to researchers, while the personal files were opened only several years ago and until now could not be used as a primary source. Since these autobiographies were addressed to people with backgrounds similar to the applicant's, it seems fair to assume that the applicants tried to sound authentic by presenting the kind of persona that would "fit the bill" and be recognized as legitimate. Since I was more interested in what this persona would be than in the real autobiographical details of each individual applicant,[43] I found the autobiographies to be a very useful source of information. I found that social origin and educational level considerably influenced the tone of the autobiographies. While the poor and the uneducated tended to write longer, more detailed autobiographies in which

they discussed many seemingly irrelevant details of their daily life, feelings, and attitudes, the better educated tended to write a shorter, more standard autobiography. The reason may be that writers from a poorer social background felt more secure in the Soviet environment,[44] or simply that many of the barely educated simply did not know what was expected. Considering the level of grammar in many of these autobiographies, it seems reasonable to assume that they were not edited by a better-educated person before they were sent with the application. They therefore provided a good supplementary source to the letters.

This difference between the better educated and the uneducated, whose autobiographies were considerably more informative, pushed me to concentrate on the latter, rather than write of young revolutionary Jews of the Pale as a whole. Although there are works on middle-class Jewish politics,[45] as well as books concentrating on the Jewish educated revolutionary leadership,[46] there is very little scholarship focusing on the poor, who constituted in fact the vast majority of the rank and file during the 1905-07 revolutionary struggle. While proceeding with my research I began to realize just how rare educated Jews were in the Pale, and how important it is to write specifically about the persona of the Jewish revolutionary that was familiar at the time – the barely educated and the poor. These people's attitudes and expectations were not the same as those of their revolutionary leaders. The interaction between these groups highly affected the nature of the revolutionary movement among Jews -- not just, as pointed out by Frenkel, Levin, and many others, in the direction of Jewish nationalism inside the Bund, but also

in terms of the accepted lifestyle, emotional attitudes, and cultural definitions of what a revolutionary should be.

This study's focus on private life and feelings, which were the key to the changing identity among contemporary working-class revolutionaries, contributes an added dimension to our understanding of working-class and revolutionary history in the Russian empire. The changing working-class culture of the period affected both political and social loyalties among the youth. The new loyalties rather than just the newly popular political parties, affected attitudes toward the regime as well as toward local hierarchies, preparing the ground for 1917.

The working-class radicalism among Jews was specifically affected by a combination of ethnic and class discrimination. This study contributes to understanding how Jewish working-class revolutionaries dealt on a personal and emotional level with the tensions resulting from their interactions with working-class revolutionaries of other ethnicities as well as with revolutionary ideologies that tended to downplay the political importance of anti-Semitism. These revolutionaries often contradicted their theoretical commitment to internationalism by concentrating on conducting propaganda within the Jewish community. They had to do so since neglecting the Jewish community while it was under attack by the regime as well as by pogromists seemed unworthy of a revolutionary. But their feelings towards the Jewish community, which initially rejected them both for their poverty and for their ideas, were ambivalent. They were ready to sacrifice themselves to protect Jews during the pogroms, but they insisted on doing so on their own terms, expressing ideas and emotions they had adopted within the revolutionary

movement. The changing loyalties of working-class Jewish youth, which became a mass phenomenon during the 1905 revolution, affected the internal relationships within the Jewish communities. They also affected the idea of what a Jew could be. These new Jews rejected the Jewish religion and the social hierarchies within the Jewish community, but they still saw themselves as Jews and forced the community to accept them as such. By doing so they changed the nature of Jewish society in the Pale. This study contributes to understanding how this change evolved and thus to an understanding of how Jews of both that and subsequent generations became different from their ancestors.

Notes

[1] See Gerald D. Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg, Labor, Society and Revolution* (Stanford, 1989); Heather Hogan, *Forging Revolution, Metalworkers, Managers, and the State in St. Petersburg, 1890-1914* (Bloomington, 1993); Mark D. Steinberg, *Moral Communities, The Culture of Class Relations in the Russian Printing Industry 1867-1907* (Berkeley, 1992); Victoria Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion, Workers, Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley, 1983); Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms, The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton, 1992); Reginald E. Zelnik, ed., *Workers and Intelligentsia in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1999); Leopold Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience, 1905-1917* (New York, 2005).
[2] Randall Collins, "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention" in *Passionate Politics,* pp. 27-43.
[3] For another historical work dealing with a social culture temporarily developing around revolutionary ideas and gaining importance in and of itself, see Martha A. Ackelsberger, *The Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and The Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (Bloomington, 1991) on Spanish anarchists-feminists during the Civil War.
[4] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1965), pp. 63-64.
[5] William Reddy, "Sentimentalism and its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution," *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (March 2000): 109-52 .
[6] Leopold Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience, 1905-1917* (New York, 2005). See for the sustainability of emotional changes William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge, 2001) and his treatment of sentimentalism.
[7] Yoav Peled, *Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: The Political Economy of Jewish Workers' Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1989).
[8] John Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881* (Cambridge, 1995).
[9] Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and Jews* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 185.
[10] Yohanan Petrovskii – Shtern, *Evrei v Russkoi Armii* (Moscow, 2003).
[11] Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia, Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (Dekalb, IL, 1996).
[12] Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York, 1979), p. 78.
[13] According to Victoria Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion, Workers, Politics and Organizations in St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1900-1914* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 50-51, discussing conditions in Moscow, by the turn of the century, precisely during the period I discuss, the economic contribution of apprentices as unpaid labor became more important than training. In the Pale there seems to be the same development. Therefore it should not be surprising that many of the young apprentices were highly disappointed with the turn their apprenticeships took.
[14] See Ilya Gerasimov, "My ubivaem tol'ko svoikh" in *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2003): 709-60.
[15] Budnitskii, Oleg, ed., *Evrei i Russkaia Revoliutsiia: Materialy i Issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1999).

[16] One of the more important results of the revolution for almost all national movements was the easing of government oppression against them. They could publish newspapers and books, use their own language in education, and in certain cases people, especially Muslims, could revert to their original religious affiliation. Some of this freedom was sustained even after the reaction began. In any case, the public expression of nationalistic ideas developed during the revolution had an important impact on the national intelligentsia among the nationalities, who (like Ukrainians and unlike Poles) were not accustomed to asserting their national identity.
[17] The different organizations – Socialist-Zionists, Poalei-Zion, and SERP (Sotsialisticheskaia Evreiskaia Rabochaia Partiia)-- were divided by their attitudes toward Palestine and the desired status for Jews inside Russia. While the S-Z and the SERP did not particularly insist on Palestine and aspired to a territory where Jews could build their own independent state according to socialist principles, in Russia the S-Z did not seek more than a right to educate in Yiddish while the SERP insisted on political autonomy. The S-Z thus demanded less and the SERP more than the Bund's demand for cultural autonomy. Also, while the S-Z were closer to the SD, the SERP were closer to the SR. Poalei Zion, unlike the S-Z and the SERP, insisted on the importance of Palestine in the new Jewish revival, as well as on continuing class struggle in the Diaspora.
[18] Mark D. Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination, Self, Modernity and the Sacred in Russia, 1910-1925*, (Ithaca, 2002), p. 57; Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling.
[19] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*
[20] Hogan, *Forging Revolution*; Steinberg, *Moral Communities*; Surh, *1905 in St. Petersburg*.
[21] Zelnik, *Workers and Intelligentsia*, p. 2 offers what he considers a useful definition of "working class" as "a way of expressing, on the one hand, important aspects of workers' subjectivity – their attitudes, mentalities, cultural norms and self-representations – and, on the other hand, the intelligentsia's beliefs about and representations of workers." This is the definition I am using in this work.
[22] Mikhail Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity, 1905-1914* (Stanford, 2001), p. 74.
[23] Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction,* p. 116.
[24] Craig Calhoon, "Putting Emotions in Their Place," in *Passionate Politics, Emotions and Social Movements*, eds. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago, 2001), p. 53.
[25] Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics, Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 144.
[26] For example, one main point of Wynn's book is that the view of the Donbass unskilled workers as anti-Semitic and capable of transforming a political demonstration into a pogrom highly influenced the level of activism of the local Social-Democrats.
[27] Some examples include: Allan K. Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution, Russian Social Democracy, 1891-1903* (Chicago, 1967); Reginald Zelnik, *Law and Disorder on the Narova River: The Kreenholm Strike of 1872* (Berkeley, 1995); Hogan, *Forging Revolution*; Steinberg, *Moral Communities*; Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*; Surh,

1905 in St. Petersburg; Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms*; Zelnik, ed., *Workers and Intelligentsia in Late Imperial Russia*.

[28] Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms*.; Theodore H. Friedgut, *Iuzovka and Revolution* (Princeton, 1989); Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbass, A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge, 1998); Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa, Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington, 1993).

[29] Michael F. Hamm, ed., *The City in Late Imperial Russia* (Indiana, 1986); Michael Hamm, *Kiev, A Portrait, 1800-1917* (Princeton, 1993); Stephen Corrsin, *Warsaw before the First World War: Poles and Jews in the Third City of the Russian Empire, 1880-1914* (New York, 1989).

[30] Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*, p. 192; Steinberg, *Moral Communities*, p. 158.

[31] Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981); Nora Levin, *Jewish Socialist Movements 1871-1917* (London, 1978).

[32] Henry Jack Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905* (Stanford, 1972); Jack Jacobs ed. *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: the Bund at 100* (New York, 2001.

[33] Joshua Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality: The Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Czarist Russia, 1892-1914* (Madison, 2003).

[34] N.A. Bukhbinder, Istoriia evreiskogo rabochego dvizheniia v Rossii (Leningrad, 1925); *Materially dlia istorii evreiskogo rabochego dvizheniia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1923)

[35] Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa: Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington, 1993); Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton, 1992).

[36] Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1995).

[37] Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale* (Cambridge, 1970).

[38] Yoav Peled, *Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: the Political Economy of Jewish Workers' Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1989).

[39] John D. Klier & Shlomo Lambroza eds. *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992); Ilya Gerasimov, "Evreiskaya prestupnost' v Odesse nachala XX v.: Ot ubiistva k krazhe? Kriminal'naya evoliutsiia, politicheskaya revoliutsiia I sotsial'naya modernizatsiia", in Ilya Gersimov et. al. eds. *Novaya imperskaya istoriia postsovetskogo prostranstva* (Kazan, 2004); Ilya Gerasimov, "My ubivaem tol'ko svoikh" *Ab Imperio* 1 (2003).

[40] Mikhail Krutikov, *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity, 1905-1914* (Stanford, 2001); Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (Stanford, 1999).

[41] Copying of a letter while going through the mail for policing purposes

[42] Autobiographies were part of a standard application process in Soviet Union. For an example of another work that uses autobiographies for analysis of the early Soviet discourse, see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light : Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia,* (Pittsburgh, PA 2000).

[43] Though considering the number of cases in which people's revolutionary past or their subsequent moral conduct was questioned by other members of the society, which tended

to initiate a long paper trail of accusations, defenses, counteraccusations, and so on, it seems that the unchallenged autobiographical details can mostly be considered authentic as well.

[44] Wrongly so, I'm afraid. A majority of the Society's members perished during the Great Purges of 1937-1938. The government could not long tolerate an alternative and authoritative source of revolutionary tradition. Ia. Leontiev and M. Iunge, eds., *Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Politkatorzhan I Ssyl'noposelentsev, Obrazovanie, Razvitie, Likvidatsiia 1921-1935* (Moscow, 2004).

[45] Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale, The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 2001); Gabriella Safran, *Rewriting the Jew, Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire* (Stanford, 2000); Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Tradition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (Oxford, 1989).

[46] Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics, Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981); Nora Levin, *While Messiah Tarried: Jewish Socialist Movements, 1881-1917* (London, 1978); Erich Haberer, *Jews and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1995).

Chapter 1 - The Road to Revolutionary Identity

What Were They Striving For?

When young, working-class Jews residing in the Pale of Settlement during the early twentieth century joined the revolutionary underground, they forged a new sense of identity and a new community. Jewish radicalism offered a powerful set of ideas and self-images that would allow a poor, uneducated person to be both secular and proudly Jewish. This new identity offered a previously unknown individual and communal dignity to these who were looked down upon due to their ethnicity, poverty, poor education and youth. The revolutionary notions that being working-class, young and belonging to a discriminated against ethnicity were an opportunity to become the most important person in the struggle to improve the world rather than just someone on the bottom of the social ladder changed how people felt about the groups they belonged to. The notion that an individual can and has the responsibility to change the world for the better created an individual identity focused on personal dignity. The combination of the two kinds of dignity was a key to the new structure of feeling established within the radical milieu.

The process of identity formation began with the young Jews' perception of their harsh contemporary conditions, in reaction to which this new identity was created. Both workers and students bitterly addressed their lack of access to secular education, their

most frequently cited cause of despair. Since students accepted to the state schools as part of the Jewish quota[1] were usually wealthy and could afford to bribe the school principals, for the poor the issue of education came to symbolize the discrimination they suffered both because of their ethnicity and their economic situation. The traditional importance of education in forming one's status within the Jewish community undoubtedly played a role in enhancing secular education as a symbol.

As an alternative, the political groups that attracted the young working-class Jews to radicalism supplied the newcomers with both general and political education. Education included reading and writing, as well as courses on science, history, and culture. Political education mainly involved reading and discussing short propaganda pamphlets published by the revolutionary parties. Given that the circle, the framework in which both general and political education usually took place, had a short life span during the 1905 revolution, the education people received was highly superficial. Still, it was more than what was available to other, nonpolitical Jews of their generation and class. The young Jews educated in the circle felt that they knew more than others in their community and were responsible for that community due to their knowledge. This education provided them with an enormous source of pride and communal prestige.

The Russian language, as the dominant language of culture in most of the area of Jewish habitation, became a symbol of enhanced educational status[2] (although in Poland this role was played by Polish as well as Russian; due to the enhanced mobility of the Jewish youth between Poland and the Pale the main language of the culture was still Russian). Almost all of the radicals' letters were composed in Russian, even if the writer

had difficulty with the language. Yiddish or, more rarely, Hebrew was used mainly for conspiratorial purposes. People wrongly assumed that the secret police would find these languages more difficult, and included in letters otherwise written in Russian sentences in Hebrew or Yiddish on issues they obviously considered secret. The number of Jews literate in Russian in most Jewish communities of the Pale was so small that even someone who marginally mastered the language was considered highly educated. A worker and a member of the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners, identified only as Fridman, recalled his period of political activism: "I was considered a good speechmaker in Yiddish, people listened to me, invited me to give talks. We had there one typesetter, he came and asked me to give a talk.… On the way he said: 'If you could say something in Russian, it would be very good.' I said that I cannot speak Russian very well. 'That does not matter, nobody knows Russian anyway… the less they understand the more they respect you, and otherwise they will not believe any talk!'"[3]

The Russian language symbolized education and an openness to the world outside the Jewish community. Often this attitude toward the Russian language and culture in general created a problem between Jews and the non-Jewish local nationalists – Poles, and later Ukrainians and Lithuanians who saw this as support for Russian cultural imperialism.[4] While Jews resided among populations that were becoming rapidly nationalistic (such as Poles, Ukrainians, or Lithuanians), they did not derive their identity from modern ideas of nationality and did not speak its language. Yiddish was no more than a vernacular, and Hebrew was too holy and culturally remote for the scarcely educated majority, so adopting the culture that seemed to offer the most in terms of social

and cultural advancement appeared to be a matter of common sense rather than a political decision. Since eastern European Jews could not help but take their Jewish identity for granted, inasmuch as Jews of the Pale grew up within a Jewish environment, and since the government discriminated against them as a people rather than against their language and culture as happened to other minorities, they did not see the linguistic issue as a cultural threat. For these people with no pretensions of national dominance in the territories where they resided, loyalty to Jews as a community and some elements of culture rather than language were what made a person Jewish. Adopting the Russian language was thus a sign of cultural and social mobility rather than cultural assimilation. This mobility, especially if gained through education, invited respect from other Jews. As Fridman notes: "Some girls came to the factory with books in their hands, and the books were in Russian….Thus some girls went out of the circles being able to read books in Russian. It was considered a sign of very good education and they were treated with a lot of respect."[5]

Self-education circles were the only way for these girls to gain status within their community and among their peers, and they valued it highly. For them, knowing Russian and reading Russian books demonstrated a cultural achievement that was inconceivable for a simple worker, and they could use it to demand respect that they had not been entitled to before.[6] Fridman notes later that the same women who learned to read Russian managed to put up a successful fight against sexual harassment in the factory. Their new standing as cultured people undoubtedly helped them gain the necessary social support for such an action.

The education issue was the main grievance even for revolutionary workers who did not end up engaging in academic studies. Jewish workers were bitter about their conditions as apprentices, but their major complaint concerned insufficient training in their craft – a complaint that ranked higher than the sixteen-to-eighteen-hour workday and continuous abuse.[7] Acquiring a craft was undoubtedly a source of pride for the workers, and they believed that the lack of proper training cheated them of their rightful status. Apprentices ran away time after time, attaching themselves to another master who, they hoped, might actually teach them a skill. The students studied as externs,[8] hoping eventually either to enter the educational system or to pass the exams externally and earn the school certificate.

Both prospective artisans and prospective students encountered enormous obstacles. These derived from their economic condition and from the discrimination against them as Jews by the state, local officials, prospective employers, and local non-Jews competing against them for jobs. Both attempted to use education to achieve economic independence and respect within the Jewish community, as well as geographical mobility and personal and intellectual independence. They sought something that could make them feel like free, enlightened individuals rather than poor shtetl Jews, downtrodden and living in fear of the authorities, non-Jews, and richer Jews. They desired an alternative to spending their lives in a desperate struggle for survival.

Yet both the students and workers quickly saw that their individual goals would be impossible to achieve as long as they struggled alone. Scarce economic and intellectual resources did not allow workers to achieve their individual ambitions.

Although most apprentices eventually became artisans, the majority could only hope for a meager existence at the bottom of the social world in the Jewish community. They wanted general and professional education, as well as a different view of their place in the world. Even the students needed economic, intellectual, and emotional support during their years of struggle against the official educational system. Both students and workers could hope to get this from one source – their peers – who viewed education as a symbol as well as an instrument for individual freedom, self-respect, and independence.

Mutually supportive communities that focused on educational issues did indeed come into existence in many of the larger cities of the Pale. They offered assistance to young Jews struggling for an education. Rosa Ginsburg, a girl from a poor Jewish family residing in 1903 in a village near Gomel, writes in her autobiography that while the poor had no chance to get into schools, the attraction of education to Jewish youth was very strong:

> The better-off studied with hired teachers, others studied by themselves, but many found teachers who would assist them without pay, since it became a habit that every student taught a free set of lessons. Not to teach for free was considered unacceptable. When I, in my village, found out about those good habits in the city, I wished to go there. When I was 15 or 16, I found myself in the city [in Gomel]. Immediately I got lucky: I found a teacher who would work with me for free and two or three students willing to pay 2 rubles for private lessons. I was so happy.[9]

While study was the center of her aspirations, becoming part of the youth culture that focused on study shaped her social experience. While this enforced her commitment to study, it also enforced her commitment to the particular social milieu she joined in Gomel. Studying and becoming a member of this social milieu became central to her life.

An educated Russian from an Old Believer family, G. F. Kalashnikov, elaborated on the intersection of education and community among Jews in Gomel:

> The striving for education in the end of 1890s in Gomel was so enormous that the number of teachers was insufficient. Therefore, when students came to the city, people made lists of the free lessons and of local self-educating students they would be teaching each day, as their contribution to the education in Gomel. Thus it was among Jews….By 1903 Gomel became a very interesting city. Young people did not dare to just take a walk. They were embarrassed to just walk without a book. They had to look as if they were going somewhere for a purpose, or to or from the library.[10]

Operating as a studious community was at the center of this milieu's self-definition, but since studying went against the aspirations of the state and of traditional Jewish elites, it acquired a political meaning that would not apply in other circumstances.

The desire for education created the Jewish youth community, which created a culture of its own, centered on learning. The young Jews involved did not live apart from the Jewish community as a whole, but created their own culture within this community and in constant interaction with it. People wrote of negative experiences with the

traditional Jewish community, but completely avoiding contact with it was economically and socially impossible. Synagogues were a convenient space for political meetings, Yiddish was used as a language of conspiracy, and the generally negative attitude of Jews toward the authorities meant that they rarely informed on the young revolutionaries of the radical subculture.

Simultaneously, however, the young people who subsequently became revolutionaries wished to assert their own individuality against both the Jewish community and the state. Education was a tool they used to assert this individuality, but education on its own was not enough. High school and university students, who acquired an education in official institutions, still felt the need for another community, such as the self-education circle. The high school student and future socialist-revolutionary Brailovskii-Petrovskii spoke with pride about being accepted into a self-education circle,[11] even though he was not prevented from getting a formal education. Apprentices like Moisei Khilkevich were enormously proud of being invited to join a self-education circle, even though it did not assist him in his professional goals.[12] Even more important, in none of the autobiographies does the protagonist describe him- or herself as a passive recipient of education. Education, both general and political, was something a person needed to reach out for, to take a risk in acquiring, even though the ultimate success was dependent on the support of the youth community. This meant, for example, going alone to Gomel for a young country girl like Rosa Ginsburg.

Next to education, Jews complained most about state discrimination and popular anti-Semitism. Applicants to the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners, as well as historians

like Naum Bukhbinder who had an opportunity to communicate directly with the protagonists, mention that Jews were kept from the better-paid mechanized employments and the larger factories.[13] The main issue for non-Jewish workers was economic competition, but the fact that this competition developed around ethnic/religious issues troubled Jews who found themselves on the receiving end of discrimination and violence. Under these circumstances, a Jewish revolutionary was constantly reminded of his or her Jewish identity and had to consider it when making political decisions.

Discrimination from non-Jewish coworkers, as well as economic hardship, made the individualist identity that had developed in the mutually supportive self-education circles seem less tenable. Instead of using the youth community as a tool to assist their personal development as individuals, young Jews came to see this community as having an inherent value in itself. It was the only place where they felt accepted, and it was the basis for collective action against whatever threatened their newly acquired individual identity. Even people like Iosif Novak, who sustained an enormous struggle against both his family and his economic situation to achieve the goal of education, and who was not involved in political activism before 1905, could not keep from joining a self-defense unit during 1905.[14] Not to do so would have contradicted all he fought for, the identity he tried to develop for himself. Being part of the youth community became a major component of his identity.

What Were They Leaving? – The Community and the Family

To understand the communities the youth formed in the revolutionary movement, we must first understand the communities they left and what leaving meant to them. All of the radicals' autobiographies document the availability of a minimal education in the heder, the Jewish elementary school. Those who later became revolutionary activists wrote disparagingly of the education they acquired in the heders or in the yeshiva, yet we have to assume that growing up in a community that valued education enough to subsidize poorer children had to affect their general attitude toward education.[15] The community obviously took interest in the education of children, both religious and secular, and not educating children was seen as wrong.

Even the poor, sickly tailor father of Isaak Sorokin, who habitually abused his family and did not care much for learning, was proud of his son's scholarly success. As a father, he had to submit to the opinion of his neighbors and provide his child with some secular as well as religious education. Sorokin, who complained about his father's disparaging attitude toward education, described how his father at first sent him to study Judaism. The child excelled, impressing the old people in the neighborhood to the point that they considered him a future Talmud scholar. His father, however, wanted to teach the child his craft – tailoring. But being illiterate and understanding the difficulties involved, he found Sorokin a private teacher for Russian. When the child learned to read and write in that language and became an avid reader of fairytales, the father decided again that it was time to teach him a craft. Sorokin writes: "As for me, I really did not

want to learn my father's craft, I wanted to study. Due to my begging and the advice of the neighbors I was sent to a three-grade municipal school."[16] It is clear that even a father who did not really value secular studies and wanted to introduce his child to his craft could not withstand community pressure. His own attitude was obviously ambivalent. Sorokin remembered his father as constantly insisting that he start work rather than study, but on the other hand the father, who was obviously very poor, was willing to provide the child with much more education than he ever received, due to the social pressure to let a gifted child study. Even orphans, the poorest of the poor, were given some schooling with the assistance of relatives or the community. The orphan Isaak Shipkevich told of acquiring some Jewish and craft education paid for by Jewish community,[17] as well as "stealing" (apparently unhindered) some secular education by eavesdropping on lessons taught to wealthier children. Thus education was not only a major component of the identity the youth strived for, but was rooted in the values of the Jewish community they grew up with. While many autobiography and letter writers present acquiring secular education as rebellious, this aspect of their rebellion was often supported by some of their nonrevolutionary elders and respected by others.

Acquiring secular education in the context of revolutionary politics, however, often meant distancing oneself from communal values (e.g., religion or segregation of the sexes) and from one's family. Attaining this education in illegal self-education circles could also lead to trouble with the authorities, both on the communal level (the employers) and the state level (the police). Jewish families were highly aware of this and strongly opposed secularization of their children. The children, on the other hand, tended

to react by openly rejecting the kind of lives their parents lived, including religious observance; adherence to communal customs; language; dress; and modes of behavior toward their peers, their elders, the non-Jews, and the authorities.

Some young people flaunted their new independence. The food in the youth gatherings was often nonkosher, and eating it was a sort of initiation ceremony. Sara Agronina-Ageeva, for example, describes her struggles with eating nonkosher food. The first time she tried to eat a pastry cooked in pig fat with another Jewish friend on a dare, both girls ended up vomiting. But at her first Bund political meeting she decided that her loyalty was ultimately with her Bundist friends and not with Jewish religious values, and she ate whatever food was there. For her this signaled a break with the old tradition and initiation into a new one, a tradition created by her new revolutionary friends.

It was a personal decision of enormous import to many people. As with learning the Russian language it did not mean disloyalty toward the Jewish community altogether, but it meant a rejection of its old hierarchies and religious values.[18] The revolutionary youth community enforced this decision, not because it was so important on political grounds but because they were building a new culture to which they wanted to attract people. This culture was built on adherence to certain aspects of secular life and revolutionary values, which emerged as an alternative to the values of the old Jewish community rather than only to its politics. In order to exist, the new culture had to struggle against the old. The old culture was still far too powerful in people's minds for the young revolutionaries to treat it with indifference or distant sympathy.

Agronina-Ageeva had to choose between loyalty to the revolutionary youth culture and the religious values she was raised with, but leaving religion behind was hard. Like Agronina-Ageeva, Fridman shared his own conflicts and difficulties with abandoning religion. He and several other workers went to meet a Bund propagandist who agreed to teach them. His friends, including a brush maker and a glove maker, were highly suspicious of the Bundist, who immediately attacked their religious beliefs. The workers first suspected he wanted them to convert, but then, when he tried to prove to them the absence of a God, they understood that he was a socialist rather than a Christian missionary. The Bundist (one of the leaders of the Bund, John Mill) attacked their religious beliefs not with a theological argument, but by arguing that if God exists he should prove his existence on demand, for example by killing the speaker on the spot. He assumed, correctly, that for these workers religion was more about cultural adherence and magic than about theology, and that for them this proof would be much more powerful. Indeed, the workers expected Mill to die instantly; when nothing happened they were frightened and emotionally shattered. Only then did the workers agree to study with Mill, and their religious faith began to evaporate. Fridman himself later told a fellow worker that no God exists and was slapped for it.

Proof of God's nonexistence of the sort provided by Mill was surely not the only thing that affected the religious faith of people like Fridman and his friends. They all felt their situation as workers was hopeless, and they felt that secular education might show them a way out. This explains why the workers did not just run away from the propagandist, even though they were truly afraid when he tried to attract God's wrath.

Both they and Agronina-Ageeva wanted the education that only socialists offered them, and they wanted the status that came with education. The self-education circles organized by socialists were the only escape from the workers' lowly social status, and many were ready to accept the cultural changes required of them.

For their part, propagandists tried to shake the new followers' religious faith, since religion implied adherence to a whole system of values and way of life that had no place in the revolutionary culture. Since the people I describe here did not have much religious education, religion to them meant mostly adherence to the lifestyle and values of the traditional Jewish community. Shaking their religious faith was a way to gain their conversion to the new values and way of life proposed by the revolutionaries. As Max Rodzinskii writes of his initial concerns about joining the Polish Socialist Party: "I liked all of this very much, but I could not accept their rejection of God. Then the agitator gave me several books dealing with the religion issue, I read them and I started doubting. After a hard internal struggle I became free of my faith and could, with all my soul, join the party."[19] It was surely not just a matter of reading books. For Rodzinskii, choosing between the party and his religion was a necessary step in breaking with the Jewish community and establishing a new identity as well as finding a new community. The same choice was made by Fridman, and by Agronina-Ageeva and her friend Genia. The pastries they ate were symbolic of their readiness to enter a new life, with new ways of thought and new beliefs.[20]

This wish to break with the old values and the old community was clear not only to the young revolutionaries, but to their families and neighbors. The young people who

joined the self-education circles repeatedly wrote about harsh conflicts with their families, who suspected them of wanting to convert. As Fridman noted, this suspicion existed among the community as a whole toward anyone espousing new ideas or even adopting a different mode of behavior. Fridman talks about his extended family persecuting him and his wife when they first became politicized, burning their books, watching them constantly, and even beating them out of fear that they were going to convert. The neighbors tried to interfere as well, and not only the wealthy heads of the community whose economic interests were jeopardized by the new assertiveness of the workers. People whose religious sensibilities were hurt by the youths' new modes of behavior also intervened. The Bundist functionary Moisei Rafes writes that "on the outskirts of Vilna, Warsaw, Belostok you could often see how 'respectable' but fanatical Jews attacked the Jewish working youth and beat them up for going to the street on Sabbath with a walking stick."[21] Though outright conversion to Christianity was not considered acceptable for a Jewish revolutionary,[22] and among the files I examined I found only two cases of conversion,[23] young Jews were rejecting communal values for new values that were no less threatening to traditional Jewish authorities.

Parents were especially concerned about the effect of their children's behavior on their position in the Jewish community. No one was happy about the neighbors or the police coming to complain about their child. When a child was involved in illegal activity it could discredit or endanger the entire family in the eyes of the authorities, but if that same child also took part in an expropriation (a robbery or extortion performed for a political cause), the family was discredited in the eyes of the local community. Avram, a

small-town boy and a former expropriator who left his family and went to Kiev, writes to a fellow party member: "Comrade! I got a letter from home, where they write that somebody came to my father in the store and started yelling, how could he let his son go to Liubinchik and demand from him 25 rubles. Then, they shouted to everyone that I went to 'install democracy,' as they put it. Make them shut up, since this can have a bad effect on both me and the organization as a whole."[24] Avram had probably taken part in an expropriation on behalf of his party, but being a young, unmarried man could easily leave his town. His family, on the other hand, had to deal with the consequences within their local community. He tried to mobilize his local comrades to protect his family, but his family could not have been happy about the situation.

A visit from the police, or even the possibility that this might occur, often scared parents enough to pressure their children into distancing themselves from the revolutionary youth community and the revolutionary movement. Naum Nemzer, a high school student expelled for possession of revolutionary proclamations, was thrown out of his house by his father after a visit from the police.[25] In most cases the parents' reaction was not quite so extreme but, as in the case of Fridman and his wife, parents could make life difficult for their rebellious children. As Shteinman, another member of the Society, wrote: "Wherever you went you saw a real struggle between the parents and their children. If you wanted to do anything you had to hide from your parents, and if some parents knew that their son or daughter worked in the revolutionary movement, then scandals began. I am not even talking about the affluent families, but even among the workers there were some really impossible situations."[26] Most young people hid their

involvement in radical activities from their parents. Yakov Raibshtein wrote: “When we had to read some booklet or Iskra[27] we waited until our parents went to sleep. My brother and I got under the table with a candle, covered ourselves with a tablecloth and studied until the candle went out.”[28]

Parents were afraid for their children and their own reputations, but they also did not want to relinquish control over their children.[29] This was an especially acute issue for parents of young girls. Many Jewish girls, especially from working-class origins, took part in the revolutionary youth culture. The relative prevalence of female employment among Jews and the fact that secular education contributed to a girl’s social status inside the Jewish community made political involvement especially attractive to young, Jewish, working-class women.[30] The easy intermingling of the sexes characteristic of the youth culture was highly unusual in the Jewish community.[31] Parents became truly anxious about controlling the sexual behavior (and therefore the marriageability) of their daughters.

In this context the revolutionary movement provided assistance to girls aspiring to a freer life, like the young woman from Starodub writing to her fiancée in Warsaw: “ I got really tired of the dull local life. What pushed me toward a revolutionary path? You think that only the reigning despotism and the faraway ideal of socialism? No, not only this, but the life of a revolutionary, full of danger, the unexpected, joy over victories and anger at the defeats. And I can escape this place.”[32] Other girls sought to escape traditional families by requesting employment possibilities among revolutionary circles. A typical letter reads: “We have here one comrade (a young woman) who suffers from

living with her parents, she wants to leave home. She talked to me and I promised to ask you about some work for her. At first she could take a role of the keeper of a party apartment. If you need one, write and she will come immediately."[33] Since women submitted to greater family restrictions, such requests often provided an opportunity for personal autonomy. Another small town young woman wrote to a friend after escaping to Odessa: "This is my fifth day here. I left home with a bang, that is, almost put an end to my relationship with my family. There were attempts at stopping me, but they were afraid of our gang.… Only sitting in the train carriage did I start to believe that I finally managed to escape."[34]

Sometimes both political and sexual issues fueled a girl's wish to get away from family pressure. After arriving in Odessa, this same small-town young woman planned to live with her boyfriend and work with him for the movement. Another young girl, Polia from Ananiev, used revolutionary activism to negotiate a complicated settlement with her parents. She wrote to her non-Jewish boyfriend from Odessa:

> I explained to my parents that immediately after finishing the gymnasium I will go to Odessa. If they let me go with no support, I will throw myself into the stormy sea of the revolution in which I will soon perish; if they give me money for travel and will go on supporting me, then I will work occasionally, when I will feel like it. They agreed to the second option, but only under the condition that I would not be meeting you. They said: "We know you love him, but he is a Christian. Fall in love with whomever you want, as long as he is a Jew."[35]

The very fact that such negotiation was possible shows how feasible the revolutionary option appeared to some young women and their parents.

The revolutionary youth community offered children who wanted to stay at home, especially young girls, protection from family authority. One revolutionary mentioned that he and his comrades often

> had to defend children from the terror of their parents….We had cases when, for example, we had to hide a daughter from her father until he came running to the birzha, demanding "give me my daughter back." Then we stated some conditions -- not to forbid her going to the birzha or meetings, not to beat her – before we would give her back. And he agreed. Some of the organization members were 17- or 18-year-old girls and there were many cases when the parents simply terrorized their children, so we had to do something. [36]

The youth culture provided an alternative to traditional support structures – the community and the family. Religion was replaced by socialism and religious education by the secular and political education offered by socialists. Challenging traditional norms of behavior such as observing the Sabbath and dietary laws, constraints on socializing with the opposite sex, early marriage, or avoiding trouble with the authorities became almost the norm. The youth adopted new modes of behavior instead, such as casual socializing; mutual support against parents, employers, and other kinds of authorities; geographic mobility; and postponement of marriage. Their new lives emphasized constant study, personal dignity, and individual initiative. The young people also

considered themselves free individuals pursuing personal development, rather than community members pursuing an ancient way of life.

The particular kind of commitment expected from a revolutionary made a wish to appear sexually attractive highly inappropriate. The revolutionary youth whose identity was rooted in their political values as well as their political ideas viewed people of the opposite sex primarily as comrades, and had to prove their moral uprightness to an essentially conservative Jewish working-class audience. It was too easy to end up being discredited as immoral if youth activists accepted (even partially) the old rules of the game between the sexes. Young revolutionary men and women were to see each other primarily as comrades in a mutual undertaking, and socializing or residing in the same place was part of the revolutionary lifestyle rather than an indication of sexual freedom. This was characteristic of Russian revolutionary movements in general, though the prevalence of working-class female activists was specific to Jewish revolutionaries. The female activists elsewhere came mostly from the intelligentsia.[37] Therefore the Jewish working-class male revolutionaries, unlike the Russian ones, worked with female activists of their own class. Unlike the Russian workers (who mostly encountered female activists of higher social class, with whom they barely interacted socially), the Jewish men adjusted the nature of their social interaction with women to the egalitarian ethos of the Russian revolutionary movement.

The presence of women and the interaction between men and women in the Jewish revolutionary movement had a critical impact on the behavior and values of those involved. Indeed, one of the leaders of the Bund, Moisei Rafes, saw women in the

movement in the same way that they were viewed among the intelligentsia revolutionaries of 1870s: he claimed that the large number of young women among the activists gave the movement a noble, pure character.[38] Considering that contact between unmarried people of different sexes among Jews was previously forbidden, this easy interaction between the sexes was viewed as important by many young revolutionaries and contributed to their experiencing the movement as a substitute family, but a better, more modern one. Relationships were viewed favorably only if they did not interfere with revolutionary activism.[39] Gudia from Ekaterinoslav wrote to her partner residing in Kiev: "About your offer to come and work for the store, I can say that under no circumstances will I agree. I spent so much time learning a skill, only now am I starting to understand what is going on, and suddenly – to just leave. I cannot leave the technical work and I would find any other work hateful. Of course I would really like to work with you, but I cannot."[40]

The revolutionary youth tended to postpone establishing families of their own, since this would interfere with their revolutionary duties. As a result, they were not as encumbered with family responsibilities and not as dependent on familial and communal assistance as their nonrevolutionary peers. Some among the young revolutionaries did marry and have children, but the percentage of marriages among revolutionaries was much lower than in the Jewish community as a whole. Most of the Jewish radicals married relatively late in life, and in their mid-twenties still had fairly young children. Some, particularly women, did not marry at all.[41]

The attitude toward marriage in the revolutionary movement was complicated. On the one hand, it met with disapproval under the assumption that a married person would not be as ready for self-sacrifice. On the other hand, there seems to have been some approval for marriage to a fellow comrade. For Elia from Warsaw, unlike many others, marriage seemed an uncomplicated, happy issue. He writes in a letter to his (apparently sympathetic) father that he plans to marry his fiancée, who was also a comrade, as soon as possible.[42] The families of both seem very supportive, especially considering his illegal status. In Vitebsk, in fact, marriage ceremonies were used for political propaganda: "We used, for example, wedding celebrations. I think that many of the Vitebsk inhabitants remember this. Whenever it was possible we sent people there and when the guests ate their supper, we held our mass meetings. Often both Zionists and Bundists came, both wanting to hold their meeting. Sometimes it happened that the bridegroom was a Bundist and the bride was a Zionist and it all developed into discussions and arguments."[43] It also seemed that unmarried but committed couples among the revolutionaries were viewed favorably by their comrades. Rosa, for example, a worker in the process of being radicalized and joining a circle, wrote to a friend about an SD who agreed to pass letters between herself and her imprisoned revolutionary partner.[44]

Marriage was a problem in the eyes of many comrades both because it might interfere with revolutionary activities and because the risks taken by revolutionaries were seen as unreasonable for parents of young children.[45] Erukhimovich, an ex-anarchist, described the unfavorable attitude of his comrades toward his marriage: "People wrote

later about us that we had to live like hermits, all our lives were to be dedicated to struggle against the government, so we could not fall in love and marry, since then we would not be free….When I got married there was a huge scandal, I had to leave Minsk to deal with that conflict. People thought – what kind of an activist is he, if he is married. Of course people got married…, but we still worked widely and with considerable success."[46] Erukhimovich does not take the issue too seriously, but apparently his comrades did--rightly so, since having children and regularly risking imprisonment, exile, or death are rarely compatible. People do seem to have left activism when they did have children, or at least to have reduced the risks they took. [47] Members of the self-defense unit definitely tended to stay unmarried. The issue was even more important among anarchists, who took more risks almost as a matter of habit. Still, as Erukhimovich observes, people married, just not as many as would marry in other times.

Clearly there was a reluctance to establish new families, but each of the revolutionaries still had a family of origin, with parents and siblings. Families seem to have been in contact and caring for each other even after the young revolutionary initiated a break from their family's values. The contact with siblings was easier because often when one of the family's children joined the revolutionary movement others followed. The emotional bonding between revolutionary siblings seems to have been very powerful. Fania Chizhevskaia remembered: "When my brother was arrested I totally forgot about myself. I sent all my salary to the prison, to my brother and to the other prisoners."[48] The authorities apparently tried to use such close ties to their own advantage. When a strike started in Chizhevskaya's factory, a policeman tried to

blackmail her into informing on other workers by threatening that her brother would be hanged. Chizhevskaya was proud of not submitting to blackmail, but the event left her in shock. She described being consumed with fear for her brother's life. [49] Another activist, Georgii Shatunovskii, tells a similar story about his intense feelings when his brother was badly beaten for illegally trying to see his imprisoned ex-wife in the police station: "This made a profound impression on me and for a long time afterward, going by a policeman, I found it hard to resist hitting him with a stone or a stick, no matter what."[50]

In other words, emotional bonding in the youth community enforced rather than replaced family ties. Ties with parents were more complicated than the ties with siblings, but even there many young revolutionaries note mutual care and support. Familial support was an immensely powerful emotional boost to revolutionaries whose families wholeheartedly encouraged them. The author of an anonymous letter from Odessa says with pride: "My mother keeps working and continues her work as an agitator. My mother is an amazing revolutionary, there is a reason they searched her house 8 times."[51] The mother of fighting detachment member Esfir' Glik was a simple woman and not an activist, but when she visited her daughter in prison she was there to support her: "When my mother came to see me in prison, the prison warden told her: 'Why do you, such an old woman, go to see such a bomb-thrower? She made bombs, she is against God and the Tsar, she wants to kill everybody. You should not come.' But my mother did not understand Russian well and answered that she is not a thief. When she came to see me she told me in Yiddish: Be strong, be brave, do not surrender to the enemies."[52]

Other parents, less political and equally worried about their children, tried to keep them away from trouble. Such parents exasperated their children, though they were still in contact and cared about their families. For example, Asia from Libava complained to a friend: "Dear Zina! I have been planning to write you in detail about myself for a while now, but I am sorry to say, nothing has changed. I stay at home, do nothing, and my parents watch my every move. Soon my brother Moisei will get to Warsaw. He will get my passport and then, no matter what, I will go somewhere. In the meantime, as you see, things are bad. What about your personal life? How is the work?"[53]

In most of the letters that I read the parents were not viewed as a threat; in fact, in most cases they were seen as needing protection. Children frequently tried to hide information that would scare or hurt their parents. Yakov from Romanov was unhappy that his father "had to go through a whole lot of berating because of me, he is really worried and warned me that things look bad."[54] Misha wrote, apparently to a sibling: "We knew of Sasha's arrest already on Thursday morning. Our father might also know, though I am not sure. I will have to tell him the truth and destroy his illusions."[55] An anonymous writer in a letter to her sister in Kharkov says: "Insist, no matter what, on getting rights, since living illegally you may be captured, and you should try to avoid that in the name of love toward our parents, this will be harder for them than if it happened to me. Things are not that good. We should have had first of all to forget about our family, to which we are so connected, to cut off all relations and to throw ourselves into the wave of the struggle, as anarchists, to become conscious activists and do all we can for the liberation movement."[56] Obviously, forgetting the family was not easy for the young

activists, and they tried to both keep in contact with their families and protect them as much as possible. The parents usually ended up accepting their children's choices but still worried about them.

This modernized substitute family, the revolutionary community, seemed the only kind that could function under new conditions and provide the youth with the necessary identity and emotional support. Its socialist content was an important part of its appeal, as both modern and based on collectivist values. The youths' initial pursuit of knowledge and individual identity, in place of a Jewish communal identity, was prevented by external conditions from developing into an individualistic liberal identity. The working-class Jewish youth were discriminated against not due to individual characteristics, but because they belonged to the "wrong" ethnicity and the "wrong" class, and therefore many saw a collective and political response as appropriate. The framework of existing revolutionary ideologies seemed most fitting for this response. These ideologies also offered the young Jews self-respect that derived from both rationalist political philosophy and romantically altruistic social values. The revolutionary movement combined collective political opposition with individual commitment to self-improvement through education. This process culminated during the 1905 revolution, when many young people were ready to adopt the revolutionary world view and lifestyle for their own, since it provided an answer to both their striving for an individualist self-assertion in a modern world and their need for collective support against the economic and the political pressures experienced by the poor Jews in the Russian empire.

The revolutionary Jews wanted to be considered human beings rather than Jews, but for this to happen they needed to change the image of what a Jew could be, both among Jews and among non-Jews. In order to become both cosmopolitan and Jewish, they had to create and enforce a new and very powerful idea of Jewishness, thus becoming much more Jewish than they would have been without the youth culture. This Jewishness was unlike any previous image of Jewishness known. It derived directly from the revolutionary youth culture developed in the early twentieth century and as we will see later, it shaped the events of the revolution within the Jewish community and in the long term radically changed the attitudes within that community.

[1] According to Alexander the III's law, no state school or university outside the Pale of Settlement could have more than 3 to 5 percent Jewish students, including places with a considerable Jewish population such as Kiev. Inside the Pale the Jewish students could constitute no more than 10 percent of any state school.
[2] Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale, The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge, 1970) p. 38 mentions that a typical "enlightened" Jewish worker went about dressed "in a Russian black shirt, carrying a Russian book under his arm and with Russian on his lips."
[3] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 457.
[4] See, for example, Joshua Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality* (Madison, 2004).
[5] GARF f. 533 op.1 d. 457.
[6] Secular learning for women was considered much more legitimate than for men, who were expected to spend all their study time on religious subjects. For these young women studying Russian did not entail by itself a conflict with a family or a community as it would for a man, even though at this time there was a general recognition that men also needed to know a little Russian to get by. Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women, Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society*, (Waltham, 2004).
[7] Using apprentices as unpaid labor instead of teaching them a craft was a new phenomenon at the turn of the century, and therefore went against the expectations of both the apprentices and their parents or other sponsors. Bonnell, *Roots of Rebellion*, pp. 50-51.
[8] Studying for examinations independently, according to the official school program, and trying to pass the examinations either to get a certificate without attending school or in order to directly enter a higher grade, where there would hopefully be an open spot for a Jewish student.
[9] GARF f. 533, op. 2, d. 445.
[10] GARF f. 533, op. 1, d. 288.
[11] GARF f. 533, op. 2, d. 242.
[12] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2161.
[13] N. A. Bukhbinder, *Istoriia Evreiskogo rabochego dvizheniia v Rossii* (Leningrad, 1925), p. 11; GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2122; a Jewish worker tells of being the only Jew among 12,000 workers employed by the Ekaterinoslav factory and being persecuted due to his ethnicity. He was protected and later politicized by another worker, a Ukrainian social-democrat. GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 183; the author, who was employed in heavy industry, says that Jews were not employed there, and he needed an enormous level of patronage to get a job. GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2231.
[14] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1402.
[15] As for the level of education in the heder, it seems to have been abysmally low, mainly since the teachers were usually Jews unable to find other employment and therefore ready

to accept the miserly wages of a melamed. Violence toward children was prevalent within the schools.

[16] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1902.

[17] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2307.

[18] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 765.

[19] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1646.

[20] Things were a bit different in Warsaw where, unlike other places, there was a large Jewish proletariat working together in large factories and residing in specific neighborhoods. There it was common to keep the external signs of Jewish orthodoxy (clothes, and so on) alongside revolutionary activism. Although in many places it was common for revolutionaries to take over synagogues for their meetings, in working-class districts of Warsaw the synagogues were fully under the control of the revolutionaries. GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 462. As for putting the word "respectable" in quotes, Rafes is being ironic, noting that respectable people did not hesitate to use violence on the street, which, in his opinion expressed later, is not respectable behavior. Of course, as we saw, much violence existed on the Jewish street at the time, though almost all of it was directed against other Jews.

[21] M. Rafes, *Ocherki po istorii 'Bunda'* (Moscow, 1923), p. 21.

[22] The Society for Ex-Political Prisoners considered conversion a sufficient reason to reject an applicant, claiming this was an unprincipled and therefore unacceptable behavior for a revolutionary. Obviously what bothered them was not a religious apostasy as such, but the fact that converts, being revolutionaries and therefore supposedly atheists, left a persecuted group (in this case Jews) for material advantages.

[23] Both cases involved improving living conditions under exile. I encountered a few other cases where people converted in order to marry their non-Jewish partners, but these individuals were not condemned. In general it seems that for the poor, conversion was not common. The parents expressed fears of their children distancing themselves from them culturally through the familiar threat of conversion. Conversion was more prevalent among the affluent in order to be able to work as a university professor, a lawyer, and so forth. For the nonreligious revolutionaries it was similar to asking pardon from the Tsar – compromising one's principles for material advantages, and therefore morally despicable--though even among the affluent this does not seem to have been a popular solution.

[24] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 87.

[25] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1379.

[26] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 452.

[27] The Social-Democratic newspaper.

[28] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1650.

[29] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 199.

[30] Rafes, *Ocherki*, pp. 14-15.

[31] For example, the Jewish populist Khasia Shur recounted how as a young girl she wanted to see a local boy whose opinions she had heard of and considered similar to her own. She knocked on the door of the family's house, asked to talk to the boy, and without

saying a word his mother slapped her. Khasia Shur, *Vospominaniia* (Kursk, 1928), pp. 33-34.
[32] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 55.
[33] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 133.
[34] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 83; she used only two letters to identify the city she had just escaped.
[35] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 176.
[36] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 452.
[37] See, for example, Hogan, *Forging Revolution*, p. 20.
[38] Rafes, *Ocherki,* p. 15.
[39] There was some justification for suspicion since after children were born to revolutionary couples the women in many cases left politics and concentrated on taking care of their family. See M. Levin, "HaMishpaha Behevra Yehudit Mahapkhanit – Normot veHalikhot Bekerev Havrei Habund," *Maasaf – Mehkarim BeToldot Tnuat HaPoalim HaYehudit*, pp. 13-14, 1982-1983, 1984.
[40] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 195.
[41] Similar to Barbara Engel, *Mothers and Daughter: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Cambridge, 1983).
[42] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 95.
[43] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 452.
[44] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 74.
[45] We must remember that discrimination against Jews existed also for those sent into exile. Wives or husbands found it hard to get permission to reside in Siberia, though this could be arranged. More problematic were children born elsewhere, who had to leave Siberia at the fairly young age of eight or nine. Unlike the non-Jews who were given permission after three months of exile to reside and accept work anywhere in the district, Jews could not leave the small settlement they were originally sent to. There was usually no work in that settlement and the workers, whose allowance was smaller than that of the exiled educated people, found it hard to survive on this, not to mention supporting a family. Single people also found it easier to live elsewhere with a forged passport (not a very grave offense, as long as they stayed in the district) or escape, but some people, especially those with families, were under sufficient pressure to convert in order to escape this Jewish exile status.
[46] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 449b.
[47] For example, Moisei Khilkevich, GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2161.
[48] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2236.
[49] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2236
[50] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[51] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 48.
[52] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 198.
[53] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 104.
[54] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 206.
[55] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 213.

[56] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 113.

Chapter 2 – Students and Apprentices: Radicalization

Students Find their Way to the Revolution

There were two kinds of Jewish students in Russia – regular students and externs. The regular students studied in established educational institutions; externs wished to do so, but were rejected due to the quota allotted to Jews. Since they still wanted to get a certificate and the employment that could help them continue with their studies, they studied by themselves, hoping to eventually enter a higher grade or pass the exams and get a certificate directly. Both kinds of students had to find a school in which the Jewish quota was not already met and those seeking a certificate needed a place where discrimination against Jewish externs during exams would be less harsh, so the students often lived away from their families. Both types of students had families who could barely support them or could not support them at all. Though it was easier for regular students to find employment giving private lessons, both types led a precarious existence.

Many young Jews explained their political radicalism as stemming from resentment over economic and ethnic discrimination and viewed the educational quotas as symbols of this discrimination. Brailovskii-Petrovskii wrote: "My parents strove to give me an education, but because funds were scarce it was very difficult. I had to take the entrance examination twice but because of the quota, even though my exams were good, I was not accepted. This created in me dissatisfaction with the existing regime, which with time developed into a certain attitude toward the government and the

bureaucracy."[1] Brailovskii-Petrovskii was eventually accepted to the gymnasium. He managed to support himself and even assist his unemployed father. Still, he joined a politically oriented self-education circle at the first opportunity. He talked about the circle with much more pride than he talked about the more difficult task of getting into an official educational institution.[2] In his view he had a right to attend a gymnasium and, by eventually entering it, did nothing more than exercise this right. The fact that he was initially obstructed from doing so because of his ethnicity seemed outrageous to him and made him view the government bureaucracy as a personal enemy. Brailovskii-Petrovskii mentioned economic difficulties, but the main obstacle he emphasized having to overcome was ethnic in nature – the quota.

Solomon Gillerson, another prospective student, emphasized the economic obstacle. A graduate of a private preliminary school, he passed entrance exams to the gymnasium with high grades, but the gymnasium accepted a son of a rich Jewish merchant who offered a substantial bribe instead of Gillerson. "I remember how I went with my mother to the assistant director to find out what the result was and he took a piece of paper, wrote some number on it with a pencil. My mother became pale and said that the most she could give was about 150-200 rubles. He shook his head in refusal and we went away. My mother cried."[3] Gillerson's hard-working mother eventually managed to put together enough money to send him to a newly opened commercial, private school in Riga. Like Brailovskii-Petrovskii, he was lucky. It seems that with enough persistence and geographic mobility it was possible to get an education, even for a poor Jewish boy or girl.[4] But as he told the story years afterward, Gillerson still remembered his mother's

grief and humiliation at not being able to afford a bribe. Gillerson became involved in revolutionary activism shortly after starting his studies in Riga. The reasons he gave for his politicization -- his family at one time residing illegally in Riga and hiding from the police, the Kishinev pogrom -- all involved his resentment of discrimination against Jews. Gillerson saw the Russian revolutionary tradition as the antithesis of the ideas behind this discrimination. His reasons for politicization all involved his perception that he had been deprived of a basic human right – education. The struggle for other human rights also plagued him, such as personal security in the context of illegal residence, and being able to start a personal relationship and a family. Gillerson described the 1903 pogrom in Kishinev in this way: "This pogrom shocked me profoundly. I saw that under conditions of lawlessness and oppression, I, being a Jew, had no moral right to create a family or to have children, since with the next Jewish pogrom organized by the State Police Department, my wife and children might be tortured and killed, like those 2000 women, children, and old people who were victims of the Kishinev pogrom." [5]

Security and education were the only things Gillerson demanded from the state. Since the state refused to offer those things he turned to the revolutionary movement, enjoying the companionship and personal pride it offered, as well as the hope for change. Both Brailovskii-Petrovskii and Gillerson embraced the revolutionary movement to reject their status as people who could be discriminated against with impunity. Considering that the basis for discrimination against them was both ethnic and economic, the ideals of economic, social, and ethnic equality promoted by the contemporary revolutionary movements in Russia seemed to offer a good ideological solution. The fact that

Brailovskii-Petrovskii ended up as a socialist revolutionary and Gillerson ended up a Bundist was due to the specific circumstances of their politicization, rather than to an ideological decision; each joined the party that was available locally. For each of them, becoming a revolutionary was deeply meaningful in asserting a new Jewish identity. This was a personal reply to the state's attempt to make them less than equal to others in the Russian empire on the basis of poverty and ethnicity.

Brailovskii-Petrovskii and Gillerson were among the lucky minority educated in an official institution that could use this to make a living. Their participation in the revolutionary youth culture was a matter of personal choice, since they had other options for continuing their education and becoming professionals. This personal choice was dictated by a combination of personal pride and assertiveness in the face of discrimination. Still, each would probably have had a more comfortable life without engaging in revolutionary activism. Their choice derived from emotional needs for which socialism was a timely answer. They wanted to create a new life where any kind of discrimination would be inconceivable. Some tried to do this through liberal or non-socialist Zionist politics, but these routes provided an answer only to ethnic discrimination, not economic. They were also attracted to positions of leadership, which they could expect when working with less-educated and less-affluent young Jews. They could acquire this position only through an ideology that combated class discrimination and rejected ethnic discrimination – at the time, either socialism or anarchism. Socialism was especially attractive because it valued the thing they had fought so hard to acquire – education -- and therefore gave political meaning to their long struggle to acquire it. The

revolutionaries also felt that they could teach other people, and they understood this as an important individual contribution. For people like Gillerson or Brailovsky-Petrovsky, this new ability was very important. In addition, socialism centered on the organization of the urban workers rather than peasants. The students, who could expect to become propagandists and who wanted their achievements appreciated, keenly preferred to work in their own communities, mainly due to popular anti-Semitism. Still, for them revolutionary politics meant leadership positions in their peers' struggle for equality.

The situation was different for young people who did not manage to enter state or private educational institutions and had to study on their own. The majority still tried to study according to the official educational program in order to pass state examinations and reach a certain level of economic security.[6] This was an exceptionally difficult undertaking, both emotionally and financially. Emotionally it meant studying in isolation while encountering negative feedback at every step from the family, the community, and the educational establishment, all of whom agreed that young people of no means should be working rather than studying. Financially it meant a constant search for ways to earn the pittance necessary for survival, and living permanently on the verge of hunger. But it also meant that, unlike those in regular educational institutions, these students were especially dependent on the youth community. There they could socialize with people of similar aspirations, acquire information on possible ways to earn money and other practical issues, get emotional support and social approval of their way of life, and generally feel more at home than in any other setting. Often such socializing took place

out in the open, right on the street. Rosa Ginzburg describes these street gatherings – the birzhas:

> In the fall of 1904, the birzhas appeared – these were clubs on the street. A street would be declared to be a birzha and the workers would gather there after work. The Iskra supporters were on one side of the street, the Bund and SR supporters on the other. Here meetings were arranged, conspiratorial addresses were given, and discussions took place. A birzha was attended not only by the politically conscious workers – the members and the supporters of revolutionary organizations -- but also the gray, politically unconscious mass went there from the airless workshops. Then somebody started to work on them. The birzhas were very important for our agitation.

Becoming part of the revolutionary youth milieu also meant being surrounded by socialist ideas.

Iosif Novak, a poor extern, told of being assisted by the youth community and especially by other externs in his struggle to continue studying with no funds. The youth community helped him become financially independent and provided him with much-needed emotional support. Novak's family strongly objected to his studies and insisted he should concentrate on working for wages. Before he encountered the youth community he received no support from anyone for his desire to study. But the youth community also introduced him to its culture of revolutionary politics. He wrote: "Socializing with students I started reading some contemporary political literature and got to know some comrades who dedicated themselves fully to the revolution.…I started going to illegal

meetings, speeches, and discussions, and from time to time went to some political birzha, where you could find out the latest political news, meet people and organize, or listen to a discussion."[7] It was some time before Novak's involvement in revolutionary politics went beyond passive interest in revolutionary ideas. His studies were his first priority. But the community of young people who stayed together, studied together, helped each other, and dreamed of a revolution became his new family. Novak, who until then had fought his battles alone and was proud of it, discovered that in times of need he could rely only on others like himself, young Jews joining in solidarity to find their way despite ethnic and economic discrimination. Among them he acquired socialist ideas, which justified for him his striving for secular education and his rejection of the worker's life that his family expected him to lead.

Like others, Rosa Ginzburg gave up on the official educational system altogether and chose to pursue education exclusively in the revolutionary community. Unlike Novak, Ginzburg entered a Bundist self-education circle and shortly after became a revolutionary activist. Her initial educational goal was individualistic but, unlike Novak, she was happy to integrate into the youth culture and accept its values, putting her educational goals in second place. For Ginzburg the dilemma of choosing between revolutionary activism and individual development had an easy solution, since for her self-improvement and revolutionary activism went together. This attitude was usually more characteristic of the apprentices and workers than the students. The students usually had some resources of their own to fall back on, either financial or educational. Novak, for example, was a typesetter and was able to make some money this way, while the

apprentices (or people like Ginzburg) had only their contacts in the youth community to sustain them.

The students' view of the anti-Jewish educational quota as a symbol of discrimination against them both as Jews and as working class meant that socialist politics, which concentrated on education as the key to political liberation, became the ideological framework for the new community the young Jews created.

What Revolutionary Politics Meant to the Students

If young Jews had to struggle only against ethnic discrimination, there would have been no reason to embrace socialist ideology. There were many nonsocialist Jewish organizations pursuing exactly this aim at the beginning of the century. Class issues played a role as an additional source of discrimination, making socialism a viable political choice. In fact, it was precisely the combination of class and ethnic discrimination that prompted the self-assertion of working-class youth. This was the key to what socialism, as an ideology of struggle against these forms of discrimination, meant to the young Jews of the Pale. While ethnic discrimination was coming from the outside, either directed by the government or as an expression of popular anti-Semitism, class discrimination against poor Jews took place mostly within the Jewish community itself.

Becoming a socialist did not mean simply upholding a certain political ideology: it meant changing broader notions of social equality, especially concerning class and gender. It meant changing one's lifestyle, not simply through clothes and frugal living but by focusing on self-education and displaying self-respect in public. It meant looking like, rather than just feeling like and believing oneself to be, a revolutionary[8]. For these students, the youth culture was as much about behavior and attitude as about personal and political goals. The future Menshevik Vladimir Levitskii (Tsederbaum) provides an outsider's view of some female externs from the Pale who studied midwifery and pedagogy in St Petersburg:

> Always half-hungry, living from a pennies-worth private lessons and similar occupations, surviving on bread, tea, and sausage, overwhelmed by the persistent thirst for knowledge which to them, as the renegades in Russian society, was refused by the Tsarist government, close to the working masses by their origins and their social status, they combined in themselves a practical ability and an understanding of the needs of the mass movement, a total loyalty to the revolution and to socialism, with a somewhat limited political and theoretical understanding and, at times, with fanatical sectarianism, strengthened for many of them by a strongly developed Jewish national identity…. similar striving toward knowledge and a revolutionary mood brought us close to each other.[9]

According to Levitskii, who came from an affluent St Petersburg Jewish family, the poor educational background and a related tendency toward sectarianism were, in addition to poverty and political dedication, characteristic of Jewish revolutionary intelligentsia from the Pale. Levitskii mentions the girls' poverty as both their actual economic situation and a source of political radicalism for Jewish revolutionaries from the impoverished Jewish Pale. The youths' rejection of the Jewish elite had moral as well as political overtones, as we saw in Gillerson's bitterness about the rich merchant who paid a bribe to get his son into school. This rejection perhaps began as a matter of necessity, but it developed later into a matter of pride. The Jewish students, like other Russian revolutionaries affected by the character of Rakhmetov in Chernishevskii's widely imitated novel *What is to be Done?*, chose to spend their time on what was considered of value-- studies and political activism. To spend more time than absolutely

necessary on earning money was considered antithetical to the spirit of the youth community.

Levitskii was highly appreciative of the girls' knowledge of working-class life and their practical experience. The emphasis on practical experience, however, might well have been a part of their identity as self-reliant, individualistically assertive pursuers of education. Levitskii was probably correct in assuming that their educational level was not high. They probably realized this as well, but they could still feel superior to a big city radical like Levitskii since they alone, they believed, could communicate with the poor based on mutual life experience.

The self-education circles to which girls like these belonged characterized the revolutionary movement in the Russian empire at large, but the Jewish revolutionary circles had some special characteristics. The circles were rarely ethnically diverse, since the various anti-Semitic pressures forced Jews into certain occupations as well as certain neighborhoods. As a result of these trends, their acquaintances, people whom they knew well enough to invite them to join an illegal circle, were almost always Jews. The other reasons included the anti-Semitic attitudes of non-Jewish workers and the need to conduct a circle in Yiddish (sometimes the only language sufficiently understood by potential participants). Since the percentage of secularly educated Jews in the Pale was small, and since the number of educated Jews who could speak Yiddish was even smaller, an arrangement characteristic of the Russian revolutionary movement was impossible among Jews. Such a system depended on the educated conducting circles for the workers, but this made no sense in the Jewish context. The educational differences

between Jewish teachers and students were usually very small, and the students expected to shortly become teachers themselves.

The circles contributed not only to socialist but also Jewish identity. Young revolutionaries used the circles as an entrance to an internationalist movement, but the way the circles were conducted encouraged them to create for themselves both revolutionary and Jewish identities. This new kind of Jewish identity was created alongside an internationalist revolutionary one, and it affected the way people felt about both the revolutionary movement and the Jewish community, developing two loyalties instead of one.

The young girls Levitskii described were still not full-fledged socialist activists, despite being close to the Bund and committed to socialist ideas. Levitskii explained this by pointing to their inferior theoretical preparation, but it was more likely a result of something different and considerably more important. For young girls, adhering to a certain revolutionary ideology and joining a party was much less important in expressing revolutionary commitment than for Levitskii. For them their lifestyle and their political commitment were the signs of their adherence to socialist principles. The students indeed took joining a political party very seriously, but the choice of one party over the other was often determined by practical considerations rather than ideology. The prospective activists tended to ask themselves where they would be most useful, rather than where their political allegiances lay. The activism promoting general principles of ethnic and economic equality was important on its own terms, not as a preference for one revolutionary ideology over another.[10]

As a student from St Petersburg, Levitskii looked down on students from the Pale for their particular political culture, but not everyone shared his point of view. Grisha, studying in Kazan but originally from the Pale, was far more impressed by the political commitment of Jews from the Pale, even if their theoretical knowledge was less extensive: “The majority of the Jewish students are frivolous idlers and fops, and there are many like this here, who are easily recognizable as coming from central Russia. Those from the West are fewer and all of them make a much better impression with their conscious attitude toward the political parties and their more or less definite political credo.”[11] The difference of perspective between Levitskii and Grisha[12] on the definition of a militant was prevalent among both kinds of revolutionaries. Living communally in poverty, working on self-improvement and teaching, as well as taking part in political activism were the proper activities for a serious socialist in the eyes of the poor Jewish students. This lifestyle indicated commitment to a new identity centering on self-respect and an active position toward life. The students used new socialist or anarchist ideas to struggle against what they saw as the main symbol of oppression – the education quota. While doing so they developed an alternative education system, an alternative lifestyle, and an alternative personal and political identity for themselves.

The Apprentices and Their Way to the Revolution

For Jewish workers, artisanal apprenticeship provided the main grounds for radicalization. Just as obstacles to general education radicalized the students, obstacles to both general *and* professional education radicalized the apprentices. The main differences involved both the immediate source of the obstacles and the conceptualization of a radicalization process. While for the students the main enemy was the state, the apprentices had a much closer enemy to handle – the Jewish master who abused them and would not teach them a craft. The older coworkers usually took part in the abuse, so generational tension was much more immediate and acute than for the students. The connection to the Jewish community and the need to struggle against its authorities was also more acute. Unlike the students, the apprentices rarely had an external source of intellectual development and were dependent on the education offered to them by the Jewish community – a few years of study in the heder and some professional training. Their attitude toward the Jewish community, which usually supported the employers, was therefore deeply ambivalent. When their families could not protect them from the abuse or provide them with means to study, the revolutionary movement was there for them, often at a crucial moment in their lives. Although peer support was important for the poorer students, apprentices describe it as lifesaving.

The apprentices did not enjoy even the meager communal support that existed for the students. Like the students, however, the apprentices describe their initial contact with the revolutionary movement as a result of their individual self-assertion, whether by moving

to a large city or demanding their rights from an employer. The apprentices who later became revolutionaries deemphasized abuse in their autobiographies and emphasized their self-assertion in dealing with it. That self-assertion would be central to their later acceptance in revolutionary circles. Noi Giter-Granatshtein, an orphan from a small shtetl, presented his self-assertion as a choice between suicide and harsh exploitation, but he eventually took the less drastic step of moving to a large city. "My older sister tried to convince me to suffer a little bit more and that everything would get better for me, but I could not suffer anymore. I let her see my bruised body and, with her help, I ran away to a large industrial city, where there was only the smoke of the chimneys and the noise of the machines. And I thought this was paradise."[13] For Giter-Granatshtein the revolutionary culture offered nothing less than a reason to live. The way he represented his story, he had to completely reject his previous life in order to reach out to this culture. Giter-Granatshtein became a new person after joining the Bund and the abused child was left behind: "[In Warsaw] my life began. I was sent to a workshop for a year and a half as a tailor's apprentice. Here I heard for the first time the word Akhtes (solidarity), here I found an organization called the Bund Jewish Workers' Party, which was named Akhtes, here for the first time I met comrade Abram who talked with me about the goals of that party, and I became an active member."

Another child-apprentice, Cecilia Shuster-Fishfeder, described her apprentice life as alternating between abuse and self-assertion. Her working life started at the age of seven when she convinced a neighboring jeweler to take her as an apprentice. Later the jeweler moved to another city and took his young apprentice with him. But he began to sexually

harass the young girl and she ran away. Later the story repeated itself when the girl, again of her own volition, apprenticed herself to a tailor. Cecilia and her family eventually moved to Odessa to live with her older brother, and there Cecilia apprenticed herself as gold polisher. She left that post because she was not willing to suffer beatings from a senior journeywoman; without interference or aid from her family she found another apprenticeship as a corset maker. She was ten years old at this time. Later, when she learned to repair corsets, she left to work as a helper in her cousin's workshop, finally gaining a position higher than an apprentice. Cecilia was never abused on the job again. According to Cecilia, she never told her mother about the sexual harassment or the beatings, always dealing with the problems herself. She was expected to bring money to the family budget, but had to (and did) fend for herself in the labor market. She emphasized her pride in this in her autobiography.[14]

Fania Chizhevskaya claimed that her life path was determined when revolutionary fellow-workers intervened on her behalf after she rebelled against abuse. They may have done so simply to prevent the harsh beating of a young girl, but for Chizhevskaya this was an act of solidarity that affected her whole life. She described the horrific exploitation she suffered as a child apprentice in a factory that eventually drove her to seek escape in death. Her older brother prevented her from committing suicide, but when she returned to work she was more distracted than usual. The factory owner's wife cursed her; Chizhevskaya, who had already decided she wanted to die and had nothing to lose, cursed her back and screamed about the injustice the workers (and she in particular) suffered in that factory. She described this moment as her act of self-assertion, the

beginning of a new identity and a new life: “During the fight all the workers got up and insisted that the factory owner’s wife and daughter leave me alone, but they were so infuriated, they did not want to listen. Then Grisha Kagan, a worker from Lodz, ran over and pulled them away, releasing me from these furious wild animals. After recovering from the fight I felt that I was not alone and I felt the power of workers. Until then I thought that the owners could do whatever they wanted with us, but now I knew this was not so.”[15] Like other apprentices, Chizhevskaya described her initiation into the workers’ community as an act of individual self-assertion. After proving her individual worth by defending herself, the other workers were ready to take her side and include her in their community.

Like Chizhevskaya, Shuster-Feder attributed becoming a revolutionary activist to a natural progression of self-assertion, though in fact she became a revolutionary under the influence of a neighboring family that took interest in her. Her family was helpless to assist in her struggles, but revolutionary neighbors could offer a way to struggle against her inferior social status and difficult working conditions. They also offered the social and emotional support she lacked. Cecilia needed something more in her life than work, and she found it within the revolutionary culture: “At that time in the same house with us lived a social-democratic family, one of whose female members was in prison. That family was kind and they liked me, so I felt comfortable visiting them often. I could listen to them discussing politics and came to understand what one of the sisters was in prison for. The result of their frequent conversations with me was my interest in politics, expressed by carrying packages to the prison and fulfilling small errands related to illegal

work. I was 13 years old and I was a smart girl." For Cecilia the revolutionary culture provided a substitute for the things she never received from her own family, including support, protection, and emotional security – but she also talks about, or hints at, ideas.

Chizhevskaya, Shuster-Feder, and Giter-Granatshtein were introduced to the revolutionary community by older people who took an interest in them, but they viewed their own journey as a process of self-assertion. They saw these substitute families as an alternative to the hopeless workers' life, while for the students it was an alternative to either an individual struggle or a life as an artisan. Even without studying, the workers' options were usually improved by contact with socialist circles and they could hope to become skilled artisans of relatively high status, such as printers. Unlike Giter-Granatshtein and Shuster-Fishfeder, Chizhevskaya's own family, especially her revolutionary older brother, became part of her alternative revolutionary family. Chizhevskaya did not need to leave her original family to become a revolutionary, not even symbolically, but her close relationship with her older brother evolved only after she earned her revolutionary credentials.

Giter-Granatshtein, Shuster-Fishfeder, and Chizhevskaya all describe their initiation into the revolutionary movement as a dramatic, lifesaving event, in which rescue from oppression as an apprentice is foremost in importance. Others, however, describe their initiation by an older authority figure through pursuit of knowledge rather than justice. In that sense some of the apprentices were similar to some of the students. For both, a self-education circle was the key for self-respect and a new identity, in their own eyes and in the view of their peers and the Jewish community as a whole. Moisei Khilkovich, a

former yeshiva student and an apprentice in a typography shop, became interested in an older worker because he, unlike the other workers in the shop, was constantly reading a newspaper. Khilkovich says that the other workers were "corrupt" (by which he probably meant habitual drinking, going to prostitutes, and so on), but that this older worker was serious and friendly. The young Khilkevich "liked him so much" that he "even imitated his movements....I desperately wanted to get closer to him and become friends. Probably comrade Farber noticed this and once in the evening after work he invited me to walk with him for half an hour before I went home. I happily accepted his offer and we went for a walk. During the walk he talked to me about things I found hard to understand, but his questions attracted and interested me. The talk became longer and more interesting and we ended up walking not for half an hour but for three hours. This talk I will remember for the rest of my life."[16] Farber talked to the young apprentice about the workers' conditions and invited him to join a self-education circle. Khilkevich gladly accepted the invitation. His primary attraction to Farber derived not from a desperate situation at work, but from a desire for knowledge. Khilkevich initially became interested in Farber because he was reading a newspaper and could talk about interesting things, not because he offered the young apprentice protection or assistance.

Interestingly enough, the older people who brought young people to the revolutionary culture disappeared from their autobiographical narratives immediately after they performed their role as intermediaries. Like the students, the apprentices describe joining a youth culture rather than a multigenerational revolutionary community, though their initiation usually took place through an older worker. The young age of their

peers made them feel like equals who did not have to defer to older authority figures. There were, in fact, many more young Jewish revolutionaries in 1905, and the mature people who participated seem relatively rare. Youth became one of the components of the revolutionary identity, along with self-assertion, striving toward knowledge, and a powerful solidarity with other workers, students, or both.

None of these components was unique to Jews. Other young revolutionary workers aspired to similar things; were attracted to the revolutionary movement; studied in circles; and were proud of their new identity as educated, self-respecting people in control of their own lives. Leopold Haimson, for example, points out that the attraction of the SD party to Russian workers in St. Petersburg's Vyborg district was the important place this party granted workers in its political narrative.[17] He also points out that the kind of education provided in revolutionary circles enforced the workers' self-image as urban, sophisticated, educated people. It reinforced the differentiation between these workers and their village relatives as much as a similar education reinforced the differentiation between young Jewish workers and their orthodox elders. In both cases this differentiation had an important cultural and political meaning. Jewish workers shared with their Russian counterparts frustration that their new identity did not lead to a rise in social status. [18] They were all radicalized as a result.

The main differences between Jewish and Russian workers derived from the effects of state and popular anti-Semitism. In non-Russian areas of the empire where the sense of national oppression of the titular population was either overwhelmingly strong as in Poland, or rapidly increasing as in Lithuania and the Ukraine, Jews, a minority within a

minority, were constantly discriminated against by both the government and the titular populations who were suspicious of their relative lack of nationalist sentiment and tendency to adopt aspects of Russian culture. Competition over jobs was demarcated by ethnicity, and Jewish workers were left with the worst jobs in the least mechanized sectors of the economy.

These conditions meant that the Jewish workers almost always worked for Jewish employers, and while the worker-revolutionaries conducted the antidiscrimination struggle against the government they also conducted a class struggle within the Jewish community. The Jewish workers, almost all employed by small workshops, were socially segregated from non-Jewish workers and developed their socialist consciousness largely among themselves. Therefore the meaning of revolutionary politics for them was both like and unlike what it meant for Russian workers or, for that matter, for Polish workers who resented the political subjugation of Poland and were willing to collaborate with the middle classes in the rapidly industrializing Polish economy in exchange for better jobs. While Zionist ideas became prevalent at this time, especially among the more affluent, there was no clear goal to Jewish nationalism (as there was for Polish nationalism, for example) and many Jews were more interested in struggling for human rights and economic equality wherever they lived rather than in emigration to Palestine. For Jewish workers particularly, their ethnicity was mainly an economic impediment, therefore the internationalist ideas of socialism were especially attractive for them. Since Jewish workers almost always worked for Jewish employers and since Jewish revolutionaries

often encountered a bitter and often violent resistance within the Jewish community, national ideas were also a problem.

What Revolutionary Politics Meant to the Apprentices

In most cases, class rather than ethnicity was still the key to initial politicization of the Jewish workers. Unlike the externs, apprentices' initial experience of discrimination took place within the Jewish community, in small, struggling workshops. Only later, when they developed aspirations for a better life, did they encounter ethnic discrimination face to face. Until then unless they experienced a pogrom they tended to either accept it or consider leaving the country. They tended to not struggle against it. As a result, most young Jewish workers entered revolutionary politics due to class-based problems, encouraged by older Jewish coworkers. Socialism for them was the key to an urban, respectable identity, and their first step toward it was liberation from submission to the employer, assisted by other politicized young Jewish workers.

Kalman Ostrovsky, an illiterate Warsaw worker from a small shtetl, tells how he became a revolutionary:

> Sometime in 1902-1903, all the turners in Warsaw went on strike. Our master, to make sure he would not lose money, shut the windows (the workshop was on the ground floor) but one day some workers entered the workshop and said that we should also stop working. At night we took all our things, when the master was still asleep, and went to the place indicated to us by a comrade. The very next day one of those who ran away was arrested, but our comrades intervened and he was released. The strike soon ended and I went to work in another workshop for 10 hours a

> day and 50 kopecks per day. From that moment my life changed. Comrades started coming to me and explaining things, pointing to all the injustice that was going on. Slowly I started listening.[19]

For Ostrovsky socialism had the same meaning as for the other apprentices whose autobiographies I have cited: a new identity. He started his story of politicization with a strike, presenting it as if the workers actually confronted the master. In fact, he and the workers waited until the strikers forced them to join the strike. The workers may not have minded being forced to participate, but none of them wanted to be considered the initiator of the strike. Nevertheless, the strike and his subsequent running away was an expression of self-respect that made the "comrades" interested in Ostrovsky. Socialism provided Ostrovsky with a new notion of himself as an assertive person whose opinion counted. Here too, as in Chizhevskaya's story, the initial expression of assertiveness was backed up by workers' solidarity, when the strikers helped him and his coworkers to run away from their master and then interceded with the police for the one who had been captured.[20] Ostrovsky had run away from masters several times in the past, but this time he was not alone. This solidarity, as well as respectful acknowledgement, was what the workers' movement offered him. Ostrovsky's immediate expression of his new identity was to join a self-education circle, where he had the opportunity to acquire some basic education. This process of studying enforced his new image as a self-respecting person who took part in a community committed to fighting for workers' rights.

Another, much more assertive worker, Iuda Orlov, expressed his newfound socialist identity by organizing a strike and becoming a local hero in the small city of

Pogor. A socialist worker named Khaim-Leib came to Pogor and became Orlov's friend. Orlov became interested in activism, and went with Khaim-Leib to Starodub to ask the local Bundists for advice. Orlov and Khaim-Leib then decided the best strategy was to organize a strike in the workshop where Orlov worked. The strike, an unheard of phenomenon in the little city, was easily won and the strikers became heroes to all the other local workers who followed in their footsteps.[21] These events took place in 1905, and are therefore not so unusual -- but the interesting issue is that for both Orlov and Khaim-Leib, becoming revolutionaries meant taking personal initiative to organize a strike rather than simply following the orders of a revolutionary organization. They received only some literature in Starodub; the strike came from their own actions. At other times a strike would probably not have been the best method to create a local organization, but individual initiative was still key to the self-definition of the revolutionary. Immediately after the success of their organizing drive, Orlov and Khaim-Leib established a self-education circle. Here we have the components of their revolutionary identity–an act of individual initiative; education; and responsibility toward their community, the Jewish workers, whose life they were proud to improve.

Unlike Ostrovsky, Orlov and Khaim-Leib were initially the only socialists in their town. As for the larger cities where revolutionary organizations were better established, we have a detailed description from Fania Chizhevskaia of what it meant to be accepted by the revolutionary community. She continues the story of her older revolutionary co-workers protecting her from the beating by telling how the other workers, as well as her Bundist older brother, began to teach her about revolutionary politics. She was especially

proud of her loyalty to her fellow workers, which she expressed when a strike started and the police tried to obtain information from her, assuming she was too young to withstand pressure:

> The police questioned me for two hours, hoping that they could use threats to get information from me about who taught me to strike, but they got nothing from me, since my hard childhood (in fact, my lack of childhood) taught me to hate those who prevented me from being a free, normal child and to support those like me. Since they got nothing from me, we all were released. I think it was the first major strike in Gomel, and so all the workers of Gomel were interested in its results and waited impatiently by the police station to find out about the result of our questioning (most of all they wanted to know how I behaved during the questioning, since my cousin and I were both the youngest and the least experienced), but when everybody found out that I handled myself during the questioning better than some older workers, they almost carried me on their shoulders as we left the police station. [22]

Chizhevskaya, who like Orlov became a local heroine because of her conduct during the strike, describes the revolutionary community as her new family: people who liked and trusted her and, most of all, gave her a reason to live. She was very young at the time and the distribution of illegal literature was a task usually entrusted to entry-level activists, but Chizhevskaya felt appreciated and respected for the first time in her life, and she believed that she earned this respect through her initiative and solidarity. For her, as

for Ostrovsky, this solidarity was central to becoming a person who could protect herself and others, rather than someone expendable, someone barely existing at the bottom of the social order. This is what revolutionary culture meant to the workers on the emotional level.

Few apprentices could afford the independent life typical of the students. They were more dependent on their employers, their families, and the approval of neighbors. However, they did often end up sharing an apartment with other young, radicalized workers, including members of both sexes.[23] Generally the relationship between the sexes was more one of comrades than among nonrevolutionary workers. Belonging to the revolutionary youth environment made geographic mobility easier for a young worker searching for better employment. A worker would be better off being referred by the local organization, but even without it the local comrades would likely assist with accommodations, finding a job, and so on.[24] In fact, the workers passed on information about job opportunities through the channels of their party affiliations. Since many activists of different parties knew each other personally, these information channels often crossed party lines. This kind of information was also available to any revolutionary worker at the local birzha. Considering that many of the apprentices, like Giter-Granatshtein, wanted to get to a big city where the work conditions were better and where there were better chances to study, supporting them in this endeavor gave the revolutionary youth community an important role. The support the radicalized apprentices and workers gave each other in their struggles against the employers also gave them a new and important role in their community, the community of Jewish

workers. Although the apprentices received less assistance from the Jewish community than the students, they stayed closer to it and saw their new identity, initially individualistic, as a way to improve the life of their fellow Jewish workers. Many of them either resided with or were in close contact with their families, and family opinions were important to them. The vast majority also took for granted their place as workers within the Jewish community, employed by Jews and working alongside other Jews. They redefined what the Jewish community meant to them, but never tried to leave it as the students did. For them the value of their new identity derived from a new ability to protect others, not from their ability for self-improvement as with the students.

[1] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 242.
[2] The task was indeed extremely difficult. For example, the historian Simon Dubnov never achieved this goal even though he tried for four years. Simon Dubnov, *Kniga Zhizni* (Moscow, 2004).
[3] GARF f. 533 op. 3 d. 633.
[4] Rosa Grinberg tells of financing four years of study in a private primary school by gathering old nails and steel pieces. She was eight or nine years old at the time. GARF f. 533 op. 3 d. 735.
[5] GARF f. 533 op. 3 d. 633.
[6] The students studied by themselves using the official textbooks, and attempted each year to pass the final examinations. A student with a certificate noting four years of gymnasium could reasonably hope to support him or herself by private lessons. More ambitious students kept taking the entrance examinations hoping to enter the gymnasium, though perhaps not the first, but the second or the third grade. A good grade, as with Gillerson, did not mean they were accepted. They could study in private schools if the family had the funds (most families did not), and they could then hope to continue their studies in an institute of higher education, whether in Russia where they again had to deal with the quota issue or abroad. Things were easier for girls, since they had to deal only with family reluctance to invest money in their education and with local anti-Semitism rather than official discrimination. My impression from reading the autobiographies is that girls who really wanted to get into a gymnasium and whose families could afford to forgo their labor usually managed to do so. The girls among the externs were more politically motivated and were interested particularly in a political education.
[7] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1402.
[8] According to existing memoirs a revolutionary adopted aggressive and studious demeanor, kept his hair long or her hair short, dressed like a Russian worker and made sure his or hair dress was cheap and simple. As for color scheme a red shirt with black skirt or trousers were prevalent.
[9] Vladimir Levitskii, *Za Chetvert' Veka* (Moscow, 1926-7), pp. 128-29.
[10] See Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, vol. 1, (Stanford, 1988), pp. 184-85. This does not mean that there was no conflict among the parties in different localities. Indeed, since it was relatively easy for one party to attract working-class activists from another, the struggles conducted among the local party intelligentsia tended to be very bitter.
[11] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 199.
[12] This difference in opinion between the intellectual elite and the other activists was present in other parties as well. When the SR party asked a group of its young activists studying in Germany to give up their studies to work for the party in Russia, they refused, claiming that they needed a good educational background for their political work. The group included such future leaders of the party as Nikolai Avksentiev, Vladimir

Zenzinov, and Ilia Fondaminskii. Victor Chernov, *Pered burei* (Minsk, 2004), pp. 191-92, 208. In his memoirs Chernov approves of their decision.

[13] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 446. His memoirs were published in *Katorga i ssylka*, 1925, No' 5; 1930, No' 5.6

[14] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2345.

[15] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2236.

[16] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2161.

[17] Leopold Haimson, "Russian Workers' Political and Social Identities," in Reginald Zelnik, ed., *Workers and Intelligentsia in Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 152, 164.

[18] Steinberg, *Moral Communities*; Hogan, *Forging Revolution*.

[19] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1460.

[20] The police were often used by employers to enforce the employment or apprenticeship contracts.

[21] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1447.

[22] GARF f. 533, op. 2 d. 2236.

[23] For example, GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 176.

[24] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 95; f. 102 op. 265 d. 121; f. 533 op. 3 d. 2148 and many other similar documents.

Chapter 3 – The Emotional Experience of Politicization

While historians have dealt with the process of radicalization of the Pale of Settlement working-class Jews as an intellectual process, I argue that viewing radicalization as an emotional process will add much to our understanding of the phenomenon of radicalization as a whole. Similar feelings were experienced differently before and after radicalization, and these feelings, enhanced by socialist and anarchist ideologies and the weakening of the traditional Jewish community, created the type of working-class militant so prevalent in the Jewish society of the Pale.

The new structure of feeling was a coherent response to the circumstances under which the working-class Jewish youth had to function in the early twentieth century. The combination of geographic mobility, economic hardship, weakening of the traditional authorities, and revolutionary ideologies encouraged the Jewish youth to take individual responsibility for themselves as well as for others. This responsibility was actively expressed in interaction with both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

I call the emotional basis for this responsibility an activist structure of feeling. People described their dominant prepoliticization feelings as passive, and including helplessness, humiliation, and frustration. They described their post-politicization feelings as active, and including anger, pride, self-respect, as well as love and protectiveness toward others. In other words, while prepoliticization feelings were not necessarily expected to be expressed in action, adopting the activist structure of feeling meant that an action should ensue as a reaction to the feeling. The activist structure of

feeling was thus how activists interpreted these feelings that made them what they were – working-class revolutionaries.

The activist structure of feeling meant that people viewed their life stories as a coherent line of events that brought them a new status within the Jewish community. Understanding life in these new narrative terms was affected by book reading and the education the new revolutionaries received in the circles. Significantly, Fridman and many other revolutionaries describe their parents tearing their new books to pieces. Books were the keys to a new identity. Even though people in fact read very little, the little they did read meant a great deal to them. Reading offered a powerful new tool for constructing an identity based on a theory that seemed rational and evidence-based. This alone changed their life stories into something important, narratives that were previously available only to members of the social elite. The pride of people like Fridman preferring an intellectual lecture to popular jokes was immense. However, after encountering education in the political context and using it to form a new identity, they had nothing to go back to. They needed a justification for their lives, and it was difficult for a working-class Jew who had abandoned religion and family to find a justification outside of revolutionary ideas. Revolutionary ideas provided the Jewish youth not only with intellectual weapons to confront the prevalent ideas within the Jewish community, but with a new identity and a legitimization to the new activist structure of feeling, which made them feel like different people who were more capable of confronting the contemporary reality.

What was that passive structure of feeling that the Jewish youth learned at home and within the traditional Jewish community, and which they were happy to replace with the activist structure of feeling? Why did the young people see it as so incompatible with the contemporary reality and with their personal aspirations? The most powerful memory conveyed in the autobiographies is of belittlement, even for people whose lives were not as bitter as that of Chizhevskaya or Giter-Granatshtein. The sources relate continual attempts at social control levied by the family, the community, the employers, the authorities, and the anti-Semitic society at large. Whether this belittlement focused on their ethnicity, their class, or their youth, and whether they accepted a lowly status or fought against it by all available means, the emotional experience seems to have been the same. The sources recount these feelings of belittlement as a persistent struggle, with little standing between them and the powers levying the discrimination.[1]

Iosif Brailovskii, a bookbinder from Mariupol, tells the story of his struggle against family, employers, and the authorities, emphasizing that he constantly fought the belittlement he experienced. Brailovskii, who according to police documents was a criminal before encountering the revolutionaries, had to deemphasize his criminal past in his autobiography and convince The Ex-Political Prisoners and Exiles' Society members that he was, in fact, a revolutionary even before he was in contact with any revolutionary organization. The constant emotional pressure to resign himself to his destiny as a poor worker, which he describes as part of his life prior to revolutionary involvement, was familiar to his contemporaries. Brailovsky narrates his life before he became politically active as a constant attempt to escape, first from the severity and poverty of his family

and later from the excessive work in his places of employment. He repeatedly describes his fury about his life of hopelessness, poverty and despair, circumstances he experienced as unbearable. Brailovsky wandered from place to place, and eventually "joined an open struggle with all those who used force not only against me but also against my comrades….Comrades gathered around me and we protested together. My comrades taught me to read and write. I was interested in their knowledge, especially in political matters and we helped each other both morally and materially." Later a revolutionary worker named Abramov introduced him to revolutionary literature and to the circles.[2]

Brailovsky is uncommonly vague about the identity of the comrades he mentions before his encounter with the revolutionary activist Abramov. This indicates that he was probably aware of the general bias the revolutionaries developed during the twenties against people like him -- people who mixed revolutionary activism with common criminal acts. The ex-activists in the 1920s were concerned with emphasizing their high social status, and therefore with differentiating themselves from criminals. Brailovsky knew it was especially important for him to express not just the "correct" ideas, but the right structure of feeling to indicate that he belonged with the revolutionaries rather than the criminals. He had to emphasize how his feelings changed from despair to belligerence and to pride in his new identity and in the comradeship of the workers, and how these new feelings were expressed in political action. This does not mean he agreed to the differentiation. I would not be surprised if he considered his criminal activity part of his general rebellion against oppression. Brailovsky conveys such an impression when narrating his "open struggle" against oppressors.

But what was the oppression Brailovsky fought against? It began with his family, and his subsequent working life seemed to be a repetition of the oppressive, belittling atmosphere he encountered at home. What troubled him both at home and at work was not only how hard the work was, but the hopelessness of his life. The entire atmosphere infuriated him, since it left him no choice but to stay what he was – a disrespected, poor, uneducated worker. No wonder he depicts each of his attempts at running away as an attempt at liberation. Anything seemed better to Brailovsky than staying at home or working for a master whose shop reminded him of his impoverished, depressing home.

Brailovsky repeatedly ran away after that initial revolutionary contact, first from Iuzovka and later, after coming back to Iuzovka as an activist, to Baku. After encountering the movement, however, he depicts his running quite differently. Before his political contact he was running away with no clear purpose. Afterward, Brailovsky perceived that he had a political purpose, a view that was not necessarily accurate, but one that enabled him to define himself in a different way. Initially he described the workers he encountered as comrades, but after learning to read and write and being exposed to revolutionary literature he began to respond like Fridman. Brailovsky began to look down on workers who had not acquired the socioeconomic insight that he had. The revolutionary movement took him from the belittling legacy of his family and provided him with a social environment and an elevated status that carried less emotional suffering. For him, this was an enormous source of emotional security.

People expressed their experience of degradation in different ways, but they all described it as something that prevented them from individual development, and enforced

their lowly social status, both issues that seemed incompatible with modern life and modern individual identity. Brailovsky's main emotional stressors came from his status as a poor worker and the hopelessness of his attempts to escape that role. For Giter-Granatshtein and others like him, the pressure came from the sheer inability to survive under extremely difficult working conditions. The main issue for people like Chizhevskaya was their helplessness in dealing with employers due to their poverty. It makes sense to assume that the issue of ethnic conflict between workers was downplayed in the autobiographies, which were written mostly in the mid-1920s (though the issue was occasionally raised and was not entirely taboo). The impression conveyed, however, was that many of the poorest workers experienced belittlement within rather than outside the Jewish community, from Jewish employers and other authority figures.

On the other hand, those who were a bit more affluent experienced their degradation primarily as Jews; ethnicity was the primary source of their suffering and of their notion that the old structure of feeling did not work in the new reality. Solomon Gillerson, a student, felt degraded by the 1903 Kishinev pogrom.[3] The pogrom in Kishinev was shocking to many Jews because it emphasized the defenselessness of their population in the face of both popular and official anti-Semitism. But both the pogrom organizers and Jews experienced this pogrom and the pogroms during the 1905 revolution as an attempt to belittle the newly politically assertive Jewish population, to keep Jews in their place.[4] The widespread participation of peasants and urban workers in the pogroms had an enormous emotional effect on the political identity of the Jewish revolutionaries. Gillerson experienced the pogroms as emotional pressure from the non-

Jewish environment to regress to what they expected a Jew to be, and passively accept his life conditions. Already influenced by the activist structure of feeling and believing that the old passivity was incompatible to his new identity, Gillerson addressed not the public implications of the pogroms but his private emotions about something very intimate, creating a family of his own. He felt that the pogromists intended to rob him of the basic human right to have a family by robbing him of his ability to protect it. He was unwilling to accept this and was looking for ways to react.

The pogrom in Kishinev was not the first time Gillerson had experienced the eventually politicizing experience of being degraded on the basis of ethnicity. As a young child he had the common experience of hiding from the police with his mother, because his father did not have all the papers necessary for the family to reside in Riga, outside the Pale: "My mother cried a lot, and this fear, humiliation, and my mother's grief all impressed forever my childish soul….My memory of that time is one of the most powerful and vivid impressions of my early childhood. At the age of five I received a very clear and good lesson from the autocratic regime that I was an outcast with no rights in the country where I was born and where my parents worked honestly for their entire life."[5] As a child he felt he had no rights, but when recalling the story as an adult he was enraged, and his initial feelings of helplessness turned into an active anger.

None of Gillerson's stories are particularly unusual. In fact, he seems to have been lucky, relative to others for whom similar stories ended with considerably more severe personal consequences. David Shinder, who also mentions the pogroms as key to his politicization process, refers with great bitterness to his childhood experience of

expulsion to the Pale with his family. His parents' humiliation was the key emotional experience that made him feel that a new and active emotional reaction would be better than the traditional acceptance of life conditions, even more so than for Gillerson. He became a Zionist and subsequently joined the Bund. Describing his formerly middle-class family's expulsion, Shinder says, "The tears of my mother, the hidden rage and the impotence of my father; it was a strong impression and it stayed with me for a lifetime."[6]

The experience of a parent's humiliation was also part of Ekaterina Riskind's story and initiated an emotional change for her as well. Her father was assaulted and crippled by a group of noblemen in Kharkov, but because he was a Jew residing outside of the Pale with no legal rights he could find no legal recourse. She writes, "When I was only eight years old I already had a grievance against the autocratic landowners' regime."[7] Riskind says her grievance was against the regime in general, but the source of her anger and the impetus to adopt the activist structure of feeling was the way the regime degraded her father.

The precarious legal status of many contemporary Jewish families created similar experiences. Ethnic humiliation was a powerful experience for many young Jews, and they had to deal with it by asserting their differences from their parents and therefore as people who could not be easily humiliated. Many coped through Zionist or, in most cases, revolutionary politics. Emotionally this meant adopting the activist structure of feeling, of identifying with the figure of a revolutionary fighter. Yerukhimovich, a worker from Dvinsk, for example, recalls that for a long time people tried to convince him of the justice of socialism even though he believed in free competition, until a

particular event occurred: “Ioske, the son of a synagogue employee, came to me, talked to me for five minutes, and that was it. I have no idea why I could not understand anything before or why now I understood everything at once. He said: ‘You see, they beat up our people, we cannot go anywhere, people fight to earn more money, we should start organizing into a union.”[8] Since he remarks afterward on ethnicity-based discrimination, it is clear that the “people” he refers to are Jews. He did not become politically involved because of purely economic grievances, but he resented ethnicity-based discrimination against Jews and felt, rather than thought, that it was right to do something about that. The young Jews’ transformation into activists as a journey from passive to active response to degradation was a generational one – rejecting parental and communal passivity.

Their parents went through similar experiences of economic, social, and ethnicity-based humiliation without reacting in the same way as did the generation of 1905. We should thus ask why this generation in particular rejected the old structure of feeling and needed a new one. The younger generation was already influenced, if only by hearsay, by the ideas of the Enlightenment and of socialism, as well as by enhanced contact with non-Jewish society due to urbanization. That younger generation was incapable of dismissing non-Jewish society as socially irrelevant, as many of their parents and grandparents did. They were open enough to the outside world to consider humiliation by a non-Jew a relevant humiliation -- and also to be able to question, if only at an emotional level, the need to passively accept their lowly status as workers. In addition many of the workers came from families like Chizhevskaya’s, with an initially secure economic status

that deteriorated during the lifetime of their parents. There was no reason for them to accept their lowly social and economic status as workers. They resented it and used the activist structure of feeling to justify their resentment and their resistance. For someone like Riskind, becoming a revolutionary after what happened to her father was a response expected by her peers, though it was not so for the father himself. For Chizhevskaya, seeing the employer as the enemy was also taken for granted, unlike for her parents; and unlike her parents for whom indignation was not expected to result in political action, she was proud to join a struggle against the employers. The youths' sense of belonging not only to the Jewish community but to humanity as a whole developed a sense of their right to dignity. Any offense to this dignity within the activist structure of feeling seemed immoral, and for them indignation entitled them to what they saw as the only valid response – political resistance. Indignation did not always mean joining a revolutionary movement. For many, and even for many revolutionaries after the reaction started, the answer was immigration. For others it was personal improvement or liberal politics. But during the 1905 revolution, when it seemed that there was a practical chance for real change, many of those who felt anger were more than happy to take to the street. This was their expression of active love and solidarity toward their peers and toward their community, feelings which were important to the new structure of feeling.

Noi Giter-Granatshtein wrote that his life seemed to begin when he heard the word 'solidarity' for the first time.[9] Solidarity for Giter-Granatshtein was not just a political concept, but also a deeply emotional one. It meant finding a group of peers in which he was accepted for what he was, rather than looked down upon and exploited.

Solidarity also meant for him a substitute family, a source of protection and emotional support. His sister, no matter how loving, disappeared from his narrative after he joined the Bund. His love, at least the love he expressed in his autobiography, was directed toward his comrades.

The struggle of a revolutionary is allegedly for all humankind, but in practice, as we saw in the case of Chizhevskaya, that struggle often ended up being a struggle for other revolutionized workers. The struggle was allegedly anonymous, but for many people its emotional meaning included people they actually knew. Only through that familiarity did people like Chizhevskaya begin feeling that those she depended on were worthy of her love and solidarity. The revolutionary culture during the 1905 revolution was skilled at creating this feeling of love and solidarity among its Jewish adherents. Chizhevskaya mentioned her love and devotion for her older brother only after they were both politicized. Only within the revolutionary culture did he have sufficient authority to reach out for her love as a sister.

Even family-based love, when it was expressed toward peers, had to be expressed through politicized emotions of solidarity. For example, this is how Matvei Neishlos expressed his love for his mother: "My mother died in 1912 when she was 45 years old, two and a half years after I was exiled, and her death had a lot to do with my exile. My mother was an uneducated housewife, she supported the revolutionary movement of 1905-6, kept a conspiratorial center in her home, and the Lubny Bund organization trusted her with keeping things like their flag."[10] His mother's involvement with the

revolutionary movement somehow legitimated Neishlos's expression of love and concern for her.

Young workers often emphasized not just love, but also hatred as the dominant feeling of their new identity. Khaim Gersh, a future anarchist, told about his experience of hatred and how it developed into a more politicized expression, more a part of revolutionary solidarity:

> When I was 12 years old, I was sent for training to a tailor, where they treated me badly, and while still a boy I was already angry and hated my master and the rich in general, who, as I saw it, looked down on the poor. Each time my master cursed "di shvester und bruder" [sisters and brothers, that is, the Bund members] because they did not want to work for 12 hours (from 6 to 6), wanted to get rid of the Tsar and the distinction between rich and poor, I always instinctively felt love toward those people. When I finished my training I was only 17 years old, but a comrade invited me to a meeting in a forest. I remember that at that meeting they talked about the importance of class struggle…. I do not remember which party called the meeting, but afterward I started to meet that worker frequently.[11]

Gersh started the story of his politicization with his hatred toward the wealthy. His hatred initially derived from his personal condition rather than from structural condemnation of the system, but when he was introduced to revolutionary ideas he apparently made a connection between his hatred and what his employer conceived as the revolution and irrational rejection of all authority. He initially found it difficult to

understand revolutionary ideas, but the fact that the revolutionary community provided an outlet for his hatred that could lend legitimacy and respectability was very important. The booklets he managed to read as well as the lectures in the circle gave him an ideological framework for his initial emotions, but they also changed those emotions into something that included comradely feelings of solidarity with other workers. His new kind of hatred seemed much more constructive. He was no longer a helpless and abused child hating his tormentors, but a self-respecting member of a political organization whose hatred had rational reasons, explained in books by educated people.

Samuil Levitin, a poor worker from Vladikavkaz, relates the ways an old, amorphous sense of outrage against life's general conditions mutated into revolutionary opposition. Levitin bitterly recalls his family's poverty. "Since early childhood I was in difficult conditions, often half-starved, wandering in the streets with other children. Then, during my five years of training in the workshop, the master conducted his training with daily cursing, beatings, and merciless exploitation." He describes how that initial feeling of bitterness qualitatively changed after contact with radical students:

> All of this affected my psychology and encouraged me to struggle against all that causes suffering. Becoming a craftsman and working for masters whose exploitation met no resistance at all, I started looking for a way out, since I started to see that all of us workers were suffering under the same conditions. Being sensitive since childhood and reading newspapers and books I quickly became acquainted with some…students, and slowly started getting some illegal literature, which clarified what we needed to do.[12]

Levitin mentions an early awareness of the need for workers' unity, but unless his situation was unique, it is likely that some of the people beating and cursing him were older workers, not just the workshop owner. It seems more likely that his feelings were not initially politically motivated, or even required action on his part at first, but that he responded to his specific situation as a poor, low-status employee. This amorphous feeling of indignation did not necessarily have anything to do with his love of reading or his effort to connect with those who could educate him. Only after he started reading illegal literature and having contact with the revolutionary circles did he manage to put together his indignation and his desire for education – a prime combination for a new revolutionary identity, one more compatible to his life. By then his outrage had changed from a general and rather passive feeling of dissatisfaction and an impression that his condition was morally wrong into part of an activist structure of feeling. He had transformed it into a source of political action, participating in a strike and later joining a revolutionary party. His outrage was the same feeling he experienced before his politicization, but it changed with his transformed personal and political identities.

Another revolutionary who described his indignation on behalf of the poor was Sania Kontorskii, who initially joined the Zionists – a group that held no grudge against the wealthy. Only after initial politicization did Kontorskii reframe his initial outrage in a way that explains his abandonment of Zionism to join the Bund. His story is more personal than Levitin's and the indignation sounds more poignant, but the object of his initial anger is just as amorphous. He tells of the aftermath of his father's death, when he went to work as a grocery salesman to help his mother and younger siblings. "I

encountered the contradiction that no matter how hard I worked no pay raise was forthcoming, and I became bitter against my masters who lived in wealth, traveling abroad for their health, when I was refused a small raise even though my mother and the children starved. I instinctively started hating the rich."[13] Much like Levitin, Kontorskii was initially indignant about poverty and injustice in general, but did not see political ramifications in his anger or, for that matter, the necessity for any other reaction. He was angry about the behavior of his particular employers, but that did not prevent him from consciously joining a political movement that included employers like them. Only during his Zionist activism did he become exposed to the political ideas that gave him the impetus to leave the Zionist movement and join the Bund. Only then, when exposed to the politicized youth, did his passive frustration with his working conditions turn into an active anger against the employers and require him to act against their exploitation.

Chizhevskaya's story is about a specific, rather than a general, indignation. Her suicide attempt was triggered by her bitterness toward her employers who found ways not to pay her because of her young age and her feeling that there was nothing she could do to stop that injustice. She says: "In the factory, the owner and his wife insulted, humiliated, and exploited me unbelievably."[14] Chizhevskaya initially presented her suicide attempt as a moral protest against this particular injustice. Only after the other workers interfered on her behalf and began to introduce her to revolutionary thinking did she begin to see this as a political act, a kind of initiation into the revolutionary community. When Chizhevskaya later speaks of outrage over the whipping of demonstrators in Vilna, the subsequent attempt of Hirsh Lekkert to kill the military

governor, and Lekkert's hanging, her indignation is different. She feels for other people rather than for herself, and she is sorry that she had not been among those who retaliated for these acts. At that turning point she understood herself to be a fighter for the rights of all the workers rather than an individualist fighting only for herself. By that time in her life a politically passive reaction like suicide would have been unthinkable.

Those young workers used the indignation that had been building all their lives as a stepping-stone toward a new moral identity. With this new identity they condemned the previous authority figures in their lives, and built a new worldview in which they had a high moral status due to their initial suffering. The revolutionary literature as well as the circles and other means of conveying revolutionary ideas provided them with a framework through which their early feelings of indignation and moral superiority were intellectually and socially legitimized.[15] They transformed lifelong feelings into an active, political assertion, turning that energy against those in power – those who, at least in their eyes, belonged to the exploiters. Their new feelings created an opportunity for them to go back to their own Jewish community from a position of strength, since they were the only ones claiming to have practical answers for its particular contemporary predicament.

But the activist structure of feeling did not only open a door back to the Jewish community for the young working-class revolutionaries, it also made them exclude from their particular revolutionary identity many people who had similar or compatible ideas. Since the activist structure of feeling provided a source of strength due to its coherence, they were often not tolerant of difference. They closed ranks emotionally and passed moral judgment on others. They viewed the nonworkers among the revolutionaries as a

confusing phenomenon, people who did not have the same right to moral indignation and whose activism was therefore incomprehensible. They felt too dependent on the party intelligentsia that provided them with the necessary intellectual framework for channeling their anger, and questioned their motivation for activism, so different from their own. The workers were unsure about the level of comradeship they could expect from the intelligentsia. They preferred to keep to themselves for emotional support. They often became indignant with the party intelligentsia, especially when a speaker was seen as pretentious with too little moral claim to power.[16] The fact that resentment was directed according to perceived earning potential and social power rather than some real economic measure was emphasized by all workers, including the poorest, who criticized the (often poor) semi-intelligentsia. The workers found it impossible not to challenge the intelligentsia's political status, while also accepting their presence. With occasional political outbursts, the rejection took place on the level of emotional distancing.

After joining the revolutionary movement, the semi-intelligentsia, including people like Gillerson or Shindler, found it as humiliating to accept their marginal status in the revolutionary movement as the workers did. Their situation may not have been as desperate as that of poor workers like Giter-Granatshtein, but in their eyes it was desperate enough; they thus saw the workers as their allies in the struggle. But the workers, while being aware that their skills were necessary for the movement, preferred to take a position of moral indignation against their own conditions as poor workers specifically, and therefore excluded the struggling semi-educated from the emotional solidarity they created. In their eyes the educated did not need that kind of emotional

solidarity since their lives were, at least potentially, better. The solidarity they created was reserved for the truly desperate.

The change from personal anguish to an active hatred of whomever was viewed as the oppressor took place both in the context of class and in the context of ethnic oppression. In a letter explaining why she did not want to work in the same party with Russian activists, Mosia expressed hatred of Russians for their tolerance of anti-Semitism and the pogroms.[17] Unlike Chizhevskaya, who derived a new identity from an almost exclusively Jewish revolutionary environment, for Mosia all the Russians belonged to the ranks of oppressors and therefore deserved her hatred on a political level. Their tolerance of anti-Semitic behaviors put them into the same category as the authorities and the employers in oppressing the Jewish workers, the people Mosia wanted to fight for by joining a revolutionary organization. Mosia's reaction was in principle no different from the politicized reaction of Chizhevskaya. She did not envision her hatred as personal or as in any way demeaning to her. On the contrary, her hatred toward the Russians was an affirmation of her identity as a true revolutionary, one who rejected without compromise all who did not fit the requirements of revolutionary culture. Moreover, she believed that other revolutionaries, by definition, should join in her reaction. The problem lay in the fact that Mosia's indignation, however justified, was impossible to endorse within revolutionary politics. Without collaboration of workers of all nationalities, there was no way to win even a simple strike.

The one thing that united Gersh, Chizhevskaya, Mosia, and others like them was that through politicization they replaced their initially helpless rage with a new and active

form of anger. This new response was built on feelings of love and solidarity for comrades. Only interaction with their peers allowed them to redefine themselves as empowered people who could effect change, rather than be consumed by painful feelings. As a result, they became intensely protective of their peer community. The peer community, however, was defined differently for different activists, and those contradictory definitions ended up jeopardizing the emotional cohesiveness of the movement. As William Reddy argued, such distinctions are experienced as particularly threatening in revolutionary movements based on notions of truth and righteousness, in which all sincere people are expected to reach similar political conclusions. The cohesiveness that the revolutionary movements strive for is impossible to achieve, considering the different experiences and the power struggles among different groups in any political movement. Perhaps more than other groups, workers found this highly threatening since they had nothing to go back to but their old life and their old experiences. Thus the perceived betrayal of the more affluent intelligentsia was hard to bear for the workers. The workers were too aware of the dependency of their own solidarity on the intellectual input from outside, and solidarity was highly important to them emotionally. But they were suspicious of the intelligentsia members, since they had different life experiences and different opportunities than the workers, and thus excluded them from the emotional solidarity.

Some, like the intelligentsia women who were often prevented from doing political work during the revolution, felt their exclusion acutely. Even as party members their anger was not conceived by their working-class comrades as correct, since it was

not based on personal experience of the working-class life. For the semi-intelligentsia, both their poverty and the discrimination they suffered as Jews seemed sufficient reasons for political indignation, and they could not understand why the workers did not share this view. In becoming politicized they went through a similar kind of change, moving from an amorphous feeling of emotional indignation to indignation suitable for a revolutionary, one that entailed political action. The fact that they had actually made an effort to build a revolutionary identity for themselves made it difficult for them to understand why they were not accepted by the revolutionary workers. The level of emotional investment that they had put into a revolutionary identity meant that being emotionally excluded by others in the revolutionary movement was inconceivable to them, but for them the emotional support that workers like Giter-Granatshtein found in the Bund was almost unattainable.

For the workers, developing a revolutionary identity meant viewing themselves as people capable of handling not only their own affairs, but also the affairs of the society as a whole. The existence of and need for intellectual input from the intelligentsia was a constant (and unwelcome) reminder that things were not so simple. Other historians have portrayed the political and cultural aspects of this divide, but the emotional element was just as important. Joining a revolutionary movement was a culmination of Leizor Tenenbaum's pride in his professional and economic success. Accepting the superiority of others contradicted the very reasons for his radicalization. As we have seen, self-assertion was the key issue for workers like Tenenbaum. His story progresses from describing the difficulty of his training to pride in overcoming all difficulties and

becoming an artisan. His revolutionary politics were a natural expression of that pride. Another far less successful worker, Iosif Fridland, also described his politicization as a culmination of economic and personal independence and of his pride in this independence. Independence and active pride in his achievement easily translated into the active independence and pride expected within the activist structure of feeling.

> When I was 12 years old, my father, who wanted to save money, sent me as an apprentice to a tailoring workshop where I was to be fed by the master. From then on a new period in my life began. I was humiliated and oppressed by the surrounding conditions, suffered all kinds of abuse, but still I thought of myself as an independent person…. 1903 came. This whole year full of strikes in many professions affected our profession as well. Our workshop went on strike too. Then I was taken to the birzha. For the first time people spoke to me as an adult, as equal to equal. I immediately felt comfortable in those surroundings. From that time my life was connected to the circle of those people.[18]

Others, like the stocking maker Riva Gering, saw their revolutionary activism as the culmination of their struggle for education.[19] Gering took a personal pride in her ability to independently acquire even a basic education, and revolutionary activism was an expression of that pride. For her a personal victory in an active battle for independence easily translated into an activist structure of feeling expected from a revolutionary.

People like this could not accept their subordination within the revolutionary movement, since that would invalidate their emotional experience in becoming

revolutionaries. Enhancing their status in their own eyes and in the eyes of their peers was an important part of adopting the activist structure of feeling, but it resulted in excluding other revolutionaries as insincere, since their experiences and their ways of thinking and feeling were different than that of the workers.

Conclusion

Young Jews from the Pale joined the revolutionary movement because it offered them emotional and social support in their struggle for survival amid industrialization and ethnic discrimination -- a reality that their families, in many cases, did not know how to deal with. This struggle created a need for a peer support group, and for many the revolutionary community was the answer to that need. As with their non-Jewish peers, this culture offered them pride in what they were and a justification for rejecting class-based discrimination, which they viewed as no less oppressive than ethnic discrimination. The internationalist notions of all the revolutionary organizations and their largely urban focus made them a comfortable ideological space as well.

The narratives of the young, poor Jews consistently emphasized their politicization as a social and emotional experience. They describe it as acceptance into a peer group determined by their initial self-assertion against the oppressive realities of their lives. The acceptance was therefore a source of pride by itself, since the future militants felt that their initial individual struggles made them worthy of membership. Both the students and the apprentices conceived of themselves as active and proud fighters for universal happiness, willing to sacrifice themselves for others, and always ready to defend their honor. They also believed that since they engaged in the study of politically relevant topics within the revolutionary movement, unlike their nonrevolutionary peers, they were the ones who would find a solution to the crisis in their society and pass their knowledge on to others. For them this knowledge – the principles

of socialism -- was objectively true information that provided them with self-worth and status in their community.

Their perceptions of themselves and of the changes they created were not necessarily accurate, but they indicate why so many young Jews joined the revolutionary movement during the 1905 revolution and what exactly they believed they were joining. We saw that for both students and apprentices the revolutionary culture meant certain ideas, a certain self-identity, but also a certain lifestyle. The lifestyle issue was more acute for students who could occasionally afford to decide to live in poverty, as opposed to truly having no money to live in any other way. At the same time the apprentices, while politicized, tended to postpone marriage, reject religious values, be more geographically mobile, have more equal relationships between the sexes, and so on.[20] A militant came to be understood not just as a person with certain ideas, but also as a person living and behaving in certain ways. Some of this was a necessary part of life as a militant in an illegal organization, but other issues, such as open rejection of a religious lifestyle, had to do with people defining themselves as revolutionaries through behavioral choices.

In emotional terms, becoming a revolutionary entailed expressing a structure of feelings dominated by active rather than passive emotions – anger rather than despair, protectiveness rather than indifference, indignation rather than humiliation, self-asserting pride rather than humility. Thus becoming a revolutionary entailed not only adopting certain ideas or even a certain lifestyle, but literally becoming a different human being. The revolutionary youth experienced their politicization as a profound personal

transformation rather than just the adopting of certain political ideas or even a different lifestyle. The activist structure of feelings, which was an inherent part of what it meant to be a revolutionary, contributed to the ability of the working-class Jewish youth to deal with the specific kind of modernity experienced at the time in the Russian empire. But it also created difficulties since it entailed a clear feeling of who could be a revolutionary, and involved emotional exclusion, if not social or political, of many others.

Notes

[1] This is comparable to the constant complaints f.rom Russian workers about disrespectful treatment. As in this case, the workers felt that they became different, more "cultural," and more deserving of. respect, but the nonworker society would not recognize this. See, for example, Haimson, "Russian .Workers' Political and Social Identities", pp. 166-167.
[2] GARF. f..533 op. 3 d. 336.
[3] GARF. F. 533 op. 3 d. 633.
[4] For example, GARF. f. 102 op. 265 d. 62 .
[5] GARF. f. 533 op. 3 d. 633.
[6] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 2305.
[7] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 1688.
[8] GARF. f. 533 op. 1 d. 449b.
[9] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 446
[10] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 1376.
[11] GARF. f. 533 op. 3 d. 623.
[12] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 1105.
[13] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 942.
[14] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 2236.
[15] For the importance of. indignation to social movements see James M. Jasper, *The Art of. Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements*, (Chicago, 1997).
[16] Wildman pointed out that the resentment often came from experienced revolutionary workers toward the leadership by inexperienced but better-educated activists.
[17] GARF. f. 102 op. 265 d. 102.
[18] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 2136.
[19] GARF. f. 533 op. 2 d. 437.
[20] For example, GARF. f. 102 op. 265 d. 121. A letter in which a revolutionary worker tells about going to Kishinev, not having a place to stay, going to the local birzha, and gladly accepting the offer of. a poor washerwoman to stay at her place until he found work and could hire his own room (which, in fact, happened in three days).

Chapter 4 - Identity Forged in Revolution

Jewish Workers and the Revolutionary Movement

The workers were ready to assert themselves politically and found enormous personal pride in doing so. Zalman Meerovich, a Bund activist from Warsaw, writes that after Bloody Sunday the workers enthusiastically went to the birzhi, where they could assert themselves against the regime. In his account, the heavy police presence did not check the workers' resolve, but instead spurred them to engage the police in a gun battle: "I remember that when one female worker was shot and her friends started crying . . . she got mad and said these wonderful words: 'We should be glad and not cry since I die not in a soft bed, not in some fancy living room, but on the street, and I know that my death will be another brick in the wall of the future.' Those final words quickly became known to all in our shoemakers' birzha and encouraged the workers so much that they were ready to fight the police with their bare hands."[1] Perhaps the citation was exaggerated and involved an element of myth-making, but the important thing is that these words were what Merovich and his comrades expected the woman to say. The self-sacrifice of the assassinated worker symbolized for her companions their new existence as people with self-respect and a future to defend, as opposed to a future as semistarved, exploited, overworked employees of an almost bankrupt, tiny workshop.[2] Workers like the ex-thief Khazanov could not imagine themselves as worthy of respect or education without that promise of a better future.

The key to that future was the solidarity of the young revolutionary workers against all who oppressed them, starting with the regime and the employers and ending with the Jewish community and, at times, the revolutionary intelligentsia. The worker who was killed viewed herself as representative not only of the promise of a bright new future, but also of what she conceived of as her community of young, politicized workers. All members of that community counted on assistance from the other members in their self-assertion, whether through providing outside support to intercommunal struggles, assisting with geographical mobility, or protecting what was considered the workers' space – the birzha.

The birzha, unlike the circles or the meetings, was attended by all rather than only by the politicized workers. It was controlled not by the semi-intelligentsia who possessed superior knowledge and better oratorical abilities, or by the better-educated workers, but by *all* the workers. The cultural importance of the birzha extended beyond its usefulness to the revolutionary movement. In the birzha even the simplest workers could feel a sense of ownership of place; even if they did not have sufficient education to make speeches they may have taken part in defense of the birzha or other activities. The birzha was for workers what the revolutionary movement was for the young members of the semi-intelligentsia – a space for self-assertion where they could count on peer acceptance, respect, and support. The safety of the birzha was thus always of paramount importance to the worker activists, and they were ready to take enormous risks to protect it.

As the illiterate (at the time) worker Giter-Granatshtein wrote of defending the birzha in Warsaw:

> I was arrested again for two months and was released under supervision of the police. The very next day I went to the birzha to see my comrades, I met a comrade (Shaka Kozhevnik) and as we were walking we saw that on the corner two policemen were arresting a comrade. We hurried to assist him and asked whether he had any illegal literature, since having any literature meant going to prison for a long time and then to Siberia. We decided to set him free. I hit the policeman on the head and the comrade Davidka ran away, but I was captured instead and a real fight started. Many policemen and dvorniki [janitors] came by, but also many workers, and the fight went on all the way to the police station. The workers did not manage to release me and I was beaten half to death, my head opened with a saber and my left ear torn. Since I was beaten beyond recognition I was harmless so the police officer decided to release me. Several days later the policeman who beat me was killed in the birzha.

Giter-Granatshtein and the other workers defended their street and defended other workers from arrest on that street. They were ready to take life and risk their lives for it. Giter-Granatshtein calls Dzika street in Warsaw the most important street in Poland since so many workers died in the struggle against the Cossacks, who ultimately did not succeed in eliminating the birzha.[3]

The workers' possession of the birzha space was an important component of their self-respect. An anonymous correspondent from Odessa wrote excitedly in a 1906 letter about how the local birzha contributed to the workers' sense of acceptance within a

community and happiness within a mass cultural and political undertaking of their own.[4] They belonged to the city by taking possession of a part of it and making themselves visible there as workers. In that space they could use their numbers and their willingness to sacrifice themselves in order to gain communal recognition and respect. This was the reason the policeman who beat Giter-Granatshtein, thus threatening the autonomous status of the birzha, was killed. There were apparently numerous incidents like this. Slomianskii from Belostok describes the local birzha as a dangerous place for traitors or for police officers who would not cooperate with the revolutionaries.[5]

The authorities as well as political opponents recognized the important symbolic connotations of the birzha. According to Slomianskii, even during the pogrom in Belostok, which was conducted primarily by regular army units, the pogromists did not dare to enter the birzha since they feared bomb throwers. When the reaction came in 1907 the birzhas were eradicated by force, but by this time the experience of having a space of their own had altered the self-perception of the young workers. With the birzhi they experienced a space where they were in control, and that experience of self-assertion could not easily be forgotten.

Revolutionary workers expected support of various kinds from the youth community. A woman who signed her letter as "your friend and comrade Fania" wrote to Shiel from Krakow: "Comrade Sh.! I have a very important request for you and I hope you will not refuse me. I know that you have some force on your side and I really need it now.… It is necessary to beat up Levinson, you know him. He was not beaten up in Elisavetgrad, since he would know who organized this. He definitely deserved it, no question about it,

he deserved more than this. Please, comrade, do not mention my request to anybody, or he will find out and I might be arrested…. Where he is, you can find out from Gutshtein in the Nalevki area."[6] This seems to have been an issue of the local young revolutionaries' struggle against some powerful person, probably an employer, inside the community. In their new self-assertiveness and support for workers' rights, the revolutionaries struggled against the wealthier members of the Jewish community, who at times managed to get some of the workers (or some of the local criminals) on their side with bribery or with claims that the revolutionaries acted against the Jewish tradition. Being able to count on outside support, as Fania obviously did here, meant a great deal to a small, struggling local organization.[7]

A depiction of a similar struggle comes in a letter by Yakov from Romanov to his friend Clara from Kiev, where he complains about wealthy Jews using the police against the revolutionaries:

> Comrade Clara. . . . I am busy the whole day, and barely can find an hour or two for reading, which is so necessary for the activity I am involved in. During the holidays I attended ten mass meetings and six circles. No meeting is taking place without me. Now I worked energetically during the whole week. But the bourgeoisie is not asleep either: yesterday we had a visit from two policemen. They were looking for one of the assembly members, and searched for him in all the places that he habitually visited. Luckily he was warned and disappeared. Afterward they asked about me and about two other comrades from the intelligentsia.[8]

Yakov, Fania, and the workers who went to the birzhi after Bloody Sunday had one thing in common – their dignity, both as individuals and as a collective of workers was important to them and they were ready to use violence to defend it against anybody who tried to force them into their past inferior status, whether from inside or outside the Jewish community: "We, on our side, are not asleep either. We organized a flying detachment armed with sticks and revolvers, we have our own 'secret service.' We declared a boycott of the provocateur factory owners and sent letters everywhere that people should beat them up if they show their faces in the neighboring shtetlakh. Generally, the fight goes on."[9]

Here again it is interesting to note that the writer is proud of his revolutionary activism, but also of his wish to study. Although he complains that he has no time for reading, the idea that he is a person who *should* be reading is part of his identity as an activist and something he mentions as a matter of pride. Unlike many young revolutionaries, Yakov apparently stayed and was active in his own shtetl, where his family lived. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, for many worker revolutionaries solidarity was a key to geographic mobility. Specifically, it enabled mobility from the small shtetlakh to the large industrial cities.

When the bookbinder Boris Yakover became a socialist he left his native city of Ananievsk, which "became too small" for him, and went to Odessa where he established useful contacts with other socialist workers.[10] Yakover was involved in trade union organization in his native Ananievsk, but not in revolutionary activism. He had to make new contacts at his workplace in Odessa but had no addresses of people he could

approach. However, in many cases arrangements were made beforehand and the revolutionary networks were used to find employment in the new location. It was common for Jews to assist each other with information on employment or commercial possibilities, just as it was common among non-Jewish workers in Russia. The difference here is that the assistance provided was based on ideological affinity, rather than on belonging to a local community or the Jewish community as a whole, and therefore was not controlled by the older people in the community. The young people used their membership in the revolutionary community to free themselves from dependency on their elders. They created an alternative self-help network of their own, a network of people who, unlike their elders, would consider a boring life in a small place as sufficient reason to go elsewhere.[11] These were not professional revolutionaries, they were not supported by the party, or even necessarily more valuable for the party in the new location. In all of these cases, the different parties worked hard to support their activists, or at least to send people who could obtain employment in the new site. Those young working people, like Yakover, knew that due to their political allegiance they could easily find friends and comrades wherever they went. Although everyone was poor and they could not count on much assistance, they were sure to get the information necessary for employment options, a place to sleep for the first few days, and a supportive social network to rely on.

Working-class Women and the Revolutionary Movement

The status of working-class women in the Jewish revolutionary movement, unlike that of semi-intelligentsia females or, as already mentioned, of working-class women among Russian revolutionaries, was seen as an important part of the general liberation struggle. Their inferior status, even in comparison to their male coworkers, was a source of discontent to male worker activists. The first indication of this is the use of the word *tovarka (female comrade)*, which referred specifically to women and was prevalent in revolutionary documents. This predates the use of the word "tovarish" to refer to both male and female comrades after 1917. The revolutionaries wanted to be clear about how they addressed women as well as men. This usage was not simply linguistic, since the special problems of women workers were recognized and specifically addressed. For example, the regulations of the Vilna tailors' fund[12] from 1887 include a comment on how the workers' struggle could be jeopardized by male feelings of superiority over their female comrades. According to the regulations, these feelings provided employers with ample opportunities to exploit the resulting hostility between male and female workers for their own interests, thus disadvantaging workers of both genders. The regulations attempted to deal with the mutual distrust between men and women that resulted from past discrimination of women on the shop floor. These regulations proposed allowing male workers to elect one of the fund's officials, while female workers selected the other. The fund also asked for a lower fee from female workers, due to their inferior salaries.[13]

The founders of the fund, presumably SD, considered it important to the workers' movement to create solidarity among male and female workers, an attitude that was not common among non-Jewish trade unionists.[14] The cigarette maker Fridman writes that after he became a socialist, he became aware of the gender-based exploitation in his factory and how wrong it was. The male cigarette makers who complained about being exploited by the factory owner were employing female helpers whom they in turn exploited and paid very little. According to Fridman, socialist propaganda made the male workers more aware of how wrong this arrangement was.[15]

Socialist ideas circulating among the workers heightened awareness of gender discrimination against working women, and a commitment to fight this discrimination. The revolutionary culture also supported women in their attempts to change their inferior status in the community. As Yakover writes about a small shtetl called Ol'gopol: "We started trying to free the women workers. At that time guys and girls could not walk together. The girls also were not supposed to listen to what the guys talked about." The politicization of women workers was very difficult under such conditions; the young activists had to struggle against traditional communal mores enforcing the separation of the sexes. Some young female workers, like Fridman's wife (who politicized her husband), were ready and willing to change those mores. The geographic mobility resulting from a changing job market was made easier by the youth milieu's networks, and in the large cities the old sexual mores did not necessarily hold. Livshitz-Riminskii, for example, mentions living with his girlfriend, who was also an activist.[16] No women workers I encountered mentioned their male comrades challenging their right to be

politically assertive. The one exception had to do more with ethnic than gender issues, and involved the Poles preventing a Jewish female worker from performing a more mechanized and therefore better-paying job, claiming that their problem was that she was a woman rather than that she was a Jew.[17] The woman, Lia Frankfurt, seemed to suspect that both gender and ethnicity were involved, but the anti-Jewish aspect was downplayed because the politicized Polish workers found it an embarrassment. In any case, the youth culture was liberating for working women. These women could count on their male peers to support their aspirations for independence. Expressing these aspirations through the socialist ideological framework also meant that, for them, independence was part of acquiring a new and respected social identity as fighters for the rights of the downtrodden, rather than as bad daughters egoistically hurting their families.[18]

Education and Revolutionary Culture

Education within the circles was another important component of the new revolutionary identity. It was important both because it offered the young revolutionaries a standing within the community that valued knowledge and because the kind of knowledge acquired within the circles contributed to their self-assurance as modern people.

Youth culture offered both male and female workers an opportunity to study, and thus to create for themselves a respected place in both the Jewish and the revolutionary community. Indeed, as revolutionary activists, they were expected to study. What made people feel like revolutionaries was the education they acquired inside the circles. The idea that a person should have a clear understanding of social and cultural issues as a basis for political activism was highly important to all revolutionaries, and was easily accepted by the young Jews. Knowledge was for them a precious thing. The specific knowledge offered by the revolutionary movement, that is, some literacy in Russian as well as some basic general and political education, was a route to the cultural openness the young Jews sought. Due to the Jewish communal attitude and enhanced respect toward skill and knowledge among working classes in the contemporary Russian empire,[19] the working-class young Jews fully accepted the premise that education was central to a revolutionary identity. Redefining themselves and integrating new models into the Jewish community were goals that went beyond mere rebelliousness. They wanted to be, and to be seen as, rational, self-respecting, knowledgeable revolutionaries,

acting to defend their personal honor as well as the honor of the Jewish community as they defined it – total rejection of any kind of humiliation. Education was the key to all of this.

What and how did the young workers study? Literacy, general education, and the ability to read and understand some basic works in social science seem to have been at the center of the education the circles provided. The focus was on those issues that made the workers feel they understood how society worked. One of the goals was to give them confidence in expressing their opinions.

While in the late nineteenth century the Jewish self-education circles often survived for long periods due to the indifferent attitude of the authorities, and people managed to acquire some real education there, people who came of age and joined the circles during the revolutionary period could not count on a systematic experience. The young activists had to move around for party needs, to avoid arrest, or to search for work in areas where they were not known as troublemakers. These were not suitable conditions for any kind of sustained education. The workers describe this with a note of regret. For example, Mikhail Pevtsov-Ryvkin stated: "The comrade told me where the place is and when I should come to study, and from then on I started attending an illegal school… we were about 7-8 students. They taught us the history of culture, political economy, the history of the French Revolution…. I got into the habit there of reading more serious books and analyzing whatever I read. Shortly I became a party member and had to leave town, since the police followed me."[20]

Sara Agronina-Ageeva, an illiterate worker who was taught to read and write in workers' literacy circles, also stated: "My first circle was studying the history of culture and the second circle was for general education. At first I went to both these circles, but I left them when I joined the Bund party."[21] The revolutionary period made serious study difficult, but young workers still attended the circles and were proud to mention this years later. Although they may not have learned a great deal, the fact that they studied at all was highly important to their identity.

This specific kind of learning had to have an effect, especially on the workers who had no other source of education. Unlike those who participated in earlier circles in which learning was more systematic and long-term, as well as those who managed to study in prison, the people studying in circles during the revolution learned very little. For them simplifications and images mattered more than actual ideas since they could be absorbed quickly, could be useful in reinventing one's image, and strategic in processing life experiences. These workers could then be deployed in leadership and educational roles. The appearance, however marginal, that this new understanding came through learning was important.

Still, even though when workers like Pevtsov-Ryvkin were proud of their activism and were unlikely to refuse an opportunity to study, political activism came first; whenever it was required studies had to take a back seat.[22] For most of the worker activists, learning did not have a value in itself but served to enhance their status as activists, fighters for a better life. This is why the worker activist Naum Nemzer was so disappointed in 1907, when student revolutionaries left the movement to return to their

extern studies or to the university.[23] Nemzer had nothing against study per se. It was the assumption that study could be a higher priority than revolutionary activism that made him feel that the intelligentsia had betrayed the workers. Here the differences between worker and student agendas were sharper. The revolutionary activists could not afford to stay in one place long enough to acquire a systematic education. Although education was one of the reasons they entered the youth community and through that community the revolutionary movement, education was still an unattainable goal for young workers.

Internal Tensions within Revolutionary Milieu

Worker and student activists encountered many conflicts in their political work. Their letters indicate that the semi-idyllic relationships inside revolutionary organizations depicted in the autobiographies written about twenty years later were somewhat exaggerated. Petty squabbles took place, as in any human community, but the commitment to the concept of solidarity made them emotionally difficult to handle. At times the revolutionary community proved almost as hard to live with as the traditional one, but since it created much higher expectations the disappointment was bitter.

Fanny from Warsaw, for example, complains in a letter to a friend that even though she had been a successful propagandist among the soldiers, a more experienced female militant, who proved to be inadequate as a propagandist, replaced her. Fanny was then forced to do less satisfying work.[24] She also expresses disappointment because internal squabbles based on informal organizational hierarchy put a stop to her work in the Bund military organization – work that had been effective. Lena from St. Petersburg also complains about incompetence and personal disagreements that marred her experience of working in an organization. She describes an incompetently organized gathering that resulted in the arrest of a member who was the only provider for his family, as well as some quarrels of which she was a victim.[25] Lena planned to go elsewhere. Neither Lena nor Fanny gave up political work because of their disappointments, but these incidents seem to have been an inevitable part of the revolutionary experience.

For them the disappointments resulted from internal organizational problems, but many young revolutionaries, especially workers, had difficulties with the principles on which the revolutionary organizations acted. This was especially true when the reaction started in 1906 and most of the revolutionary parties became considerably more cautious in their activities. This explains why many young Jewish worker revolutionaries ended up in 1906-7 either emigrating or joining the anarchists (or, less often but for the same reasons, the SR-maximalists).

A revolutionary dressmaker, Vera Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, became an anarchist while living in Ekaterinoslav after being disappointed by the semilegal trade union. Her reaction was typical of this period, when some Social-Democrats attempted to legalize labor unionization and were therefore ready to compromise on the utility of the labor unions, which suffered from far too many legal restrictions to be able to assist their members effectively.[26] In that sense, the Jewish workers were no different from other employees of small workshops, who could easily be replaced if they started a strike that was not supported by others in the profession. As with other workers, the result was political extremism and violence. The only real difference between Jewish workers like Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya and the primarily Russian workers in St. Petersburg and Moscow was that the Jewish workers, with rare exceptions, had no choice but to work in small workshops. For them, the temptation to turn to violence in labor struggles was even more powerful, since replacing a small number of workers was often easier for an employer than negotiating with them. Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, for example, tells how she tried to organize a strike against an exceptionally rude employer who assumed

he could curse and humiliate his workers due to his status as employer. Initially supported by her coworkers, she soon discovered that the union had no means to put pressure on the employer. She and another worker went to the union, but after the employer refused to acknowledge the union's right to intervene, they

> Demanded that the union take more radical measures, but the secretary self-importantly answered that the union could not take any measures, since the governor would just close it. The words of the comrade secretary shocked us and we, highly offended, answered that we would find a better way and comrades who would assist us. The secretary tried to dissuade us from joining the anarchists-communists. I do not remember what I replied to him, but he called me a typical rebel and tried to get comrade Elia to take his side, but also with no results.[27]

Upon returning to their shared room, they met an anarchist-communist neighbor who immediately offered the help of his organization. The workers eagerly accepted as the only way to protect their dignity. Unlike the union, the anarchist-communists acted immediately. They procured money to assist the strikers financially and sent people to threaten the employer until he accepted all their demands. The strike became a sensation among other local tailors, who also started using threats of violence against their employers. Considering that the ineffectiveness of the union and inadequate respect from the employer left the tailors only the two choices of violence or defeat, it is clear why workers like Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, highly affected by the activist structure of

feeling prevalent inside the revolutionary youth culture, left the Social-Democrats on behalf of anarchists in 1906-7.

Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya found the trade union useless for her purposes. She did not want a partial victory; she wanted recognition of her value as a human being as she defined it. This is precisely what the employer was not ready to provide, since it would mean giving up his power in the shop. The trade union was ineffective not because it tried to achieve a compromise, but because it refused to use violent threats in order to gain its right to play a role in industrial disagreements. Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya and her friends became rebels in the eyes of the trade union activists because they were ready to use violence to achieve immediate results. Interestingly, this was the language that both the workers and the employers understood much better than the concept of careful negotiation presented by the trade union. For the employer, a trade union unprepared to use violence was irrelevant to his power-based relationship with his employees, while the anarchists, ready to use force on behalf of employees, were relevant. In the long run neither the violent nor the peaceful tactics worked to improve the workers' conditions, but the peaceful tactics were perceived as ineffectual by both the workers and the employers.

Because of this approach, a gap in understanding developed between the revolutionary parties and their working-class supporters. The young revolutionary workers could not understand the calls for restraint from the revolutionary parties. To them, these calls meant regressing to their former position, isolated and exploited, with no self-respect to protect and no better future to hope for.[28] To the worker revolutionaries

like Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, using violence was not necessarily an irrational response. Especially during the reaction period, violence was probably the only means of achieving respect in the Jewish community.[29] In contrast, the revolutionary intelligentsia were well aware of the problems bound to ensue from violence, including the discrediting of the revolutionaries in popular public opinion for which this violence indicated criminality. Cognizant of the negative effect within the revolutionary movement of legitimizing spontaneous violence and the disorganization that was bound to ensue, the intelligentsia rejected spontaneous violence by revolutionaries. After the reaction started in 1906, however, they could offer no satisfactory alternatives to their working-class activists.

The local organizers, usually more familiar with their activists than the party leaders, tried to downplay resulting conflicts, but in many cases they ended up with open conflict on their hands when departing revolutionary workers became anarchists. The word "anarchist" came to symbolize a worker activist willing to use physical force against both people and property to protect the self-respect of other workers, and the ability of the revolutionary organization to function.

The conflicts between the workers and the intelligentsia within revolutionary organizations were especially acute when the issue involved a group who persistently performed expropriations. The expropriations were perceived by the revolutionary intelligentsia to be corrupting, but they also provided funds for a newspaper or for assistance to strikers in a period when revolutionary parties had few sources of income. Therefore, the moral condemnation of the "exes" was never clear-cut among the

revolutionaries, and even less so among the worker revolutionaries. Often the official attitude of the revolutionary parties seemed hypocritical and inconsistent to their working-class activists. This heightened the tension within the revolutionary organizations. The Bundist Naum Nemzer from Vilna did not join the anarchists, but he initiated several expropriations that the local party committee was ready to overlook until they became too embarrassing: "The truth is that I quietly sometimes took part in 'exes,' but the discipline in the Bund then was not like our discipline in the Communist party. Also, when we brought money to the Bund, as if we had collected it for party needs (in fact we had expropriated it), it was accepted. This two-faced work was done not only by me, but by many comrades. This went on until one of them happened to be arrested for an ex and the 'good' Bund members began opening their mouths."[30] Nemzer clearly differentiated himself and his friends from the "good" Bundists who were members of the semi-intelligentsia. For him, taking part in an ex was a mission of self-sacrifice on behalf of a party that he knew could not function without those funds. This mission was made all the more self-sacrificial since the party did not recognize people like him as its representatives. Nemzer also mentions that many of his friends ended up emigrating. He states that he was pushed toward anarchism by a combination of hatred toward the regime and disappointment in the party leadership and other educated members who left. He felt that his revolutionary fervor became less relevant to his own party. He differentiated between the youth who were ready to sacrifice themselves for revolutionary goals and risk an expropriation, and other members who morally condemned the expropriators while offering no solution to the financial difficulties of the party. In Nemzer's view,

these critics were, in fact, ready to leave politics altogether, while sacrificing the good names (and at times the lives) of the young expropriators and taking their money. These conditions made Nemzer feel that the Bund was treating him as a second-rate member, and that he needed to look elsewhere for the sense of family he expected to find in a revolutionary community. As an example, Nemzer tells of an expropriation performed to sustain a Bundist newspaper that was on the verge of bankruptcy due to police pressure: "The older comrades Liber and Medem protested saying than expropriations are a non-Marxist approach to the issue, but we kept saying what we thought and were certain that if we came up with the money, nobody would criticize us for this. But this is what happened: we committed the robbery, brought the money, but were expelled from the organization. After this, of course, we were forgiven, but we already did not exactly feel like Bund members."[31]

The youth that Nemzer describes were not only young but also working class, while the party leaders who engendered his sense of alienation seem to have been from either the intelligentsia or the semi-intelligentsia. For Nemzer and his friends, the newspaper for which they expropriated the money was of utmost importance. Allowing it to close because of low funds was far more morally despicable than getting money for it through expropriation. For the Bund leadership, on the other hand, expropriations could compromise their relationship with the community as a whole, by making the organization appear to be more of a criminal gang than a respectable organization. For people like Nemzer, who were not "respectable" to begin with, the only status they could acquire derived from the strength of the revolutionary movement, and this status was

endangered by the weakness of this movement. Violence to protect the movement was perceived as justified and necessary self-defense. As Moisei Neiman, a Bundist who became an anarchist in 1906, wrote about dealing with the authorities: "Trials started, the authorities shot and hanged hundreds of people. For some minor offenses people were sent to Siberia. I felt that I could not stay with the passive 'Bundists,' when revolutionary deeds against the bloody reaction were needed, so I went to work in the organization of Anarchists-Communists."[32]

For Neiman, as for Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, the violence provided opportunity for young workers to assert themselves. In a letter to a friend in Kiev, Usher, an ex-SR, described a spectacularly unsuccessful expropriation he took part in at Kamenetz-Podolsk. He then refers to the negative reaction of the local SR members to the expropriation, which led him and his comrades to leave the SR party and become anarchist-communists.[33] Usher is proud of the unsuccessful ex because it scared the local bourgeoisie, because the local police could not find the perpetrators, and also because it was a challenge to the local leadership of the SR party, all in the name of anarchism. The expropriation meant challenging practically all the authorities in his life and getting away with it. Anarchism was the label they used to make this challenge look rational and respectable, rather than just an expression of rebelliousness.

Violence, both on behalf of the socialist parties and on behalf of anarchism, had been used as a last resort before 1906. But beginning with the 1906 reaction it came to embody the self-assertion the young workers associated with becoming a revolutionary. Workers of the different revolutionary persuasions were united in this willingness to use

violence, and the fighting detachments of different organizations were often ready to assist each other in times of need. The party leadership tended to consider this solidarity politically harmful, since it threatened the political demarcation among the different parties. Zalman Apfelbaum, for example, was expelled from the Warsaw Bund organization for joining a violent PPS (Socialist Polish Party) demonstration with his group of workers when the Bundist group did not participate.[34] Party allegiance had meaning forApfelbaum, but it was considerably less important than the value of workers' solidarity and self-assertion. Another Bund activist, Giter-Granatshtein, writes: "I took an active part in the first armed demonstration, which was organized by the PPS party in 1904. Though the SD party and Bund were against this demonstration we, the fighting detachment members, could not stay away and see workers' blood spilled and we took a very active part."[35] For these activists the main issue was the right of workers to protect themselves, to control their urban space and to assert their right to public political expression in that space. Adherence to a particular political party was less important to them than asserting workers' solidarity against the authorities and, in cases like this, against the revolutionary parties as well.

In the eyes of the party leaders, these unaffiliated, assertive workers were irrational rebels. They were viewed as people without strong political views, responding emotionally to a difficult situation. The party leaders could not understand or accept that a revolutionary identity had a different meaning for their working-class adherents. The figure of the anarchist emerged in that climate, providing the party leaders with an explanation that they could understand – a different political allegiance, rather than a

different political discourse. On the other hand, this figure made the revolutionary ideas of the working-class activists, which initially seemed irrational, acceptable within the contemporary revolutionary discourse. To the trade union representative, Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya and her friends were irrational rebels; their turning to anarchists for help only emphasized how politically irrational they were. Still, the fact that their political actions could be connected with a specific ideology meant that it could be conceived of in terms of intraparty rivalry. This was much more convenient than dealing with the fact that trade union inaction put people like Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya in an impossible situation. As revolutionaries, they were supposed to protect their dignity and that of their coworkers, but as responsible trade union members they were expected to accept the union's inactivity as a political necessity and not use violence, the one recourse left to them. For people like Kazimirovskaya-Kanevskaya, revolutionaries were by definition people defending dignity, and by refusing to protect them the union designated itself as nonrevolutionary. Becoming anarchists designated them as people whose opinions were supported by revolutionary practice, as well as by revolutionary theory.

The conflicting definitions of revolutionary identity were not the greatest problem that the activists faced. Far more important was the fact that the Jewish militant workers felt isolated among the non-Jewish working classes of the Pale of Settlement, who seemed much less politicized and often reluctant to participate in a joint political action with Jews.[36] This reluctance was likely based on both anti-Semitic prejudice and a history of bitter confrontation over jobs. Whatever the reason, the Jewish activists (and

especially the workers, who valued solidarity highly) were aware of the impossibility of achieving workers' rights in a setting of fragmented ethnic agendas. The politicized Jewish workers felt that under these conditions their politicization was meaningless. Since socialist ideas were heavily dependent on the international solidarity of workers, the worker activists could not help but feel that something was wrong. The situation made them especially aware of their particular status as Jewish workers. It underscored how advanced, internationalist, and politically mature they were, but also highlighted the reality that they were potential victims of anti-Semitism not only from the authorities, but from their non-Jewish coworkers as well.

For workers the issue involved the practical problems of going on strike when the employer could easily fire them and hire non-Jewish workers. The Bund newspaper *Poslednie Izvestiia* reports from Vilna in 1905 that it was particularly hard to organize strikes of Jews and Christians together, since the revolutionary work among the non-Jewish workers in Vilna was not well organized, and the Christian workers tended to be less committed to continuing strikes than Jews: "Small strikes start every week, and Christians strike side by side with Jews. The weak consciousness of the Christians and the fact that there is no organization here that could have worked properly among Christian workers is highly detrimental to the Jewish workers, who start a struggle together with Christians."[37] This same worry is noted by a female worker willing to sacrifice her life in the general strike, but worried that if the Christian workers do not join Jews, her sacrifice will be in vain: "Now everything is set – we start tomorrow…. It was possible to start today, but we had to wait because of the Christian comrades. We hope

that everything will be all right – everybody is armed. Some victims on both sides are, seemingly, unavoidable…. I only hope the Christian workers will join us."[38] Aaron Izakson from Dvinsk also complains about the impossibility of convincing non-Jewish workers from his city to join Jews in a demonstration one day after Bloody Sunday.[39] He mentions that the Jewish workers were concerned about demonstrating on their own since they could achieve nothing that way, and because starting a pogrom was a real possibility.[40]

Later the local Bundists managed to organize a joint demonstration around a strike that Christian workers had declared in a factory. The problem remained that the Christian workers were ready to accept assistance from Jews, but were not ready to join Jews in the struggle for anything other than their own interests. This put the Jewish revolutionaries in a very difficult position. They were supposed to teach the Jewish workers that their strength derived from the sheer numbers of the poor, but the Jewish workers knew that their Christian coworkers would not join the struggle and would not consider their interests.

As for the political effect of what seemed to some contemporaries the disproportionate number of Jews in revolutionary parties, Moisei from Odessa complained in an October 1906 letter to a friend: "I was convinced all over again that all the organizations here are Jewish, that is, their activists are Jewish. You simply do not see any Russians. The organized Russian workers and students belong to 'The Union of the Russian People.'[41] A while ago I was at the university to listen to a socialist-revolutionary lecture: the lecturer was a Jew, his critics were Jewish, the audience,

several thousand people, were all Jews, and this is how they tried to deal with the agrarian question."[42] This attitude reinforced the Jewish activists' insecurity about the political allegiance of the masses they were supposed to rely on in the forthcoming revolution. Kamil from Chenstokhov notes: "Physically I am well, but the spiritual life here cannot satisfy my needs. Our comrades are happy with me here, but among the masses I feel bad, since I am a Jew. And there are many anti-Semitic National Democrats[43] here. Now I rarely go to mass meetings, but concentrate on the school, the circles, the literature and the fund."[44] In many cases Jews were advised not to approach Christian workers as agitators.[45]

There were examples of Jewish and non-Jewish revolutionaries working together, and a considerable number of non-Jewish revolutionaries took part in self-defense activities during the pogroms, but the ideal of all workers struggling together in solidarity seemed to be a lost cause.[46] Lia Frankfurt's story of job competition among workers of different ethnicities was typical:

> I was the only Jewish woman working on a steam machine. After a while another Jewish woman learned the work and then we were hunted down. There was struggle against us, in the beginning demanding that we leave the workplace, that is submit, but I fought for a long time. I remember that once three Poles came to me with Browning guns to get me to quit, but I told them that they could kill me, but I would not leave. Then they said that for a while they would let me be, on behalf of my brother. My brother was an old party worker, all the workers knew and loved him. At that time

> he was in Belostok. But in a couple of weeks when he left the story repeated itself. When they threatened to kill my father, I had to give up. They tried to prove to me that they fight not against Jews but against women, since women push them out of jobs. Perhaps, but the fact was very sad.[47]

Ethnicity was the criterion by which job competition in the Pale was demarcated, and Jewish revolutionaries, representing a population that had traditionally been discriminated against, found that workers of other ethnicities were not ready to relinguish the economic privileges they enjoyed.[48]

Jewish Soldiers and the Revolutionary Movement

Radicalized Jewish soldiers shared many experiences with Jewish workers. Their Slavic comrades rejected them due to popular anti-Semitism. During the revolutionary period many young Jewish revolutionaries made a special effort to join the army to become propagandists and revolutionize their fellow soldiers. Considering the importance of the army to the success of the revolution, this was a sensible political decision in 1905. Yet, like the workers from whose midst they usually came, the Jewish soldiers did not sufficiently take anti-Semitism or the generally apolitical stance of their ex-peasant comrades into account.

Belostok activist Slomianskii was one of those who chose, together with other local maximalists, to become a soldier to conduct propaganda inside the army. His decision came after the Belostok pogrom, which was conducted primarily by soldiers.[49] His motives were both generally political and specifically Jewish. He was convinced that only by revolutionizing the army could future pogroms be prevented. Slomianskii presented himself as a highly efficient propagandist.[50] He used the grievances of the soldiers (transport by cattle wagons, bad food, and so on) to politicize them. It is unclear whether smashing a tavern, which was one reaction of the soldiers to his propaganda, was a political action or an act of simple vandalism, but soldiers like Slomianskii clearly tried to convince others that standing up for their rights meant becoming revolutionaries. Their success seems to have been partial, and it was very much dependent on the situation in particular units and on personal standing. Unlike true political radicals, all the soldiers

who served with Slomianskii, even if they did not believe in revolutionary ideas, used political radicalization in order to persuade the commanders to agree to their demands.[51] The work that those like Slomianskii took on was notoriously hard, and therefore there was a general consensus to ignore any political rivalry among the revolutionary parties while working inside the army. The only way to convince the soldiers of the value of revolutionary ideas was by showing that those ideas had sufficient strength to improve their lives and that unity was essential to achieving this goal. The commanders were well aware of the soldiers' usage of revolutionary ideas to promote their immediate objectives and tried to contain them both by accommodating them and by attempting to isolate the soldiers from the radicalized civilian population.

The isolation was rarely successful, especially with troops positioned in large cities where contact with the revolutionized civilian population was impossible to prevent. A soldier positioned in Warsaw wrote to his sister in Konotop that the officers often warned the troops about the revolutionaries and promised them money for information about the "agitators." According to him, the propagandized soldiers would not inform.[52] The soldiers were interested in revolutionary propaganda, although it is unclear how much of it they really believed. The activists could apparently get into the barracks and the revolutionized soldiers could get into the city to make the necessary contacts. Having soldiers like Slomianskii made the work of civilian activists much easier.

Convincing the soldiers to take the revolutionaries seriously was extremely difficult, though in many cases the soldiers refused to take part in pacification actions.

They occasionally publicly expressed solidarity with revolutionaries due to the influence of a successful agitator. Volek described such a case in his letter from Dubno:

> On the evening of May 16th after the roll call we were dismissed, since we could be called to a neighboring village to replace the soldiers and Cossacks who had already been there for three days. It is terrible what is going on in that village—people die like flies, the peasants… made the workers leave the fields; set some buildings on fire, destroyed property, etc. During the night I gathered together some politically conscious guys in my tent and we decided to refuse to pacify honest working peasants, no matter what. In the morning, after being ordered to take up our guns we, eleven of us, refused and were sent to headquarters under guard.[53]

On the other hand, another soldier-activist complained that "Until now I did not manage to arrange a meeting of the new recruits, they drink too much."[54] For those soldiers, revolutionary activism was obviously not a priority. The commanders understood this well and usually succeeded in buying the allegiance of their soldiers through minor concessions.[55]

The Jewish soldiers, on the other hand, had a reputation of being radicalized. It is not clear whether this was true only for Jews or for urban dwellers at large (Slomianskii mentions that the easiest soldiers to organize were former urban workers), but the commanders tried to use anti-Semitism to present revolutionary ideas as inherently Jewish. Jewish soldiers were constantly considered as potentially disloyal. For example, a soldier named Shaia writes: "There was an 'artist' in our regiment, a gun disappeared

together with whoever stole it. Now all the guns were put in a separate storage place in the camps, under several locks and guarded by patriotic guards (non-Jews of course)."[56] Although it was unclear whether the soldier who stole the gun was Jewish, the Jewish soldiers were immediately designated as suspect.

The revolutionary Jewish soldiers were concerned about this image and tried hard to make their non-Jewish comrades into activists. Often this overeagerness led to their subsequent capture by the authorities. A sense of betrayal is powerful in the letters that discuss this issue. Jewish revolutionary soldiers went to work in the army expecting to find comrades and mobilize the masses for a better future. They honestly could not understand how their idealistic impulses could be betrayed by another soldier, a potential--even if ignorant--comrade. In that sense, the Jewish revolutionary soldiers encountered the same problem as the workers. A soldier calling himself "your M." writes to a female friend from a military prison about the reasons behind his arrest:

> The reason for my quick arrest is that I was betrayed by a Russian soldier, who pretended to be a comrade and a friend and ended up being a spy and a terrible scoundrel. The thing is that in our unit there are no politically conscious soldiers at all, and seeing this soldier pretending to be a comrade, knowing the immense importance of having a Russian comrade in the unit, I became so happy that I forgot everything and immediately drew him into my work.[57]

The commander's designation of all Jewish soldiers as subversive successfully employed popular anti-Semitism against the revolutionary movement inside the army. Based on his personal experience of revolutionary agitation inside the army, Abram

Nekhamkes from Helsingfors advised a soldier friend from Odessa (apparently a new recruit) against initiating revolutionary actions since “the Jew encounters a mass which, though it is capable of joining the liberation movement is also capable of listening to the officers about the ‘yids’ and to believe them.”[58]

The Jewish revolutionary soldiers, like the Jewish revolutionary workers, encountered the unwillingness of the non-Jewish masses to give up their anti-Semitic prejudices for the sake of revolution. This put in doubt not only their self-respect as activists, but also their socialist ideas. The revolutionary parties were well aware of this, and wrote in their publications about anti-Semitism as a tool used by the authorities to divide the workers’ movement and weaken the struggle of the lower classes as a whole.[59] These problems and the Jewish revolutionaries’ sense of isolation served to emphasize their link to the Jewish community they had endeavored to leave. The relationship of the young revolutionaries to both their families and their communities proved to be much more complicated than they had initially expected.

The Semi-Intelligentsia and the Revolutionary Movement

An anonymous revolutionary from Kazan was so proud and grateful of his new status as a revolutionary that he left his studies for revolutionary activism. He writes in a letter to a friend: "In October last year I left Kazan and went to Poland, Lithuania, and Polesie to do some work. There I found both consolation and work demanding a lot of energy. This life for five months among the Jewish proletariat enriched me with knowledge, developed in me abilities of a party worker, and now my destiny is decided: I dedicated myself to the party. In May I leave, I do not know where. This will be decided by a letter from the party."[60] The development of his abilities furthered his commitment. Indeed, students and other intelligentsia were initially respected among the young working-class revolutionaries due to their superior knowledge, as well as the fact that, unlike the workers, their motives for joining the revolutionaries seemed to be purely altruistic. For example, a revolutionary worker from Odessa, Timofei Gurshtein, says of students: "We trusted the students more than anybody, and if a student said something it was holy. He is educated and knows everything, and no matter what party he belonged to, he always had influence."[61] Workers were impressed with the students' self-sacrifice. Fridman, the worker who described his politicization in the previous chapter, depicted the workers' attitude toward a revolutionary activist from a well-to-do background: "Revekka Tog was the most energetic activist from the intelligentsia and the best liked. The workers had a reason for this: they noticed the fact that she was a daughter of a rich man – but she is for the revolution and against her father, she will not give up for his sake

and will struggle to better the conditions of the working class."[62] Often inspired by such respect, the educated activists swiftly became study circle leaders, organizers, and well-known propagandists. They felt a responsibility toward their newfound community, which included bringing to it both education and revolutionary ideas. This positive relationship between the intelligentsia (or the semi-intelligentsia) and the workers in the movement, however, was later marred by suspicion and resentment on the side of the politicized workers, who felt that the intelligentsia activists were hypocritical. They did not live as workers, did not really identify with the workers, but still pretended to represent the workers while following their own agenda. While this suspicion and resentment was prevalent in all the revolutionary parties, it was a particular problem among Jews of the Pale. [63] For them, the intelligentsia was not comprised of well-educated students or intellectuals from large cities in the interior of Russia, but semi-intellectuals, people who were only slightly better educated than a skilled worker.

For the young militants, the educational differences between the externs and the workers created resentment among the workers -- and perhaps a bit of condescension among the externs. It is important to note that the externs and some of the gymnasium students came from family backgrounds similar to those of the workers; at times, as I have noted, they even came from the same family. While they were seen as separate from the community of the Jewish poor, they were not identified as sufficiently different to deserve the respect offered to the better educated.

Vladimir (Ze'ev) Zhabotinskii illustrates just how precarious their place was in his novel *Five*, which deals with a contemporary Jewish middle-class Odessa family.

> Generally externs were then a very conspicuous group in Odessa; they came from shtetls both close and far away …during the day they were reading Turgenev and Tugan-Baranovskii in the city library and in the evening were propagandizing – some for the revolution and some for Zionism. During the exams for six or eight classes of the gymnasium certificate, the teachers failed them mercilessly; many gave up long ago, stopped studying and even dreaming about the university, but were still considered externs, as if it was a caste…. I was always scared of them, reading in their eyes a biblical condemnation: you were sentenced, sentenced – and was proved a good for nothing.[64]

Levitskii admired the externs, but he also looked down on them because of their excessive seriousness as autodidacts who verged on fanaticism, and because of their inferior education. Zhabotinskii agrees with his evaluation of their intellectual abilities and resents their expressions of moral superiority. The externs were definitely categorized as belonging to the lower, rather than to the affluent middle classes. While their pretense for moral superiority antagonized middle-class Jews like Zhabotinskii, they were also resented by the workers, who felt that the combination of their own study in the circles and their practical experience should count for as much inside revolutionary groups as the studies of the externs.

In many cases, after spending some time within the revolutionary movement, the workers began to doubt the intellectual credentials of the revolutionary leadership. This, along with a lack of real social distinction between the semi-intelligentsia and the

workers, made the resentment all the more bitter. This bitterness intensified when workers realized they needed the intelligentsia to teach them and communicate with non-Jewish revolutionaries (more so because the Yiddish-speaking workers could often access only a small part of the published revolutionary material, even when they were intellectually capable of studying on their own).

An educated activist, Rachel, writes from Odessa to her brother at a small shtetl called Snov:

> There is absolutely nothing to do here. Whoever wants to work goes to another place, since the conditions here are such that any work is impossible. The workers here say: away with the intelligentsia, we will do everything by ourselves. And the result is absurd. They do nothing at all by themselves, since they are still not sufficiently independent to manage without the intelligentsia and the result is that each time divisions happen, other groups either divide or reunite, and generally disagreements and petty squabbles, so the wish to work really disappears.[65]

Rachel did not expect the workers to consider her a part of the hierarchy they intended to overthrow. For their part, as Wildman has pointed out, the politicized workers in the Russian empire felt betrayed by the intelligentsia for their constant tendency to take control. [66] They also felt that members of the intelligentsia swiftly returned to their previous, relatively comfortable lives whenever the revolutionary tide subsided. "P." from Vitebsk (who, like many others, uses only an initial to sign her letter) wrote to a friend: "I have plenty to say against the intelligents and dislike them…they are not

fighting for themselves, they leave the movement en masse and keep on living in the old bourgeois style."[67]

P. does not articulate her objections to the role of the intelligentsia as teachers and revolutionary leaders, but she strongly mistrusts their loyalty toward the workers. In her view, the intellectuals were fighting for their own rights and therefore could not be trusted to sustain their revolutionary commitment. P. has nothing against education as such; indeed, she mentions wanting to study. Her problem with the intelligentsia is their superior social status, which they maintain within the revolutionary movement and which, in her view, also supplies them with an easy return to bourgeois life.

It is important to remember that this letter was written in late 1906, when the reaction period had already started. Many activists from the intelligentsia did indeed leave the revolutionary movement and went back to private life, but they were not the only ones. The lack of activists Samuil complained about in his letter also derived from the large-scale emigration movement, which included many workers. The ex-anarchist Erukhimovich noted that in Belostok, as soon as any young man was drafted into the army, he immigrated. This was surely an exaggeration, but many did in fact leave the country.[68] In the ten years from 1904 to 1914, the United States alone accepted 1,200,000 Eastern European Jewish immigrants.[69]

The emigration of the workers did not seem to create a similar level of distrust among the activists. The main issue was that the workers' expectations of the intelligentsia were too high to begin with. The young students were happy to join forces with the young workers in struggling against the political and economic arrangements

that oppressed them all, but in fact they always had other options available by using their studies for social and economic advancement, and the activist workers could not help but notice this. Like other workers in the empire, the Jewish workers' understanding of their political goals was not the same as the intelligentsia's, and they wanted to be in control of key positions in the movement.

The workers' resentment had a strong impact on the status of the semi-intelligentsia. The young, semieducated students and externs, very insecure about their own educational level, joined the movement through the youth culture hoping for an enhanced status based on their superior education. These people were easily challenged by the workers and often felt unable to respond. The men had the option of joining the self-defense units to prove themselves, as Iosif Novak did. Semi-intelligentsia women like Rachel, on the other hand, found themselves in a more difficult situation.[70] They were too insecure to compete against better-educated activists who provided the intellectual leadership of the movement, but the workers rejected them as organizers and permitted them to take on only technical work (such as typesetting), for which they believed themselves to be overqualified.

Fania from Kiev writes in a letter to a friend in Kharkov:

> Here the mood is very much against intelligentsia women and they are not wanted as assistant organizers. They are offered jobs as propagandists, but you know that for this a person needs knowledge and in such a big city, where there are so many intellectuals, a propagandist is chosen very carefully. So I am in this terrible situation. I do not know what I can do.

> Perhaps I can find some technical work, but I do not want that. And I want so badly to be useful.[71]

Fania was acutely aware of being discriminated against, both as an educated person and as a woman. While working-class women found a source of personal and political assertiveness in the revolutionary movement, women like Fania and Rachel were offered only the simplest jobs, and in fact were often pushed out of the movement. It is true that they did not have many skills to offer, but neither did working-class activists who did not encounter similar problems. It is difficult to guess what choices these women subsequently made, or whether they eventually found their place within revolutionary politics. While during the revolutionary period there was no lack of potential activists and all organizations could pick and choose, when the reaction began many of these activists retreated to private life and revolutionary organizations were eager for every participant. The important issue is that they, and people like them, were left feeling rejected by the revolutionary workers, the supposed carriers of the revolutionary movement. During the revolutionary struggle they felt, and perhaps were, useless.

They were rejected by their working-class co-activists for their low political utility, but politics and ideology were only part of the reason for the rejection. In fact what happened to them was just a tip of the iceberg, as far as the relationships between the working class and the educated activists were concerned. The working-class Jewish activists were excluding the intelligentsia not just from political work (which was possible to do only during the revolutionary period when activists were plentiful) but from the emotional community as well, which they had created among themselves for

mutual support. The exclusion of the intelligentsia was just a side-product of this emotional community, which emphasized the activist 'structure of feeling' created around the working-class experience of politicization.

Notes

[1] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 199.
[2] Therefore even stories of unsuccessful strikes, as in f. 533 op. 1 d. 198, sound like a victory. The self-assertion was a victory over the old self-image of a worker as a worthless human being at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy.
[3] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 446.
[4] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 92.
[5] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[6] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 99.
[7] Unity was also a matter of survival for revolutionaries who found themselves imprisoned with common criminals. While at some places, like Odessa, the criminals did not consider revolutionaries a threat, elsewhere, such as Warsaw, the struggles between revolutionaries and the criminals (both inside prisons and in the streets) were notorious.
[8] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 207
[9] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 206.
[10] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[11] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 76; d. 88.
[12] I do not know who established this fund, but the rhetoric seems to be social-democratic. This would make sense since the Jewish SD, which later developed into the Bund party, was active at the time among workers in Vilna. It does not appear that the fund survived for long, since according to Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale,* women tailors in Vilna organized separately in 1888. What is of importance is that, at least for some male workers, the issue of discrimination against their female comrades was seen as politically wrong, and it happened in the context of socialist propaganda.
[13] RGASPI, f. 271 op. 1 d. 3102.
[14] Rose Glickman, *Russian Factory Women, Workplace and Society 1880-1914* (Berkeley 1984), pp. 207-208
[15] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 457.
[16] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 176.
[17] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2122.
[18] Barbara Engel in *Mothers and Daughters* (Cambridge, 1983) wrote about the fact that they were like the mainly Russian intelligentsia women, though unlike these women they were fighting for their own rights as workers and for the rights of people like themselves.
[19] Many researchers doing work on Russian workers (Hogan, Surh, Steinberg, Haimson) emphasize the importance of skill and self-respect that derived from this ability as a basis for the self-respect that became part of the workers' revolutionary identity.
[20] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1498.
[21] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 168.
[22] GARF f.. 533 op. 2 d. 1498.
[23] GARF f.. 533 op. 2 d. 1379.
[24] GARF f.. 102 op. 265 d. 93.

[25] GARF f.. 102 op. 265 d. 58.

[26] For similar later cases in St Petersburg that made the workers turn to Bolsheviks, see, for example, Hogan, *Forging Revolution*, pp. 217-20. Almost every author writing on workers of the period (Victoria Bonnell, Gerald Surh, Mark Steinberg) also refers to the weakness of the contemporary legal unions. The disappointment described here was thus typical for workers in general -- especially, as pointed out by Gerald Surh, *1905 in St-Petersburg*, pp. 395-96, for workers in small workshops for whom organizing the profession as a whole was necessary for any kind of achievement.

[27] GARF f.. 533 op. 2 d. 796.

[28] Heather Hogan, who explains why St-Petersburg metalworkers were more attracted to Bolsheviks than to less-radical revolutionary parties, makes a similar point. In the case of Jewish workers, the anarchists represented a radical solution, as the Bolsheviks did for the Russian metalworkers.

[29] Several historians have engaged the issue of the negative working-class attitude toward compromise during the revolutionary period. The most recent is the article of Leopold Haimson on the workers' movement after the Lena massacre (in Leopold Haimson, *Russia's Revolutionary Experience, 1905-1917* (New York, 2005)), where he views the roots of this attitude in workers' inherent insecurity about their right to be considered part of educated society. I agree that this insecurity existed, but I am not convinced that this was the only important cause. I think that activism as a key to the new structure of feeling combined with the place of violence as an expression of self-assertion among the working-class described by Joan Neuberger in her book *Hooliganism: Crime, Culture and Power in St Petersburg, 1900-1914* (Berkeley, 1993) are important additional causes to both their uncompromising attitude and attraction to violence.

[30] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1379.

[31] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1379.

[32] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 1374.

[33] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 133.

[34] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 199.

[35] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 446.

[36] Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution*, p. 52, points out that in the areas of the Pale Jewish workers readily responded to socialist agitation, while their non-Jewish counterparts remained largely passive. Still, Orest Subtelny points out in his *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto, 2000), p. 296 that 120,000 workers in Ukraine took part in the general strike in October 1905. He also points out the widespread disturbances in the countryside. On the other hand, in the Pale most of the Christian workers still had ties to the village while none of the Jewish workers did. This may have contributed to different groups of workers' mutual perceptions of their different interests, which considering the importance of ethnicity in the area, was perceived by both Jews and Christians as an ethnic tension.

[37] *Poslednie Izvestiia*, No 211 17(30).1.1905.

[38] *Poslednie Izvestiia*, No' 212 1.2 (19.1).1905.

[39] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 448.

[40] Wynn, *Workers, Strikes and Pogroms*, discusses the reluctance of revolutionaries to organize mass political actions because they were concerned that these actions could result in a pogrom.
[41] The conservative, nationalist party
[42] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 117.
[43] The Polish National-Democratic Party, struggling for the independence of Poland, was notoriously anti-Semitic.
[44] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 117.
[45] For example, GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 198. There were stories about Jews being successful agitators among the workers or among the peasantry, among others in this document, but those do not seem to be representative. Many Jews working as agitators concealed their identities.
[46] The problem of intraethnic hostility among workers preventing an efficient struggle for labor rights existed in other places and for other ethnicities as well. For example, according to Suny, Ronald G., *The Baku Commune, 1917-1918, Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton, 1972) in the Baku oil industries it was practically impossible to organize the poorest Persian workers, organization among local Azeri workers was extremely difficult, and socialists were usually found among the better-skilled and better-paid Russian and Armenian workers. The hostility between different ethnicities among the workers made any labor-related struggle extremely difficult.
[47] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2122.
[48] As mentioned by Steven Zipperstein, Jews of Odessa (Stanford, 1985); Stephen Corrsin, Warsaw before the First World War (Boulder, 1989), and many other works dealing with contemporary urban employment.
[49] It was a personal decision, rather than a party assignment. As with expropriations, this was a political decision taken and implemented inside the revolutionary milieu, but not in obedience to any party authorities.
[50] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[51] See John Bushnell, *Mutiny amid Repression: Russian Soldiers in the Revolution of 1905-1906* (Bloomington, 1985).
[52] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 203.
[53] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 213.
[54] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 123.
[55] See Bushnell, *Mutiny and Repression*
[56] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 88.
[57] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 35.
[58] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 170.
[59] For example, *Ekho*, 30.6.1906, No. 8 where the specific designation of Jewish soldiers as revolutionaries and its possible political ramifications are discussed.
[60] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 73.
[61] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 209.
[62] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 457.
[63] See, for example, Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution.*

[64] Vladimir Zhabotinskii, *Piatero*, (Moscow, 2002).
[65] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 59.
[66] See Wildman, *The Making of a Workers' Revolution*
[67] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 85.
[68] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 449b. There are many other references to activist workers emigrating during 1906-7, for example in GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 112 or f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[69] Liebman, *Jews and the Left*, p. 137.
[70] Women joined the self-defense units, but according to the autobiographies I read, they came largely from among the workers rather than the intelligentsia.
[71] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 47.

Chapter 5 – The Emotional Experience of Revolutionary Activism

Creation of Emotional Community and the Worker-Intelligentsia Conflict

The seemingly cohesive revolutionary community was emotionally torn to pieces, not only through interparty squabbles over ideology and tactics or the immense difficulty of dealing with anti-Semitism, but also by different levels of access to the movement's most precious commodity – education. Workers' inferiority of any kind was incompatible with their activist structure of feeling, and thus the workers emotionally excluded the educated. This resulted in creation of an emotional community of young revolutionaries to which only workers could belong. This emotional community was central to the revolutionary experience both of workers who belonged to it and to the non-worker revolutionaries who were excluded from it.

Tsivie, a working-class Bundist from Lodz, spent much of her speech to the Society for Ex-Political Prisoners discussing what seemed to her as a case of emotional exclusion based on educational differences. She was talking about an intellectual fellow activist, Moishe-Leib, who ended up committing suicide. Both Tsvie and her audience seemed to take for granted that his status as an intellectual was a reason for his exclusion from the movement's emotional solidarity. Tsvie appreciated Moishe-Leib for his dedication to the movement, rejected charges that material issues affected him, and portrayed him as a

valuable activist. However, her feelings were mixed when she discusses issues that emphasized the class difference between herself and Moishe-Leib. Tsivie appreciated Moishe-Leib's education and intellectual interests, but she believed that these traits alienated Moishe-Leib from other revolutionaries, making him especially self-reflective, and somehow prevented others from reaching out to him. The majority of the activists found intellectuals like Moishe-Leib valuable for the education they could share, but also different and therefore incomprehensible and even threatening. Tsivie needed activists with better education to assist her in becoming something more than just a young rebel full of resentment, but she also could not accept the fact that after she became an activist, there were still people in her party organization to whom she was not an equal in terms of education and political knowledge. The worker-activists united emotionally in part to fulfill party ideology but also to satisfy the emotional needs unique to the workers. This emotional unity excluded some people and caused them to suffer. This suffering was not necessarily a cause of this particular suicide, but while telling this story Tsivie recognized that the suffering was due to emotional exclusion.[1]

This emotional estrangement between workers and nonworkers was reinforced by the nature of the activist structure of feelings and by the revolutionary ideologies. When the workers adopted an activist structure of feeling they felt that they had become new people, superior to any other component of the society. But any structure of feeling entails not only inclusions, but also exclusions. Some people were considered strangers, even if ideologically they were seen as comrades. With the new structure of feeling a subtle reordering took place in regard to who was entitled to emotional solidarity and

who was not. While the political conflict between workers and intelligentsia in the revolutionary movement has been discussed by many past historians, the emotional exclusions have not. Examining the activist structure of feeling and thus understanding the emotional component of that political conflict provides a better understanding of the tensions in the contemporary revolutionary movement. There were permanent emotional tensions between the workers and the intelligentsia in the movement because the activist structure of feeling led the workers to exclude the revolutionary intelligentsia from their emotional solidarity. On their part, the intelligentsia found it hard to accept, or even to understand, their exclusion; they viewed it as irrational and resented it.

The revolutionary workers saw themselves as strong enough to overcome obstacles on their way to equality for themselves and for others. Such workers resented the patronage of the party intelligentsia who, in their eyes, did not struggle against similar obstacles, did not build its moral vision of the world on the basis of that struggle, and was thus emotionally and socially estranged from real revolutionaries. It was not that working-class activists were not proud to be in the same movement with members of the intelligentsia. The idea that a mere apprentice, a half-starved extern student, or a small-town girl or boy could become a person that seemingly important people would listen to and view as powerful enough to change the world for the better attracted the working-class youth. Guarding their personal pride and their revolutionary goals became one and the same. But while the educated revolutionaries provided them with a source of personal pride, the fact that the workers had to give the intelligentsia a place in the movement's leadership would ultimately contradict the workers' new view of themselves and their

activist structure of feeling, which entailed an unconditional superiority. The situation was more than a struggle over power. Without some intellectual background the worker activists could not conceive of themselves as activists. Study was an essential part of their self-image, so they acknowledged their inferior status in comparison to the educated activists, even while resenting it. The very existence of the intelligentsia as part of the revolutionary milieu constituted a challenge to the newfound authority of the self-educated revolutionary workers. Even though in terms of class the intelligentsia were not supposed to be on the front lines of the revolutionary struggle, there they were, taking leadership positions by using their superior education and constituting a constant challenge to the revolutionary workers.

The general tendency of the workers to view the educated revolutionaries as strangers[2] was largely expressed toward the externs, who were, as both Levitskii and Zhabotinskii noted, among the most dedicated revolutionary militants.[3] They usually led the self-education circles; when the workers encountered those they considered revolutionary intelligentsia, it was the externs rather than university students. The prouder the workers became of themselves as part of a group, the more resentful they were of the dominant position of people coming from such a similar social background. They resented such people for enjoying educational and therefore social advantages that, if not for bad luck, the worker could also have enjoyed. This resentment was translated into emotional rejection since rationally they had to accept the utility of educated revolutionaries' work within the movement.

In the Jewish context, the workers' resentment and tendency to exclude the externs from their emotional community was exacerbated by the fact the externs were not exceptionally well educated. The student Zaslavsky, for example, said of his theoretical background: "We believed in the revolution and in the subsequent fall of the autocracy… but we felt our helplessness on the issues of theory…. It was clear that we did not really know what our theoretical positions on general questions were, we lived by the crumbs which got to us. But we did not consider this very important. We considered ourselves the practical revolutionaries."[4] Although Zaslavsky claimed this inadequacy was not very important, it was important to working-class supporters who looked to people like him to intellectually validate their practical work. We can also see how important it was from a story Zaslavsky told of the time when he, as a Bund activist, had to argue with an SD on the issue of national rights. On this occasion his knowledge was found wanting, and the attending working-class Bundists were highly disappointed. In cases like this, large groups of lower-class activists frequently left the party in question and joined another, looking for one that they believed could provide a better justification for its policies. The political differences here were less important than the need of the workers to feel pride in their party on which their personal pride and identity as revolutionaries was focused.

Worker-activists found it hard to understand the importance of the theoretical differences between the parties. As Kagan, a Bundist from Warsaw, said about the theoretical background he acquired: "The agitation was generally not on a very high level: the eight-hour day, the strike, the master is your enemy, the autocracy oppresses you as a Jew. Those were the main agitation topics."[5] The revolutionary parties agreed on

all of those issues. These were also the issues that were central to the workers' revolutionary emotional community. The knowledge provided by the educated revolutionaries was important to the sense of a modern, knowledgeable identity which the worker-revolutionaries strived for and thus a victory in the political debate of their party's representative made them proud. But their own focus was on issues on which all worker-revolutionaries agreed and which were a key to their activist structure of feeling. These issues were the need for strikes or demands for respectful treatment at work and within their local communities.

Parties were interested in recruiting semi-intelligents like Zaslavsky, who worked with the lower-class activists. They operated under the assumption that those people could easily bring their former coworkers or acquaintances with them to a different party. On the other hand, recruiting workers alone without more educated people to work with them was considered useless, since they would soon leave. Shimon Dimenshtein, a social-democrat from Vilna, noted that his party was specifically interested in recruiting mid-level activists from the Bund: "We wanted to win over several mid-level activists from the Bund. We did not try to win the upper- or the lower-level activists. We knew that the latter would stay on only if we . . . have people who could work with them."[6]

The workers expected the party to provide them with assistance in improving their education and expected this assistance to enforce their newly respectable identities as political activists. As Dimenshtein said: "There were those from Poalei Zion who suggested organizing a nonparty party. These were to be circles that would prepare activists for all the parties. There would have to be lectures and discussions. A person at

first belongs to no party and only later decides which party to join. And this nonparty party would be neutral on all the issues. There was considerable support for this." [7] The idea of neutral training circles, which seemed ludicrous to a party activist like Dimenshtein, must have made sense to the workers, who were committed to wide-ranging ideas rather than to party ideologies and for whom political education was a symbol to their new identity.

During the period of the 1905 revolution, especially after the reaction started in 1906, the workers' alienation from party leaders was often seen in the desire of working-class members to perform criminal acts. They wished to support their striking comrades or party activities in a period when finances were scarce and thus performed robberies or extortion acts. For those members, many of whom joined the anarchists or the maximalists to engage in activities unobstructed by party leaders, the scruples of that leadership seemed unimportant, especially relative to the sense of defeat the workers would experience if they became immobilized due to low funds. Therefore when Krichever, a working-class Bundist from Berdichev, spoke about the workers' hostility toward the intelligentsia in the movement during the summer of 1905, he was immediately asked whether there were tactical issues involved, but he answered:

> "The workers demanded that the intelligents be expelled from the leadership. Their reasons were that the leadership of the intelligentsia represses their initiative, that they [workers] cannot sufficiently prove themselves and that the intelligentsia is taking control of the movement and leaves no space for others to prove their abilities."

A question: "Were there no tactical issues involved?"

Answer: "The workers' opposition…supported the economic terror and the Bund organization forbade participating in terror."[8]

The revolutionary parties' resistance to terror was perceived by the workers as weak and neglectful of the main goal – advancing the revolution. This exacerbated the feeling that the party intelligentsia cared about the revolution less than the revolutionary workers. The fact that many people (including the intelligentsia) left the movement after the reaction started only reinforced this feeling.

Rabinovich, a working-class Bundist from Warsaw, cited a fictional story to illustrate his attitude toward the intelligents who left the revolutionary movement in 1906, immediately after the reaction started. The story by an unnamed Jewish writer expressed a feeling he and other working-class revolutionaries identified with:

> Khaika used to work in a city 'W.' Each holiday, Sukkot and Passover, she went to the shtetl where her mother lived. As soon as she arrived home, she was pressured to get married. And when the reaction started she listened to her family and got married. Her life afterward was very bad. One day Boris came to that shtetl – he was the new doctor. She went to Boris and said: 'I am Khaika,' 'But what ails you?' asked the doctor. She cried out: 'I am Khaika.'.[9]

Boris did not recognize her, though they had worked together in the revolutionary movement and Boris had been part of Khaika's support group. Khaika and people like her, uneducated workers from a small shtetl, had meaning for Boris only when they were part of a heroic, and preferably successful, struggle. After the struggle was defeated he

and others like him went back to their previous occupations and easily forgot the worker activists who had nothing to go back to.

This was not true of all the intelligentsia. Many, like Moishe-Leib, truly dedicated themselves to the movement and could not conceive of life without it. But the workers' suspicion and the emotional distance between workers and members of the intelligentsia gravely affected the revolutionary milieu. The party intelligentsia and semi-intelligentsia were excluded from the revolutionary milieu on an emotional level. The externs were rejected both by those more affluent and less affluent than themselves. They became a caste, as Zhabotinskii called them. Their new pride in their superior status within both their new and old communities meant inevitable social isolation. For those like the Odessa metal worker Timofei Gurshtein, even in the context of self-defense against the pogroms, it was clear that their social group was made up of revolutionary workers rather than revolutionaries at large.[10]

The emotional community initially created by worker-revolutionaries for support and assurance in their new activist structure of feeling ended up being intolerant and rejecting those whose life experience was not that of a worker. The revolutionary workers, for whom their life experience was the basis for their newly acquired identity as revolutionaries, felt they could not trust the revolutionary commitment of these who, in their view, could more easily find a place within the existing order. The utility of the educated revolutionaries for the movement at large and for the educational needs of worker-revolutionaries in particular exacerbated this emotional rejection, since the

workers ended up feeling dependent and somehow subservient to people they mistrusted and considered inferior to themselves within the movement.

Those who had family members within the movement were much less likely to close ranks against the better-educated revolutionaries, since they experienced less insecurity. Their identity as revolutionaries did not depend as much on their identity as workers and thus their dependency on the emotional community of working-class young revolutionaries was not as total as for others.

Family, Jewish Community, and Education

Another problem, linked with emotional community, was that of the complex relationship of the Jewish revolutionaries to the Jewish community and to their families, which was highly influenced by their newly acquired status as modern and educated individuals, due to their experience in self-education circles. During their politicization all young revolutionaries tended to leave their traditional families behind, but they and their families, as well as the Jewish community, discovered that this was unviable and made an effort to sustain some kind of relationship.

I have previously discussed the abandonment of the traditional family, which was part of many young revolutionaries' experience, and I have noted that in many cases the family was ready to provide some assistance to a son or a daughter in prison or escaping arrest. I have also stressed that it was important for them to take pride in the revolutionary credentials of their family members whenever possible. In a way, this combined the loyalty they felt toward both their new and old families, and made them feel more secure. In fact, for many of the young Jews like Chizhevskaya, membership in the revolutionary community was family-based. When siblings were politicized together, a part of the family transferred to the revolutionary environment intact. Chizhevskaya described her loyalty to her revolutionary older brother and her pride in him as part of her revolutionary identity. Her worry for him was an integral part of her experience and constitutes one of the most vivid segments of her autobiography. The fact that she joined the revolutionaries not by herself but as a member of a family unit, however small, seems

to have been more important to her than she was ready to admit. The feeling of continuity between the old and the new loyalties this provided made her feel more secure in her new choices. She felt she had some family approval even though, as for many others, it came not from parents but from a sibling. For Chizhevskaya, for Abram Shvartz whose elder brother introduced him to self-study circles and for I. Buchman, whose older brother encouraged his to study to become a better revolutionary, the revolutionary community was not as unfamiliar as it had been for Giter-Granatshtein, and therefore they expressed less personal insecurity about the intelligentsia. The experience of hierarchy based on knowledge that every new revolutionary encountered in the movement was not quite as troubling because it took place among family members. In this way the movement's hierarchies were incorporated into the traditional family norm of older siblings passing on experience to the younger.[11] Siblings, unlike strangers, could be counted on to stick with the organization.[12]

The issue here is not just the confidence afforded a young revolutionary by his or her like-minded family members. Status in the revolutionary community was higher for those with a family reputation for revolutionary politics. They still needed to prove their worth as individuals to the older revolutionaries, but they arrived with an aura of legitimacy. They also seemed a bit more stable in terms of staying with the particular revolutionary organization to which their family members belonged. My impression is that for these individuals, moving from one organization to another was a more complicated issue (though still not too significant), since their political loyalty was affected by personal as well as political ties.

The family remained an important base to which revolutionaries could return in times of trouble even for people whose family was not revolutionary and for those whose families threw them out of the house because of their revolutionary ideas.[13] Particularly during the 1905 revolution such individuals could return as heroes rather than as needy failures. Contact with the family and the community offered a security that the revolutionary environment could not always deliver. For example, when self-defense unit member Boris Yakover needed to recover from his wounds, he left Odessa to return to his family in Ol'gopol.[14]

While the revolutionary culture supplied its worker adherents with both a new identity and a corresponding new mode of behavior, this new identity was complicated by previous loyalties. Emotional complications arose not just in relation to the family but in relation to the Jewish community as a whole. The Jewish community was the place in which the Jewish revolutionaries felt most comfortable. Lena, a prospective revolutionary chose to join the SD rather than the SR, whom she supported politically, since she assumed that in the urban-oriented SD party she would be able to propagate among Jews rather than among peasants, whom she assumed would reject her due to her ethnicity. In the Jewish setting the revolutionaries did not feel a need to pretend to be non-Jewish,[15] and to some extent they could count on communal solidarity against the authorities.

Respect for study within the Jewish community was translated under the revolutionary circumstances into respect for the political understanding of revolutionary self-study circle graduates. While in general the circles contributed to improving education of the workers and thus contributing to their self-respect as well as their

chances for occupational mobility, the social status of the non-Jewish workers did not essentially change. By contrast, the Jewish community at the time combined a traditional respect for learning with an increasingly powerful belief that secular learning was important for succeeding in life. The young working-class revolutionaries exploited these ideas. When the parents tried to destroy their children's revolutionary books, it was not only out of fear of the police or fear that the children would leave Judaism. After all, sending children to learn some Russian was fairly common at the time even among religious Jewish families, as we saw in the case of Isaac Sorokin.[16] The issue was not possessing books per se, but the fact that by engaging in this particular kind of learning the children claimed a different status in the Jewish community, a status very different from that of their parents. Even more problematic, their learning seemed to upset old communal beliefs. The revolutionary youth recreated themselves as a different category of people, one to which the parents, the communal authorities, and the employers could not relate to.

Activist revolutionary workers changed the Jewish community's perception of workers. Even though the economic struggle was a losing battle, the cultural fight was not. The activism at the workplace involved the Jewish communities as a whole and presented a notion that any and all workers—not just politicized ones—are persons of self-respect who can struggle for their rights. This affected not only the attitudes of the employers who felt bewildered by the new cultural changes, but also the attitudes of the nonworker members of the community who could not continue to look down on the Jewish workers.

It was in that sense that the Jewish militants effected an important cultural change in the Jewish community. While previously the hierarchy was clear, organized according to the criteria of learning and wealth, new criteria emerged as a result of the mass militancy of 1905-7. The new criteria were not as clear as the old ones, but they included self-respect; readiness to defend the dignity of self and community, including by violence; and the kind of learning relevant to understanding current affairs, as opposed to religious learning. These criteria provided previously low-status individuals – the young, the barely educated, the workers – with a new social standing. Since during the revolution the militants managed to involve so many from these groups in their activities, they were all affected to some extent by the new cultural definitions the militants imposed.

To do this, the militants returned to the Jewish community in many ways. They instigated strikes in their workplaces, organized self-defense units in their neighborhoods, and offered educational opportunities and social support to the rebellious youth. They also produced revolutionary propaganda in Yiddish in areas where this language was prevalent among the Jewish population. They made use of communal institutions such as synagogues or schools, tried to negotiate arrangements between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors, and generally reiterated that they were part of the Jewish community, willing to fight for influence within that community. As a result, during the revolution people came to the Bund with daily problems that they had previously referred to the communal authorities. Weissenberg makes fun of this in his story "A Shtetl,"[17] but in fact it was an indication of the confusion about social hierarchies in Jewish communities and

of the tremendous identity change that resulted. For a short period during the revolution, the Jewish community accepted the revolutionaries and even afforded them leadership.

To be accepted as such, the young revolutionaries had to make compromises when it came to their internationalist identity and make it clear that they were responsible to all Jews. When local Jewish community leaders came to Levitan with a request to stop his agitation since it might end in a pogrom, they did not come to him as only an SD activist, but also as a Jewish SD activist. He was a local person and they accepted him as one of their own. Although militants like Levitan usually expressed disdain toward those same community leaders, they did not abandon communities when they were threatened. The militants struggled inside the community as Jewish workers fighting against Jewish employers, who wanted to radically change its hierarchical arrangements, but they also took responsibility for the community and expected to be treated as insiders rather than as strangers. The militants expected to be supported and to provide support against the common enemy – the Tsarist regime, which discriminated against all Jews.

A special interaction with the Jewish community developed among the worker-revolutionaries. The new notions affected not only their ideas of themselves, but also the way they felt about their place among their peers, in the Jewish community and in the world at general. These feelings were not clear-cut. The young Jews in question still needed support and recognition from the old authorities of family and community, though the family was often represented by siblings rather than parents, and the community was often represented by poor neighbors and coworkers rather than the communal elite.

Even though the young Jews had mixed feelings toward the Jewish community, it was clear that only within that community did they feel secure in their social status as revolutionaries. Whereas the non-Jewish revolutionaries saw the actions of the Black Hundreds as part of a longer political battle they were fighting, Jews felt that the very basis of their activism was threatened, the space in which they felt secure. [18] Their subsequent struggle against the Black Hundreds was not just a struggle for the Jewish community, but also a defense of their identity.

[1] GARF f 533 op. 1 d. 449b.
[2] N. Khanin stated so specifically in his introduction to the memoirs of Bundist leader Leib Blekhman (Abram der Tate), Abram der Tate, *Bleter fon Mein Jugend*, (New York, 1959), claiming that the memoirist was an exception to the exclusion of the intelligentsia by working-class revolutionaries from their emotional community.
[3] Also among the most useful militants, since they could communicate with the Jewish lower classes in Yiddish, which was a problem for offspring of more affluent families in the larger cities of Ukraine and Poland, though not of Lithuania. As Levitskii pointed out, they were also more familiar with the life of the Jewish workers and therefore found it easier to communicate with them compared to revolutionaries like Peter Garvi, who came from a lower-middle-class Odessa family. Jewish revolutionaries like Martov, from a truly affluent St Petersburg background, found this communication even harder. Describing his experience as a propagandist in Vilna, he notes that the workers treated him with respect, but when he discussed the relationship between employers and their workers his description was so distant from the reality of the Jewish street that the workers treated it as an interesting story. The Jewish workers in Vilna were simply not familiar with the rich owners of large factories that he was describing, since their employers were impoverished workshop owners barely capable of making ends meet and employing one or two journeymen.
[4] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 459, p. 29.
[5] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 462, p. 75.
[6] GARF f. 533 op 1 d. 459, p. 48.
[7] GARF, f. 533 op. 1 d. 459, p. 48.
[8] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 447, pp. 88-89.
[9] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 462, p. 79-80.
[10] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 209.
[11] GARF f. 533, op. 2, d. 2275; f. 102, op. 265, d. 51
[12] Siblings of a worker were usually workers themselves (though on occasion, as in the case of Chizhevskaya, the family fortunes changed and a younger child had to go to work while an older one had previously attained some education). The difference between those with less and more education was not necessarily clear-cut. On occasion a worker, who spent more time in the circles and acquired a certain educational level there, was viewed by the other workers as closer to the intelligentsia than to themselves (see, for example, a reference of Sara Agronina-Ageeva to her coworker, GARF. F. 533 op. 1 d. 168). A notion of a community of revolutionary workers was highly important, but this notion was occasionally complicated by the reality in which educational level was constantly changing, as pertaining to both workers and the semi-intelligentsia.
[13] For example, the Bundist Isaak Tsitrin. GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 2191.
[14] GARF f. 533, op. 1, d. 195.
[15] It seems that whenever possible many Jewish propagandists who approached non-Jewish peasants or workers hid their Jewish identity so that their political protagonists

could not blame them for acting on behalf of Jews, as opposed to on behalf of their revolutionary ideas. Anti-Semitism appears to have been a powerful political weapon in the hands of the conservatives at that time, and the propagandists could not afford to ignore it. Working among Jews was much easier emotionally because ethnicity was not an issue.

[16] GARF f. 533, op. 2, d. 1902.

[17] In Ruth Wisse, *A Shtetl and Other Yiddish Novellas* (Wayne, 1986)

[18] Though Jews were the primary targets of the pogroms, non-Jewish radicalized workers (and practically all those who seemed educated) were targeted as well. The Black Hundreds' violence was therefore not just a "Jewish problem."

Chapter 6 - The Pogroms of 1905-6: Self-Defense as an Emotional Experience

Introduction

Immediately after the Manifesto was issued, the Jewish revolutionary youth had to face a violent challenge to their new activist identity – the pogroms. The pogroms took place all over the Pale of Settlement, though focused in Ukraine. The supporters of the government considered Jews to be instigators of the revolution and thus, while the pogroms were not directed exclusively against Jews, Jews became their main targets. Crowds of pogromists entered neighborhoods, homes and businesses and killed, wounded, raped and robbed any Jews on the premises. The level of physical violence was unheard of even for pre-1905 anti-Jewish pogroms. The Jewish communities did not know what to do. Since the revolutionary youth presented themselves as the only ones understanding the new political realities, they were expected to come with a solution. Activist structure of feeling meant they had the same expectations of themselves.

The youth who left their communities and declared independence from communal values and norms of behavior found that family and communal ties were much too strong to be easily cut. Considering that at the time all Jews, including the secular young revolutionaries, had to deal with the same anti-Semitism, some level of allegiance of the revolutionaries toward the Jewish community is to be expected. The young revolutionaries did not leave behind the individualistic idea of self-development, but they learned that the way to self-development was through communal solidarity. They

expressed this solidarity not as traditional Jews would, but in ways legitimate to the new youth culture they had developed. They presented themselves not as renegades, but as people with a new Jewish identity, the identity of a Jewish revolutionary. This new identity found its utmost expression in two emotion-laden political struggles –the struggle for self-assertion against the revolutionary intelligentsia and self-defense against the pogroms.

The revolutionary movement demanded that the young working-class Jewish activists uphold their new emotional identity, an identity that entailed pride, intolerance of abuse, "modern" ideas and education, and an image of an honest, moral, and politically savvy people struggling against the backward and immoral remains of the past anti-Semitism or class-based discrimination. This identity helped activists to change the Jewish community's notion of what a worker was. The primary emotion in all the sources is their personal and communal pride. This may have been the most important achievement of the contemporary revolutionary movement within the Jewish community. While the economic gains were short lived, the experience of pride, self-respect, and power achieved through solidarity with others did endure. Since these feelings were achieved by the masses of poor Jews through revolutionary discourse, they became associated with a new group inside the Jewish community – working-class revolutionary young men or women who were respected due to their learning and their ability to offer solutions to difficult social problems.

This new identity entailed not only the inclusion of a new group among those respected in the Jewish community; it also entailed exclusion of those who threatened

this new and precarious identity, mainly through superior education and thus a superior social standing both outside and inside the movement. This exclusion segregated the Jewish revolutionary workers. They were not flexible enough to include others, even in periods of ultimate heroism and unity during the pogroms. The young workers' social community excluded not only the more materially fortunate among them, but also others who did not fit the social and cultural profile of the "genuine" revolutionary that the workers had established. Since the better educated were the ones encouraging the workers to politicize lifelong resentments, they had no theoretical recourse against their exclusion.

The pogroms put the new personal and emotional identity of the young revolutionary Jews to the ultimate test. Under extreme conditions, these youth had to deal with their relationships with the non-Jewish poor; with their place in and feelings toward the Jewish community; and, most of all, with the question of how much they would sacrifice for their newfound dignity. Considering how often small, poorly armed self-defense units took on not only the civilian pogrom-makers but the police and the army, it seems they were ready to sacrifice a great deal.

During the pogroms the young revolutionaries had to abandon the idea of leaving the Jewish community for internationalist values. They had to return to it as defenders, precisely because of the new personal, political, and emotional identity they had created for themselves as revolutionaries. This meant dealing with the issues of their personal and political identity on a new level, since seeing themselves as internationalist revolutionaries who happened to be more comfortable working among Jews was no

longer good enough. They had to openly create and become still another kind of people – Jewish revolutionaries openly committed to the Jewish community first and foremost. For many this was true even before the pogroms, but for others, including many of the Bund members, it required an uncomfortable final recognition that membership in an internationalist comradeship of socialists was not possible just yet.

The Emotional Experience of Self-Defense

The revolution of 1905 was strongly rejected by a considerable number of people who supported the existing regime and were willing to fight on its behalf. The struggle took place in the same urban spaces where the revolutionaries had recently become influential. The enemies of the revolution often came from the same lower social classes as the revolutionaries, found their political voice in opposition to revolutionary self-assertion, and wanted control over the urban political spaces. To assert that control, they employed violence against those groups that they believed supported the revolutionaries, including all those who looked educated; students; urbanized revolutionary workers, and Jews.[1] Since Jews were targeted indiscriminately, they ended up being the main victims of the pogromists' violence. [2] The anti-Jewish pogroms began immediately after the Tsar's October Manifesto of 1905, which was perceived as a victory of the revolution throughout the Pale of Settlement, but especially in Ukraine.[3] Crowds of pogromists, often protected by the regular army and police, attacked Jewish neighborhoods. They killed, raped, and robbed with impunity, certain that the Tsar endorsed their actions.[4]

An ex-Bund functionary, Moisei Rafes, states specifically that the pogroms were an enormous shock to all of the Jewish revolutionaries, definitely to those who did any political work among Jews. He was writing in 1923, when this statement would sound too ethnicity minded to be politically acceptable. I therefore assume that the statement was genuine.[5] Because the pogroms represented an attempt to put Jews back in their place, they triggered lingering doubts about the revolutionary spirit of their non-Jewish

working-class neighbors who, in most though not all cases, were not sufficiently internationalist to fight for Jews attacked by both the Black Hundreds and the regular army units. The Jewish revolutionaries felt angry and betrayed. The activist structure of feeling pushed the young Jews to expect their non-Jewish counterparts to either take part in their defense, or be considered collaborators with the pogromists. By extension, the pogroms raised doubts in some young Jewish revolutionaries about socialist ideas in general. It was clear that a fragmented working class could not win a simple strike, much less make a revolution. For the young Jewish revolutionaries, for whom public expressions of personal pride and self-respect were crucial, there was no choice but to get back to their foundational identity as Jews. Distancing themselves from people violently attacked by the forces of evil would have been shameful, precisely because they viewed themselves as revolutionaries.

Shatunovsky, a Jewish revolutionary who, disguised as a non-Jew, engaged in propaganda among the peasants, experienced the Nikolaev pogrom following the declaration of the October manifesto.[6] The pogrom made him feel betrayed by the very peasants he had wanted to help as a socialist. It also made him feel like a passive victim--the traditional image of a Jew that he thought he had left behind when he became an activist: "When I got to the apartment where I lived some Jewish women ran inside, crying that an anti-Jewish pogrom had started in town. I felt very distant from Judaism, did not look like a Jew, was dressed as a peasant, but at that moment I felt Jewish." He spent the day hiding in the basement with other Jews, but when the pogromists drew near, he escaped and managed to board a ship. There Shatunovsky almost fought with one of

the pogromists, but was taken away by other Jews who wished to avoid further trouble. Shatunovsky was very patronizing in his description of these Jews, who were badly frightened and did all they could to avoid a conflict. He reveals feelings of shame for belonging to this passive group that would not defend itself, even though his revolutionary ethos would never allow him to avoid involvement on their behalf in such a time of trouble. Shatunovsky's experiences in the pogrom produced new conflicts for him – he became both angry and patronizing as a revolutionary, and confused and feeling identification with the victims as a Jew. Shatunovsky and others like him did indeed feel Jewish during the pogroms, even if they had not felt so beforehand while living in an overtly anti-Semitic environment. He expressed a distinct identity, not just of a revolutionary, but of a Jewish revolutionary.

Others, especially those who took part in self-defense, tried in their autobiographies to point out that this identification with the victims was more revolutionary than Jewish, and that some non- Jewish workers and activists came to the aid of Jews during the pogroms. In the 1920s these authors no doubt attempted to accommodate the authorities, who expected expressions of worker solidarity rather than ethnic conflict. However, we should remember that the autobiographies were submitted and judged by people who had experienced these events firsthand, and who were ready to challenge the accuracy of the accounts. Also, in some of the autobiographies specific individuals are cited, and the stories seem too detailed to be entirely invented.

In general the letters express more bitterness, rage, and betrayal than the autobiographies toward non-Jewish activists for not aggressively responding to the

pogroms. There was the general awareness among Jewish revolutionaries that no victorious political action was possible by Jews in isolation; if we assume that the non-Jewish revolutionaries betrayed Jews en masse during the pogroms, the conclusion for a Jewish revolutionary could only be that socialism had failed. But there was also another issue. After becoming politicized, many young Jews wanted to end up like Shatunovsky, who left the framework of the Jewish enclave to look and behave like a Russian revolutionary, self-possessed and respected by the broader society. It was not easy to acknowledge the ties to the Jewish community they had left behind.

Livshitz-Riminskii, an SD and a self-defense member from Ekaterinoslav, took pride in the behavior of non-Jewish SD workers during the pogrom. For him, the fact that they were ready to fight side by side with Jews was confirmation of his political and personal identity as an SD. The fact that he and those workers fought together on the same side carried a powerful message of political (rather than ethnic) solidarity. This was apparently also the message the workers involved tried to convey.[7] In his case, besides an effort to write a story suitable to the expectations of the post-1917 audience, there was a deep personal reason for stressing solidarity. The position Livshitz-Riminskii left in order to go home and rest was taken over by a group of non-Jewish workers, who were shortly afterward massacred by the Cossacks. This is in contrast to Shatunovsky, who mainly remembered the peasants as pogromists. The most important issue is that during the pogrom Livshitz-Riminskii viewed himself as both an SD and a protector of Jews as a whole (though he points out later that the Jewish poor, who could not leave town or bribe the police, suffered disproportionally during the pogrom).[8] In fact, he saw himself as

someone in a position to protect Jews because he was an SD, just as Shatunovsky considered himself in a position to protect Jews because of his revolutionary identity.

An even more revealing story that illustrates this point was told by Aron Levitan, a Jewish SD propagandist whom Shatunovsky envied for being able to conduct propaganda in the villages without concealing his Jewishness:

> He was obviously Jewish. He looked very Jewish…but the SD representative felt very comfortable, he spoke with plenty of self-assurance and self-respect. And he had an obvious advantage over me, since he could speak in a very popular way and therefore charmed his audience. In the crowd you constantly heard: 'Let the long-nose speak,' — some yelled directly: 'yid.' But now this word sounded in the village rather positive. Some said: 'That yid is really smart.'[9]

Levitan, who later fought against the Odessa pogrom as the only Jew in a unit of railroad workers, told how he handled the issue of a possible pogrom during his work as a propagandist in the villages of the Novaya Odessa area. Levitan put his prestige as a revolutionary leader on the line and convinced the local peasants to publicly commit to resisting any attempt to organize a pogrom in the area. Levitan made the pogroms into a status issue for the same peasants whose lack of interest in politics he decried in his autobiography. His message was that they had to choose between revolutionary ideas and endorsement of (or neutrality toward) the pogroms -- and he won. The peasants publicly sided with those protesting the pogroms, and they also publicly expressed their moral and political condemnation of the Black Hundreds.

As for the local Jews, however, Levitan described them much as Shatunovsky presented Jews on the ship. For Levitan they were not individuals, but a group reacting collectively. They were afraid that Levitan's activism would result in a pogrom and asked him to stop, which he saw as a characteristic reaction. He, on the other hand, got much better results, not by passive acquiescence but by a combination of belligerence and communication with the local non-Jews. This was his (not necessarily solicited) contribution to the Jewish community as a revolutionary. In relation to that community the Jewish revolutionaries portrayed themselves as individualists coming from a different place.

Still, this attitude does not mean that the Jewish revolutionaries were uncritical of the anti-Semitic behavior of non-Jewish revolutionaries, but they emphasized it less with some time and distance from the events, and depending upon their reading audience. Mosia from Odessa writes in a letter: "I really do not feel like working with the SDs, since they have many Russian activists and I find even the Russian 'comrades' disgusting. I do not trust their honesty, and even when they pretend to be shocked by the pogroms it is only because SD theory obliges them to do so."[10] Feelings like this were not uncommon among Jewish revolutionaries, who were enraged and alienated by the behavior of gentile workers. The fact that the revolutionary parties tried to blame the pogroms on the authorities and represented the participation of the lower classes as deluded, together with some genuine anti-Semitic attitudes among the revolutionaries, seemed like a betrayal.

The relationship of people of different ethnicities within the revolutionary community, the most politically sensitive issue when the autobiographies were written, is less important than the way Jewish revolutionaries envisioned themselves in relation to the Jewish community. The pogroms shocked people like Shatunovsky into remembering that their non-Jewish neighbors considered him to be different and despised. They returned to identifying with the Jewish community, yet their identification was that of an outsider. They had to create a self-image of individualistic fighters struggling for pitied--but not respected--Jews.

Protection of the Jewish community against violence became central to the identity of the Jewish revolutionaries. Protection of the Jewish community meant using physical violence, a reply to the violent anti-Semites in their own language. Under the influence of a revolutionary ethos, the young Jews conceived a communal self-respect deriving from the readiness of a community to protect its space against intruders with the intruders' own means. Through self-defense the young revolutionaries rejected their status as Jews living in exile, and rejected the notion of having to get along with the locals. They insisted on *being* the locals. Ultimately this self-assertion ultimately did not work, since the local Christian population refused to accept Jews and had the power to enforce their view. Still, the concept of a Jew feeling at home in his or her environment, and the notion that this feeling of home was connected to ethnic, class, and gender equality (as well as secularism and pursuit of knowledge) persisted for a long time afterward. The young East European Jews' wish to incorporate themselves into a secular

European culture and the outright rejection they encountered pushed them toward both the revolutionary left and the acceptance of violence as a necessary self-protection.

Not all the self-defense stories emphasize the protagonist as a heroic individual. In many stories heroism is collective rather than individual. For example an SD Moisei Brodsky told such a story:

> On October the 17th the famous manifesto was made public and a day later a pogrom started and I, among twelve comrades with "bulldog" guns went to defend the Jewish population. First we succeeded in making the pogromists' crowds disperse but then we were surrounded by a Host of Cossacks who opened fire. Five were killed and all the rest wounded and beaten up. I was slightly wounded in the foot and cut on my head. We were taken to the police station and the police officer sent us to a hospital. Several days later we were discharged and drafted into the army. The majority refused to swear the oath to serve the Tsar, until bayonets and whips forced us to do so, but we promised to serve the people, not Nicholas II.[11]

Brodsky depicts himself as part of a group that was no longer just workers insisting on their rights, but an organized street fighting unit. The experience of fighting to protect their community did indeed make them feel closer to the Jewish population they aimed to protect, but also separated them from it in terms of self-identification due to their feelings of superiority as revolutionaries.

After the pogrom, the difference was not simply between people who did and did not adopt a revolutionary identity, but also between the street fighters and the civil population they protected. Socially speaking, the revolutionary youth group closed itself off. This process was specific to this group and its experiences. In a way, the youth went back to the initial individualistic impulse that had pushed them outside the Jewish community. People still took pride in education, but during the pogrom other issues – specifically personal pride and readiness to assert it through violence – took precedence.

The attitude of the nonrevolutionary Jews toward the young revolutionaries was mixed, as I have discussed, even after the pogroms started. Yakover recalled that: "When people in the town saw that I was taken to the police, everybody was really happy, thinking that finally they got rid of one socialist rebel."[12] In some cases, as recalled by Khilkevich, the heads of the Jewish community initially reported the revolutionaries to the police. In other cases they tried to prevent the revolutionaries from acting. For example, Ida from Balta wrote in an August 1906 letter: "The attitude of Jews to all who are even just a little bit red – terrible."[13] But in other cases, Jewish neighbors helped the young revolutionaries, as in the case of "S." from Poltava, who wrote in a letter in November 1906: "Recently I happened to find out that the police want to arrest me (generally the arrests will take place shortly before the Duma elections), and that then I will be exiled to Siberia. A lady who knows the policeman told me this….Write as fast as you can to the uncle (Khaika's father) in the store, for me."[14] Livshitz-Riminskii also got information about future actions of the police through community connections.[15]

During and after 1905 many Jews regarded the revolutionaries with a confused but somewhat hopeful attitude. It seems that many Jews were so desperate, due to economic difficulties and political limitations, that they would listen to anyone offering a solution to their predicament. Sonia, a student from Kharkov, wrote in a November 1906 letter of her elections work: “I was assigned to the most populated poor Jewish streets. These poor people met me and my comrade (a Russian) warmly and asked us whether the second Duma will help them in any way.”[16] The situation was confusing for everyone; the extent and nature of the pogroms during the 1905 revolution was not something the Jewish community had previously encountered or knew how to deal with. Because of this, many community leaders were more willing to listen to self-assured young men like Levitan. They did not necessarily believe that he knew what he was doing, but they had no better solution to offer and were willing to try anything to protect their community.

On the other hand, the revolutionary youth were confident that they knew how to protect Jews and were determined to do so. For example, Betia from Odessa wrote to a friend in Berlin in June 1906: “There is a terrible pogrom in Belostok. Here everybody is afraid, but the self defense is ready and on occasion of the smallest ‘patriotic manifestation’ as they call it, we, all together, will defend ourselves. After the October events our self-defense, being more experienced, will not be so helpless. We have Browning guns, we also have some more interesting stuff.”[17] Similar emotions were expressed in another letter by Boria from Odessa, sent four days later: “Our self defense has 350 bombs and more than 6000 revolvers. I also belong to a self-defense unit and will not give up my life cheaply; I learned to shoot a revolver in the Caucasus where I spent

five and a half years. All the organizations are highly inspired, we will not stop before any kind of sacrifice, our fighting strength is now 5-6 times more than it was in October."[18]

Such an attitude was difficult for traditional Jews to understand. While respect, both for the individual and for the Jewish community as a whole, was a paramount issue for some, for the others the main issue was the survival of the community. For the revolutionaries, the activist structure of feeling, which was expressed in fighting for self and class, was easily translated into fighting for self, class, and people, and imposing their notions of self-respect on all. Passivity in the face of an attack was humiliating. For others, similar feelings of outrage did not necessarily translate into action.

Even among the revolutionaries there were compromises. Shatunovsky pointed out that his challenging about twenty peasants just back from the pogrom could have ended badly had the other Jews not interfered, and Levitan would probably have left if he felt that his presence would endanger the local Jews. There were also cases in which the local self-defense units decided they were too weak to be of any use in protecting the community, for example, during the pogrom conducted by the regular army in highly politicized Bialistok.[19]

There may have been a generational issue at play here as well, since the revolutionaries were mostly young people unencumbered with families, who were geographically and occupationally mobile. During this particular period, however, generational conflict was played out in terms of worldviews and identities. This was probably what Shatunovsky meant when he said he did not feel like a Jew. He did not

feel like a Russian or a Ukrainian either -- he did not adopt another ethnic or religious community – but he embodied characteristics that seemed incompatible with any traditional Jewish identity. Shatunovsky and Levitan did not rebel against the authority of the Jewish community; they rejected authority out of hand. When they decided it was their moral duty to publicly return to a Jewish identity, they insisted on their right to impose authority over the community. This right presumably came from their readiness to fight for safety and honor of the Jewish community. In the confusing times of revolution, the community had no means to defend itself. With no alternatives to offer, even those who initially fought against the revolutionaries on the Jewish street fell silent during the pogroms.

The Jewish population as a whole expected the revolutionaries to protect them. For example, Timofei Gurstein, a revolutionary worker, told about the day the manifesto was announced in Odessa: "When we got to Chumka, we saw a Jewish woman running with loose hair and crying wildly and then she took a stone and threw it at our banner: 'You bastards,' she cried, 'over there they are cutting people up and here you are taking a walk.' Well, some said that she is crazy, but one of my close friends came by and asked what was going on? 'A pogrom started, they are cutting up Jews.'"[20] The Jewish woman in question was not necessarily a revolutionary herself, but she clearly believed that the revolutionaries had an obligation to protect Jews during the pogroms.[21] Unlike those in Shatunovsky's story, she did not come to tell Jews that they should hide, she demanded protection.

Since the workers had not been part of the now discredited communal leadership, being a worker might have been advantageous in this confusing time. If the working-class revolutionaries had to go back to the Jewish community, they wanted to go back as new people with new solutions. Even though the autobiography writers had a political axe to grind by emphasizing the role of the workers in self-defense units, their overt pride is still striking in the texts. When Lyvshitz-Riminsky talks about organizing self-defense, he understands it as the province of the workers, and all the people he mentions contacting are worker-activists.

Not all who eventually took part in the self-defense were workers. Livshitz-Riminskii's emphasis on turning to workers had a specific meaning. He wanted to describe the self-defense as conducted by those who were expected to fight on the first lines of the revolutionary battle – not just workers, but male skilled workers employed together with many others like them. The issue here was not the identity of the workers, but the identity of the self-defense units. The point Livshitz-Riminskii made in his story was that the self-defense against the pogroms was a purely revolutionary enterprise, as opposed to an action based on ethnicity. It was a useful statement to make in Russia during the twenties, but considering that the contemporary revolutionary parties made a point of not fighting together with their political opponents, the point he made probably had some basis in reality. If self-defense was an action conducted by bona fide revolutionaries, then those taking part in the self-defense had to be seen as revolutionaries themselves. Ideology dictated that ideal revolutionaries were the workers.

Still, the revolutionaries were very proud of the local inhabitants' ability to protect the birzha and the working-class neighborhoods in general from the pogromists. This enforced the general idea that the working-class Jewish youth could and would defend itself effectively, while the middle classes would accommodate the authorities. For example, Slomianskii says about a pogrom in Belostok:

> The pogromists did not dare go into the Surazhskaya street. As soon as the soldiers came to that street, two bombs were thrown. Several people were killed and the soldiers turned back, started shooting along the street, and did not want to go on. I took part in the self-defense unit of a maximalist group on Novyi Svet street. As soon as the hooligans arrived, we immediately put sticks out of the windows, like guns, and started shooting from revolvers. The hooligans thought that we had guns and were afraid to go on, the army shot randomly, but did not affect us, and if they moved toward us we would have thrown a bomb. [22]

An emphasis on the working-class nature of the self-defense deemphasized the working-class nature of the pogroms. Stories like this leave the reader with the impression that the self-defenders were primarily fighting a revolutionary rather than an ethnic battle. Considering the importance of the first and the relative lack of importance of the second in the revolutionary literature, the self-defenders surely wanted their fight to be revolutionary. The confusing and embarrassing fact that they were fighting other poor people of a different ethnicity thus had to be downplayed. To emphasize this, Livshitz-Riminskii noted that the richest Jews bribed the police to defend their houses, so Jews who suffered most from the pogrom were those who could not afford to bribe the

police—workers, artisans, and small business owners.[23] While this was often true, emphasizing it had an important rhetorical role in emphasizing class over ethnicity.

What the revolutionaries defined as the Jewish bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was seen as the source-- whether willing or not--of funds for weapons.[24] The wealthy Jews were looked on with condescension as people unable to defend their lives and honor, unable to take a stand for their community. Their perceived inaction and the community leadership's attempts to accommodate the authorities enforced the self-image of the young revolutionaries as the only ones who actually cared for the Jewish population. As we saw in the story with Levitan, this issue was not always that clear-cut. The community leaders, whom the revolutionaries saw as the bourgeoisie, feared that the revolutionaries would provoke or escalate a pogrom, but also wished to support the self-defense. They tended to vacillate between the various options at hand. For example, a report from Ponevezh in Poslednie Izvestiia discusses the concern about a pogrom starting and the reactions to this concern. The journalist claims that the Jewish "bourgeoisie" was trying to bribe everyone, and offering financial assistance to the self-defense units, since they did not know what else to do. After the chief of police threatened to initiate a pogrom if the socialists organized a demonstration, the wealthy population became scared and threatened the self-defense unit, which they were earlier happy to assist. They were even ready to inform on the unit to the police.[25]

In other cases, the community leadership was even less clear about the kind of action they should take. Nadelshtein observes that when the rumors about a possible pogrom surfaced, the self-defense group he belonged to appealed to Jews to contribute

money for weapons. Since the poor did not have the funds and the rich were afraid to give assistance to self-defense, the group locked the doors of the synagogue during an important ceremony, trapping the elite of the community inside. Nadelstein interrupted the rabbi and stated “that we are facing such a danger. We are familiar with your attitude toward this, that on those occasions you are incredibly cowardly, and trust God to save you, but this is a mistake. In short no one will leave the synagogue before contributing something for self-defense. Those present whispered among themselves and finally a large leather merchant made the first move. He came over and contributed 50 rubles, after him the rest came.”[26] The use of force undoubtedly convinced some to make contributions; others in the synagogue actually considered self-defense a good idea.

The community leadership distrusted both the police and the revolutionaries, so they tried to accommodate both. On occasion, bribes did work better than self-defense. Lev Rauf wrote:

> A pogrom was planned to take place one Sunday after the manifesto when the peasants came from the villages…Leaders of the pogrom were the Luchshevskii brothers – landowners and local butchers. We, the youth, organized a fighting unit. Several Poles joined it too. Only workers. We had some arms, that is sticks with knives inside. We had “bulldogs.” Young people guarded every corner. And in the areas where Jews lived all kinds of burning liquids were prepared.. But the bourgeoisie at that time contributed a large sum of money to the 13th dragoon regiment, which was supposed to send in secret a unit of soldiers in case of a pogrom. When the Poles left the church and somebody cried: “Let’s go get the

> Yids," soldiers immediately shot into the crowd, several people were wounded, and thus the pogrom ended. The pogrom did not take place.

Rauf was from a small provincial town in Poland where pogroms rarely took place at that time. In Lodz, for example, PPS, the Polish nationalist labor party, managed to redirect a planned pogrom into an antigovernment demonstration.[27] In other places such as Belostok, attempts at bribing local officials were ineffectual. Jewish community leaders tried to prevent the revolutionaries from alienating the authorities and the local Christian population in hopes that political quiet would ensure the safety of the local Jews, yet they knew all too well that this approach was not always effective. They remembered Kishinev, where a pogrom began in 1903 with no provocation at all. Thus they quietly contributed money, weapons, and apartments to the self-defense units as a backup for protection, even though they knew that their members were revolutionaries.

Youth was also an important characteristic of the self-defense member. As the previously disparaged workers were now in a position to protect and advise respectable community members, so also the young people were in a position to protect and command authority over older leaders. Volodia from Odessa writes in a letter:

> Here any minute we expect something to happen, we all feel the presence of the ghost of a pogrom. For every Jewish city dweller there is the torturous question: "What shall I do?" Though not all Odessa is engrossed with this fear. . . . The young people organize self-defense units. Here there is no place for those who despair or are afraid. All of them are very decisive and highly convinced of the correctness of their response; there is

> a spark in their eyes, they all strive for revenge – to pay for the spilled blood of the innocents and for the fear in which all of them – the young, the old, and the children, are kept.[28]

Volodia eulogizes the youth in contrast with the city dwellers -- those Jews who had traditionally been afforded more of a voice in communal decisions—noting their decisiveness in times of confusion and their supposed lack of fear.

The same feelings were expressed in a letter sent two weeks later by Liova, also from Odessa, who praised (with some exaggeration) the effectiveness of the self-defense during a recent attempt to start a pogrom in the city:

> Thanks to the self-defense, the hooligans and the army are afraid to battle. In Odessa there are more than 3,000 well-armed self-defense members, all have bombs and revolvers, some also have machine guns. Soon a general uprising will take place here. Both sides are preparing energetically for the decisive battle. The agitation now will take place in the villages, to widen the agrarian movement. We read the manifesto of the Duma which was published in Vyborg and therefore expect a revolution to start every day. The spirits here are high.[29]

In reality, the heroic story of the self-defense often turned into bitter disappointment, due to ineffective weapons and disunity among the different political parties. Three days after Volodia's letter, "NS," apparently another revolutionary and self-defense unit member from Odessa, sent a letter to a friend from Kishinev, saying: "The Cossacks, in revenge for the murder of one of their comrades, together with the

hooligans, came to the market and tried to create havoc there – a pogrom, but partly the self-defense and mostly the army prevented this from happening. Though several Jews were wounded and two Jewish workers were killed, one of them was a Bund member, a nice guy, a politicized factory worker. The self-defense did not act that well. The best units were the ones of the Bund. I am unhurt."[30] The self-defense unit members knew that they were too weak to fight against regular army units, though they apparently were successful in promoting a more powerful image of themselves among the young Jews like Volodia.

Sonia from Odessa wrote to a friend in May 1906, "I joined a 'fighting unit.' I thought that this would satisfy me, but it doesn't, our unit is very weak."[31] She then goes on to complain about the disagreements among Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Ania, again from Odessa, discusses the same attempt at a pogrom:

> During the pogrom, which almost started here, the real defenders of Jews proved themselves. Of the self-defense, the first to come to the place were the Bundists, armed with bulldogs. Later came the SRs and the SDs, armed with brownings, but the main force was the several groups of Poalei Zion, each with its own leader, armed with browning guns and revolvers….The SDs played the smallest role and this was expected; after all, they say that we need Jewish blood as lubricating oil in the wheel of the Russian revolution and the hooligans, in their opinion, are the mistaken proletariat and they should not be killed. As for the SRs, there

> are more Russians among them and it is hard for a Jew to understand their way of thinking."[32]

Ania, obviously a supporter of Poalei Zion, compares the performances of self-defense units from different parties in a way that conveys her political bias, but also the lack of coordination between them. Considering her political preferences, she probably wanted to be disappointed, as much as Livshitz-Riminskii wanted not to be disappointed by the position of non-Jewish revolutionaries, but her feeling of betrayal was not unusual among the Jewish revolutionaries at the time. It is obvious that neither she nor Livshitz-Riminskii considered self-defense as an exclusively Jewish issue, but rather as a revolutionary task. The fact that Jewishness was an element that caused people to join or not join the self-defense was a problem. The Jewish revolutionaries who, like Shatunovsky, felt they were Jews during the pogroms did not do so willingly. Their Jewish identity was violently forced on them, and they resented both their identification with the nonrevolutionary Jewish population that they viewed as passive, ineffective, and lacking in pride, and the fact that they had to fight for this population rather than directly for revolutionary goals. This was the reason for emphasizing the party identity as well as the revolutionary credentials of the different units.

In any case, both the lack of unity and the lack of weapons often made fighting units ineffective. The question arose of whether the unit should fight at all during the pogroms. Some argued that they should avoid exposing their weakness and making the pogromists more violent, while not frightening them enough to force them retreat. In that case, there was a real danger that the Jewish population would be the victim of the

fighting unit's heroism, and the unit would later be blamed. A fighting unit incapable of protecting the population against the civilian pogromists (taking on regular army units was obviously impossible) could only emphasize the weakness of the Jewish revolutionaries, reinforcing their previous identities in the Jewish community as second-class citizens. People like Sonia needed the heroism of the struggle, but they also needed to feel powerful, at least in relation to the Jewish community. For the young revolutionaries, a Jewish community that did not need them -- and could in fact do better without them -- was unacceptable.

In a July 1906 letter, Rafael from Kazan described a common discussion in his self-defense unit about whether they should fight or not. The discussion focused on whether they had enough weapons. Coordination with other revolutionary parties and the lack of money for weapons were also discussed. Rafael emphasized the inefficiency of the members, but also their real helplessness in the face of the pogromists. The unit members decided that, considering their lack of strength, fighting against the pogromists would be worse than useless, since it would escalate the violence without providing the benefit of protection to Jews.[33] The inefficiency, lack of weapons and funds, and a general sense of inadequacy were typical but not unexpected, considering that the self-defense units were organized by inexperienced young civilians. In many cases when the revolutionaries felt too weak they thus preferred to not fight at all rather than provoke a reaction they could not handle.

Volodia from Ekaterinoslav writes anxiously in May 1906 about how to respond to the recent death of a young revolutionary named Tania: "Now we do not know what to

do: arranging a funeral for her – will necessarily result in a massacre or a pogrom, but not to arrange it is hard. A stormy cloud covers the city and we wait for important events each day."[34] Unlike Levitan, Volodia was extremely unsure about his and other Jewish revolutionaries' positions in Ekaterinoslav. He felt responsibility toward both the local revolutionary community, who could be massacred during the funeral, and the local Jews against whom a pogrom might be directed. He and his friends apparently were not ready to risk confrontation at this point.

Many were skeptical about mass support from non-Jewish revolutionary workers. The young activists doubted the readiness of such people to risk their lives and livelihoods to protect Jews. The Bund newspaper Poslednie Izvestiia was full of expressions of insecurity about the political commitment of non-Jewish workers in the Pale. This report from Vilna is typical: "Small strikes start every week, and Christians strike side by side with Jews. The weak consciousness of the Christians and the fact that there is no organization here, which could have worked properly among Christian workers, is highly detrimental to the Jewish workers who start a fight together with Christians."[35] As a prospective activist from Odessa wrote in an anonymous letter:

> What should we tell to the masses? If you and I were not Jews, if I were not afraid that tomorrow I and all the people we care about will be killed, I would have answered calmly: "to strengthen the revolution," but now I feel helpless. In Odessa there are rumors that a pogrom is planned again, and if the pogrom will be like the one in Sedletz, talking about self-defense means just wasting time uselessly. The Odessa committee of the

> Russian party decided: to declare, in case of a pogrom, a political strike and drag the workers to the street. I am afraid of the nearest future forcing us to examine the realism of this plan.[36]

The pogroms created a new Jewish collective identity among the Jewish revolutionaries. As Boria wrote in a letter from Ekaterinoslav: "We, Jews, cannot withdraw from the fight and have no right to do nothing. The Russians will never stop persecuting us, until the regime changes."[37] Or as Yakov wrote from Baku to his brother in Odessa:

> We, Jews, should take part in the liberation movement of Russia and take revenge on the hated government, which, with no court or investigation, executes people and ignores the most elementary human rights. Now is the time to work, time for all the opposition movements to unite. If we will not use this opportune moment, we might bitterly regret our passivity, cowardliness, and laziness. When the power is in the hands of the people, we can hope that the shame of pogroms in Kishinev, Gomel and other cities will never happen again." [38]

The shame of the pogroms and the defenselessness of Jews moved Yakov no less than the universal considerations he states. Reaction was a necessity, since otherwise Jews would be nothing but passive and cowardly victims. According to the revolutionary philosophy of the time, as well as to the activist structure of feeling, those who did not fight for their rights did not deserve them. For Boria, Yakov, and many like them, fighting the government not just as revolutionaries but as Jews was inevitable. This was a

natural extension of the self-defense, a protection of their community both against the local pogromists and against the government that, in their eyes, stood behind the pogroms.

In addition to bringing new conceptions of class and age (and also gender, since revolutionary Jewish women either joined the self-defense directly or assisted it in ways incompatible with the traditional social segregation of the sexes), the revolutionaries also brought new ways of dealing with the outside world. Their new approach combined aggression and communication. The revolutionaries were ready to use violence to protect themselves and other Jews, but they were also constantly conducting revolutionary propaganda among non-Jewish workers and peasants, stressing the need for a solidarity that crossed ethnic lines. Thus, alongside self-defense that conveyed to gentiles that the local Jews would no longer be helpless victims, the young revolutionaries also pointed out to the local poor that they, too, had a range of possibilities. They reminded the non-Jewish poor of the importance of other legitimate loyalties and coalitions beyond ethnicity, pointing out the value of broadening their alliances. In the case of Levitan, this combination of aggression and communication obviously worked. Even when it did not, some non-Jewish revolutionaries joined the self-defense. In the field of politics, the revolutionaries occasionally won over some of the gentile poor, where in the context of interethnic competition those victories would have been impossible.

The young revolutionary Jews had a complex emotional relationship with both the revolutionary movement and the Jewish community. While the revolutionary movement was the key to a new identity and increased social status, it did not, in their eyes,

sufficiently address the specific discrimination Jews suffered in the Russian empire. Some of the Jewish activists did their best to ignore the ethnic factor, but official discrimination and popular anti-Semitism made it difficult. In addition, popular anti-Semitism constantly put in doubt the rhetoric of internationalist solidarity promoted by the revolutionary movement. The Jewish revolutionaries constantly ran into the contradiction between this rhetoric and the realities of ethnic discrimination, even from the non-Jewish poor. They sought to be internationalist in approach, but they were pushed back into a Jewish identity by a series of discriminatory events.

The youth found a new social space inside the Jewish community, not in spite of but because of their new revolutionary identity. Their experiences, identities, and loyalties were inescapably paradoxical. Becoming a revolutionary entailed leaving behind many of the traditional Jewish communal values, but they also had to recognize their unique interests as Jews within a revolutionary movement that was not always ready to address ethnicity. They both belonged and did not belong in each cultural space.[39] This paradoxical position required the creation of a new social space in which the Jewish revolutionaries could feel comfortable. Simply creating a new identity and calling it "the Jewish revolutionary" was not sufficient, since they had to deal with accusations of not being "revolutionary enough" from non-Jewish movement members as well as accusations of not being "Jewish enough" from their ethnic community. In the community's time of crisis during the pogroms, they had to prove their willingness to fight for it, using the organizational tools and personal skills they had acquired in the revolutionary movement.

When someone like the SR Mariia Spiridonova conducted a terrorist act in defense of peasants, she was seen as defending the people at large. But when the young Jews prioritized fighting against the pogroms, they were seen as neglecting their other revolutionary duties to focus on their own ethnic group. The revolutionaries at large condemned -- and at times fought against -- the pogroms, but they did not view the pogroms as important to the broad revolutionary movement. The general view was that the pogroms would disappear when the revolutionaries won the struggle over the minds of the poor. Whether true or not, the revolutionary Jews in the Pale could not afford the luxury of concentrating on other issues during the pogroms. Their constituency would have simply evaporated. Had they not prioritized defending the Jewish community, they would have become hopelessly estranged from it, unable to conduct effective propaganda of any kind. Refusing to defend their community against the forces of evil would destroy their self-image as revolutionaries and their conviction that they were sincere in their revolutionary beliefs, since they were ready to die for them.

[1] According to the available partial data during the three weeks after the Tsar published his Manifesto in October the 17th pogroms took place in 108 cities, 70 settlements and 108 villages. At least 1622 people were murdered and at least 3,544 were wounded. S.A. Stepanov, *Chernaya sotnia 1905-1914 gg.* (Moscow 1992), p. 56
[2] Though there were also pogroms in central Russia, Sibiria, Far East and Central Asia targeting whomever was considered a supporter of a revolution. Jews were not the only ones targeted due to their nationality. Armenians were targeted, and in different places Azeris, Georgians, Ukrainians, Latvians and Germans were targeted as well. But Jews were the only nationality targeted systematically. A. Korelin, S. Stepanov, *S.Iu. Vitte – finansist, politik, diplomat* (Moscow 1998), p. 186
[3] Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 154
[4] Stepanov, *Chernaya Sotnia*; John Klier & Shlomo Lambroza, *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (Cambridge, 1992); I. Kagan, *Pogromy v dni svobody, oktiabr' 1905 g.* (Moscow, 1925)
[5] Moisei Rafes, *Ocherki iz Istorii Bunda*, (Moskva, 1923), pp. 127-28.
[6] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195.
[7] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 176.
[8] Since there were often rumors several days ahead of time that the pogrom was going to take place, the better-off Jews usually left town. The poor Jews, who could not afford to do so, stayed. See, for example, Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms: The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905* (Princeton, 1992), p. 215.
[9] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 217
[10] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 101.
[11] GARF f. 533 op. 2 d. 246.
[12] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195
[13] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 96.
[14] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 120.
[15] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 176
[16] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 121.
[17] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 79.
[18] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 80.
[19] GARF f. 533, op. 1, d. 195.
[20] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 209, pp. 5-10.
[21] The revolutionaries were ready to force the support of the community. While in most cases the expected support was in the form of money, weapons, or hiding places, Gurshtein said that in Odessa, while taking Jewish noncombatants to the Jewish hospital during the pogrom, they discovered there youths their age who had previously laughed at them. The fighting unit members found their presence in the hospital unacceptable, and

pushed them out to fight. On the other hand, Gurshtein expresses respect toward the Jewish thieves who fought together with the fighting units.

[22] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 195, p. 34. The birzha was located on Surazhskaya street. The point was that the inhabitants of working-class neighborhoods protected themselves even against the army.

[23] The perception that there was a class dimension to the pogroms can also be seen in a letter by N.S. from Odessa, a member of an SR fighting detachment in Odessa, who points out that in case of need his organization had decided to concentrate on protecting the poor districts. GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 79.

[24] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 84, xp 86.

[25] *Poslednie Izvestiiia* No' 213, 4.2.1905.

[26] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 198 p. 51.

[27] GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 199.

[28] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 88.

[29] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 89. The army was probably the main force that stopped this pogrom. Apparently there was no organized attempt at a pogrom, but simply a group of Cossacks raising havoc in a market due to the recent killing of their comrade, who had taken a drunken walk in one of Odessa's poorest Jewish neighborhoods, shouting anti-Semitic comments and attacking people with his saber. He was killed by some local youths.

[30] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 89.

[31] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 177.

[32] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 89. While General Zionists did not have many adherents among the workers since they did not offer solution to their class-related problems, the socialist-Zionist groups became more popular during the revolution. Still, they were much smaller that the Bund and thus their role in self-defense, while important, was exaggerated here.

[33] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 87.

[34] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 77.

[35] *Poslednie Izvestiiia* No' 211 17 (30).1.1905. This issue is raised time after time in autobiographies as well. For example, Aaron Izakson tells of the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in his city of Dvinsk. The Jewish revolutionaries organized a demonstration hoping, based on previous agreement, that the non-Jewish workers would join as well. None of the non-Jewish workers showed up, and the Jewish workers ended up feeling that the revolutionary cause was hopeless since it was supported only by Jews. GARF f. 533 op. 1 d. 448 pp. 19-21. The general feeling that Jews were politicized and the non-Jews were not -- and that this situation could have dangerous developments -- is clear. The bombs, when the reaction started, were an expression of despair rather than revolutionary optimism.

[36] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 102.

[37] GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 59.

36 GARF f. 102 op. 265 d. 55.

[39] I am reminded here of Ranciere's depiction of the politicized workers as positioned between the workers and the revolutionary intelligentsia, deriving their status in each space from belonging to the other, but not fully belonging anywhere -- neither in their own eyes nor in the eyes of others around them. Jacques Ranciere, *The Nights of Labor, The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France, (*Philadelphia, 1989).

Conclusion

This dissertation is a cultural history of Jewish working-class radicalism in the Pale of Settlement. Several cultural histories of the Russian working class already exist, but this is not the case for any other nationality of the Russian empire including the Jews. Among different possible ways to write the cultural history of social movements, I chose to concentrate on identity and emotions. An understanding of the new structure of feeling and newly emerging identities offers important insights into Jewish working-class revolutionary politics. The radical ideologies provided a theoretical framework for a new structure of feeling emerging as a result of Jewish experience of industrialization and urbanization. This structure of feeling was liberating for some but oppressive for those excluded from the working-class radical milieu. Both its liberating and its oppressive aspects had important ramifications for contemporary Jewish working-class politics.

In this work I analyzed the new structure of feeling adopted by the young working-class Jewish revolutionaries from the Pale. This activist structure of feeling explains the emotional change which took the young people away from the Jewish community, but forced them to go back to it in its hour of need – during the pogroms. The revolutionary youth ended up reaffirming their Jewish identity, but before that they used their activist structure of feeling in order to give a new meaning to being a working-class Jew. This meaning can be fully understood only if we perceive the emotional change these young people went through. Their new structure of feeling gave them the

strength to impose on a Jewish community a new perception of its social structure and of the place of working-class youth in it.

In this work I have described in detail two trajectories that these young Jewish activists followed while fighting for dignity and social standing and against official and popular anti-Semitism.

The first trajectory entailed the youth leaving the Jewish community to adopt the revolutionary culture and activist structure of feeling. It included prioritization of self-respect and the readiness to defend it whenever necessary. In this way they created a previously nonexistent social status, despite their poverty. The trajectory ended when the youth returned to the Jewish community during the pogroms as members of the self-defense units. By then, their new standing was recognized on the Jewish street. They were still committed to fighting for social change, but they were more aware than ever of the need to protect the Jewish community from its enemies, and more prepared to fight the social ills that assailed it.

The second trajectory dealt with the gradual exclusion of those perceived as not belonging to the category of a "working-class Jewish revolutionary." For various reasons, the working-class Jewish revolutionary youth gradually closed ranks and became an entity unto itself. While the more affluent and the better-educated were still members of, and often headed, the revolutionary organizations, they were gradually excluded from this unique group defined by mutual emotional affinity and formed around mutual class origins. The results of this trajectory are beyond the scope of my current work. While the new character of the Jewish revolutionary was integrated into the Jewish identity as a

whole, the result of the second trajectory did not bode well for the existence of the Jewish revolutionary as a cultural type. When discrimination softened against Jews in post-1917 Russia and the places they emigrated to, fewer Jews were trapped in poverty, thus fewer fit the mold of the working-class Jewish revolutionary. Not surprisingly, the only location where the Bund retained its political importance was independent Poland, where Jews were officially discriminated against by nationalistic governments, and where many Jews remained poor and uneducated. For many Jews the image of the poor, young revolutionary became a vestige of the past rather than a viable identity.

Still, some of the working-class Jewish revolutionary culture survived. Jews called on it when situations required proactive attitudes and optimism. When dealing with the most extreme of these situations, the Holocaust, Jewish partisan Meilakh Bakalchuk-Feilin mentioned with pride that some of the Jewish members of his unit were the children of participants of the 1905 revolution.[1] The continuity between the revolution and membership in a partisan unit seemed natural. Arthur Liebman and others have also pointed out the influence of the revolutionary culture on Jews who immigrated to the United States, even though such influence notably weakened as social mobility increased.

The Jewish revolutionary endured as a model for secular Jews to emulate. In that sense, participation in the 1905 revolution was highly important to the creation of a modern Jewish identity.

Notes

[1] Meilakh Bakalchuk-Felin, *Vospominaniia Evreia – Partizana* (Moscow, 2003), p. 68.

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