

# Tolstoi and the Jews

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Lev Tolstoi's fascination as a writer rests largely on his ability to defend the polarities of a given issue more effectively than most writers manage to support any single ideological opinion. Thus over the span of his illustrious career, Tolstoi pledged his allegiance to militarism and pacifism, sensualism and asceticism, and to the class values of both aristocratic and peasant life. A similar polarization holds true when we examine his attitude toward the Jews, which can best be described as a curious mixture of positive and negative elements.

Whereas Tolstoi's contradictory stance on the aforementioned themes has been exhaustively studied and belongs to any comprehensive treatment of the writer, his position vis-à-vis the Jews has remained virtually uninvestigated. Until the present time, only L. G. Barats, author of the brief publicist pamphlet *Tolstoi i evrei* (1961), has discussed this topic in any significant detail.<sup>1</sup> As a critic, however, Barats is decidedly prejudiced against Tolstoi. For example, he suggests that the Russian writer excluded the Jews from his celebrated philosophy of brotherly love ("For the Jew alone, Tolstoi could not find a place in his expansive and loving heart") and accuses him of employing a double standard in his public statements on social and moral issues ("He always made a distinction between 'Hellene and Israelite,' and to the latter he did not apply the high principles which he taught and propagated").<sup>2</sup> The aim of this paper is to show that Tolstoi's views on the Jews are far more complex than Barats and other critics believe.<sup>3</sup> Just a cursory glance at Tolstoi's statements on the Jews, for instance, already reveals a clear distinction between the Jewish religion and the Jewish people—a fact which Barats fails to consider.

<sup>1</sup> L. G. Barats, son of the accomplished Ukrainian-Jewish scholar Germann Barats, was born in Kiev in the 1870s. He published extensively in both Russian and French. His interests concerned primarily trade relations (*O vvedeni v Rossii volnykh gavanei, Tovarno-komissionnye operatsii russkikh kommercheskikh bankov*, and *Nauka ob organizatsii mezhdunarodnoi torgovli*) and the Jewish problem (*Evreiskii vopros v sovetskoi Rossii, Mechty i deistvitel'nost' Getto, Problema evreiskikh bezhenstev* and *Bo'shevizm i Iudaism*). Emigrating later to Western Europe, Barats published his pamphlet *Tolstoi i evrei* in Monte Carlo (1961).

<sup>2</sup> Barats, *Tolstoi i evrei*, pp. 8, 4 respectively. Unless otherwise indicated, I have translated citations taken from Russian sources myself.

<sup>3</sup> B. Gorev's essay "Russian Literature and the Jews" (1917), in *A History of Russian Jewish Literature*, ed. and trans. Arthur Levin (Ann Arbor, MI, 1979), and Joshua Kunitz' monograph *Russian Literature and the Jew* (New York, 1929), also dealt very superficially with the topic "Tolstoi and the Jews."

Judaism first began to interest Tolstoi following his "life crisis," which he so impressively described in his *Confession* (1879). In his subsequent religious tracts of the 1880s—primarily *A Harmony* and *Translation of the Gospels* (1883) and *What I Believe* (1884)—Tolstoi, striving to formulate his own specific brand of Christianity, felt obliged to explore all the harbingers of the current faith, and Judaism ostensibly belonged in this category. However, Tolstoi chose to dispute the notion of a continuity of faith between Christianity and Judaism, and in his *Introduction to an Examination of the Gospels* (1880), he argued in metaphorical terms against their interrelationship:

To study the faith of the Jews in order to understand the Christian faith is like studying a candle before it is lit, in order to understand the significance of the light which comes from a burning candle. The one thing that can be said is that the nature and quality of the light may depend on the candle, just as the form of expression in the New Testament may depend on its relation to Judaism, but the light cannot be explained by the fact that it proceeds from this and not from that candle.<sup>4</sup>

After debunking the long accepted idea of an unequivocal bond between Judaism and Christianity, Tolstoi developed his argument one step further in *What I Believe*, contending that the two faiths, far from complementing each other, actually contradict one another. He based his contention on a juxtaposition of the laws comprising the core of each faith: "Moses gave us the old law 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' and Christ repealed this law with his own law 'Resist not evil, or him that is evil.'"<sup>5</sup> Here Tolstoi admitted that as a child he failed to understand the inherent contradiction of these two laws and merely accepted both as emanating from the divine spirit. However, when as an adult he read the Gospel and the Old Testament in the original, he became convinced that Christ does not confirm, supplement, or complete the law of Moses, but contradicts it, and that each person may accept only the one law or the other.<sup>6</sup> For Tolstoi this decision presented no difficulty because he saw the law of Moses as full of "such minute, meaningless and often cruel rules," while the law of Christ conveyed to him a simple message of love.<sup>7</sup>

Making the latter the nucleus of his new philosophy of non-resistance to evil by violence, Tolstoi subsequently applied it to all realms of

<sup>4</sup> Lev Tolstoi, "Introduction to an Examination of the Gospels" in *A Confession, The Gospel in Brief, and What I Believe*, trans. Aylmer Maude (London, 1921), p. 103. For the original citation see Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols. (Moscow, 1928-58), 24:15 (hereafter cited as PSS).

<sup>5</sup> Tolstoi, *What I Believe*, p. 354. For the original citation, see PSS 23:335.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55 (PSS, 23:336).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354 (PSS, 23:335-36).

human life where he suspected the presence of coercion, i.e., to the possession and distribution of property, to the law courts, military service, etc. Armed with love as his new theological belief, Tolstoi began his assault on all religions which value blind observance as the highest form of sanctity.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, he entirely concurred with Christ's denigration of the Jewish Sabbath in favor of human love and explained this action in an annotation to his work *The Gospel in Brief*:

And now Jesus says that this Sabbath is a petty detail and an invention of man. He sees the whole of mankind as far more important than any external holy thing. In order to fathom this, one must understand what the words "I desire good deeds and not sacrifice" mean. The Sabbath, an external form of worship that is regarded as most important, need not be fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

Besides denying the kinship between Christianity and Judaism and rejecting Jewish law in favor of the non-legalistic, non-coercive religion of Christian love, Tolstoi also found repugnant the biblical expressions of Jewish elitism. He first raised this objection in *What I Believe*, where he became perturbed at the Jew's narrow interpretation of the concept of "neighbor" (*blizhnii*): "On consulting the dictionaries and concordances of the Bible, I convinced myself that 'neighbor' when used by a Jew, always meant and only meant a Jew."<sup>10</sup>

Just when it appeared that Tolstoi through his denunciations of Jewish precepts and teachings had firmly entrenched himself as an implacable enemy of Judaism, he underwent a total transformation, emerging as a man who, if not in every case affirming these once repudiated ideas, then at least recognized them as no worse—and perhaps even better—than their Christian counterparts. For example, in writing his short, privately published essay "What Is a Jew" (1891), this new Tolstoi rejected two opinions which the old Tolstoi had previously held. First, he started to condone Jewish religious elitism, by proclaiming that "The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire and has illumined with it the entire world," and second, he reestablished Judaism as an undeniable predecessor of Christianity, by stating that "The Jew is the religious source, spring and foun-

<sup>8</sup> Here it is important to mention that Tolstoi censured not just the Jewish faith for its emphasis on law and observance, but all the other patriarchal religions as well: "The Jew lived as he lived, that is, made war, put criminals to death, built the temple, organized his entire existence in one way and not another, because all this was prescribed in his law, which he was convinced, God Himself had promulgated. It was the same with the Hindu, with the Chinaman, it was the same with the Roman, and it was the same also with the Mohammedan"—*What I Believe*, p. 456 (PSS, 23:443).

<sup>9</sup> PSS, 24:106.

<sup>10</sup> Tolstoi, *What I Believe*, p. 396 (PSS, 23:364).

tain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions."<sup>11</sup>

This essay followed by only one year a letter Tolstoi had written to the Jewish journalist Faivel-Meyer Getz (25–26 May 1890), in which he reassessed Jewish moral law and ranked it above Christian law as practiced by the Russian establishment of his day:

The moral teaching of the Jews and the practical example of their lives stand incomparably higher than the moral teaching and the practical example set by the people of our quasi-Christian society. The latter acknowledge from the Christian doctrine only the theories of confession and atonement invented by the theologians; such theories free them from all moral obligations. Therefore, Judaism, by adhering to the moral principles which it professes, occupies a higher position than quasi-Christianity in everything that comprises the goals of our society's aspirations. Christian people do not possess any moral principles, and the result is that hate and persecutions abound.<sup>12</sup>

Just as Tolstoi reevaluated his perception of Jewish law, raising it above the "quasi-Christianity" of his time (though we must assume that it still ranked below true Tolstoian Christian law), so he also neutralized his sharp attack on Jewish ritual, by degrading Christian ritual to an equal if not greater extent. And here we have in mind Tolstoi's much maligned depiction of the sacramental rite in *Resurrection* (1899), which the revered critic D. S. Mirskii assailed in this unforgettable statement:

<sup>11</sup> Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (New York, 1964), p. 137. Baron notes that this essay achieved wide circulation several years before the writer's death in 1910. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 10 vols (New York, 1939–43), 10:264 gives the publication date as 1891, linking it with Tolstoi's correspondence with the philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev. The latter in 1890 had requested that Tolstoi sign an open protest letter against the anti-Semitic movement in Russia. Writing to Solov'ev on this topic (15 March 1890), Tolstoi made this similar positive statement on the Jews: "The basis of our aversion toward the oppressive measures taken against the Jewish nation is one and the same—a recognition of the brotherhood that ties all peoples together. This applies even more so to the Jews, among whom Christ was born; they have suffered so much and still suffer from the pagan ignorance of so-called Christians" (PSS, 65:45).

<sup>12</sup> Faivel-Meyer Bentzelovich Getz was a Jewish journalist, teacher, and newspaper correspondent who exchanged letters frequently with Tolstoi and visited Iasnaia poliana in May 1890. On 1 June 1894, Tolstoi gave Getz permission to publish part of their correspondence in German translation: "I would like to help you in some way, and for that reason I am very glad that my letters will be useful to you. Publish them anywhere and in whatever form you wish. I only regret that I am unable to express more effectively and imposingly my aversion for the methods the Russian government uses against the Jews and to show my puzzled amazement at the stupidity and inexpediency of these methods which lag behind our time by several centuries" (PSS, 67:138–39).

But his [Tolstoi's] satirically blasphemous account of an Orthodox Church service, prohibited by the censorship and absent in pre-Revolutionary editions printed in Russian, can scarcely be qualified otherwise than as a grave lapse from good taste. It is quite gratuitous and unnecessary for the mechanism of the novel.<sup>13</sup>

Since Tolstoi's negative treatment of the Jewish Sabbath pales by comparison with his offensive account of the sacramental rite, we must conclude that it was his desire to oppose all rituals no matter what their origin because they deflect attention away from the moral laws which he perceived as infinitely more important.

Although there appears to exist a general time frame for Tolstoi's views on Judaism (i.e., the negative opinions were confined to the 1880s and tended to yield themselves to more positive statements in the 1890s), this trend did not prevail for long. By 1906, for example, Tolstoi had already reverted back to his earlier negative pronouncements, as witnessed by a diary entry for 6 January, where he once again criticized the Jews for the exclusive attitudes held by their faith: "The Jewish faith is most irreligious. . . It is a proud faith in that Jews consider only themselves as the chosen people of God."<sup>14</sup> Thus in summary, Tolstoi clearly adopted an inconsistent policy on the Jewish religion, vacillating between praise and condemnation.

Tolstoi's social attitude toward the Jewish people also turned out strikingly unpredictable. Beginning with total indifference on the Jewish question, Tolstoi changed to a more favorable stance around the turn of the century, before lapsing into a negative viewpoint after the Russo-Japanese War. The writer's indifference, consisting of a desire not to get involved with Jewish social problems, can be traced to the treason trial of the French-Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus in 1897-98. In contrast to the many fin-de-siècle writers (Zola and Chekhov, to name just two) who registered powerful objections against this blatant case of anti-Semitism, Tolstoi preferred to remain silent on this issue, offering his aid instead to the thousands of equally innocent political prisoners already being detained in Russian jails. The ordeal of these poor common people, he believed, indubitably deserved his concern more than the individual case of Dreyfus, who as a member of the privileged class, was not worthy of sympathy.<sup>15</sup> Some critics were certain that such indifference on the writer's part might better be viewed as

<sup>13</sup> D. S. Mirskii, *A History of Russian Literature* (New York, 1958), pp. 319-20.

<sup>14</sup> PSS, 55:180.

<sup>15</sup> Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy*, trans. Nancy Amphoux (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 564. Tolstoi's view of the Dreyfus affair was recorded by his daughter Tat'iana in her notebooks (5 February 1898).

covert anti-Semitism, since silence on volatile social issues usually implies approval or at least acceptance of the status quo. This was, for instance, the interpretation Barats gave to Tolstoi's position on Dreyfus and in censure of him wrote accordingly: "It is not easy to accept the fact that Tolstoi did not realize that without this protest and mobilization of world public opinion, Dreyfus would have rotted away on Devil's Island."<sup>16</sup>

At the start of the Kishinev pogrom (6-8 April 1903), Tolstoi seemed ready to continue his low profile on Jewish issues. As news of this tragic event spread throughout Russia, Tolstoi received letters from two prominent Jews—the dentist E. G. Linetskii (18 April 1903) and the pianist D. S. Shor (24 April 1903). Both requested that he use his influential moral reputation to condemn publicly this most unfortunate occurrence. Even though this Jewish problem was different from the Dreyfus affair in that it was native to Russian soil, Tolstoi at first still refused to help. Predictably, his decision came from a lifelong inclination not to allow other people to impose certain roles upon him.<sup>17</sup> By writing a public response to the pogrom, Tolstoi was afraid that he would be seen as a publicist, when he wished to be regarded exclusively as a man of religion:

It is supposed that my voice carries weight and therefore, people demand from me a statement of my opinion about the villainous act carried out in Kishinev—an event so important and complex in its reasons. The misunderstanding lies in the fact that people are demanding from me the activity of a publicist, when I am a person entirely occupied by one very important question which has nothing in common with contemporary events: namely the problem of religion and its application to life.<sup>18</sup>

Characteristically, Tolstoi's frustration over the perpetration of senseless violence overcame his stubborn egocentricity.<sup>19</sup> On the very same

<sup>16</sup> Barats, *Tolstoi i evrei*, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Tolstoi's response in this case is consistent with what the critic Boris M. Eikhenbaum identifies as the writer's inclination to rebel against all modes of established and expected behavior within the contemporary milieu (*byt*). One of the classic examples cited by Eikhenbaum was the insistence of the radical editors of *Sovremennik* (in the early 1860s) that all writers discuss current issues using the genre of the short essay (*ocherk*). Tolstoi intentionally defied both parts of this order in writing the lengthy historical novel *War and Peace*. Thus, it is completely in character that he should not immediately accept the role of publicist imposed on him by the Jews. See Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi* (1931; rpt. Munich, 1968), pp. 221-22.

<sup>18</sup> PSS, 74:107.

<sup>19</sup> Tolstoi's decisions for taking or not taking certain public stands hinged in large part on his theory of non-resistance to violent forms of evil. Thus, when he saw a particular group being victimized by violence and sensed their temptation to

day (27 April 1903) that he was declining the appeals of Linetskii and Shor, he was already writing to N. I. Storozhenko about his intention to sign his name to a letter of protest directed to the mayor of Kishinev (*Kishinevskii gorodskoi golova*). Before signing the document, however, Tolstoi stipulated that the phrase "a burning shame for Christian society" (*zhguchii styd za khristianskoe obshchestvo*) be removed from the text.<sup>20</sup> He insisted on this deletion because he resolutely believed that the blame for this evil deed rested more with the Russian government than with Christian society, as he had earlier indicated in his response to Linetskii and Shor: "The villainous act of Kishinev is only a direct consequence of the preaching, lying and coercion which are so intensely and persistently being cultivated by the Russian government."<sup>21</sup>

Thus in polished form the protest letter, signed by Tolstoi and dispatched to the Kishinev mayor, directly reflected the Russian writer's evolution from complete indifference to a sincere concern about the Jewish question and read as follows:

Dear Sir:

Deeply shaken by the villainous act carried out recently in the city of Kishinev, we express our painful compassion to the innocent victims of the crowd's brutality, our horror before these atrocities of the Russian

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respond in kind, he was prone to intercede in their behalf. For example, while writing an introduction to a biography of the American abolitionist and pacifist William Lloyd Garrison just eight months after Kishinev (i.e., 1904), Tolstoi took a stand against the violent treatment of Negroes in the U.S.A.: "The nature of this question has remained insoluble, and the same question, only in a new form, now stands before the people of the United States. Then (in Garrison's time) the question was how to free the Negroes from the violence of slaveowners; now the question is how to free the Negroes from the violence of all the whites and the whites from the violence of all the blacks. And the solution of the question in its new forms consists not of lynching the Negroes and not of any of the dexterous or liberal measures of American politicians, but only of an application to life of those very principles which were advocated a half-century ago by Garrison"—Ernest J. Simmons, *Leo Tolstoy* (Boston, 1946), p. 623. For the original citation, see PSS, 36:97.

<sup>20</sup> In his letter to N. I. Storozhenko (dated 27 April 1903), Tolstoi summarized his feelings about this undesirable phrase: "I would be very glad to sign your telegram. I just don't like the expression 'A burning shame for Christian society.' . . . In any case, if only this expression of shame is left out, I would be happy to sign and thank you for asking me to do so" (PSS, 74:110).

<sup>21</sup> Tolstoi expressed the same opinion about the causes of the Kishinev pogrom in his first letter to S. N. Rabinovich (Sholom Aleichem) on 6 May 1903: "Unfortunately, that which I have to say, namely, that the guilty party not only for the Kishinev horrors, but for all that discord which has settled in a certain small segment of the population (and I do not mean the masses) can only be the government. It is a pity that I am unable to say this in a Russian legal publication" (PSS, 74:118-19).

people, an inexpressible loathing and aversion for those who encouraged and incited the crowd and an infinite indignation against those who instigated this awful affair.<sup>22</sup>

On 6 May 1903, Tolstoi undertook still a further action to benefit the Kishinev Jews. He consented to contribute some literary works to an anthology which Sholom Aleichem had proposed to dedicate to the victims of the pogrom. Holding true to his word, Tolstoi sent the Yiddish writer on 20 August the two tales "Assiriiskii tsar' Asarkhadon" and "Tri voprosa." Subsequently, he added yet a third story "Trud, smert' i bolezn'," but as he himself had predicted, the censor refused to approve this work.<sup>23</sup>

With his collaboration on both the anthology and the protest letter, Tolstoi demonstrated greater sensitivity toward the Jews than one would expect from a man who had previously expressed both indifference toward their fate as a people and contempt for their biblical laws and rituals. And in all truth this trend was too good to be true because over the next few years he moved back in the direction of indifferent toleration and sometimes even approached anti-Semitism. The latter apparently was linked to the Russo-Japanese War in which Tolstoi developed an active interest. Writing some thoughts in his diary (18 June 1905) about this great Russian disaster, Tolstoi found a parallel between the Japanese quest for superiority and Jewish elitism, since both non-Christian groups encouraged and profited from intense rivalry with Christians:

This debacle [the Russo-Japanese War] is not only that of the Russian army, the Russian fleet and the Russian State, but of the pseudo-Christian civilization as well. . . . The disintegration began long ago with the struggle for money and success in so-called scientific and artistic pursuits, where the Jews got the edge on the Christians in every country and thereby earned the envy and hatred of all. Today the Japanese have done the same thing in the military field, proving conclusively, by brute force, that there is a goal which Christians must not pursue, for in seeking it they will always fail, vanquished by non-Christians.<sup>24</sup>

Tolstoi's critique here of Jewish ethnic elitism, just as his earlier condemnation of their biblical elitism, raises a question about the writer's

<sup>22</sup> The letter, addressed to "Kishinevskomu gorodskomu golove," is dated "the beginning of May, 1903" (PSS, 74:111).

<sup>23</sup> Sholom Aleichem published all three tales in a colloquial Yiddish translation. They appeared in the collection *Gilf*, (Warsaw, 1903). In Russian the first two tales came out in *Posrednik* (Moscow, 1903). Although the third story was at first rejected by the Russian censor, it ultimately was published in *Scobodnoe slovo*, January-February 1904.

<sup>24</sup> Troyat, *Tolstoy*, p. 617 (PSS, 55:147-48).



possibly hypocritical position; namely, how could he advocate the Christian law of love for all men while at the same time harboring antipathy for the Jews? Tolstoi must have clearly sensed his vulnerability on this point, because when in 1907 an avowed anti-Semite, Elena P. Stamo, asked him to express his position on the Jews, he tried to soften his stance by extending Christ's law of love to them as well, though this required a note of condescension on his part:

Your question about how we should treat the Jews I can only answer as the teaching of Christ instructs us to behave toward people who are our brothers. The more unpleasant they appear to us, the greater the effort we must exert not just to overcome this hostility, but to awaken in our heart love for them. To adopt such an attitude toward them, just as toward all people whom we find unpleasant, is the only way our souls will receive peace, and along with that it is the most effective way to counteract their influence which we perceive as so harmful.<sup>25</sup>

This combination of pro and con arguments which we have encountered in Tolstoi's views of the Jewish religion and the Jewish people, is, not surprisingly, also to be seen in his personal relationships with individual Jews. In his letter to Linetskii which we cited earlier, Tolstoi wrote: "I have met and know a great many good Jewish people."<sup>26</sup> In view of some strong supporting evidence, there is no need for us to doubt the sincerity of these words. For example, both A. B. Goldenveizer and I. B. Feinermann, two of his most devoted religious disciples, were of Jewish extraction, and the kind words he spoke about the Moscow Rabbi Solomon Alekseevich Minor (1826-1900), from whom he took Hebrew lessons after his religious conversion, also corroborate this statement.<sup>27</sup> However to no one's amazement, Tolstoi also maintained a diametrically opposite position. For instance, after a disappointing meeting with the German-Jewish pedagogue Berthold Auerbach in 1860, he disdainfully labeled him "nothing but a Jew."<sup>28</sup> And Barats reports that Tolstoi, having heard from his daughter Aleksandra L'vovna that Goldenveizer in an attempt to sprint up a hill had fallen and lost consciousness, was reputed to have said: "All this happened because everywhere Jews always strive to be first."<sup>29</sup>

Tolstoi's inconsistent attitude toward his Jewish acquaintances, along

<sup>25</sup> PSS, 77:258.

<sup>26</sup> PSS, 74:107.

<sup>27</sup> Tolstoi stated his opinion of Rabbi Minor in a letter to V. I. Alekseev in 1882: "All this time I have been intently studying Hebrew and have almost mastered it; I'm already reading and understanding. I am being taught by the local Rabbi, Minor, a very good and intelligent person" (PSS, 63:106).

<sup>28</sup> Troyat, *Tolstoy*, p. 206.

<sup>29</sup> Barats, *Tolstoi i ebrei*, p. 10.

with his ambivalent feelings about Jews as an ethnic group and as a religious denomination, suggests that he experienced considerable dissonance when pressed to formulate a definite policy toward them. While on the one hand he failed to overcome the hostile viewpoint toward Jews that he had inherited from his own aristocratic upbringing, on the other hand, he deeply felt the contradictory nature of his position because he was dedicated to religious convictions rooted in Christ's law of love for all peoples. The result of this paralyzing conflict between theory and practice, was that Tolstoi never succeeded in creating a prominent Jewish character. In this respect, he lagged behind his rival Dostoevskii, who despite his sometimes rabid anti-Semitism, had at least carved out the individualized image of his fellow Jewish convict Isai Fomich Bumshtein in his poignant study of prison life *Notes from the House of the Dead*.<sup>30</sup> Tolstoi, on the other hand, never gave his Jews a name or an individualized identity. For example, in *War and Peace* he made only oblique general references to Jews, such as his mention of Dolokhov's altercation with a Jew in Poland: "In Poland, if you please, he nearly killed a Jew."<sup>31</sup> And likewise in *Anna Karenina*, he referred to the Jews just in Stiva Oblonskii's pejorative pun "bylo delo do zhida i ia dozhidalsia" (I had business with a Jew and waited).<sup>32</sup> Only in his third great novel *Resurrection* did Tolstoi attempt to draw a detailed Jewish character—the revolutionary Vil'gel'mson. However, this figure did not survive the early drafts of the work and emerged in the final version as Simonson, whose origins are less clearly defined. B. Gorev, author of the essay "Russian Literature and the Jews" (1917), perceptively ascribed this change in name and traits to Tolstoi's uncertainty about creating a successful Jewish character.<sup>33</sup> As long as Tolstoi possessed an ambivalent, inconsistent, and fickle attitude toward the Jews, he shunned by necessity the particular detail that might reveal him as a committed friend or enemy of this vocal Russian minority.

<sup>30</sup> For further information on Dostoevskii's attitude toward the Jews, see David I. Goldstein, *Dostoevsky and the Jews* (Austin, TX, 1981), or the original French edition of the work, *Dostoievski et les juifs* (Paris, 1976).

<sup>31</sup> PSS, 9:145.

<sup>32</sup> PSS, 19:301.

<sup>33</sup> Gorev, "Russian Literature and the Jews," p. 27.