

Nationalist Myths
and Modern Media

Contested Identities in the Age of Globalization

EDITED BY

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THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION AND THE MYTH OF A JEWISH CONSPIRACY IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

Michael Hagemester

Over one hundred years ago, in August-September 1903, a series of articles appeared in an obscure, extreme right-wing St Petersburg newspaper under the title 'A Programme for World Conquest by the Jews'.¹ The newspaper went out of business shortly thereafter, and only a handful of libraries hold issues of it, but this text was subsequently transformed into the most infamous anti-Jewish pamphlet of the twentieth century, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is a fictitious document that purports to reveal a Jewish-Masonic conspiratorial plan to achieve world domination and to establish a global, totalitarian welfare state. The forgery, based largely on a compilation of literary materials from the second half of the nineteenth century, was probably concocted at the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite the most intensive research, the details of its origins still defy clarification and the question of its authorship remains open.²

It was not, however, this first version from the St Petersburg newspaper that became so widely known after the First World War and the Russian revolution, but a version that appeared two years later. This subsequent version is connected with the name of Sergei Nilus, who included the text in his devotional book *The Great in the Small and the Antichrist as an Imminent Political Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer*.³ Although Nilus is the editor of *The Protocols* rather than its author, his identity plays an important role in its reception in post-Soviet Russia. In secondary literature

Nilus is often characterized as a shadowy and enigmatic figure, labelled a 'professor', 'playboy', 'priest of the Russian Orthodox Church', 'itinerant monk' or '(half-)crazy (pseudo-)mystic'. Some mistakenly believe his name to be a *nom de plume* and believe him to be the author of *The Protocols*.

Sergei Aleksandrovich Nilus was born in 1862, the son of a minor noble landowner. A pious and erudite man, he became known as an apocalyptic thinker and prolific religious writer.⁴ On the losing side in the forced modernization and secularization of Russia, he was among those who interpreted the downfall of their own world as the end of the world in general. Pilgrimages and association with charismatic preachers and miracle-workers led Nilus to develop a mystical Christian faith, based on signs and wonders.

Nilus was a follower of the famous Russian religious thinker Vladimir Solov'ev (1853–1900) and the charismatic Father Ioann (John) of Kronstadt (1829–1908) and, like them, was driven by apocalyptic fears. In his commentary, Nilus interpreted the *Protocols* as an unveiling of the hidden strategy of the Satanic forces of darkness—and their worldly allies—in their unremitting struggle against the divine forces of light, a struggle that seemed to have entered its final stage at the turn of the century.⁵ Nilus was not a racist antisemite. More accurately, his attitude was that of traditional Christian anti-Judaism, according to which the Jews have a central, predetermined role to play in the cosmic drama of Passion and Salvation. Nilus also perceived a tragic dimension to the negative role that the Jews have had thrust upon them, as pathfinders and agents of the Antichrist. He believed that their fateful part had to be played out according to the divine plan until the end of history, leading them to struggle against Christianity and to strive for world power, as *The Protocols* revealed. At the end-times the Jews would inevitably recognize and repent of their apostasy and turn to Christ, and therefore the Jews have to be preserved. For Nilus, as for Solov'ev and many other Russian religious thinkers, the 'ultimate resolution' of the 'Jewish question' lies in *conversion*, that is, the elimination of Judaism, not of Jews. Nilus expressly appealed to his readers not to harbour enmity towards the Jews, who were, after all, simply blind and misguided by their leaders.⁶

Nilus spent several years near the famous monastery of Optina Pustyn', working in the archives and conversing with the elder monks (*starsy*). Most of his writings and popular publications date from this period, including the diary *On the Banks of God's River*, a kind of chronicle of monastic life at Optina. Other works deal with the lives of the desert fathers in Egypt and of Russian hermits; they describe encounters with

elders, miracle-workers and 'holy fools', and report prophetic dreams, prophecies and the activities of demonic forces.

Nilus regarded the Russian revolution, which to him seemed to bear out some of the predictions in *The Protocols*, as an eschatological catastrophe and the beginning of the reign of the Antichrist, the false messiah of the Jews. Nilus refused to leave Russia and joined the catacomb church. He was arrested, tried and imprisoned several times, yet—despite being well known to the authorities—was always released again. Finally, he found refuge in the village of Krutets (some eighty miles northeast of Moscow), in the house of the local parish priest. There, in January 1929, he died of a heart attack.

With the end of the Soviet regime, Nilus and his writings have been rediscovered in Russia. Nilus is a virtual cult-figure in ecclesiastical and nationalist circles, and his grave has become a place of pilgrimage. His books—especially those that contain *The Protocols*—are continually republished and can be found in Christian bookshops in even the most distant provinces. Congresses, lectures and the establishment of an annual Sergei Nilus Prize by the St Petersburg organization Orthodox St Petersburg (Pravoslavnyi Sankt-Peterburg) testify to the high honour he is granted, as does his presence in the press and on the Internet.

In this predominantly religious environment, *The Protocols* are read and understood—quite as Nilus intended—apocalyptically, as the unveiling of the hidden struggle, the hidden onslaught of anti-Christian forces. *The Protocols* is thus part of a long tradition of apocalyptic writings, many of which, like *The Protocols* themselves, are apocryphal: the famous and widely distributed prophecies of Saint Serafim of Sarov (allegedly discovered and deciphered by Sergei Nilus), for example, or the 'Dream of Father Ioann of Kronstadt', an anti-Bolshevik text fabricated in the early 1920s.

In Russia today there is a widespread belief in a conspiracy hatched by Satanic forces and their earthly helpers. Through countless tracts and brochures, eschatological, demonological and anti-Jewish predictions like the following—evolved over centuries—are now being revived and propagated: expectations of the Antichrist (a Jew from the tribe of Dan who will become the false messiah of the Jews); manifestations of the 'number of the beast' and the 'mystery of iniquity' (2 Thessalonians 2:7) and other signs of the end-times; the appearance of demonic beings; and, significantly, Jewish ritual murder of Christians.

The effect of such propaganda was apparent in April 1993 when three monks in the newly reopened monastery Optina Pustyn' were killed

by a man who was, apparently, mentally disturbed. The extreme nationalist press, including the major Communist newspaper *Pravda*, appealed to the authority of Sergei Nilus as an 'outstanding expert in Jewish symbolism, Zionism and Masonry', and thus interpreted the act as an attack by the Antichrist (supposedly born in 1962 in Israel) and as a Jewish ('Hasidic') ritual murder commissioned by conspiratorial Satanic powers.⁷

In Optina, one of the most important religious sites in Russia, the memory of *The Protocols* and of their publisher Sergei Nilus is carefully preserved and honoured. Visitors are proudly shown the house where Nilus lived from 1907 to 1912 and the hermitage of St John the Baptist, where the supposedly original manuscript of *The Protocols* had been kept. The Optina monks are convinced of the authenticity of this 'document', since Nilus received the blessing of the elders while working on *The Protocols* in Optina.

Another centre of anti-Jewish apocalyptic thought is the famous Holy Trinity-St Sergii Monastery, the home of the Moscow Theological Academy. In 1993 the monastery's publishing house brought out a book called *Russia before the Second Coming*, an anthology of apocalyptic and anti-Jewish conspiracy myths.⁸ This book, which contains excerpts from Nilus's writings and from the *Protocols*, was published in an edition of 100,000 copies. It became an immediate bestseller and has been republished repeatedly since then (including in many pirated editions). In the meantime, the text has swollen to two fat folio volumes.⁹ Apparently, doctrines about the activities of the Evil Ones (Satan, the Antichrist, the demons) and their allies on earth (the Jews) have forced the traditional Christian Good News off the stage.¹⁰

There are, however, those who oppose all of this. As early as the 1980s, the charismatic Orthodox priest Aleksandr Men' commissioned the translation of Norman Cohn's classic study of *The Protocols* in order to combat antisemitism within Russian Orthodoxy. In September 1990 Men', a baptized Jew, was killed. The circumstances of this crime have never been clarified, but many suspect that Men's battle against *The Protocols* may have been one of the reasons for his assassination.¹¹

In July 2001 Mikhail Oshtrakh, the president of the Jewish National Autonomy of Sverdlovsk Oblast, sought to initiate legal proceedings against the local diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church for incitement to ethnic and religious hatred against Jews and Judaism by its distribution of a book by Nilus containing *The Protocols*. The case garnered a lot of attention, including that of the international Jewish community. The World Jewish Congress condemned the publication and dissemination of *The*

Protocols under the benediction of local Orthodox Church authorities.¹² The state attorney's office, however, refused to pursue the case, arguing that it lacked funds to have Nilus's book examined by experts and a report written.¹³

Outside of ecclesiastical circles, *The Protocols* was and is promoted by extreme right-wing and antisemitic political organizations. One of the first to do so was the notorious Pamiat' movement, under its leader, the radical nationalist and antisemite, Dmitrii Vasil'ev. Pamiat' promoted *The Protocols* in its publications and meetings even in the mid-1980s, that is, even before the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁴ Although publishers of *The Protocols* initially justified themselves in the name of *glasnost*, cynically claiming to offer readers a chance to form their own opinions about 'probably the most mysterious document of the twentieth century', later publications rejected all doubts about the authenticity of this 'document'. Up to the present day, *The Protocols* is continually republished as a slender pamphlet that one can buy for a few roubles on street corners and in subway stations. The extensive collection of Russian editions of *The Protocols* even includes one supposedly published by the 'Department of Information and Culture [sic]' of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Among the public defenders of *The Protocols* are well-known writers and publicists such as Dmitrii Balashov, Petr Palamarchuk and Stanislav Kuntiaev, as well as the widely respected philologist and specialist in Old Russian literature, Iurii Begunov,¹⁵ and the late Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev) of St Petersburg and Ladoga, the second highest-ranking cleric of the Russian Orthodox Church and a member of its Holy Synod.¹⁶ By far the most influential propagandist for the notion of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy, however, is Oleg Platonov, an economist and historian who is apparently quite well funded by patriotic Russian sponsors. Platonov publishes numerous thick tomes in which he offers countless 'proofs', gathered from archives the world over, of the workings of secret powers.¹⁷

Il'ia Glazunov and *The Protocols*

Besides open propaganda, there are, of course, more subtle ways of fostering *The Protocols* and its message. The work of Il'ia S. Glazunov (born 1930), probably Russia's best known and most popular painter, offers a good example of this.

Exhibitions of Glazunov's paintings attract record numbers of people, and senior state representatives have no qualms about fraternizing with the artist. His works are distributed in millions of reproductions through magazines, calendars, posters and cheap brochures, but they are

also featured in expensive art albums. Glazunov is an extraordinarily successful and, at the same time, an extremely tasteless painter: his critics call him *keoro' kicha*, 'the king of kitsch'. He is also an aggressive nationalist, chauvinist and—somewhat more discreetly—an antisemite and an advocate of conspiracy theories, beliefs he first displayed long before it became fashionable in postmodern, post-Soviet Russia to adopt extreme-right postures. In the 1960s Glazunov was among the founders of informal 'patriot' associations such as the Fatherland Club (1962–8), the antisemitic Russian Club (founded in 1968) and the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments (founded in 1966), from which the notorious Pamiat' movement emerged in the mid-1980s. Its leader, Dmitrii Vasil'ev, spent several years working as Glazunov's secretary.¹⁸

Glazunov's large artistic oeuvre can be characterized as an encyclopaedia of bad taste: sometimes it is accompanied by bombastic religiousness, sometimes by a tendency towards the pornographic; and—if the viewer knows how to decode Glazunov's symbolism—one can discern in his works illustrations of the myth of the 'Jewish-Masonic world conspiracy'.

Probably Glazunov's most popular and most frequently reproduced work, the gigantic canvas *Grand Experiment of 1990*, offers a classic example of these visual references to the 'Jewish conspiracy'. In this work, which features eminent figures and events of twentieth-century Russian history, Glazunov uses the collage technique that he usually favours, combining an Old Master style with elements of a peculiar comic-like propaganda art. In the painting's centre—framed by a large, red, five-pointed star or pentagram, which, according to Glazunov, is 'an ancient cabalistic sign, a symbol of evil'¹⁹—are portraits of leading Marxists and Bolsheviks (Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Bukharin, Dzerzhinskii), the poets of revolution (Gorky and Mayakovsky), the founder of abstract painting (Kandinsky) and, most prominently, Jews (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Sverdlov, Uritskii, Kamenev, Kaganovich, Radek, Luxemburg, Béla Kun). On the outer left-hand margin one can recognize the Jewish assassin of the Tsar, Iakov Mikhailovich (or Iankel Khaimovich) Iurovskii, who is drinking blood-red liquid from a cup. Not far from him, in the lower left-hand corner, are his victims: Tsar Nicholas II and his family who were murdered as captives of the Bolsheviks in Ekaterinburg in 1918. The heads of the Tsar, the Tsarina and their five children are surrounded by haloes; underneath them is a sea of fire in which there is a wriggling serpent covered with five-pointed stars. Saint George, the patron saint of Moscow, is piercing the serpent's head with a lance.

Only on a superficial reading does this painting appear as a confusing amalgamation of scenes and portraits; on closer examination, it contains a clear message. At the centre of the Red Star—in other words, in the centre of evil—there is another star, a pentagram, covered with cabalistic, alchemical and astrological signs. Placed directly in the middle, this peculiar sign is obviously the key to understanding the whole horrible action presented by the painting. The small pentagram is none other than the 'Seal of Antichrist', which Glazunov borrowed from the title page of *Near Is the Coming Antichrist and the Kingdom of the Devil on Earth* by Sergei Nilus, published in 1911 by the Holy Trinity monastery at Sergiev Posad. This book contains *The Protocols*.

Tracing this key source makes the meaning of Glazunov's blunt and demagogical symbolism immediately clear: Marx and the—mostly Jewish—Bolsheviks are depicted as agents of the 'Judeo-Masonic conspiracy' as described in *The Protocols*, and their victim is none other than Holy Russia. At this point, the serpent on Glazunov's painting can also be decoded: it is the 'Symbolic Serpent' described in *The Protocols*, and represents the progress of the Jewish conspiracy. Starting from Jerusalem at the time of Solomon, the serpent's head moves through the European states until, with Zionist immigration, it returns to its point of origin. The serpent signifies that the world is ruled from (and, literally, encircled by) Zion.²⁰ Glazunov's painting 'exposes' those truly responsible for Russia's dismal fate and sufferings in the twentieth century; in other words, it serves the same purpose as *The Protocols*.

The function of 'Jewish conspiracy' myths

Having presented several ways in which *The Protocols* and its message have been popularized in post-Soviet Russia, we now turn to the function of myths of a Jewish conspiracy against the background of twentieth-century Russian religion and ideology.

First, a clarification: there have always been and always will be conspiracies, of course, and some of them have even been successful. Some may have involved Jews. However, the notion of a Jewish (world) conspiracy is a very different matter. It claims that the course of a whole historical epoch, perhaps (according to *The Protocols*) all human history since Solomon's reign, is the direct and intended result of a conspiracy, that is, the secret, co-ordinated, planned deeds of a specific group: the Jews and their leaders.

The myth of a Jewish conspiracy is based on an all-encompassing Manichaeic and teleological worldview.²¹ As such, this conspiracy theory

possesses structural features shared with, on the one hand, Marxist-Leninist ideology (which held Russia in its sway for many generations) and, on the other, Russia's other dominant interpretive system, Orthodox Christianity. The shared structural features of *The Protocols*, popular conceptions of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of history and Russian Orthodox eschatology are:

- a radical division of the world into absolute good and absolute evil;
- the belief that the history of humanity is governed by 'higher' powers and directed according to a great plan towards an ultimate goal;
- belief in the hidden or veiled nature of the driving forces of history and of history's villains, which have to be revealed, unmasked, and overcome.

History as (transcendent or immanent) salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) is based on oppositions: good and evil, light and darkness, Christ and Antichrist. The struggle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, or the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed, which leads to a decisive battle (the 'last battle', as it is called in the lyrics of 'The Internationale'), is a central element of Christianity as well as Marxist eschatology and demonology. National Socialism is also interpreted as a kind of dualist 'political religion', which demonizes Judaism and gives a religious, redemptive significance to the universal struggle of the light-bearing Aryans against the 'Antichrist of world history' (Goebbels's epithet for the Jews). The urgency remains the same: salvation (or 'final solution') of the world through naming, uncovering and overcoming the agents of destruction. This radically Manichaean dichotomy is also the basis for the myth of a world conspiracy as depicted in *The Protocols*.

Within Stalinism, the theory of 'two camps' and the doctrine of the opposition between the system of victorious socialism and the system of dying and rotting capitalism became the basis of the dominant *Weltanschauung*. Correspondingly, conspiracy theories were continually produced in order to explain socialism's faults and disruptions. These theories generally served to blame others for one's own failures. New campaigns were launched to detect, unmask and liquidate supposed 'saboteurs', 'underminers' and 'destructive elements', who worked in the dark and at the command of foreign powers. Even the 'unmasking' of 'Judas Trotsky' and his followers had clearly antisemitic features. The campaign against cosmopolitanism launched during the post-war period was emphatically directed against the Jews as 'rootless people'. This was simultaneously a

struggle against the supposed agents of modernity and against the western way of life. The massive anti-Zionist campaign in the Soviet media after the 1967 Six-Day War and during the 1970s was typical: it was merely another manifestation of the belief in a conspiracy of 'international finance capital'. Once it has been internalized, a Manichaean worldview remains highly potent, even in the face of complete breaks or reversals of ideology. Thus, in today's Russia, there is many a former Marxist who has made a facile exchange: the 'class enemy' of the old days, the world-historical opponent of the forces of progress, has become 'the corrupter of Russia'. He can take the form of a mythologized, demonized 'world Judaism', be identified with Western Europe or the United States, or appear more generically as the spectre of globalization. Once again, the wave of liberalism, pluralism and capitalism sweeping Russia is experienced as a threat and (some) Russians see themselves as dominated and betrayed by the West. Now that the 'spectre of communism' has died for Russians, the 'spectre of conspiracy' has become livelier than ever.

The concept that history is orderly, linear and runs towards a goal (that is, is not random or cyclical) is a Judaeo-Christian one. The unity of historical processes is grounded in God's plan, contained in the famous 'Book of Seven Seals' and 'revealed' to believers in its essential phases. Christian fundamentalists believe in a divine plan that supersedes all human plans, meaning that God has everything under control. The beginning and end of history are predetermined, and thus not subject to human intervention. The end of history, and thus its meaning-giving goal, is pre-empted in the Apocalypse: the last decisive battle, the Last Judgement, the defeat of the forces of evil, the Kingdom of God. Marxism took over this teleological schema and 'secularized' it by replacing the revealed, providential plan of salvation with this-worldly progress and with history's 'natural laws': class struggle, world revolution, victory over the oppressors and a classless society as paradise on earth.

The myth of conspiracy is also based—like Christian or Marxist eschatology—on the belief that history is orderly and unfolds according to an agenda, namely, the step-by-step plan that will take the mighty conspirators to their goal: a Jewish world state. *The Protocols* purportedly reveals precisely this plan. In other words: the Elders have everything under control. It is not even necessary to know the exact contents of *The Protocols* (they vary); the very existence of *The Protocols* 'proves' that there is a conspiracy.

Like every conspiracy theory, *The Protocols* promises access to a reality that is, by its very nature, hidden. Nonetheless, the most decisive events

occur precisely in this hiddenness. The notion of an occult power, a 'hidden hand' that secretly steers the happenings we see in the visible world, is an ancient and common phenomenon, perhaps the 'anthropological constant' at the base of all conspiracy theories.²² The notion is also central to the Marxist scheme, according to which historical events are only apparently accidental. In reality they are driven by 'inner, hidden laws' that one must 'discover'.²³ We are therefore surrounded by a superficial, misleading veil; what is essential and real all takes place behind this veil. Insight into this realm of 'higher reality' is, of course, beyond the reach of the average person. Only the initiated or visionaries—seers, prophets, apocalyptic thinkers—that is, people with the 'right' consciousness are able to pass this threshold, pierce the veil, and press forward to the truth. The same holds true when it comes to recognizing the Antichrist and his destructive activities, for the Antichrist appears in the cleverly counterfeited likeness of Christ but is, of course, his antithesis. As Vladimir Solov'ev shows in his famous *Short Tale of the Antichrist* (1900), the Antichrist appears as a charismatic personality and benefactor—exactly like the Jewish ruler in *The Protocols*—yet very few are able to penetrate and recognize the deception.

The notion that the real is hidden in a sphere above or beyond the world of the senses has widespread roots in Russia. One finds it, in an elaborated form, in those religious philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who draw on Platonic and neo-Platonic tradition. One such philosopher, Pavel Florenskii (1882–1937), labelled Plato's philosophy as 'realism', since it shows man how he can participate in the truly Real, in the hidden being of the Ideas. Less esoteric (and therefore more broadly influential) is the notion of a world beyond the senses that, nonetheless, impinges on the here and now. One finds such notions in the teachings of Helena Blavatskaia (1831–91), Nikolai Retikh (1874–1947), and Daniil Andreev (1906–59), which have enjoyed a popular revival in post-Soviet Russia. Their writings are full of cosmic, occult conspiracies, of higher beings who direct earthly events, or of secret lodges and brotherhoods working to realize a comprehensive plan for the final victory of good or evil.²⁴

If the mystery is unmasked—and the unmasking can be had for a few roubles on every street corner—then everyone can participate in the mystery. The mythic recounting of conspiracies promises to reveal the connection between a hidden reality and the world of the everyday. It grants viewers a look behind the curtain, lets them leaf through the script and points them to the 'hidden hand' that pulls the strings on the stage of history.

Conclusion

With the beginning of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which sought to end state censorship and monopoly of information, and finally with the collapse of the Soviet system, Soviet citizens suddenly found themselves overwhelmed by a flood of new and conflicting information. Confused and anxious, inexperienced at picking their way through the jungle of news reports, many turned to simple and simplifying explanations that corresponded with familiar (ideological) patterns of thought. This was the moment of *les terribles simplificateurs* and their conspiracy scenarios. The conspiracy theorists had an easy time of it, because the high expectations and almost utopian hopes that ordinary people had placed in the new social system during the *perestroika* period—the values and slogans of which ('market economy', 'liberty', 'economic reforms') were identified as western—were utterly disappointed: politics, the economy and life in general failed to improve as promised. The result was a defensive reaction, spite and the revival of old oppositions.

As is well known, conspiracy theories derive their attraction from their capacity for radical simplification of a complex and confusing reality. Moreover, they offer a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them', friend and foe, between one's own community and 'others': a dichotomy that tends to consolidate the community in itself and *against* 'others'. Finally, they promise a future consolation; that is, once the hidden enemy is detected and overcome, the times of suffering will end and redemption will be just ahead. Many Russians continue to see themselves and their country as victims, as the mere playthings of those powers whose master plan one can supposedly decipher. Unfortunately, they do not recognize that they thereby place themselves at the mercy of spectres first invoked a century ago, spectres that Russia will not be rid of for some time to come.

Notes

- 1 'Programa zavoevan'ia mira evreiami', *Znamia* (SPB), 1903, no. 190 (28 August, Old Style/10 September, New Style), 2; no. 191 (29 August/11 September), 2; no. 192 (30 August/12 September), 2; no. 193 (31 August/13 September), 1–2; no. 194 (1 September/14 September), 1–2; no. 195 (2 September/15 September), 1–2; no. 196 (3 September/16 September), 2; no. 197 (4 September/17 September), 2; no. 200 (7 September/20 September), 6.
- 2 See, e.g., Cesare G. De Michelis, *The Non-Existent Manuscript: A Study of the Protocols of the Sages of Zion*, trans. from the Italian by Richard Newhouse (Lincoln and London, 2004); Vadim Skuratovskii, *Problema avtorstva Protokolov sioniskikh mudretsov* (Kiev, 2001).

- 3 Sergei Nilus, *Velikoe v malom i Antikhrisť*, *kak blizkaia politicheskaia vozmozhnost'*. *Zapiski pravoslavnogo* (Tsarskoe Selo, 1905).
- 4 On Nilus's biography, as well as for literature by and about him, see my article in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 21 (Nordhausen, 2003), 1063–7, available at www.bautz.de/bbkl/n/nilus_s_a.shtml (viewed 13 May 2004).
- 5 See Michael Hagemeister, 'Vladimir Solov'ev and Sergei Nilus: apocalypticism and Judeophobia', in Wil van den Bercken, Manon de Courten, Evert van der Zweerde (eds), *Vladimir Solov'ev: Reconciler and Polemicist* (Leuven, 2000), 287–96.
- 6 Nilus, *Velikoe v malom*, 323.
- 7 Vladislav Shumskii, 'Pechat' Antikhrista. Po povodu ubiistva v Optinoi Pustyni', *Den'*, no. 22 (102), 6–12 June 1993, 5; cf. also Dmitrii Gerasimov, 'Sataninskoe plemia. Kto stoit za ubitsei inokov?', *Pravda*, no. 85, 5 May 1993, 4; Aleksandr Korolev, "'Brat Satany". Ritual'noe ubiistvo monakhov v Optinoi Pustyni', *Trud*, 5 May 1993, 4; Ieromonakh Tikhon, "'Nevidimaa bran'", *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, no. 20, 21 May 1993, 6–7.
- 8 Sergei Fomin, *Rossia pervd vtorym prishestviem. Materialy k ocherku Russkoi esebatologii* (Moscow, 1993).
- 9 Sergei Fomin and Tamara Fomina (eds), *Rossia pervd vtorym prishestviem. Materialy k ocherku Russkoi esebatologii*, 2 vols (Moscow and St Petersburg, 1998).
- 10 See Aleksandr Verkhovskii, *Politicheskoe pravoslavie: Russkie pravoslavnye natsionalisty i fundamentalisty, 1995–2001 gg.* (Moscow, 2003), 51–72.
- 11 See Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, 'Contextualizing the mystery: three approaches to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*', *Kritika*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2003, 397–8.
- 12 See Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union's (UCSJ) Action Alert message, 'Infamous antisemitic forgery being spread in Russia', 6 December 2001, available at the UCSJ website at www.fsmonitor.com/stories/120601Russ4.shtml (viewed 13 May 2004).
- 13 See 'Sverdlovskie evrei obidelis' na Pravoslavnuu Tserkov', 13 November 2001, at <http://rus-sky.org/history/library/articles/apn.htm> (viewed 13 May 2004).
- 14 See, e.g., Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York, 1993), 204–21.
- 15 See Iurii Begunov, *Tainye sily v istorii Rossii. Sbornik statei i dokumentov* (St Petersburg, 1996).
- 16 See, e.g., Ioann (Snychev), *Bivna za Rossiiu. Pravoslavie i sovremennost'* (St Petersburg, 1993); Ioann (Snychev), *Samoderzhavie dukha: Ocherki russkogo samosoznaniia* (St Petersburg, 1994).
- 17 See Oleg Platonov, *Ternoyi venets Rossii. Tainaia istoriia masonstva 1731–1996* (Moscow, 1996); Oleg Platonov, *Ternoyi venets Rossii. Taina bezzakoniia: iudaizm i masonstvo protiv Khristianskoi tsivilizatsii* (Moscow, 1998); Oleg Platonov, *Ternoyi venets Rossii. Zagadka Sionskikh protokolov* (Moscow, 1999).
- 18 See Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia: Dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953–1985* (Moscow, 2003).
- 19 I. Glazunov, in *Panorama*, 31 August 1994, 20, quoted in Semyon Reznik, *The Nazification of Russia: Antisemitism in the Post-Soviet Era* (Washington, D.C., 1996), 239.
- 20 On the 'Symbolic Serpent' as an anti-Jewish symbol, see Cesare G. De Michelis, 'Ot Ierusalima do Ierusalima. (Tsiki "Simvolicheskogo Zmiiia" v "Protokolakh Sionskikh mudretsov")', in Wolf Moskovich et al. (eds), *Ob, Ierusalem! (Pisa and Jerusalem, 1999)*, 161–72.
- 21 These observations are based on the insightful definitions of conspiracy theories developed by Dieter Groh and Geoffrey Cubitt; see Dieter Groh, 'The temptation of conspiracy theory, or: why do bad things happen to good people?', in Carl F. Graumann and Serge Moscovici (eds), *Changing Conceptions of Conspiracy* (New York, 1987), 1–37; and Geoffrey T. Cubitt, 'Conspiracy myths and conspiracy theories', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, vol. 20, 1989, 12–26.
- 22 See Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (New York and London, 1962), 123.
- 23 Friedrich Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie', in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Stadienauagabe*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1966), 212.
- 24 See Bernice G. Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1997).